

24th International Studies in Medievalism Conference

Abstracts

Joe Allegretti, M.Div, J.D., Siena College Departments of Religious Studies and Business Law

“Updating Dante: Exploring the Relevance of *The Divine* for Professionals and Professional Ethics.”

It’s almost a cliché these days to talk about a crisis afflicting business and professional ethics. We can hardly turn on the television without witnessing another business ethics scandal and watching another corporate executive being hauled off to jail. Doctors and lawyers—once among the most-respected persons in America—are increasingly seen as greedy, self-serving, and amoral. One response to this current crisis is to propose more regulation, more laws. But if the crisis of the workplace is primarily “spiritual,” then more laws will have little effect. By “spiritual” I mean that the core problem facing workers is one of self-identity, of doubts about the meaning of work itself. What law professor Anthony Kronman says about the legal profession applies more generally: “This crisis is, in essence, a crisis of morale. It is the product of growing doubts about the capacity of a lawyer’s life to offer fulfillment to the person who takes it up.” In other words, business and the professions have lost their way. Under these circumstances, business persons and professionals can learn from others who have lost their way and struggled to regain it; others who have passed through a spiritual crisis only to find new meaning on the other side. Perhaps the most famous of all such spiritual pilgrims is the Italian poet Dante Alighieri, whose *Divine Comedy* traces his journey of redemption through hell and purgatory to paradise. In this paper, I will argue that Dante can prove a spiritual resource for workers who are unhappy and disillusioned. The three stages of the *Divine Comedy* can be seen as three stages that business persons and professionals must journey through if they are to find themselves and their true destiny—and if they are to reinvigorate the workplace itself.

Brenda Beck, PhD., President, The Sophia Hilton Foundation of Canada

“From Virgin Birth To Resurrection in a Medieval Hindu Epic From South India”

A medieval oral folk epic from South India’s interior uplands describes the period from roughly 1000 to 1600 AD. Although this is a purely Hindu story, with no reference to British, Portuguese or other foreign contact, it contains some interesting details that mirror a variety of themes in Christian belief. The key heroine and queen mother of the divine heroes (her twin sons) in this forty four hour oral epic becomes magically impregnated by Lord Shiva after many years of meditation and penance. Shiva can easily be understood as the “senior male figure” of the Hindu pantheon. He places the “spirits” of two pre-existing culture heroes (Arjuna and Bhima) in the heroine’s womb (along with the spirit of a little girl, one of seven lovely maids who live in his heaven as “vestal virgins.”) The mother of these triplets, although not explicitly extolled as a virgin, is a very chaste and devout woman who bears no other children during her lifetime. Her twin sons grow up with divine powers and in fact live their first five years in a cave that is hidden under the temple of a local goddess. Though quite different from Christ in their temperament(s) these two men do fight “evil” and defend “the good.” Like Christ, they are very chaste. They never so much as touch an “eligible” woman and they never bear offspring. Because of a pre-existing threat that all male children born to the king (their “father”) will be killed at birth, these two are whisked away as babes. The local goddess grabs them before the midwife or the mother become aware of their presence. The queen has been blind folded and the two exit the womb via a magical Caesarean performed secretly by Lord Vishnu. By contrast, the little sister, not under a death threat, is born normally soon afterwards and then raised openly in her parent’s home. Many other biblical and medieval style themes in this story will also be referenced in the paper (Jacob’s ladder, hell, the devil, pilgrimage, sitting on a meditation pillar etc). The paper will also include a description of the death of the two heroes. Like Christ the two men die willingly, with an understanding that they are carrying out God’s will (the will of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu) and that they will soon return to join him (them) in heaven. After life leaves the two heroes their sister finds their bodies and magically resurrects them for a brief period. She talks with them during this “revival” and they offer her some wise words of understanding. Then the two ascend to heaven where they regain their former status as “spirits” in Shiva’s paradise. The paper will conclude by emphasizing that this is not a story that resulted from missionary work, or simple diffusion. It is not even “Indo-European” in the normal sense, since it is told exclusively in Tamil, a Dravidian (non-Indo-European language) to its very core. The resemblances to Christian traditions remain something of a mystery, but do seem to point to a shared cultural umbrella of story images and devotional themes. Perhaps these resemblances are not so much “Christian” as they are part of a common body of shared folk beliefs found in medieval societies across a wide swath of trade-connected regions. The lecture will be illustrated with folk art (European and South Indian). This story is being animated in 26 half hour episodes and will soon be made available for teaching comparative medieval studies. See www.legendofponnival.com for further information and details.

Helen Brookman, M.St., Cambridge Victorian Studies Group and Faculty of English, University of Cambridge, UK

“Religion, Ritual, and Romance: Jessie L. Weston’s Gawain”

This paper will explore how one figure from Arthurian legend and romance, Sir Gawain, was celebrated and re-interpreted by one early-twentieth-century scholar, Jessie L. Weston. It will move away from Weston’s hugely influential and controversial *From Ritual to Romance* (1920) to consider not only the evolution of her writing on Gawain, published in scholarly articles, but also her popularizing translations of Arthurian literature, particularly the only text she translated twice - once into ‘modern prose’ (1898), the other a recreation of the ‘original metre’ (1912) - *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

Contesting Alfred Nutt’s favouring of Perceval as the original Grail hero, or A.E. Waite’s championing of Galahad, Weston wore Gawain’s colours proudly in debates that represented nothing so much as scholarly tournaments, and which stirred up nationalist, religious, and sexist emotion. This paper will explore how Weston’s arguments for the primacy and originality of the Gawain legends in the development of Arthurian myth were tied to her own scholarly status, her readings of medieval romance, and her speculative thinking on ancient religion and ritual. Weston traced the character of Gawain back through ‘scattered ballads and metrical romances’ to prove his centrality and significance to English tradition and argued for the existence of a pre-Chrétien English myth in which Gawain was the chief Grail hero. She was simultaneously seeking to follow the origins of the Grail legend even further back, to understand its roots in pre-Christian ritual and nature worship. Significantly, Weston argued that Gawain’s roots were not only pre-Chrétien but pre-Christian; as the original Grail hero, he was a folk remembrance of the fertility cult of Adonis.

