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Introduction

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As we write this introduction in September 2025, the world is convulsing and longstanding traditions are changing.[1] In keeping with our own internal tradition, we open with song lyrics: for this issue, and this current moment, the dulcet, harmonizing tones of Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush come to mind:

> Don't give up
> You still have us
> Don't give up
> We don't need much of anything
> Don't give up
> 'Cause somewhere there's a place
> Where we belong[2]

Song lyrics alone cannot heal the world's ills, but the effort matters – and these lyrics, speaking as they do of community and solidarity, feel particularly relevant amidst continued governmental overreach, driven by extremist populism but engineered by high-ranking members of government. Nationalist sentiment is on the rise globally, as are significant defunding, restructuring, and continued corporatization of higher education. We send support and solidarity to all colleagues currently at risk and remind our readers that educators "cannot do our jobs if our students live in fear, and our education system is undermined."[3] Medievalists and medievalismists constitute an enormous community, but, whenever we gather, by whatever method, we are reminded of how, at our best, we are welcoming, supportive, and inclusive.

These strands of community are particularly well-displayed by the current issue's focus on all things green . . . especially a special cluster of papers on David Lowery's *The Green Knight* (2021) which began as round-table presentations at the 57th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, MI, USA) in May 2022. We took our inspiration and framework for the roundtable from Richard Utz and Elizabeth Emery's *Medievalism: Key Critical Terms* (2014), a volume in its turn inspired by Leslie J. Workman's desire to develop "a dictionary or encyclopedia of critical

[1] One such tradition is dating issues of *The Year's Work in Medievalism* not by the year of publication but by the year the work was produced. We are moving to the latter format because our issues typically included submissions from more than one calendar year.

[2] Peter Gabriel, vocalist and writer, with Kate Bush, "Don't Give Up," *So*, Geffen Records, 1986.

[3] "A Statement from the Executive Board," *International Society for the Study of Medievalism*, May 9, 2025, accessed September 15, 2025, https://medievalisms.org/a-statement-from-the-executive-board/.

terms."[4] By 2022, with a virtual ICMS mandated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the medievalism of Lowery's adaptation of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* providing fresh insights, we asked our round table respondents to each select a chapter—a term—to guide their analysis and put into practice the theories laid out in the Utz and Emery volume. Our authors have delivered.

Chelsea Keane addresses *Co-disciplinarity*, linking the alternate modes of time to medievalism by way of vegetal studies and the multiplicity of temporally-based mindsets. Language is another form of mindset, and A. Arwen Taylor connects *Lingua* to *The Green Knight* through the film's systemic and deliberately dysfunctional engagement with English. The film's settling between the lines of the poem provide focus for Rob Brown's discussion of *Middle* and the malleability that the film finds in and through its narrative. Such malleability, and the loss of essence that inevitably results, is also the uncanny origin of the *Simulacrum* that Sarah J. Sprouse explores by way of neomedievalism, which, she suggests, generates anxiety over authenticity within the cinematic Gawain and the film's audiences, alike. Megan B. Abrahamson explores the self-conscious *Spectacle* of the film's medievalism by way of the grand panoramic shots that Lowery employs to shock the audience into active engagement and participation with the story. The film's use of these panoramas and circular shots create visual memento mori focused upon naturalistic decay that Emily A. Price argues create *Transference* from chivalric romance to eco-horror by way of medieval poetics of death and decay. Annie Doucet brings the thematic cluster to its natural conclusion, highlighting *Troubadour*ian duality in the film, blurring the line between subject and object.

Of course, work on *The Green Knight* continues, and Molly Martin's discussion of St. Winifred's haunting of Gawain, and the film, serves as an apt transition between the cluster and regular issue. Martin argues that the presence of Winifred's shade crafts a filmic landscape that functions simultaneously as setting and as hagiography; the shade herself becomes a sign of unsettled social violence and uncertainty. Karl Fugelso continues with the green theme, but turns his gaze to graphic novels, examining how *Green Dante/Green Virgil* engages in reference and mimicry as part of a self-referential effort to validate itself via connections to the *Divine Comedy*. Ultimately, such a perspective provides a natural bridge to Nadine Hufnagel's discussion of nuanced cultural memories that infuse place names and settings of early twenty-first century film adaptations of the Nibelung myth. John Sandy-Hindmarch ably concludes the volume through his examination of historical reenactors' discussions of the value they find in their

[4] Emery and Utz also note that this desire was "unfulfilled" at the time of Workman's passing in 2001. Elizabeth Emery and Richard Utz, "Making Medievalism: A Critical Overview," in *Medievalism: Key Critical Terms*, ed. Elizabeth Emery and Richard Utz (Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2014), 1-10, 1.

performance-based inquiries and experiential research, by parsing how these simulations animate history for audience and enactors.

Finally, we are delighted to welcome two new editorial assistants to *The Year's Work in Medievalism*: Lorena Alessandrini (Celtic languages and literatures, musicology) and Wendy Vencel (Public history, archaeology). Lorena and Wendy will be helping us develop a full archive for *The Year's Work in Medievalism* with all public-access issues available via our website. We will also develop an internal archive for printed issues, over which we do not hold copyright. Eventually we hope to have a full record of this journal's publication history. If you hold early print issues, we urge you to reach out to us and send a list of what you have, table of contents inclusive, so we can come to plug the archival hole once we know it exists.

ISSM's 2025 annual conference is fully virtual and will be held in just a few weeks: we'll see you there!

And, as always, be well.

VBJ & RW
2025