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Creating the Premodern in the Postmodern Classroom: Creativity in Early English Literature and History Courses

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Situating Conciliarism in Early Modern Spanish Thought
Situer conciliarisme dans la pensée espagnole de la première modernité

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The fifth, and final, chapter both presents the aftermath of Margarida's trial and reflects on the study as a whole. In particular, Bednarski analyzes the microhistory he has just presented. In particular, he tells the reader of his reasons for a particular interpretation or line of enquiry, which complements the pedagogical strengths of this study.

The case of Margarida de Portu is a fascinating one, and Bednarski's detailed archival work has yielded a rich source base. At the same time, his nuanced presentation and engaging language, together with self-reflective analysis, would work well for classroom use: particularly for advanced undergraduate students or those beginning postgraduate study. The ideal secondary source for a classroom is one that shows students what the world of scholarship looks like. Bednarski's careful analysis and remarkable self-reflexivity reveal the potential problems of a microhistory, while showing students how to assess, evaluate, and piece together problematic historical evidence. Moreover, Bednarski reminds the reader that there are further discoveries to be made and alternate ways to read evidence. From this, one can hope that Bednarski's study will encourage students to gain the skills he presents here.

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Bertolet, Anna Riehl, and Carole Levin, eds.
Creating the Premodern in the Postmodern Classroom: Creativity in Early English Literature and History Courses.
Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 537 / MRTS Texts for Teaching 11. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2018. Pp. xx, 227 + 21 ill. ISBN 978-0-86698-594-9 (paperback) US$40.

One contributor to this volume, Karolyn Kinane, begins her essay by confessing her former "private fear" that creative projects are somehow "anti-intellectual" and inappropriate for undergraduates (193). I suspect that many other instructors share her fears, and it is a great strength of Anna Bertolet and Carole Levin's collection that it goes a long way to dispelling them. Serving as a "toolbox for teachers," *Creating the Premodern in the Postmodern Classroom* argues for increasing the use of creative assignments in the university classroom

and presents accounts from instructors who have successfully done so. The essays included focus primarily on Renaissance history or literature classes, but a few consider medieval subjects or survey classes. The creative assignments described vary considerably, but all involve creative work outside the confines of the usual analytic essay.

Bertolet and Levin's introduction explains the usefulness of creative projects for classes on premodern literature and history, in which an instructor must both show how the past is different from our own time and demonstrate its importance to a present-day audience. The editors also point out how creative projects, properly executed, can improve student engagement, increase their retention of class material, and engender a sense of its value in and outside academic contexts. The introduction is followed by Nancy Hayes's "Prelude," which describes several examples of creative projects in an early British literature survey course. Like a number of the projects in the volume, Hayes's end-of-term assignment is rather open-ended, asking students only for an initial proposal and an accompanying written explanation of how the project demonstrates "historical relevance, creativity, knowledge of the […] literature […] and personal relevance" (1). One student constructed a giant flea, which was vigorously squashed (complete with simulated gore) as an accompaniment to an in-class reading of Donne's famously bizarre poem on the same insect. Hayes demonstrates that her students achieved many of the same learning objectives an essay might be expected to produce (close reading, research skills, period knowledge, thematic understanding, etc.), but in a way that engaged their passions and energies much more compellingly.

The remainder of the collection is helpfully divided into two sections. The first includes briefer essays describing standalone creative exercises that could easily be adapted into existing syllabi; the second includes five slightly longer descriptions of classes entirely designed around one or several creative projects. The first five chapters in part 1 all focus on dramatic performance exercises. Regina Buccola describes an assignment that requires her students to write the script for an off-stage scene in *Measure for Measure,* while Carole Levin shares the parameters for a mock trial of Charles I. Mary Ellen Lamb and Nathanial Smith follow up with descriptions of brief in-class performance exercises for Shakespeare classes, and Matthew Hansen narrates his experience leading a service-learning course in which his students help an elementary

