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Introduction: a return to wonder

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> Wonder is the first of all the passions.
>
> René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*

Any list of "wonderful" medieval European artifacts would have, somewhere near the top, the *Très riches heures* of Jean, duc de Berry, illuminated by the Limbourg brothers. One of the most famous examples of medieval manuscript illumination, the *Très riches heures* languished in obscurity until it was purchased by the Musée Condé at Chantilly in 1856. Initially received as an exotic curiosity and celebrated as one of the *primitifs françaises*, the manuscript was regarded in terms typically applied to artifacts of Africa or the Far Pacific. Now it is celebrated as a rare and precious art object: so rare that the Musée Condé has decided to remove it entirely from public exhibition and even private scholarly viewing.[1] The history of the manuscript's reception highlights the extent to which modernity casts the medieval past as a "foreign country," aligning it with the binaries of East and West, Europe and abroad. Nevertheless, even as the Middle Ages came to occupy the position of the "dark continent" for post-Enlightenment Europe, its alterity is capable of generating an aura that emanates especially from its material culture. We call this aura "wonder."

By juxtaposing East and West, and past and present, readers of the *Très riches heures* imposed the preoccupations of modernity on a hapless past, its object. Their response exemplifies how the medieval past can be colonized, like a distant continent, to further the interests of modernity, and anticipates the common ground that medieval and postcolonial scholars have found in recent years. As postcolonial scholars have sought to dismantle the notions of modernity upon which colonialism was

predicated, medievalists have, in turn, challenged the binaries of medieval and modern (or early modern) that bracket off the Middle Ages, and keep it as exotic and foreign – and also as domitable – as any orientalist fantasy. As critiques of colonialism work in tandem with critiques of modernity, medieval studies and postcolonial studies have sought to undermine a series of western myths of origin, history, identity, and temporality. Our collection joins this evolving trajectory.

At the same time, by characterizing the manuscript as one of the great medieval "wonders," we participate in a resurgence of scholarly interest in the marvels, the prodigies, and the wonders of the Middle Ages, as well as the Renaissance. As Caroline Walker Bynum puts it, wonder takes place "when the specificity, the novelty, the awe-fulness, of what our sources render up bowls us over with its complexity and its significance."[2] Wonder has become a catchphrase for a scholarly response to medieval alterity that seeks neither to accommodate it to the priorities of the present, nor to bracket it off as irredeemably alien and different. Stephen Greenblatt distinguishes wonder from historical and scholarly resonance by defining it as "the power of the displayed object to stop the viewer in his or her tracks, to convey an arresting sense of uniqueness, to evoke an exalted attention."[3] However, this sense of an arresting encounter, and of the shock of the new and different, is often lost when the sister processes of orientalism and medievalization are demystified and deracinated. As Greenblatt asks, "How is it possible, in a time of disorientation, hatred of the other and possessiveness, to keep the capacity for wonder from being poisoned?"[4]

To answer this question, we turn to the *Très riches heures* (Fig. 1). The manuscript generates wonder by participating in a conflation of time and space that seems, at first glance, to share much with its nineteenth-century classification as *primitif.* This conflation of cultures, and of past and present, is also the manuscript's theme. Described by Erich Auerbach as "providential time" (in contrast to the linearity of modern conceptions of time), the temporalities of medieval Christianity produce similar juxtapositions through a triadic fascination with the past (the Old Testament), the present (the birth of Christ), and the hopeful future (the New Jerusalem).[5] Thus, the Limbourg brothers' depictions of the life and surroundings of early fifteenth-century inhabitants of the French countryside share space with spectacular renderings of the most sacred

1 The Meeting of the Magi, *Les très riches heures de Jean, duc de Berry*, fol. 51, v.

moments, such as the Annunciation, or St. John on Patmos. The artists, a trio of brothers displaced from Germany, take pains to emphasize the messianic qualities of Christ by depicting his acceptance by a variety of cultures. This cross-cultural, even ecumenical aspect of Christianity is present in the depiction of the Exaltation of the Cross, which presents the Byzantine emperor Heraclius with a multiracial set of companions, and in the Nativity scene, where Jesus' visitors possess a variety of skin tones. Yet such charming anachronisms and apparent inclusiveness cannot be detached from stereotypes that highlight difference. The Revealing of the True Cross uses the pointed hat typically used to designate a Jew, which functioned as a kind of visual shorthand for medieval anti-Semitism.

