

expedited trade, they enabled fraud. Thus new practices led to charges of corruption against financiers, and speculation was associated with the demise of republicanism. The caricatures that accompany Lindemann's essay document vividly the harsh public attitude toward speculators.

From the opening of *Living Dangerously*, the editors cast a wide net, reminding us that "marginal" includes those whose identity or way of life challenges in any way accepted paradigms or hierarchies. In all cases, a repeated motif is the need of outsiders to cross social, religious or economic boundaries to survive. Interaction with the dominant society may be dangerous, but it is a constant, even symbiotic state of marginal groups.

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**Andrew Galloway, *Medieval Literature and Culture*. (Introductions to British Literature and Culture.) Continuum, 2006. Pp. 154.**

**A**ndrew Galloway's *Medieval Literature and Culture*, part of Continuum's "Introductions to British

Literature and Culture" series, offers the introductory-level reader a well-rounded review of medieval English history, culture, and literature. This slim volume offers a fine selection and survey of themes and topics and will help to open doors for future study—either by the individual, or in a classroom setting—of key events, trends, and characters in medieval England. The format and content are targeted primarily toward beginning students, most likely those engaged in Literature or History survey courses, and their instructors. In spite of sometimes cumbersome prose, Galloway introduces his material in an accessible format and keeps his discussions carefully organized to help students more systematically approach the complex literary and political history of the Middle Ages. The breadth and range of subjects addressed—such as "periods, populations and social orders" and "the clergy and the intellectual world"—is ideal for the introductory-level student, making this volume an apt text with which to introduce a semester's study or to engage students in other fields of study.

One of the most marked features of Galloway's introductory text is the author's careful division of the elements of the medieval past under discussion. Galloway divides

the major periods of the medieval era into Anglo-Saxon England, Anglo-Norman England, and Later Medieval England. The tripartite, rather than the more traditional bipartite, division allows Galloway to explore in greater depth the significant trends and changes apparent in each period. Though this is not a unique approach to discussing the Middle Ages in their entirety, drawing these distinctions in an introductory text helps to ground the modern reader in the framework of current perspectives on medieval England. In addition to distinguishing the predominant historical periods according to clear political and social trends, Galloway addresses the genres (e.g., epic, lyric, and drama), canons (e.g., hagiography, prose writings, mysticism), and literary communities (e.g., French and Danish influence) that students may encounter in their future readings, as well as past and current schools of criticism. Such attentive outlining of his materials provides the student with more accessible inroads to the material and encourages further independent study.

The glossary may also prove a helpful tool for students new to the study of medieval literature and history, though there are some notable omissions of

complicated words appearing in the main text of the book. For example, terms such as “Mithraism,” though indirectly related to medieval studies more generally, help to contextualize historical events and trends and warrant a definition for beginning readers. The volume’s guide to further reading is well-organized and suggests materials of interest to students in a number of different areas of study. The guide also offers listings of a number of online sources that will greatly benefit both students and their instructors. There is, however, no direct reference to texts on women’s or gender studies or feminist approaches; few of the texts in the guide to further reading seem to address these subjects.

The currency of Galloway’s historical and bibliographic approaches in general throws into sharper relief a rather archaic approach to women’s roles in medieval culture, as well as to gender studies or to feminist approaches. The first mention of women’s roles appears in the middle of the first chapter in the context of medieval religious orders. The half-paragraph-long mention of women does not fully provide women’s history a central position in Galloway’s broader discussion of medieval

English history and culture, and instead emphasizes the barriers preventing women's intellectual growth as compared to their male counterparts, abruptly dismissing women's education in noting that "women who overcame these circumstances were giants of intellect and determination indeed" (p. 34). Such glib commentary sets the tone for the remainder of the book—though points related to women's and gender studies are addressed with some frequency, Galloway tends toward wit in expressing women's value in the societies of medieval England.

There is a degree of inconsistency in his accounts of the education of women. He mentions that they were infrequently schooled in Latin, but ten pages later indicates that many young ladies had private tutors, noting Abelard's instruction of Heloise as an example of such tutelage. While more mature scholars may be able to interpret this disparity, the students to whom this book is directed are more likely to see a mixed message. Given his often-flippant tone toward clerical life and women's roles in general, Galloway's caveat that the cathedral schools were exclusive to men may offer little clarification. The details of the portraits of women's education become further

confused by Galloway's mentions of religious writings for women, such as the Katherine Group and the *Ancrene Wisse*—an indication of women's literacy and education that seems to further contradict Galloway's assertions elsewhere in his text.

Galloway seems generally unaware of contemporary discussion of women's voices in medieval literature and texts, omitting references to feminist or gender study where such discussion might be most prudent. For example, in discussing the Old English and Old Norse elegies, including *Helreið Brynhildar*, he seems almost to accept the laments as evidence of the misfortune of medieval women's lives and, more significantly, neglects to mention that contemporary scholarship might attribute the authorship of some of these poems to women. Galloway mentions that "some lyrics were probably written by *real women*" [my emphasis], but mitigates such an indulgence by adding "impersonation of a woman's lamenting voice is a lyricist's stock in trade" (73). The absence in Galloway's text of a more balanced discussion of authorship among medieval women, though certainly not detrimental to the volume's value as an introductory text, might

compromise the student who seeks to branch out from this discussion into more in-depth study of feminism or women's history.

Despite the tone often adopted toward women and women's roles, Galloway seems to attempt homage toward women authors and historical characters and does reference a number of significant female figures of the Middle Ages. With prudent use of the index, the student of feminism or women's studies may find brief but relevant discussions of Heloise, Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, the *Life of Christina of Markyate*, and the abbesses Hild of Whitby and Katherine Sutton, as well as of topics such as women's religious freedoms, women in Chaucer, wives and household duties, and women's literacy and patronage, among others. In his chapter on Critical Approaches, feminist criticism and gender discourse receive direct, if brief, attention. The information Galloway offers may provide a good starting point for future study, in the context of more generalized introductions to medieval English history and culture.

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Louise M. Sylvester,  
*Medieval Romance and  
the Construction of  
Heterosexuality.* (The New  
Middle Ages.) Palgrave  
McMillan, 2008. Pp. 202.

Sylvester argues that medieval romance narratives provide scripts for heterosexual relationships, scripts that endure today in contemporary romance fiction. In this script, “for a woman to get the sex that she wants, she must take up a position of refusal, passivity, and lack of responsibility” (p. 144). She applies transitivity analysis (examining the syntactic choices that show the roles fulfilled by the participants in the text, such as the degree of volitionality or the effect on other participants) and discourse analysis (the number of conversational turns allotted to each character, the length of utterances, and the use of hedges and tag questions), to provide careful readings of the first encounter between lovers and the scene where the lovers ultimately consummate their relationship in selected texts.

The first two chapters focus on the construction of femininity in medieval romance. Chapter 1 examines two texts illustrating the “heterosexual contract,” where