The fourteenth-century alliterative romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* - to Weston ‘a characteristically English composition’ and ‘the jewel of English mediæval literature’ - played a significant and previously-unrecognised role in Weston’s scholarly configuration of Gawain. Weston’s translations aimed not only to popularize the poem but to combat the received reputation of Gawain as lusty and irreverent. I will examine Weston’s translations of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* to shed light on the tension between the tradition of the ‘Matter of Britain’ and the Christian society that assimilated it, the crucial difficulties early Arthurian scholars faced in attempting to find evidence of pre-Christian mythology in the Christian corpus of extant Arthurian texts, and the significance of ‘translating against’ received portrayals of Gawain by Malory and Tennyson.

This paper will provide insight into how Weston used medieval romance to elucidate ancient religion, and vice versa. Said by one contemporary to have a ‘Gawain-complex’, Weston celebrated the virtuous and courteous Gawain of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, but despised the ‘monkish’ Galahad and the sinful Gawain of French and later English tradition; she celebrates ‘that the author of the most important English metrical romance dealing with Arthurian legend faithfully adheres to the original conception of Gawain’s character, as drawn before the monkish lovers of edification laid their ruthless hands on his legend, and turned the model of knightly virtues and courtesy into a mere vulgar libertine’. To Weston, the fourteenth-century Christian context and content of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* were less significant than the ritual tradition in which she placed its hero; the poem was a way of accessing the ‘original’ myth. From the rituals of nature worshippers of pre-Christian Europe to the work of a devout poet in fourteenth-century North-West England, Gawain – of whom Weston was only the latest interpreter – was to Weston a mutable figure, one that revealed truths about religion and devotion that were not limited to faith or creed. The paper will thus reveal one example of scholarly ideology and its role in translation, and the mobile valency of medieval concepts to modern scholars.

William Calin, Ph.D. Department of Languages, University of Florida

“Postcolonialism and Medievalism: How French Regional Cultures/Literatures Reshape their Past and Present”

The purpose of this paper is to explore possible connections between postcolonialism and medievalism. I argue that the postcolonial approach, and for that matter the reality of postcolonialism, will help illuminate the phenomenon of medievalism in various regional cultures: specifically, Breton and Occitan in France; a comparable situation is to be found in Scotland and Catalonia. Secondly that the medievalism cultivated by the great modernist writers in the regional languages forms part and parcel of their sense of colonial oppression and their subsequent reaction against the dominant, presumably classical culture, emanating from Paris. We find in these literatures the cultivation of medieval themes and historical events, especially in the theater. This is part and parcel of their quest for origins, for a political past of independence and a literary past of glory.

Hali Camper, Montana State University

“Medievals and Goths: Drama, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, and *The House of Night*”

From its birth out of the post-punk music scene at the end of the 1970s, Goth has moved from dark, industrial warehouses into the light of the mainstream. Goth emerged into popular culture through popular films and books which recall its medieval roots. While many examples of modern Gothic exist, those that reach a wide audience illustrate how virtues and values from the Middle Ages permeate current Western culture. American texts like Jim Sharman’s *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1976) and P.C and Kristin Cast’s *House of Night* series (2006) chronologically bookend the contemporary Goth subculture, while embracing elements of medieval British drama. This dramatic form is pertinent to the discussion of modern Gothicism through its intended audience. Often written and performed for the benefit of the layman, drama had the capacity to reach a far larger audience than written works or those performed exclusively at European courts. “Medievals and Goths: Drama, *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, and *House of Night*” shows that didacticism links the medieval and modern periods through popular culture.

Lorna Wolcott Cooper, M.A., Texas Tech University

“The Dragon Ne Dyeth Nat: Alchemical Sins and Sacrifice in “The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale” and Full Metal Alchemist.”

In Chaucer’s “Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale,” the canon’s yeoman gives two explicit warnings about the practice of alchemy: 1) do not practice alchemy unless you know the technical language and its intentions and 2) do not attempt to seek the Philosopher’s Stone. Both of these warnings are given because many medieval alchemists were trying to use alchemy as a way of perfecting the soul, ignoring a God-ordained spiritual transformation. The intention of alchemy should not have been to create and perfect life—that was a power reserved solely for the Creator. The religious implications of wrongfully-practiced alchemy as stated by the Canon’s Yeoman are revived in the 21st century anime series Full Metal Alchemist. It tells the story of two brothers, Edward and Alphonse Elrich, who defy the laws of nature and God in an attempt to bring their mother back from the dead. The boys exist in an alternate universe from earth where alchemy has developed as the main source of science/technology. During their attempt to bring back their mother by using alchemy, the boys are violently disfigured. Ed’s right arm and left leg are ripped from his body, and Al’s body disappears altogether. Only his soul is left behind—attached to a suit of armor. The boys also inadvertently create a homunculus—a demonic spirit named after one of the Seven Deadly Sins. To resolve their conflict, the boys seek the Philosopher’s Stone to restore their mangled bodies. However, they eventually discover that the only way to correct their wrong is to capture and destroy the homunculus they created—to destroy their sin. The Judeo-Christian references in this anime series have often been toned down or removed altogether in order to appeal to its American audience. Despite these edits, Full Metal Alchemist is inextricably tied to a religious world view of science gone awry. Both Full Metal Alchemist and the “Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale” warn against the sinful consequences of using alchemy to transmute life—to play God. Viewing this in a modern context, author Hiromu Arakawa may be warning against our use of modern technology as an attempt to play God, as well.