The illumination of the Meeting of the Magi that appears on our cover illustrates our concept of "wonder" even as it highlights its problems.[6] On their way to visit the baby Jesus at Bethlehem, the three Magi meet at a crossroads, on which is erected an elaborately Gothic Montjoie: one of the sites, marked by crusaders, from which Jerusalem could be seen. In the background, Jerusalem is figured as medieval Paris, complete with Sainte-Chapelle and Notre Dame. In the foreground, the gorgeously embellished Magi and their entourages flow like three rivers from three different directions, coming to a conclusive stop at the Montjoie. Just to the left of its spires nestles the Star of David. As the Magi, of Zoroastrian faith and Eastern origins, witness the unfolding of a new religion, this focal conjunction of star and spire subsumes a variety of human times and places within the eternal and the providential. As a vantage point for crusaders seeking out Jerusalem, the Montjoie conflates the Magi's pilgrimage to seek out the Christ Child in Bethlehem, with the battlecry "Montjoie!" used by medieval knights in the *Chanson de Roland* during their manifold encounters with the demonized "pagans." Architecture and performative speech acts thus draw the ostensible timelessness of biblical typology into the world of the crusades: a conflict whose repercussions continue to be felt today. The Parisian edifices of Sainte-Chapelle and Notre Dame mask the extent to which the site of revelation segues into contested territory: a battleground between "Europe" and "Orient," East and West, Christian and Jew and Muslim. As the Star of David beckons to the Magi, we are reminded of the centrality of encounters with difference to

Christian mythology. Simultaneously, the appropriation of Jerusalem for Paris recalls the more recent invocations, by both George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden, of the "clash of civilizations" and the medieval crusades.

Nevertheless, the star itself radiates alternative interpretative strategies. It is a signifier that King Herod, who throws down the prophetic books in denial, reads very differently from the Magi, for whom it provides direction and meaning. Likewise, the illumination's depiction of cross-cultural contact can be read in a diametrically opposite way. With their crowns and turbaned followers, in embroidered silks and satins, and accessorized with damascene scimitars, the Magi reflect the movement and appropriation of culture from the Byzantine East to the Latin West. The fifteenth-century vision of luxury that they embody visually echoes the increasing characterization, in the commentaries of the Church Fathers, of the Magi as mysterious Others. The Magi, figures of Zoroastrian learning, are thus layered with contemporary Oriental significations of Saracens and Ottomans. This shift at the level of exegesis took place in the context of Western Europe's increasingly frequent encounters with "the Orient," through the crusades, trade and pilgrimage routes, and in the contact zones of the Outremer, Sicily, and Spain.

The work of Edward Said provides us with a ready framework for theorizing the reconceptualization of the Magi in accordance with emerging Western systems of knowledge that sought to define, and to control, "the East."[7] Yet the historical context in which it took place is very different from the post-Enlightenment world of European imperialism that produced Orientalism. Prior to the age of European expansion, the balance of power between Western Europe and "the Orient," and the European admiration for – and appropriation of – the non-European, makes the Magi of the *Très riches heures* bearers of what Lisa Jardine dubs "worldly goods."[8] As an artifact, the *Très riches heures* is itself crowded with sumptuous objects – luxury textiles, gemstones, damascene swords, hunting dogs, thoroughbred horses. By attending to the "social life" of these things, we complicate both the Magi's Othering and their role as proto-crusaders, even as that role, in turn, is blurred by the coexistence of Jerusalem as a site of crusade and pilgrimage.[9]

The multivalent Magi, who signal both spiritual rebirth *and* commodity culture, invite us to read Jerusalem, too, as a site that

accommodates conquest, appropriation, and bloodshed with travel, pilgrimage, and cross-cultural encounter. Returning to Greenblatt's question of recuperation, we propose a return to wonder, and an effort to keep it from being poisoned, by reading the Meeting of the Magi as a translated artifact. The Limbourgs translate luxurious commodities from East to West, and from physicality to representation, and from the fifteenth century back to the time of the birth of Christ, illustrating ostensible geographic and temporal oppositions while, at the same time, enacting the inextricable embeddedness of cultural contact. As animal hide is translated into illuminated book, the artistic process of illumination likewise brings together European parchment with gold, lapis lazuli, and vermilion imported from the East. If the experience of viewing this illumination produces wonder and rapture (in its literal sense of being borne away, upwards), then translation itself may be viewed as a kind of transcendence. And transcendence, itself, speaks with two tongues: on the one hand, it moves toward the erasure of difference, and on the other, it moves away from pernicious distinctions and toward incorporation as well as variegation.

Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures develops this variegated, seemingly contradictory, understanding of translation as a mechanism of and metaphor for cultures in contact, confrontation, and competition, but also as a means of rehabilitating wonder. Translation is often seen as a metaphor for postcolonial writing itself, with the literal act of translation embodying the asymmetrical power relations and violence of different colonialisms.[10] The father of Orientalism, William Jones, has been accused of sanitizing "odorous" native realities within his translation of the Sanskrit classic *Abhijnanasakuntalam*; yet the same Jones, while voyaging out to India, eagerly sniffed the sea air and marveled "that India lay before us, and Persia on our left, whilst a breeze from Arabia blew nearly on our stern."[11] Taking a cue from the affective and symbiotic relationship between Jones and his own physical, temporal and linguistic translations, we reengage what many perceive to be "the shameful history of translation" by examining different aspects of medieval European culture through the lens of postcolonial studies.[12] Our multiple uses of translation foreground

the intersections between medieval and postcolonial studies while at the same time suggesting some recuperative measures that we consider useful for both disciplines.

