trained in the "philological arts"—though better in criticism—than they were a generation or two ago. But students of theory (and especially feminist theory) may encounter peculiar explanations for this state of affairs: any deficiencies they have (in Latin, philology, or whatever) may be attributed specifically to their interests in theory, whereas other students with similar deficiencies are likely to be criticized, but without reference to other, presumably "competing," interests.

The only approach, if one wishes to counter these attitudes, is to develop traditional skills to a point that is beyond reproach. Even this is not a full solution, however, since the fundamental suspicion some academics hold in regard to feminist theory will not be shaken even by admirable competence in the medievalist's craft. (The likely reaction: "She's well trained and bright; too bad she doesn't concentrate on what she's trained to do.") But we all know that feminism won't be embraced by everyone in any case, and ultimately, we simply have to accept the fallout.

Job candidates may well face a situation in which an interviewer will assume that they cannot be serious (or "real") medievalists because of their feminist or other theoretical orientation. But on the other hand—and so as not to end on an entirely negative note—I suggest that, on occasion, the candidate's theoretical training and orientation may instead be a decided asset. Not too long ago, a major university advertised for someone competent in History of the French Language and critical theory. I am persuaded in fact that the number of departments that might either seek or accept that combination is growing and will continue to grow.

But it won't happen overnight.

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A NOTE ON BECOMING A FEMINIST PHILOLOGIST
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Sarah writes:

Janine Rogers and I have just designed an ad hoc "methods" course for research on medieval literary manuscripts. It includes sections on such traditional subjects as paleography, textual criticism, and physical composition of the manuscript book. By "traditional" I mean "long accepted by the academy." Yet these subjects are not widely taught in graduate literature programs. In the minds of the participants, the course is also feminist. The feminism is not in the reading assignments, but in the extra effort needed

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to get the course going, and in the certainty that these tools will clear the way for fresh, untraditional research results. Janine is the only student.

Designing this course caused me to recall the inventive side of my own graduate training in German literature. Then, as now, philology was on the margin of mainstream literary studies (I am talking about the mid 1970s). I saw the potential of primary source studies largely through the guidance of my dissertation director, Ingeborg Glier. I had exhausted my department's offerings in "older" topics. Medieval courses relevant to my dissertation goals were offered in other departments, and the challenge was to get them recognized as work toward my degree in German literature. I do not know what inspired me, but searching through decade-old copies of the graduate school bulletin I discovered my department's "philology option." It was a fossil, left over from the way the program had been shaped by an earlier generation. No one in recent memory had gone that route, but neither had the option been officially discontinued. The chair capitulated. It was my first experience with surprises in archives, and my first inkling of the power of the public documents that define one's professional life.

I learned about academic feminism in a different setting. My first acquaintance with feminist research came from members of my student Consciousness Raising group, not through the classroom. Not surprisingly, I have always linked consciousness and epistemology. It seems incredible in retrospect, but when I was working on my dissertation it was still possible to read all second wave feminist literary criticism, and be reasonably informed about developments in related disciplines like anthropology or history. I have long since given up my aspiration to encyclopedic breadth of knowledge. Meanwhile, feminist research in medieval history and literature have burgeoned to define a field (although many areas are still not adequately represented). I am not certain how consistently it is covered in graduate programs, though. Today's feminist student of medieval literature may have to invent ways to build feminist research into her curriculum as well as philology, or turn to the extra-curricular learning context as we did twenty years ago.

The task of finding one's way through emerging knowledge is not simple, and not simply a matter of academic advising. The concepts "feminist," "literary," and "medieval" do not triangulate a neat, clear research area by excluding what each finds irrelevant in the other. The opposite, in fact, holds true: each of these concepts opens a vista whose potential, methodologically speaking, has not been fully included among the other two. For instance, feminism is always present in my work, but it varies with the character of the project: feminist psychoanalysis in one; feminist empiricism in the archival recovery of medieval women in another; and in another, gender relations in texts and/as social institutions. The implications of feminist work in some distant area may be relevant to understanding the Middle Ages. Much of my thinking time is spent in figuring out how the feminist theory to which I am attracted fits with the primary sources I want to talk about, or conversely what feminist theoretical formation the sources seem to address or refute. This variance in my feminism(s) resembles what Sandra Harding calls riffing on the "parameters of dissonance" between specializations.[1] I have no single, comprehensive model to hand to my students, but several, partly-constructed models.

Practically speaking, recovery of "the philology option" for graduate education in literature demands as much inventiveness today as it did twenty years ago. The feminist,

proactive context of recovery, though, is a stark and significant contrast to the "daunt-ingly long apprenticeship with all the implications of servitude within a patriarchal system" required by philology in the past.[2]

Janine writes:

Feminism and medievalism have a lot to offer each other, but for the graduate student attempting to bridge the two, proving this to established departments can be a frustrating, and sometimes an impossible task. Since ad hoc degrees are viewed with suspicion in many universities, graduate students are usually attached to a particular department and must adhere to that department's degree requirements. To complicate things further, it is very likely that the graduate student's home department is neither Women's Studies nor Medieval Studies, but a third discipline—literature, history, philosophy, etc. Yet this third discipline can be a space where the two other disciplines meet, since both Women's Studies and Medieval Studies are often combined with other disciplines independently.

Since the student will have to satisfy the requirements of the home program, as well as become an adequate feminist theorist and medievalist, she and her supervisor must be strong enough to stand up to the rigid departmental structures of most universities. They must expand the parameters of established programs to accommodate the student's individual research requirements.

There are a few practical strategies for accomplishing this task. Occasionally departments will permit the student to replace courses in the conventional degree program with courses in other departments. The feminist medievalist graduate student must be aware that many departments will resist this kind of substitution, and that she will have to acquire some skills on her own time. Another tactic is to use individual reading courses—such as the one Sarah and I constructed for my program. Before entering any program, the graduate student should make sure that the department is receptive to these kinds of adjustments, since a sympathetic and flexible home department is invaluable.

Two other components are also crucial for the feminist medievalist who is attempting to negotiate the bureaucracy of the traditional university—a well-defined thesis idea and a supportive supervisor. Deciding on a dissertation topic early in the program will provide direction and will help the student and the supervisor decide what kinds of skills are needed to complete the research.

Finally, the well-defined thesis topic should lead naturally to the well-chosen supervisor. It is important for the medievalist feminist graduate student to attach herself to an individual who is as familiar as possible with the various disciplines she is involved in. Mentoring, already an important part of feminist academia, may be essential for feminist medievalism.

The absence of well-defined graduate programs is probably an advantage, but the student needs self direction and a sense of how to fill the structure of graduate programs with the content she wants. The advantages include creative research topics and exposure to several disciplines; the disadvantages are not fitting into conventional academic structures, isolation, and lack of support. Feminist literary medievalists are inventing the field as we are inventing our professional identity. The relationship between student and

supervisor in medieval feminism adds an interesting twist to academic mentoring. Creating the program requires an activist mentality from the professor. And for the student, this process can be as educational as writing a thesis. A feminist philologist will have to convince feminists that it is worth combining the two fields, and to convince medievalists that it is worth redoing their work from a feminist perspective.

1."The Instability of the Analytical Categories of Feminist Theory," in *Feminist Theory in Practice and Process*, ed. Micheline R. Malson et al. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, 15-34, esp. 20.
2. Lee Patterson, "On the Margin: Postmodernism, Ironic History, and Medieval Studies," *Speculum* 65 (1990): 87-108, esp.102.