Mary Catherine Davidson, Ph.D. Glendon College, York University, Canada

“Language Crusade: American English in the 1950s Hollywood Medieval Epic”

This paper analyzes the accents of English language dialogue represented in 1950s historical film epics set in medieval England. In adapting theories from postcolonial studies for studying popular constructions of language history (Davidson, in press), this paper examines the ways in which the medieval origins of English were themselves Americanized by Hollywood studios. Contrasting the changing international status of American and British English in the mid-twentieth century, my discussion considers medieval historical epics filmed in England, produced by major Hollywood studios, and starring American actors who appeared most often among exclusively British English speaking casts. While contextualizing this discussion within other medieval-set films of the 1950s such as *Knights of the Round Table* (1952) and *Black Knight* (1954), this paper centers on the 1952 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer production *Ivanhoe*. It contends that the lead casting of an American English speaker (Robert Taylor)—who maintains his Midwestern American accent among a predominantly British cast throughout this epic about a medieval English hero—reproduced linguistic assumptions about the international status of English in the 1950s. More than just capitalizing on the notoriety of Robert Taylor as an American film star and pro-McCarthy patriot (Lenihan 1992), *Ivanhoe* as both a commercial and linguistic product reflected and also advertised American English as a language of international authority after World War II. In the ways in which Hollywood film has supported the global superiority of English over non-English languages (Rich 2004), this kind of casting, which was common to the genre of 1950s medieval historical epic, had also positioned American English over such national varieties of English as British English.

Tim Dayton, Ph.D., Department of English, Kansas State University

“Alan Seeger: Medievalism as an Alternative Ideology”

Writing about T.S. Eliot, Michael Alexander notes that his “English history is not medieval, but is taken from the period between the executions of Mary Queen of Scots and those of Laud and Charles I. The Caroline spirituality ended by the Cromwellian reformation figures as a little Middle Age of Anglicanism” (231). Eliot’s interest in this “little Middle Age” is, of course, well known. Considerably less well-known is the little Middle Age conceived of by Eliot’s fellow poet and college roommate, Alan Seeger.

Seeger is, or at least was, best known for “I Have a Rendezvous with Death,” whose popularity helped make Seeger’s collected *Poems* a non-fiction best seller in 1917 and 1918. As did Eliot, Seeger drew upon medieval and quasi-medieval elements in his poetry, looking to the past--or at least to the past as he imagined it--to find values and meanings that differed from those of the present. In the most concentrated instance of this element in his poetry, Seeger apostrophizes Sir Philip Sidney in a sonnet:

Sidney, in whom the heyday of romance
Came to its precious and most perfect flower,
Whether you tourneyed with victorious lance
Or brought sweet roundelays to Stella's bower,
I give myself some credit for the way
I have kept clean of what enslaves and lowers,
Shunned the ideals of our present day
And studied those that were esteemed in yours;
For, turning from the mob that buys Success
By sacrificing all Life's better part,
Down the free roads of human happiness
I frolicked, poor of purse but light of heart,
And lived in strict devotion all along
To my three idols -- Love and Arms and Song. (145)

Sidney, though not a medieval figure, is imagined as medieval, pre-modern. Seeger sought in this imagined past an alternative to the world of industrial capitalist modernity. Ironically, the ideology that he fabricated upon this basis served to make him an enthusiastic participant in the First World War, the first major industrialized war, and one whose outcome would eventually determine the successor to the UK as the dominant nation in the capitalist world economy.

Thus, Seeger based his life and his poetry on a type of medievalism that led him to idealize not only the past, but also the present in the form of the First World War, a war he saw as the proper site for the practice of his devotion to “Arms and Song.” In my paper I will examine medievalism in Seeger’s pre-war poetry as well as in his wartime poems, exploring the ways in which the values Seeger ascribed to this imagined medieval world acted as, in Raymond Williams’ terminology, an “alternative ideology,” setting up a world that differed from that of the industrial capitalist modernity that surrounded him, but which ultimately failed to pose any significant challenge to that world

Michael Evans, Central Michigan University

“Eleanor of Aquitaine, the Crusades, and First-Wave Feminism”

Eleanor of Aquitaine was severely criticized by misogynistic clerical writers during the Middle Ages, but became a feminist heroine in the twentieth century, championed by writers such as Amy Kelly and Marion Meade. The treatment of Eleanor by nineteenth-century women writers represents a transitional phase in the evolution of her reputation. For these authors, Eleanor remained suspect on account of her allegedly frivolous behavior, but they also saw in her a role-model of a strong female ruler, at a time when British and U.S. women were struggling for the right to participate in the political process.

If Eleanor was a problematic figure, so too was her participation in the crusades. Historians (both male and female) in Protestant America and Britain were torn between critiquing the alleged fanaticism of the medieval Catholic crusading movement, and praising those elements of it that asserted Christian values and the reclamation of the Holy Land from Muslim ‘tyranny’.

Two female authors of the mid-nineteenth century focused on Eleanor and her crusading career. The British writer Agnes Strickland’s work *The Lives of the Queens of England* (1840-8) devoted a chapter to Eleanor. Strickland was a conservative and an opponent of women’s suffrage, but her work was an important milestone nevertheless in presenting the history of women written by a woman. Her (somewhat romanticized and inaccurate) account of Eleanor’s life influenced the American school teacher Celestia Bloss, who included Eleanor among her *Heroines of the Crusades* (1853). In contrast to Strickland, Bloss was a feminist, whose family was active in the abolitionist and temperance movements in up-state New York, at a time when that area was a center of radical activism. Despite these contrasts, Strickland and Bloss shared many judgments and prejudices about Eleanor and the crusades, and their writings illustrate their era’s often contradictory attitudes toward powerful women and the Catholic Middle Ages.