Highlighting the interactions between colonial representation and postcolonial resistance, Maria Tymoczko points out: "translation is paradoxically the means by which difference is perceived, preserved, projected and proscribed."[13] The essays in this volume illustrate these paradoxes by drawing upon the widespread medieval trope of *translatio imperii et studii.* They thereby engage the concept of translation from its most narrow, lexicographic sense, to the wider applications of its literal meaning, "to carry across." Translating between postcolonial and medieval studies, as well as between disciplinary boundaries, including classical and vernacular literatures, historiography and biography, they carry across the multilingual, multicultural realities of medieval studies to postcolonial analyses of the coercive and subversive powers of cultural translation.

By offering case studies of translation as the transfer of language, culture, and power, we make available to postcolonial scholars a rigorous historicization of their own insights. At the same time, our essays actively acknowledge and respond to a sense of wonder. Even though it is evoked by material artifacts such as maps, monuments, and paintings, rather than natural or geographical phenomena, this experience is in many ways comparable to the Romantic sublime. As David Hume observes, in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*:

> The imagination of man is naturally sublime, delighted with whatever is remote and extraordinary, and running, without control, into the most distant parts of space and time in order to avoid the objects, which custom has rendered familiar to it.[14]

In Immanuel Kant's theory of the sublime, which moves more closely to the awesome and the unrepresentable, this uncontrolled "running" toward the remote – whether spatial or temporal – emerges even more clearly as the active desire for and engagement with Otherness.[15] However, we differentiate wonder from the sublime by foregrounding the acts of decentering the ego that can occur at precisely the moment of experiencing wonder. Joseph Bédier encountering the *Chanson de Roland* for the first time under a mango tree in his tropical island

home of Réunion, medieval cartographers inventively and imaginatively reorienting Roman maps, a twenty-first-century scholar marveling at an Anglo-Saxon church built from a Roman ruin and nestled in the post-modern urban sprawl of contemporary provincial Britain: our essays reveal these and other responses to the past not as cynical acts of appropriation or suppression, but as cultural encounters signaling immersion, even negation of the self, engagement, and wonder.

The chapters in this volume thus engage forms of translation that accommodate and express wonder at the newness that enters the world through the act of cultural dialogue. Like many others, we draw our inspiration from Walter Benjamin's sense of translation, which he defines as "a somewhat provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of language."[16] Yet the awkwardness and alienation that define Benjamin's "The task of the translator" also contain glimpses of nostalgia for the premodern. Referring to the interlinear glosses that appear in medieval religious manuscripts, he declares, "The interlinear version of the scripture is the prototype or ideal of all translation."[17] Images of medieval icons and early modern portraits also seem to underscore his statement that "the language of the translation envelops its content like a royal robe with ample folds."[18] For all its high-modernist longing for the purity and essence that exists "between the lines," Benjamin's account of translation mines the Middle Ages for images that convey a sense of the coexistence of difference. The temporal distance between medieval and modern, and the inaccuracies in appraisals of the past that occur as a result, thus accompany and illuminate the linguistic problematics of "translation" and "original." Interestingly, this nostalgia for the Middle Ages reappears in current discussions of postcolonial translation: Tymoczko invokes the physical translation of medieval saints' relics in her discussion of the utility of translation as a metaphor for postcoloniality, while Harish Trivedi and Susan Bassnett declare that "medieval writers and/or translators were not too troubled by [the] phantasm" of the high-status original text.[19] In this way, the Middle Ages contributes to, and even enables, a process of centering and displacement that complicates the equation of translation and wonder: its role in these discussions of translation invites a reconsideration of the role of historical nostalgia as a force that generates empathy and recognition, as well as wonder.

Trivedi and Bassnett's turn to the Middle Ages supplements their argument about the mutual implication of authorship, copyright, and the emergence of print culture: an argument that relies on Benedict Anderson's account of nationalism.[20] Medievalists have repeatedly intervened into this supposed rupture between the medieval and the modern in Anderson's construction of modernity exposing the reproduction of these paradigms in the work of Homi Bhabha and others. These interventions have produced a series of critiques of the constructs of nationhood and national identity, as well as of the ideologies of colonialism itself.[21] Yet in deconstructing the binary between medieval and modern, it is not enough, as Ruth Evans points out, to rest on analogy: "while the situation of medieval vernacular writers was analogous to that of modern postcolonial writers confronting the cultural hegemony of English (and other colonial languages), this confrontation cannot be represented straightforwardly as English playing the David to Latin's Goliath."[22] Rather than lamenting the "abiding historical trauma" of medievalism, the essays in this volume advocate not only the problematics of engaging with history, but also its potential.[23]

