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## Fight or Flyte: Pride and Masculinity in Medieval England

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## **Fight or Flyte: Pride and Masculinity in Medieval England**

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Sometimes described as a medieval English rap battle or as “throwing shade,” flyting was an important part of early English culture. The practice could strengthen bonds, establish hierarchy within a comitatus, or convince a lord of one’s worth. It was a key component of medieval social norms, offering a fascinating window into those who practiced (and observed) the eternally-appreciable art of quality banter. Where did fighting with words stop and fighting with swords begin? Starting with flying as a springboard for exploring broader social realities interconnecting gender identity with Christian virtues, papers engaged a range of related topics including but not limited to toxic masculinity—its manifestations and its reinforcements; the social functions of value, pride, weakness, and humility; the range of intimacies—from kinships to friendships and other homosocial ties—available to medieval peoples; banter’s role in politics and governance’ subjects the instigated flyting; representations of rhetorical competition in contemporary films and popular culture; and distinctions between flyting and dueling, namely figurative versus literal foils.

This issue features work responding to a student-conceived and -designed call-for-papers on this topic the germinated in a fall 2018 course at Pacific University, “Viking, Vulgates, and the Making of Medieval Literature.” Some of this original research went on to be presented at the 2019 Northwest Undergraduate Conference on Literature, hosted by Seattle University in Seattle, WA. We are very grateful to our guest editors Dr. Ann Marie Hubert (St. Lawrence University) and Dr. Kate Norcross (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) who gave of their time and expertise to evaluate this rigorous group of student scholarship.

— Elizabeth E. Tavares, PhD  
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# FIGHT OR FLYTE:

## Pride & Masculinity in the Middle Ages

Sometimes described as a Medieval rap battle or as “throwing shade,” flying was an important part of early English culture. The practice could strengthen bonds, establish hierarchy within a comitatus, or convince a lord of one’s worth. It was a key component of Medieval social norms, offering a fascinating window into those who practiced (and observed) the eternally-appreciable art of quality banter. Where did fighting with words stop and fighting with swords begin? Starting with flyting as a springboard for exploring broader social realities interconnecting gender identity with Christian virtues, we invite paper proposals on a range of related topics including but not limited to:

- toxic masculinity—its manifestations and its reinforcements
- the social functions of valor, pride, weakness, and/or humility
- range of intimacies—from kinships to friendships and other homosocial ties—available to Medieval peoples
- banter’s role in politics and governance
- subjects that instigated flyting
- representations of rhetorical competition in contemporary medieval-ish films and popular cultural
- distinctions between flyting and dueling—figurative versus literal foils

### Call For Papers

Please submit paper proposal abstracts of 250-500 words for twenty-minute papers to Dr. Elizabeth E. Tavares through Moodle ([moodle.pacificu.edu](https://moodle.pacificu.edu)) by Monday, October 15, 2018.