Karl Fugelso, Ph.S., Art Department, Towson University
“Dante as Surfer Medievalism: Sandow Birk’s *Commedia* Illustrations”

In the summer of 2001, two surfers were sitting in a Long Beach bar when they decided to update the *Divine Comedy*. Within four years Sandow Birk and Marcus Sanders had translated all three cantiche into such memorable lines as “For God’s sake, just lead me the fuck out of this depressing darkness.” Moreover, Birk had designed two-hundred lithographs that refract their text through Gustave Doré’s nineteenth-century *Commedia* engravings. Supporters welcomed Birk’s illustrations as edgy, candid, and harmonious with Dante’s *vulgari eloquentia*. But even Birk admitted that they could be seen as sacrilegious, and not just with regard to Christianity. They are often so close to Doré’s work that they border on plagiarism. And where they depart from it, they are often so far from Dante’s text that they could be accused of recklessness. Moreover, they are extraordinarily shallow across the (surf)board.

So why bother with them in an academic venue? First, because they are a window to the values and abilities of an artist whom many critics treat as a leader of the West Coast art scene and who, to judge from the tremendous popularity of his work, is in touch with the tastes and values of a much larger public. Second, because they raise profound questions for medievalism, beginning with: What are the criteria for our subjects? Is every post-medieval response to the Middle Ages fair game? At what point, if any, should superficiality rule out a topic? And how do we define superficiality? Moreover, who are “we”? Who should determine whether a subject is sufficiently profound for our journals and conferences? Can even the shallowest subject be redeemed by an interesting approach? Does a discussion of that very shallowness merit your attention? I hope so, dude(te).

Aspen Hougen, Montana State University. “Debilitating Dracula.”

The obvious parallels between vampires and infectious disease have long been recognized, and much has been written to connect vampirism both literally and metaphorically with various illnesses. While valid, such examinations have often failed to fully take into account the position which vampires and other related monster-figures hold in their respective tales. From Medieval stories of revenants and werewolves through to Stoker’s *Dracula*, vampires and their ilk were generally positioned as strong, frightening forces of nature – more like diseases in and of themselves than sufferers of disease.

Since Stoker’s time, however, a new trend has appeared in representations of Dracula and other “master vampires”; rather than a powerful disease vector, these representations position the vampire as a disease *sufferer* himself, often in search of a cure which will restore his former humanity. “Debilitating Dracula” explores these representations in light of the vampirism-infection metaphor, arguing that such depictions are only possible within a cultural context informed by modern theories of disease and infection. As the cultural understanding of disease has shifted -- from a Medieval understanding of infection as a punishment for wickedness to an understanding of infection as a frequently undeserved misfortune -- so, too, have depictions of the vampire-as-illness evolved.

K. A. Laity, Department of English, College of St. Rose,
“Revising Masculinity in Beowulf.”

The recent film *Beowulf: Prince of Geats* provides many new twists on the Anglo-Saxon epic, including a geographical mix that expands the tale to Africa. The film also makes choices about the portrayal of the eponymous hero and his cohorts with a deliberate re-assessment of masculinity in modern terms. Nonetheless, the film makers also provide a narrative valuing the source text and make efforts to resurrect the “true” life of the Scandinavian warriors. How do these modern revisions illuminate the attempts by readers and performers to comprehend this medieval text?

Mary Meany, Professor *emerita*, Siena College
“Anne Rice and Johannes Caulibus’ *Meditationes vite Christi*.”

Anne Rice, well-known and respected for her contemporary historical fiction, has published a two-volume novel, *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt; Christ the Lord: The Road to Cana*. These are meditations on the life of Jesus Christ which the author describes as a “realistic fictional portrait ... rooted in faith.” Rice has, further, explicitly placed the writing of this novel in the context of her own return to the Catholic Church. The same combination of imagination and faith was the strategy which guided medieval works in the genre of *Vita Christi*.

This paper will examine specific similarities between Rice’s work and the seminal fourteenth century text, Johannes Caulibus’ *Meditationes vite Christi*. First, the paper will examine the content and organization of the two works. What does each say about the childhood of Jesus, and what sources does each use? It seems most useful to concentrate on the depiction of Jesus’ family life with Mary and Joseph and on his own call to preach the Good News. In both cases, the paper will pay special attention to the depiction of Mary.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, the paper will examine the goals and strategies of the two works. Both authors, Rice and Caulibus, emphasize the importance of imagination in their portrayals of Jesus’ life. The paper will argue that both use a “high Christology,” that is, both remain conscious that Christ is Lord, that He has a special relationship to God the Father. Caulibus was writing for one reader, a professed religious woman. He calls on his reader to become a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ and provides her with specific guidelines for doing so. Rice, whose audience is quite different from Caulibus’s, explores the inner consciousness of Jesus Christ in a way that Caulibus could not have done. Both writers, however, are writing at least in part to express their own faith experience.

There are interesting differences as well as underlying similarities here which may help us read the medieval text more clearly and deepen our appreciation of Rice’s work. Rice could, perhaps, serve as a model of how to use not only medieval texts but medieval strategies in our own classes.

Alicia C. Montoya, University of Gronigen, Netherlands

“Lifting the Veil. Rousseau's Nouvelle Heloise and its medieval Intertext.”

Before the advent of Romanticism, Jean-Jacques Rousseau was arguably the most prominent - and least recognized, as such - French medievalist author. Ranging from his *Confessions*, with their Augustinian intertext, to his *La Nouvelle Heloise*, his works consistently draw on medieval models and themes. Yet this element has largely gone unrecognized or, as in the case of *La Nouvelle Heloise*'s reference to the story of Abelard and Heloise, has been dismissed as a superficial and late addition to a text that, most often, is still read within a classicist framework. In this contribution, I will make an argument for re-considering Rousseau as a medievalist author by focusing on his best-selling novel *La Nouvelle Heloise*. In this work, indeed, a number of elements suggest a closer relation to the medieval letters of Abelard and Heloise. These include the veil imagery that pervades the book (and its accompanying theme of female monasticism), Abelard's narrative of persecution (that Rousseau was later to personally adopt as his own), and a number of textual elements suggesting a closer reading on the part of Rousseau of the medieval text. The novel thus offers a conversion narrative in which, especially in the Elysee episode, Rousseau proposes a utopian vision of another, better world. It is also, however, a narrative in which the lost unity the author envisions - conventionally equated with the classical Golden Age - has strong medievalist and Christian undertones.