This collection works alongside and expands upon recent scholarship dedicated to the intersections between medieval and postcolonial studies. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, the first collection on the subject, uses medieval, and mostly English, culture to present a variety of engagements with and critiques of Said's *Orientalism*, justifying its Anglophone remit with reference to the Anglophone domination of postcolonial theory.[24] A more recent volume on the subject, *Postcolonial Moves: Medieval to Modern*, presents a wider geographical field of vision, and focuses specifically upon the task of dismantling the ultimately teleological periodization of European history from the standpoint of medieval studies.[25] The dual critiques of colonialism and modernity are fruitfully reflected in essays that present a series of juxtapositions of medieval and modern texts, revealing a modernity that is persistently haunted by the medieval past. Attentiveness to historical difference characterizes the work of medievalists who have convincingly intervened into those new master-narratives of difference and rupture, while avoiding the danger of conflating intellectual and historiographical paradigms with the lived experience of oppression that lurks in the call to "decolonize" the Middle Ages.[26]

While our collection draws inspiration from these parallel enterprises, its emphasis on translation calls attention to material and linguistic as well as theoretical details, and to the texts and artifacts in themselves. The requisite scholarly training of medievalists, which notoriously saddles us with linguistic training as well as paleography and codicology, leaves us particularly eager and willing to engage with the demands of the archive and the manuscript. However, the particular consideration these essays give to buildings and maps, paintings and statues, philology and biography, moves the discussion of medieval postcolonialism, or postcolonial medieval studies, into different arenas of translation. As Bruce Holsinger warns, "in a number of ways the presumptive belatedness of medieval studies in relation to postcolonialism threatens to be counted among what Louise Fradenburg calls 'those modes of self-marginalization' that medieval studies enjoys perpetrating against itself."[27] This collection does not merely inflict the postcolonial on the medieval (or vice versa). Rather, it highlights the connections between the two by exploring a theme common to both medieval and postcolonial studies: translation as a mechanism of and metaphor for cultures in contact, confrontation, and competition. It reconsiders the role of historical nostalgia as a force that generates empathy and recognition, as well as wonder. It reveals how cultural relationships in the Middle Ages can be viewed through the filter of translation-as-wonder, and shows how the idea of the Middle Ages itself is the product of ceaseless decenterings, displacements, and translations.

Many themes resonate throughout the collection: the legacy of Rome, the "idea" of the Middle Ages, the politics of cultural identity, the prehistory of Orientalism, the impulse toward genealogy, and the power of memory. However, we have grouped the essays in this volume in order to reflect a past, a present, and a future. The first group, "The afterlife of Rome," calls attention to ancient Rome as an antecedent to imperialism in modernity, and charts a series of "postcolonial" responses to it in the Middle Ages. The second section, "Orientalism before 1600," examines medieval representations of cultural difference, and reveals the fluidity of identifications of self and Other that proliferate in a period that precedes European domination. The third, entitled "Memory and nostalgia," reveals how the medieval past signified and was deliberately

manipulated in colonial as well as postcolonial contexts, from India to France to the New World.

"The afterlife of Rome" highlights the relationship between the Middle Ages, late antiquity, and imperial Rome. With the spreading nexus between capitalism and globalization in a post-Cold War world, evocations of America as Empire in popular as well as academic discourses have become commonplace. The Roman Empire has reemerged as a historical and political predecessor to contemporary neo-imperialism: from the Hollywood extravaganza *Gladiator* to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's recent work of radical political philosophy, *Empire*. Yet discourses about the primacy of Rome invariably invoke some aspect of the Middle Ages as a regressive space of "anti-Empire" to be fetishized and infantilized as non-civic, non-democratic, and non-modern. Thus, the fertile culture of late antiquity becomes, in *Gladiator*, the chaotic border between classical imperial order and medieval Gothic disorder, represented by the contrast between the armored phalanxes of the Roman army and the long-haired, club-wielding masses of the Germanic hordes it encounters.

The revisionist, anti-imperial approach of Hardt and Negri discards the image of the chaotic early Middle Ages in exchange for a Christian Middle Ages that challenges imperial might.[28] Their opening discussion of Empire as world order concludes by invoking "the birth of Christianity in Europe and its expansion during the decline of the Roman Empire," a "chiliastic project [that] offered an absolute alternative to the spirit of imperial right – a new ontological basis." Although they use this analogy to seek out "an ontological basis of antagonism – with Empire, but also against and beyond Empire," Hardt and Negri gloss over the intense political struggles within early Christianity, seamlessly conflating the several centuries between Christianity's birth and its expansion (not to mention geographical distance between Near East and Europe).[29] Such space-clearing moves romanticize the Middle Ages in ways that undermine rather than highlight its "radicality," posing serious intellectual challenges to an otherwise laudable counter-imperialist philosophy.

The chapters in this section historicize the much invoked binary between Rome and the Middle Ages by focusing on the material culture that was left behind: buildings, floors, roads, maps. Different phases of

the Middle Ages then appear differently "postcolonial" when situated in relationship to Rome, and the very idea of postcoloniality emerges as imbued with more imperial and colonial legacies than the "post" would suggest. Together, these essays offer new challenges to postcolonialists and postmodernists who continue to see the Middle Ages as modernity's other, as well as to medievalists who place the Middle Ages at the beginning of European historical teleology.