school class put on an abridged Shakespeare play. The remaining chapters in this section explore a variety of other pedagogical approaches for encouraging creative engagement. Assignments presented include an open-ended creative project in a Shakespeare class for which students create their own evaluation criteria (Jonathan Lamb); an account from the imagined perspective of an embedded reporter observing the warfare in the *Aeneid* (Craig Bertolet); the historical analysis of a Bugs Bunny cartoon (Charles Beem); an in-class trial of Sir Gawain's morality (Kimberly Jack); assuming the voice of a historical figure on Twitter (Renee Bricker); and the collaborative development of a class wiki (Elena Woodacre).

Part 2 begins with three more Shakespeare-focused essays. In one, Anna Bertolet shares her experiences incorporating a creative composition into a class on the playwright's sources and "spin-offs." In the second, Jo Eldridge Carney shares a peer-graded oral presentation on contemporary adaptations of Shakespeare around the world. Linda Shenk follows up with a particularly thoughtful explanation of an assignment that introduces students to Renaissance-era rhetorical terminology as preparation for a creative composition. Jonathan Walker then provides the only sustained reflection on a graduate-level class, and details a bibliography assignment that trains his students to edit Renaissance-era dramatic texts. Karolyn Kinane's essay, which closes out the volume, is more directed at the teaching philosophy that motivates her own non-traditional assignments, and explains how they prompt students to ask "existential questions" (i.e., how each person "should best live").

This collection will prove extremely valuable to instructors who are interested in adding non-traditional assignments to their classes. The contributors provide many examples that could be easily adapted into a range of humanities courses, and they show repeatedly how creative assignments can be at once academically rigorous and a source of deep gratification for students and teachers. It is a slight shame, perhaps, that the book focuses so much on Shakespeare classes, though even the Shakespeare-focused essays include plenty of broadly applicable advice. One minor weakness of the volume is that it does not devote much attention to the evaluation of non-traditional assignments, which would have been helpful considering that concerns about grading contribute significantly to the scepticism many faculty still have about

creative projects. Overall, however, the detailed practical advice and concrete examples provided in these essays offer a tremendous pedagogical resource.

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Cantaluppi, Anna, and Blythe Raviola, eds.
L'umilità e le rose. Storia di una compagnia femminile a Torino tra età moderna e contemporanea.
Quaderni dell'Archivio Storico della Compagnia di San Paolo 1. Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2017. Pp. xxiii, 401 + 42 ill., 48 tables. ISBN 978-88-222-6504-3 (paperback) €49.

This collection provides a detailed study of a single female confraternity, the Compagnia dell'Umiltà in Turin, from its origins in the sixteenth century until its demise in the modern era. The Compagnia was founded by middle class and elite women, who chose Elizabeth of Hungary, a thirteenth-century Third Order Franciscan, as their patron saint. Following the example of Elizabeth, these women provided material and financial assistance for the poor and sick of Turin. The title of the volume refers to the miracle of the roses. St. Elizabeth, who had been secretly delivering bread to the poor against the orders of the king, was confronted by a hunting party who suspected illicit activity. When asked to reveal what she was hiding, she opened her cloak and the loaves of bread she was hiding miraculously transformed into a bouquet of roses.

The study is divided into four sections that examine the connections between the female Compagnia dell'Umiltà and the male Compagnia di San Paolo, the role of the Umiliate in providing charity to the underprivileged of Turin, the devotional practices of the Umiliate, and the figure of St. Elizabeth in the art and literature of early modern Europe. Anna Cantaluppi begins with a prosopographical analysis of the women in the Compagnia dell'Umiltà during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Mining the archdiocese and state archives of Turin, the private archives of the Compagnia di San Paolo, and the diaries of the Umiliate sisters Margherita and Annamaria Falcombello, she illustrates the connections between the male and female confraternities and the state. She shows that a significant percentage of the Umiliate had strong familial