Gwendolyn Morgan, Ph.D., Professor of English, Montana State University

“Beauty and the Beast: Courtly Love in the *Twilight* Series”

In the wake of a half-century of feminist activism, Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series evinces a nostalgia for pre-feminist gender roles. Shamelessly casting its women as objects of adulation in a male-actuated society, it returns them to their traditional functions of wives, mothers, and chaste maidens, positions they are more than happy to fill. This paper examines how Meyer adapts the medieval courtly love archetype, with its affiliated quest, to validate her negation of feminist dogma with a reading public otherwise unlikely to accept her reactionary position.

Daniel-Raymond Nadon , Ph.D., Kent State University Trumbull

“Navigating Multiple Intersections: Staging a Contemporary, Multi-faith, Multi-lingual Version of *Everyman*”

In this presentation, I will chronicle the process of directing Willy Conley's adaptation of *Everyman* titled: *For Every Man, Woman, and Child* at the Trumbull Campus of Kent State University. This play provides the opportunity for the production team to explore the intersections between medieval times and post-9/11 America, between hearing and deaf cultures, between medieval Christian totalitarianism and contemporary religious pluralism, and between the worlds of literature and theatre. In the production process, we worked to maintain the “essence” of *Everyman* while reaching for a diverse and contemporary audience. I will focus on production elements and aesthetic choices, including coaching actors and collaborating with designers.

Michael Papadopoulos, Ph.D., eds Trinity and All Saints College.

“Wagner's treatment of Ó_inn in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and his influence on Tolkien's *Sigurd and Gudrun*.”

The recent publication of J.R.R. Tolkien's posthumous *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrun* (his two poems in eddic metre on the legends of the Völsungs) has fanned the flames of the debate over Tolkien's indebtedness to Wagner, provoking new contributions from scholars no less than Tom Shippey. This was partly due to Christopher Tolkien's introduction to the book, which stated that Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung* 'must be seen less as a continuation or development of the long-enduring heroic legend than as a new and independent work of art, to which in spirit and purpose [his father's poem's] bear little relation.' Indeed, Tolkien followed the *Völsunga saga* and *The Poetic Edda* intimately in composing his new treatment of the legends, and it would be easy to attribute any similarities between his and Wagner's works to their common sources. However, I maintain that echoes of Wagner's *Ring* itself are apparent in Tolkien's poems, not only because of their common sources, but also independently. A key example of this is Tolkien's integration of the Völsung legends into the Ragnarök myth complex by making Sigurd's death part of Odin's eschatological plan. This is unsupported by the medieval texts, but may be said to be closely related to Wagner's association of Siegfried with the fate of the gods.

I therefore propose to examine Wagner's and Tolkien's texts and their relationship to their medieval sources and to each other. Possible sources other than Wagner's *Ring* for Tolkien's decision to integrate the legend of Sigurd into the myth of Ragnarök will be considered and assessed, including previous criticism. The main focus will be each author's interpretation of Sigurd's role in the mythic corpus and their respective re-envisioning of Ó_inn. Some consideration will also be given to Tolkien's somewhat reductive treatment of the lycanthropic elements in the Völsung legends, which Wagner emphasizes in his adaptation but which are very understated in *Sigurd and Gudrun*. The objective will be to determine the extent, if any, of Wagner's direct influence on Tolkien, and, if necessary, revise Christopher Tolkien's conclusion that there is 'little relation' between his father's poems and *The Ring*.

Alexandra Pârvan, PhD, University of Pitești, Romania

“ST. AUGUSTINE’S *DE CIVITATE DEI* IN FERNANDO MEIRELLES’ *CIDADE DE DEUS*”

If we look at the time passed between our present world and the medieval era it seems like we have gone a long way. If we look closer, we sometimes find out that to a certain extent we did not move away from that period, but move along together with it, to the point that it is not simply a matter of carrying on some latent remains of it as our legitimate cultural heritage, but of turning into our reality what for the medieval thinkers was a pure exercise of thought. This paper will focus on how Fernando Meirelles’ film *Cidade de Deus* (*City of God*), presenting the social life of a real Brazilian community of our days it actually stands for a representation of Augustine’s views on evil, free will, providence, predestination, the end of history and reality as divided into two cities in his *De civitate Dei* (*City of God*). Meirelles makes no direct reference to Augustine as he is interested only in faithfully describing the tremendous reality experienced by a particular Brazilian city. But what he actually does (most probably without knowing it) is showing how Augustine’s ideas on reality and history are proved to be true by real events happening in our world.

Nils Holger Petersen, Ph.D., Centre for the Study of the Cultural Heritage of Medieval Rituals (under The Danish National Research Foundation), University of Copenhagen

“Messiaen’s Franciscan Strategy in his *St François d’Assise*”

Olivier Messiaen’s only opera *St François d’Assise* to his own libretto (based on medieval sources) is something of an anomaly among operatic works. It was mainly written between 1975 and 79 and first performed at the Paris Opera House in 1983. Although Francis of Assisi’s life contains plenty of dramatic moments and could well have given rise to a narrative dramatic account, Messiaen – consciously – chose an almost opposite approach. The opera is divided up in 3 acts, further subdivided into 8 *tableaux*, the notion of tableau providing a key to the meaning of the work. Different from most operas, *St François d’Assise* has little that could be termed action and is only concerned with spiritual contemplation and moments of inner combat from St Francis’ life. In other words, the work functions as a kind of meditation on St Francis and his particular spirituality, pointing to a fundamental point of Franciscan piety: the conformity of St Francis with Christ. Messiaen, well-known as a devout Catholic, thus chose to use the operatic stage as a place for religious contemplation. I shall argue that Messiaen, through musical, textual, and scenic means also involving medievalisms in some measure, altogether appropriated what may be characterized as a Franciscan way of taking his religious message to places where people assemble, also outside of the church: as the Franciscans would preach on street corners and market places, Messiaen preaches, as it were, in the opera house, just as he, in many works, may be said to have done in the concert hall. I shall discuss only certain aspects of this huge opera, contextualizing it with other modern religious musical works drawing on medieval traditions.