Nicholas Howe's chapter, "Anglo-Saxon England and the postcolonial void," clears theoretical space for the interpretation of Anglo-Saxon England as the postcolony of the Roman Empire by reading architectural and textual traces of Roman material culture as the haunting of the Anglo-Saxon imagination by the Roman colonial past. The *spolia* that litter the physical landscape of England are translated into the Latin textual witnesses of Gildas and Bede as well as the Old English poems *The Wanderer* and *The Ruin*. This "line of memorial transmission" traverses the historiographic void between the departure of the Romans and the Saxon Advent, as well as between the two languages of Anglo-Saxon England. The continuing legibility of those *spolia*, ensured by the monastic use of Latin, signals the reconnection of the postcolony of the Roman *imperium* to the new empire of Latin Christianity that continues to be centered on Rome, though with a transformed significance. Anglo-Saxon England thus emerges out of the postcolonial void by critically scrutinizing its relationship to Empire, albeit not without a sense of eerie melancholy. The material and memorial overlap of imperial and Christian Rome, Roman Britain, and Anglo-Saxon England both complicates the simplistic application of postcolonial theory to the period and calls for greater recognition, by postcolonialists, of the coexistence of colonial and postcolonial structures, in a manner analogous to the assimilation of former British colonies into the "Commonwealth."

Alfred Hiatt's chapter, "Mapping the ends of empire," examines a similar overlap of colonial and postcolonial discursive practices through medieval mapping practices. By reworking the traditions of classical geography, medieval maps are both "enablers of colonial vision and colonialism's detritus." Hiatt proposes that we view medieval maps not through "binaries of preservation and innovation," but instead through the processes of translation. As Isidore of Seville and Orosius, key sources for medieval geography, grapple with Roman modes of spatial

organization and representation at the very moment of empire's dissolution, they participate in the *translatio studii* of classical knowledge to the medieval period; simultaneously, they assume a postcolonial status. Hiatt proceeds to chart the changes in mapping practices from the twelfth century onwards, engaging cartographic evidence for the intertwining of commerce, pilgrimage, and occupation that occurred under the rubric of the crusades. The changing representations of the Holy Land demonstrate how maps, crucial in the formation of Roman imperial discourses, lived on as colonial formations after the colony. By reminding us of the continuing contested cartography of Palestine, predicated on imperial redrawing of boundaries prior to decolonization, Hiatt urges us "to rethink the post in postcolonialism." By emphasizing that "narratives of curiosity, accident, and imagination also make maps, not only histories of contestation and encounter," he also recuperates the wonder that the collection, as a whole, emphasizes in postcolonial readings of medieval artifacts.

Themes of translation, recuperation, and Rome's legacy to postcolonial Europe recur in Seth Lerer's "'On fagne flor': the postcolonial *Beowulf*, from Heorot to Heaney." Lerer reads the "fagne flor" (stained/marked floor) of Heorot, the great hall in *Beowulf*, as a tessellated floor of the Roman past. Through Seamus Heaney's recent translation of *Beowulf*, he magnifies the contemporary postcolonial resonances of a vernacular present set on an ancient relic. Feuds and pyres of *Beowulf* emerge as a layer of the "modern scarred political body" that includes Heaney's Northern Ireland. However, the memory of Roman magnificence, inscribed through the Latin and Old English equivalents of wonder (*mirabilis/wrætlic*), rescues *Beowulf* from melancholia. Through the reclaimed nexus between Anglo-Saxon England and imperial Rome, Heaney transcends his own (post)colonial relationship to England. The translator's "illumination by philology" leads to a postcolonial sublime effected through the vernacularizing of that magnificence, epitomized in Heaney's renaming of Heorot as "bawn." Through an Irish word that connotes simultaneously simple barn and grand castle, Heorot becomes a hybrid structure, "part native settlement, part foreign imposition," just as Howe's reading of the church of St. John at Escomb, built upon a Roman arch, physicalizes translation in the form of historical syncretism and cultural assimilation. The Irishness of Heaney's *Beowulf*

makes philology reverberate not with the desire for pure origins – and its concomitant associations with empire and colony – but with the joy of the contaminated and stained.

