

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF SMFS

In 1987, when I began my graduate work, the academic world looked quite a bit different from now. New Historicism was the emergent fashion in critical theory, and the academy's commitment to feminism seemed more or less settled. At the University of Iowa, at least, it was safe to assume that all of my women colleagues were feminists, and that that academic men were either sympathizers or avowed feminists themselves. This was not to say that we felt complacent, just comfortable. We were in a position to celebrate the gains of our foremothers and to build on their accomplishments. We had no idea that an anti-feminist backlash was on the way. When the counter-movement arrived and received extensive (often sympathetic) coverage from the mainstream media—and even the progressive press—our sense of solidarity bristled. By the late 1990s, that luxurious sense of feminist common cause that we'd enjoyed in the 1980s was under serious attack.

This past spring, the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship organized a roundtable at the 37th International Congress on Medieval Studies, entitled: "Are We Postfeminist Yet?" In a packed lecture hall, we told our stories and received strength and inspiration from one another. We represented a wide range of positions, generations, and orientations: undergraduates, emeritae, feminists, and postfeminists. Some of our presentations appear in this issue of the *Medieval Feminist Forum*. As contributor of one of these essays, I hope that their perspectives stimulate further discussion on the status of feminism today. And as SMFS President, I invite you to respond to these essays in future issues of *MFF*. Are we postfeminist yet? Should we be? It's time to ask the difficult questions, perhaps to roast the sacred cows. As Abbie Hoffman once reminded us, they make the tastiest hamburger.

Anne Clark Bartlett
DePaul University
5 October 2002