Jason P. Pitruzzello M.A. University of Houston

“Hail the Lord Crusader!': Crusades, Relics, and the Mythic Other in the *Knights of the Nine* expansion to *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*”

Utilizing a host of neo-medieval elements, including landed aristocrats, armored warriors, and magic wielding Merlins in a completely fictional setting, *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* garnered millions in sales and a number of awards as one of the best role-playing games of the year for 2006. However, despite the presence of a unifying religion with structural similarities to medieval Christianity, including monasteries, cathedrals, and a bureaucratic religious hierarchy, the original release of the game played down religious elements in favor of questing, fighting, and magic, leaving a critical aspect of medievalism unexplored.

With the release of the *Knights of the Nine* expansion, the religion of Cyrodiil and its people is brought to the forefront with surprising neo-medieval results. With the focus of the expansion’s narrative resting upon the restoration of a crusading religious order of knights and the securing of holy relics, it places crusades in a different socio-economic and political context. Because the fictional setting of *The Elder Scrolls IV* is one that assumes the economic and political hegemony of the Tamrielic Empire, there is no readily available Other against which to direct a crusade; all potential enemies have already been conquered and assimilated. Instead, the crusade is directed against Umaril the Unfeathered, a Gogmagog figure from Cyrodiil’s mythic past. The return of Umaril to Cyrodiil, his sacrilegious attacks upon various cathedrals, and his association with the quasi-demonic Daedra, creates a conflict that can only be resolved through crusade-like activity. In structuring the narrative in this way, the *Knights of the Nine* conflates the imperial prerogative located in the founding legends of medieval Europe, such as Brut’s defeat of the giants and subsequent conquest of Albion, with the medieval paradigm of crusade.

Nancy Resh, M.A., Modern and Classical Language Studies—ASL, Kent State University Trumbull

“Slip of the Tongue, Slip of the Hand: Willy Conley’s Slippery Adaptation of *Everyman*.”

Willy Conley’s adaptation of the Middle English play, *Everyman*, is a complex process of transferences of one medieval culture into other modern cultures (hearing and deaf, European, Middle Eastern, Eastern, North American, ...). It is the adaptation of a muted spoken language, trapped in the visual confinement of written words, adapted not only for contemporary English speech (again) but also for American Sign Language and contemporary gesture. For Conley, it seems, the musical poetry of Middle English plays must be translated into the motion picture poetry of an ASL performance. This is a slippery task, for ASL linguistics is significantly different from that of English (written or spoken). To illustrate, I will demonstrate ASL and Modern English translation issues of one passage of *Everyman* in my discussion of Conley’s adaptation of that passage. The translation is not just an issue of linguistics, but also of poetics, and (ultimately) of culture.

Carol L. Robinson , Ph.D., Kent State University Trumbull

“See Neomedieval, Speak/Sign Neomedieval, Hear/See Neomedieval: Teaching Willy Conley's ASL/English Adaptation of *Everyman*.”

Neomedievalism is neologism for which, “Medieval concepts and values are purposely rewritten as a conscious vision of an alternative universe (a fantasy of the medieval that is created with forethought).” * Willy Conley's adaptation of *Everyman* does not coincide with this part of the definition, but it does lack “the nostalgia of earlier medievalisms in that it denies history. Contemporary values (feminism, gay rights, modern technological warfare tactics, democracy, capitalism, ...) dominate and rewrite the traditional perceptions of the European Middle Ages, even infusing other medieval cultures, such as that of Japan.” * Teaching both the original and the adaptation, then becomes a type of neomedieval experience, especially when that experience is further enhanced by an online discussion board where hearing and Deaf alike have an equal pedagogical “playing ground” experience.

*MEMO definition (<http://medievalelectronicmultimedia.org/definitions.html>)

George Ruckman, Kent State University Trumbull

“Buffy the Vampire Slayer on Xbox ‘Male or Female’”

The discourse placed on women in the Middle Ages plays a unique part of how young girls or women are thought of in modern times. Through the many waves of feminism others have seen great challenges brought upon them through the church, parents, morals, and ethic codes. Who is to say whether these standards are true? With the onslaught of many diverse cultures in the mainstream, power has been granted to exclusive groups of individuals. These others consist of a variety of people in society who tell people how to: think, speak, and what is morally acceptable. Women have always been at the forefront of this matter, for women seem to be the ones who are frequently deemed the “the incarnation of evil.” _Throughout the centuries there has been a stigma placed on women in general. It has been seen time and time again in stories, movies, advertisements, and mass media in a variety of formats. In the time of a “Powerful Woman”: woman defined as being one who rejects the thought of relying on a “Prince” to save her. Women have attained the status of being more independent self-sufficient human beings. _In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries there have been great strides made for women. We have seen women become what they were traditionally meant to marry. There has been a role reversal between the sexes in the sense of tradition. Women are no longer just mothers, and care takers of the home, but the main protagonists in their own family lives. No more of the valiant prince and his rescue, women have chosen to rescue themselves. I plan to show how one women Buffy transcends many of the roles and disadvantages women have had to deal with throughout the ages, such as her role, sexuality, and gender identity.