Themes of syncretism, assimilation, and cultural encounter return with the second section, "Orientalism before 1600," that takes its name from a conference held at Trinity College, Cambridge, in July, 2001.[30] Said's widely influential *Orientalism* demonstrates the extent to which European colonization of the East from the Enlightenment through the nineteenth century was produced by discursive practices of ordering and shaping the world. Somewhat like the legacy of the Roman Empire, the success of *Orientalism* may be measured in the overwhelming number of responses to it (many of them critical): its East–West binaries, its Foucauldian focus on western forms of knowledge, and its analysis of discourses, as opposed to, say, psychological formations or economic structures.[31] Early modern cultural historians such as Lisa Jardine, Jerry Brotton, Nabil Matar, Daniel Vitkus, Jyotsna Singh, and Andrew Hadfield have offered a series of critiques of Said, and uncovered material evidence that reveals a multiplicity of responses and engagements between East and West. As a whole, their work reveals a complex of western attitudes to the East and in particular to Islam, and of eastern responses to the west, that are, variously, envious and pragmatic, condescending and admiring, eager to convert and eager to emulate, and, very often, charged with wonder.[32] This body of evidence, as Jardine and Brotton conclude, allows us to "circumvent an account of the marginalized, exoticized, dangerous East within Renaissance studies as not only politically unhelpful but also historically inaccurate."[33]

Within medieval studies, however, the response to *Orientalism* remains somewhat more binaristic. Some medievalists have critiqued Said's emphasis upon spatial and geographical distinctions of East and West at the expense of time and history, as, on the one hand, reaffirming the timelessness of the East–West binary, and, on the other, producing an image of the medieval as either antecedent or Other to this modern framework.[34] Others have engaged with Said by locating, particularly in the literature of the crusades and in the genre of romance, a kind of prehistory of Orientalist paradigms. The chapters in "Orientalism before 1600" contribute an alternative perspective. Rather than critiquing postcolonialists' attitudes toward temporality and ideas

about the Middle Ages, or elaborating Said's existing binaristic structures, they locate numerous examples of western self-identifications and representations as, in a variety of ways, "Eastern." These essays demonstrate the fluidity and porousness of cultural paradigms in the Middle Ages, locating processes of identity-formation that move between and among alternate and competing perspectives and definitions of cultural difference.

The tangled routes of cultural transmission crisscrossing antiquity and the Middle Ages, and bringing together Persia, Byzantium, Greece, and Rome, provide complex antecedents for Saidean Orientalism. In "Alexander in the Orient: bodies and boundaries in the *Roman de toute chevalerie*," Suzanne Conklin Akbari examines the multiple westward turns embodied in a twelfth-century Anglo-Norman romance of Alexander, a member of the Alexander corpus that provided the Middle Ages with a vast template of "Oriental wonders." Akbari complements Hiatt's discussion of the medieval recycling of late antique geography by focusing on Orosius' quadripartite sequence of *translatio imperii* (from Babylon to Rome via Macedonia and Carthage). Although the text does not engage with western geographical extremities, it makes a series of movements west that illustrate multiple significations of "the West." Alexander's conduct on the battlefield with the Persian king Darius and in the bedroom with the Oriental queen Candace, makes him a mediator between the familiar space of home and the exotic terrain abroad. Whereas the Roman describes unsettling locations where identity is contingent and danger close at hand, the return of the narrative to the West anticipates the medieval vernacularization of Latinate culture through the enactment of *translatio imperii*, as well as the early modern cultural ascendancy of Western Europe.

Deanne Williams observes, in "Gower's monster," that some aspects of the Middle Ages have proved more amenable to "postcolonization" than others. Taking an unlikely candidate, the medieval English poet John Gower, Williams examines the ways in which his work, with its royal dedicatees and learned frames of reference, has been considered inhospitable by medievalists who are eager to recuperate and celebrate the "Other" Middle Ages. Polyglot, elite, and (as some argue) politically conservative, Gower is frequently associated with the structures and hierarchies of a Middle Ages that previous generations of medievalists found

consoling, and that medievalists today are more willing to demonize. However, Gower's fascination with the biblical figure of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon from the book of Daniel who is transformed into a beast and exiled to the wilderness, complicates our understanding of this author. It constitutes a direct engagement with the questions of civility and barbarism that medieval English culture was contending with, as it was developing a distinct identity in conversation with the Latin and French cultures that dominated in the aftermath of Roman colonization and Norman Conquest. Williams shows how Gower uses Nebuchadnezzar's monstrous form to reclaim, even celebrate, an English reputation for barbarism. A figure for acts of translation and interpretation, as well as for wondrous revelation, Nebuchadnezzar sheds light on Gower's authorial identity as well as on the literary culture of late medieval England.

As "Gower's monster" concerns an English identification with Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, James Harper's chapter, "Turks as Trojans; Trojans as Turks: visual imagery of the Trojan War and the politics of cultural identity in fifteenth-century Europe," shows instead how Trojans, the mythical ancestors of choice of the Italians (not to mention the English, the Burgundians, and the Habsburgs), are identified with contemporary Ottoman Turks in fifteenth-century manuscript illuminations and paintings. Harper argues that this identification between Trojans and Ottomans responds to the military and territorial threats posed by the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of the spectacular victories in the fifteenth century. Some commentators located a Trojan lineage for the Turks in order to accommodate them within the European community. As a result, the visual representations of Trojans as Turks in manuscript illuminations also evoked the worldly riches of ancient Rome. Yet as the Ottoman Empire continued to gain power, attempts to contain the threat that they posed produced instead a series of counter-attempts to demonize, as well as convert, the Turk. Hence, by the sixteenth century, Trojans were presented not as Turks, but as ancient Romans. While this complex process of analogy and comparison highlights anxieties about European colonization by the Turks – how can you colonize your own people? – it also charts an early history of the use of the legacy of ancient Rome for purposes of propaganda that anticipates the future of European colonialism.

