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between diverse religious groups. That is the manner in which Pick describes the archbishop's ambiguous performance: "History would be far easier to write, although much less interesting, if all archbishops were either noble reformers or power-hungry opportunists, 'tolerant liberals' or 'fanatical anti-Semites'... Rodrigo's textual and actual relations with the Jews show that he possessed a complicated mixture of attitudes, interests, and perspectives in which positive and negative views of non-Christians crossed the lines of both theory and practice." I do not disagree with Pick's valuable assessment, but I would like to note that the phenomenon of coexistence in the Iberian Peninsula cannot be understood exclusively through the idea that Christian society had implicitly accepted tolerance thanks to a theological conception. It was just another mechanism to regulate the common existence of the three religious communities.

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G.R. Evans *Breaking the Bounds : An Inaugural Lecture Given in the University of Cambridge, 16 February 2004*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2004. Pp. 48. \$11.99

Gillian Evans' pamphlet, *Breaking the Bounds* was originally delivered as an inaugural lecture for her acceptance of the professorship of Medieval Theology and Intellectual History at the University of Cambridge. Evans calls for interdisciplinary studies in higher education in England, and particularly in the field of medieval studies. She wishes to say a lot in her one hour lecture. She begins her lecture, however, by a discourse on medieval university education and its interdisciplinary nature. Her argument is that to understand the texts produced by men educated with that broad knowledge of established texts of the medieval university, one must have a similar education. The medieval focus on an established canon, although she never uses that loaded word, allowed one to take joy and pride in learning and writing by synthesizing the wisdom of authority while adding one's own voice. As a published pamphlet, *Breaking the Bounds* is not without wit, although it meanders a bit, and the anecdotes and asides that made for a lively lecture are sometimes distracting when the text is read. It has the typical provincial Oxbridge preoccupations, and its larger plea for interdisciplinary studies may be lost in local concerns and in its focus on medieval studies in particular. Indeed, Evans really fails to make a convincing case for interdisciplinary

studies outside the area of medieval studies, although she does offer an impassioned plea and criticizes those within and without the academy who adhere to well established and fixed boundaries. Here in the United States, where interdisciplinary studies are tolerated if not openly encouraged, the treatise is of questionable relevance.

The lecture begins with an overview of the medieval university system in England, which centered around lectures and disputations. While Evans is trying to introduce to the reader the concept of a liberal education as known in medieval Western Europe, she spends a great deal of time with amusing local anecdotes. There are numerous *recherché* references, particularly to the local histories of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. While these anecdotes undoubtedly entertained her learned local audience, they also lend to the lecture its parochial tone and distract from its main points. From beginning to end, in anecdotes and in central points, the concerns remain local. Evans' summary of the early history of Oxford and the origins of the modern degree system is useful and interesting for those who know nothing of the subject, and she illustrates the development of the modern university with colorful examples of medieval scholars trying to get published, promoting their books, and applying for acceptance as a Master. It does not sound as though things have changed all that much.

Evans, however, argues that things have changed a great deal and for the worse. Many of the troublesome professional preoccupations of scholars may not have changed all that much, even if some of the terminology and the protocol has changed. The approach to education, unfortunately, has changed. The university now presents subject matter as "discrete educational 'portions' by discipline or subject." In contrast, a medieval education initiated the scholar into "a more or less conscious 'community of authorship' in which medieval writers strove for a curious like-mindedness with their sources." Curious and original minds of the medieval period sought to build upon the synthesis of the canon that they had received in their education. Trailblazing was not respected, although Evans notes that some, like Adelard of Bath and Roger Bacon, did question the medieval reverence for authority. Medieval authors were creative and were able to make discoveries because they had synthesized the earlier authorities. Evans wonders if today's students, who focus on one subject, are able to engage in such a creative synthesis. Are they, or for that matter, their teachers, the modern scholars, able to enter into the "community of authorship" and savor the true pleasures of writing? Amid asides about the pleasures of writing, the reasons for writing, the false modesty of medieval authors, and the changing notions of plagiarism, Evans comes to the conclusion that it is very hard, maybe impossible, for the single-

subject scholar to enter into the “community of authorship.” Specifically, contemporary medievalists must avoid the prevalent specialization even within the field, so that they can learn to recognize the numerous references that saturate a medieval text. The modern reader must “do his best to seat himself as securely as he can within the community of authorship as he reads the medieval text.”

To those who are familiar with a medieval studies program in the United States, Evans points will seem to be a statement of the obvious, although her case glitters with interesting quotations and anecdotes. She closes her lecture with a condemnation of the hindrances to interdisciplinary studies in England and at Cambridge in particular. It is best if the American reader stops at this point. The quotations from various government and university councils, exercises, reports, and statutes are more obscure and abstruse than any medieval author previously cited. It may also shock one to hear, according to Evans, just how backward English higher education is in this regard. Evans condemns the focus on pragmatism, and appeals to academic freedom in defense of interdisciplinary studies. Those in the American system who feel that the traditional liberal arts and interdisciplinary studies continually get short shrift should take heart. Things could always be worse.

Evans' pamphlet may provide for some rumination in Oxford and Cambridge, where talk of change is wildly disproportionate to realized change. Otherwise, it is worth a look just for its array of anecdotes and quotations, which are almost all worth repeating. While the battle is not over, the case for interdisciplinary studies has long since been made and its necessity in medieval studies is obvious; we must just forge ahead and not give up the fight.

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Susan Groag Bell. *The Lost Tapestries of the City of Ladies: Christine de Pizan's Renaissance Legacy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004. Pp. xvii, 254. \$39.95

Following the great microhistories to which she refers, and not unlike a gripping mystery novel, Susan Groag Bell initiates her recent study with a small clue: a ‘Citie of Ladies’ tapestry listed in Henry VIII’s inventory as belonging to Elizabeth I’s ‘guarderobe.’ Bell thus embarks upon what is equally