Daniel Ryan, University of Pittsburgh

“Affirming the Transcendental: The Consequences of a Demonstrable Deity.”

This paper seeks to explore key questions regarding the existence of God through the historical fiction of J.R.R. Tolkien. What if God's existence were taken as an historical fact? Can there be ‘faith’ in such a climate? The fortunes and plights of Tolkien's Men can shed light upon the necessity of a historically unconfirmed deity.

Francoise Saurage, Montana State University

“Modern Feminism, Medieval Archetypes”

In analyzing the rise of postmodern vampire lore, it is imperative that scholars consider its medieval roots, whether of folklore or of historical figures such as Elizabeth Bathory. By juxtaposing Akasha in Anne Rice's *Queen of the Damned* and Neferet in P.C. and Kristin Cast's *House of Night* series, we witness the rise of the vampire queen as an object of “courtly idealizations of sexual love” and as an emblem of neopagan femicidal fears (Lewis 13). MoreBoth Neferet and Akasha assimilate a feminist reading of the “originary power of the mother and...a vampiric relation to feminism” (Doane and Hodges 422). This paper will examine the emergence of the goddess destroyer in female-authored vampire tales within the framework of medieval courtly love and psychoanalytic feminist theory.

Clare A. Simmons, Ph.D., The Ohio State University

“Strike Me Dead: Divine Wrath and Democratic Saxonism on the Eighteenth-Century English Stage”

Historical drama provides a useful means of exploring representations of the medieval past because plays tend to draw on the audience’s preconceived ideas about the historical incident and its cultural meaning. For English audiences in the French Revolutionary era, history held a particular significance: while the French Revolutionaries claimed to be rejecting their national past, English popular culture looked for ways to reconcile past tradition with a need for change, while remaining inherently suspicious of the association between the Middle Ages and Roman Catholicism. This paper analyzes two dramas of the 1780s set in 11th-century England, and argues that while they show affection for the past, they also change their source-material to rationalize references to divine wrath, especially as directed towards Saxons.

Earl Godwin, written by Anne Yearsley, a Bristol milk-woman, tells the story of Godwin, Earl of Mercia and father of Harold II. Traditionally, two stories about Godwin imply supernatural interference. In later medieval sources, Heaven is said to have proved Queen Emma’s virtue by enabling her to walk unscathed over burning plowshares. Most accounts implicate Godwin in the death of Edward’s brother Alfred, whose eyes were put out so brutally that he died in prison soon afterwards. According to the chronicles, at dinner with King Edward, Godwin invoked Heaven protesting his innocence in Alfred’s murder—and immediately dropped dead. As Yearsley claims, both of these stories only appear in much later versions and not in contemporary sources such as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Yet rather than abandoning these stories as superstitious legends, she rationalizes them. As in the legend, in Yearsley’s play the blindfolded Queen Emma, who is innocent of the charges of adultery, blunders across burning plowshares without realizing that she has undergone the ordeal. The play, however, describes her acquittal as due to “chance” (25), not providence, while the charge itself is the work of the sexually-repressed priests who advise King Edward. Goodwin, poised to become Edward’s trusted legal advisor who represents the interests of all Englishmen, dies at the banquet not of choking but when he is poisoned by a wicked priest.

Set in a similar time-period is John O’Keefe’s *Peeping Tom of Coventry*, which remained popular for several decades. In tradition, Tom is struck dead or struck blind for peeping at Lady Godiva as she rides naked through the streets of Coventry to save the townspeople from her husband’s oppression. The operetta’s main focus is on Tom and his wife, ordinary people who, through some modest trickster behavior and a benevolent aristocracy, end up safe and successful. While implied aristocratic nudity is part of the appeal of the story, Lady Godiva does not appear naked on stage; her ride is narrated from others’ assumptions as to what she is doing. Although the social hierarchy is only marginally disrupted, the legend itself, that Tom suffers divine retribution for his prurience, is restructured so that the popular hero survives and there is no supernatural element, or even invocation of heaven; what happens in Coventry is entirely in the human realm. Both dramas, then, provide examples of medievalism as a form of freedom in which ordinary people can redress their social wrongs without the involvement of heaven.

Nancy M. Thompson, PhD. St. Olaf College

“Didron’s *vitrail archéologique* and the Catholic Revival: Ulisse De Matteis’ Sloane window in Santa Croce”

This paper explores the connections between the stained-glass window created by Ulisse De Matteis for Francis Sloane’s chapel in Santa Croce, Florence in 1869 (Fig. 1), the Catholic revival in 19th-century Europe, and what French artist and critic Adolphe Napoléon Didron defined as *vitrail archéologique*, a stained-glass window made in the ancient manner resulting from an archaeological study of medieval windows. De Matteis’ Sloane window would have likely met Didron’s specifications for *vitrail archéologique* because it emulates the medieval technique and style of the fourteenth-century stained glass of Santa Croce. Like the medieval windows, the Sloane window is made from small pieces of colored potmetal glass painted with *grisaille*, a dark vitreous pigment, that was fired onto the glass. The composition of the Sloane window, from the interior geometric borders formed with thin strips of white glass decorated with a dot pattern to the external border of the window composed of a foliate design, reflects De Matteis’ close study of the medieval traditions of glazing in Florence. De Matteis employed these medieval stained-glass techniques to create a window illustrating the veracity of recently declared church doctrine. From its construction in the early fourteenth century, the Sloane chapel was dedicated to the Virgin. De Matteis’ 1869 window depicts the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception and Christ atop four early Christian saints, Jerome, Sophronius, Tarasius and Germanus, whose writings were important to the formation of the concept of the Immaculate Conception, declared as official church doctrine only in 1854. The window clearly demonstrates the dedication of Santa Croce’s Franciscans and of Francis Sloane, the patron of the chapel window, to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. For Sloane, a Catholic who left England for Italy five years before Catholic Emancipation in 1829, the window’s declaration of recent Church doctrine must have been particularly meaningful. In his adopted homeland, not only could Sloane worship freely, but he could also purchase his own private chapel dedicated to the Immaculate Conception and provide financial support for the creation of Roman Catholic imagery and for the restoration of the church of Santa Croce. And Didron would have likely commended this imaging of a new religious doctrine in an “archeologically correct” stained-glass window. In the midst of the Catholic revival in nineteenth-century Europe, Didron perceived the return to medieval stained glass as a modern renewal of the Catholic faith. As a proclamation of Francis Sloane’s fervent Catholic belief, carried out in an archeologically correct medieval style, De Matteis’ Sloane window embodies Didron’s modern renewal.