Our final section, "Memory and nostalgia," examines the ways in which medieval studies and the idea of the Middle Ages functioned in a colonial framework. As historians of the Holocaust, African-American slavery, and, most recently, the Partition of India have documented, the traumas of displacement and of loss of property and territory produce a series of complex narrative responses. Highlighting the experiences of shock and conflict, and the processes of recollection and forgetting, the chapters in this section reveal how the Middle Ages and medieval studies signified in the formation of colonial as well as postcolonial subjectivities. They provide a vocabulary for, as well as a distraction from, the experiences of colonialism. Most notably, these essays show how medieval histories and cultures offered the possibility of rewriting the past, by providing a wonderful mythos and genealogy to justify, smooth over, and suppress aspects of history in response to what Allen Frantzen calls "the desire for origins."[35]

In "Analogy in translation: imperial Rome, medieval England and British India," Ananya Jahanara Kabir explains how British imperialism in India was conceptualized through a series of analogies with medieval English history, and, in particular, the conquest of England by the Romans, the Saxons, and the Normans. These analogies cast, for example, the Hindus as the Anglo-Saxons, and the Persians, seen as invaders into India, as the Normans; while the British played a variety of roles, including Romans, Normans, and Anglo-Saxons. Such analogies offered a means of assimilating the complexities of the colonialist encounter, but they problematized the concurrent analogy between the British and Roman empires. These competing, as well as conflicting, analogies reflected not only colonial struggles for linguistic and cultural as well as geographical domination of India, but also the struggle among historians in England to establish a coherent narrative of English history. By closely focusing on imperial medievalism, Kabir nuances and develops arguments advanced by both postcolonialists and medievalists for the colonies being the laboratory of Empire, especially in the context of constructing the concept and canon of English literature. As she also suggests in conclusion, however, this necessary unmasking of the consequent celebration of racial purity should also be open to recuperating moments of countermemorial nostalgia that operate within this discourse of collective colonial memory.

In the case of the British nostalgia for the Middle Ages, collective memory acts as a justification and frame for colonial activities. Michelle R. Warren's "*Au commencement était l'île*: the colonial formation of Joseph Bédier's *Chanson de Roland*" charts a different territory by explaining how the individual memory of a French colonial subject inflected his landmark edition of the *Chanson de Roland*, a cornerstone of the French national literary heritage. Warren sets out the medieval philologist's colonialist background, explaining Bédier's divided allegiances, as a Créole, to his home, the island of Bourbon (now named Réunion), and, as a patriotic French citizen, to France. Warren reveals how medieval studies served as a means of healing the split between his two homelands. Yet in the process, as Bédier's medievalism elided his own colonial past of mixture, or *métissage*, and hybridity, he also established an authoritative edition of the *Chanson* that, similarly, expunged its own foreign influences. This impulse towards racial and national purity in Bédier's medieval scholarship suggests how his obsession with origins sought to smooth out a conflicted personal and national history, in the effort to establish a continuity between past and present, centre and colony.

Whereas Kabir and Warren show how medieval history and literature provided a frame for formulating a colonial identity, Roland Greene's "The protocolonial baroque of *La Celestina*" highlights the quality of insurgency in the historical baroque that anticipates, instead, postcolonial resistance. Long identified with the colonial, the baroque aesthetic, with its artificiality and incongruousness, not only looks back to the wondrous excesses of the medieval, but also looks forward to the magical paradoxes of the postcolonial. *La Celestina*, a late medieval Spanish prose dialogue (*c.* 1499) by Fernando de Rojas, illustrates this temporal elasticity, presaging the baroque as well as its subversive reinterpretations in postcolonial Latin America. A procuress and a witch, Celestina embodies a disproportionality and eye for superfluous detail that Rojas defines with the adjective *alinde*, or "of India," and that Greene regards as a form of aesthetic disruption that reflects the shifts in perspective that proceed from, and reflect, the discoveries and cross-cultural encounters attendant upon Spanish colonialism in the West. "A baroque figure in a romance background," Celestina celebrates colonial hybridity and

postcolonial resistance, even as she undermines the boundary between medieval and early modern.

As Bruce W. Holsinger's recent article "Medieval Studies, Postcolonial Studies and the Genealogies of Critique" observes, "while scholars from certain quarters of medieval studies have begun to borrow heavily from postcolonial studies, medievalists have yet to make a significant impact on the methods, historical purview, and theoretical lexicon of postcolonialism – in large part because of the seemingly intractable modernity of the postcolonial arena and its critical-theoretical apparatus."[36] We take this as our challenge, and hope that the essays in this volume will prompt our postcolonialist readers to reexamine the historical boundaries of their discipline, and challenge medievalists from all quarters to reformulate and redefine this growing field.

NOTES

1. *Très riches heures of Jean, Duke of Berry*, Musée Condé, Chantilly. Intro Jean Longnon and Raymond Cazelles, Preface Millard Meiss, trans. Victoria Benedict (New York: George Braziller, 1969), 8. On the history of the manuscript in the twentieth century, see Michael Camille, "The *Très Riches Heures*: An Illuminated Manuscript in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1990): 72–107.
2. Caroline Walker Bynum, "Wonder." Presidential Address to the American Historical Association. *American Historical Review* 102 (1997): 15.
3. Stephen Greenblatt, "Resonance and Wonder," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Politics and Poetics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 42.
4. Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
5. Erich Auerbach, "Figura," in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 11–71.
6. For medieval visualizations of the Magi, see James Harper, "Turks as Trojans; Trojans as Turks" in this volume, chapter 7.
7. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978).
8. Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (New York: Doubleday, 1996).
9. We borrow this phrase, and the attendant methodological implications, from *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Practice*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
10. On translation as a postcolonial metaphor, see Samia Mehrez, "Translation and the Postcolonial Experience," in *Rethinking Translation*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (New

York and London: Routledge 1995), 120–38; Maria Tymoczko, "Postcolonial Writing and Literary Translation," in *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*, ed. Harish Trivedi and Susan Bassnett (London: Routledge, 1999), 19–40; on the violence of translation, see Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from the Tempest to Tarzan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) and Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

11. Sir William Jones, *A Discourse on the Institution of a Society for Inquiring into the History, Civil and Natural, the Antiquities, Arts, Sciences, and Literature of Asia. By the President* (15 January 1784). See also *Between Languages and Cultures: Translation and Cross-cultural Texts*, ed. A. Dingwaney and L. Maier (Philadelphia and London: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 7.
12. *Post-Colonial Translation*, ed. Trivedi and Bassnett, 5.
13. Maria Tymoczko, *Early Irish Literature in English Translation* (Manchester: St Jerome, 1999), 17.
14. David Hume, "Of the Academical or Sceptical Philosophy," in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles W. Eliot (The Harvard Classics 37, New York: P. F. Collier and Son Co., 1909–14), 3.2.
15. Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* (1764), trans. John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
16. Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schochen, 1968), 75.
17. Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," 82.
18. Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," 75.
19. See *Post-Colonial Translation*, ed. Trivedi and Bassnett.
20. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).
21. See, for example, Kathleen Davis, "National Writing in the Ninth Century: A Reminder for Postcolonial Thinking about the Nation," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 28 (1998): 611–37, and Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communtities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).
22. Ruth Evans, "Historicizing Postcolonial Criticism: Cultural Difference and the Vernacular," in *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Medieval Literary Theory 1280–1520*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Brown, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1999), 366.
23. See Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1998).
24. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *The Postcolonial Middle Ages* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).
25. *Postcolonial Moves: Medieval to Modern*, ed. Patricia Clare Ingham and Michelle R. Warren (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
26. The introduction to *Decolonizing the Middle Ages*, a complete volume of the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30 (2000), ed. Margaret R. Greer and John

Dagenais, claims that "the Middle Ages has itself become the object of scholarly colonization." However, the contributors frequently express anxiety about this move.

27. See Bruce Holsinger, "Medieval Studies, Postcolonial Studies and the Genealogies of Critique," *Speculum* 77 (2002): 1195–227 at 1198.
28. See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 21.
29. See also their discussion of scholasticism as the precursor of the Renaissance:

> It all began with a revolution. In Europe, between 1200 and 1600, across distances that only merchants and armies could travel and only the invention of the printing press would later bring together, something extraordinary happened. Humans declared themselves masters of their own lives, producers of cities and history, and inventors of heavens. They inherited a dualistic consciousness, a hierarchical vision of society, and a metaphysical idea of science; but they handed down to future generations an experimental idea of science, a constituent conception of history and cities, and they posed being as an immanent terrain of knowledge and action. The thought of this initial period, born simultaneously in politics, science, art, philosophy, and theology, demonstrates the radicality of the forces at work in modernity. (*Empire*, 71)

30. The conference was organized by Alfred Hiatt, Ananya J. Kabir, and Richard Sarjeantson. For further information, see http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/empires/.
31. See, among others, Aijaz Ahmed, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literature* (New York: Verso, 1992); Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question," in his *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 66–84; on critiques from an Arab perspective, see Nabil Matar, "The Question of Occidentalism in Early Modern Morocco," in *Postcolonial Moves: Medieval to Modern*, ed. Ingham and Warren, 153–70.
32. Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and *Turks, Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); *Piracy, Slavery and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*, ed. Daniel Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*, ed. Daniel Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Travel and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance: 1545–1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999); Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
33. Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 61.
34. See Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism*; Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, and Davis, "National Writing in the Ninth Century."
35. Allen J. Frantzen, *The Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990).
36. Holsinger, "Medieval Studies, Postcolonial Studies," 1197.