Margaret Williams, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of History, William Paterson University
“Pat Fish’s ‘Celtic’ Tattoos: Medieval Imagery and Modern Religious Identities.”

Contemporary tattoo artist Pat Fish interprets her *Duleek Knot* design as follows:

This symbol is found in many old druid and pre-Christian patterns. The circle which encompasses the pattern is a symbol for completeness and also represents the sun, which was an object of worship....The inner pattern can also be seen as a cross, thus symbolizing the integration of Christian and druid beliefs...¹

Fish articulates the image’s ability to encode multiple religious identities, locating its origins among druids and sun-worshippers, while suggesting that the knot’s underlying symmetry “...can also be seen as a cross, thus symbolizing the integration of Christian and druid beliefs....” Her notion of an inclusive and multivalent “Celtic” spirituality is quintessentially postmodern, and yet her artistic sources are entirely medieval. In fact, the *Duleek Knot* tattoo derives from Fish’s revision of a ninth-or-tenth-century relief from the stone cross at Duleek, Ireland. (Figure 2) As she explains on her website, Fish’s creative goal is to make “...the intricate designs from the ancient Irish illuminated manuscripts and Pictish stones come to life in the skin of modern Celts.”² In this paper, I examine the resonance between Fish’s tattoo designs, their medieval sources, and the multifaceted religious identities that they represent in contemporary viewing contexts. Using visual examples and data collected from interviews with the artist, I demonstrate how Pat Fish’s artwork embodies a twenty-first-century religious hybridity that is echoed in the imagery’s elaborately intertwined forms.

Richard Utz, Ph.D., Western Michigan University
“Pi[o]us Medievalism vs. Catholic Modernism: The Case of George Tyrell”

Due to its amphibolous semantic potential, the history of the term “medievalism” has received only scant attention. Most scholars silently accept the OED’s first attributions to historians and poets in the second half of the nineteenth century, but have so far refrained from a continued investigation of the various later embodiments, especially those prior to “Medievalism” becoming an academic field, i.e., the late 1970s. It is my goal to supply an additional piece to the growing mosaic of the English use of the term by discussing the altercation between Cardinal Mercier of Malines, Primate of Belgium, in his Pastoral Letter on “modernism,” and George Tyrell, a defrocked Jesuit, whose tiny volume, *Medievalism. A Reply to Cardinal Mercier*, created a small scandal in and shortly after 1908. I am particularly interested in contextualizing the uses of “medievalism” and “modernism” as they are conveyed by both original sides. Cardinal Mercier’s Pastoral Letter represents an application to his diocese of *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, the Papal Encyclical (Pius X) that ushered in the Catholic Church’s global offensive against the “new heresy” of “modernism,” a mindset viewed as coterminous with “Protestantism” and inimical to the doctrinal authority of the Catholic Church and its divinely revealed hierarchical structure. Many critics of the Church read these texts as a repudiation of modern science. George Tyrell, however, accuses the Cardinal and the Pope of deliberate “medievalism,” i.e., of a return to the medieval constructions of Church doctrine, to the “mechanical and static idea of ecclesiastical infallibility.” The modernist Catholic, he claims, may not simply canonize a thirteenth-century synthesis, but must view the essence of Christianity as a corpus of normative principles that have to be expanded in accordance with “all that is good and true in the process of human development.” He champions a “God in history,” thus historicizing dogmata, ritual, Papacy, as necessary “medievalist” experiments which the modernist must work out “to its extremest and bitterest consequences if the Church is to realise inwardly and comprehensively a truer, deeper, richer notion of liberty and authority, of faith and orthodoxy, of revelation and theology, of growth and identity.” My preliminary analysis of the Mercier-Tyrell controversy reveals it as the outrightly negative use of the term “medievalism” in the twentieth century and thus an indicator of modernism’s (even Catholic modernism’s) continued need to define itself against the still powerful influence of the medieval Other. In this need, it followed in the tradition of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment which, while never employing “medievalism,” denounced the Middle Ages as a period of intellectual darkness and obscurantism.

Pamela Young, Kent State University Trumbull
“Seeing The Wife of Bath’s Wys Words: A Middle English into ASL Analysis”

I am really fascinated with the Wife of Bath because she is deaf (like me) and because of her beliefs in both marriage and religion (which are similar to my own). She became deaf by Jankin hitting her hard on the ear. One of the three women traveling on this pilgrimage, Allisoun comes across as being open-minded about her sexual prowess. I also noticed while reading Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* there’s a lot of French words. Which made me want to investigate how much of our English language is actually influenced by the French. While researching I came across interesting facts, such as the French also influenced American Sign Language. Translating from Middle English, from the never heard language of a sound-based world, into contemporary spoken English is a challenge that only a truly deaf (stone deaf) person can appreciate. However, translating from Middle English into American Sign Language is a far greater challenge because it is a transition, not only from medieval London to modern America (Ohio), but from the written representation of a sound-based language (again, never heard) to the kinetic/bodily representation of a visual-based language.

¹ <http://www.luckyfishart.com/duleekknot.html> (last accessed 6.22.09)

² <http://www.luckyfishart.com/meetpatfish.html> (last accessed 6.22.09)