

# Why not invite a crowd?

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### **Why Not Invite a Crowd?: The Open Scholarly Review Experiment for *Postmedieval*'s "Becoming Media."**

The "Becoming Media" special issue of *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies* (Palgrave Macmillan), will appear this upcoming spring, 2012 (in both print and online formats, including multi-media elements for some of the essays). We conducted the peer review for this issue through a process we have termed, "crowd review." In consultation with editors from *Shakespeare Quarterly* and others, we worked on a model for scholarly online peer communication that operated through a simplified "webby" interface, and that was linked from the outset to newly emergent online scholarly collectives, such as the BABEL Working Group. The response to the "Becoming Media" crowd review has been exceptional, measured in the context of the response reported by other humanities journals experimenting with various forms of open or peer-to-peer review.

This presentation explores the unusually high response rate for the *postmedieval* crowd review experiment, from both practical and theoretical angles. The media elements of this presentation will display features and aspects of the online crowd review as it progressed. The theoretical aspect of the talk will focus on the appearance of the figure of both the "crowd" and the "mob" in network theory. This concept of the "crowd," experiencing renewed interest and popularity in works such as Graham Harman's *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics* and Thacker and Galloway's, *The Exploit*, offers some insight into authorial collaborations that function as "webs of objects [and agents] that act autonomously and in aggregate" (Cochran).

# Hypothes.is

“The internet peer-reviewed...”

## The Internet, peer-reviewed.



Dan Whaley  
On Hypothes.is

### Imagine:

*If wherever we encountered new information, sentence by sentence, frame by frame, we could easily know the best thinking on it.*

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# postmedieval

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Volume 1  
Issue 1  
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**Welcome to *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies***  
*postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies* is a cross-disciplinary, peer-reviewed journal in medieval studies that aims to bring the medieval and modern into productive critical relation.



[About the cover](#)

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Myra Seaman

Book Reviews Editor  
Holly Crocker

**News**

***postmedieval* Vol 2, Issue 3, 'New Critical Modes', now published!**  
Co-edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Cary Howie, [this issue](#) examines and embodies some of the new critical modes that are emerging among contemporary medievalists (and postmedievalists). This issue features an introduction by Jeffrey Cohen and Cary Howie; short essays from Daniel C. Remein, Richard H. Godden, Anna Klosowska, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, Eileen A. Joy, Cary Howie, Karmen MacKendrick and Catherine Brown; an interview on medieval blogging from Brantley Bryant and Carl S. Pyrdum III; and a book review essay by Sharon Kinoshita.

**Launch of *postmedieval* FORUM!**  
The [postmedieval FORUM](#) is a space for responses to articles and essay clusters published in *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies*, and for debate on pressing or controversial topics in the humanities.

The [first forum](#) features responses to Paul Strohm's review essay '[Historicity without historicism?](#)', which appeared in vol. 1, issue 3 of *postmedieval*. This article will be available free online for a limited time.

**Larry Scanlon reviews *postmedieval* in TMR**  
Sept 2011: Larry Scanlon reviews *postmedieval*'s inaugural issue, '*When did we become post/human?*' in *The Medieval Review*:

"I think it fair to say *postmedieval* has identified a significant *lacuna* in the field. Medieval Studies in general and Middle English literary studies in particular can definitely use another venue for theoretically informed, interdisciplinary, even anti-disciplinary scholarship. [...] *postmedieval* is also clearly interested in work that is stylistically edgy as well as theoretically informed and politically engaged. In terms of what we might call quality and rigor in the traditional scholarly sense, this inaugural issue is truly very impressive. To the extent that the short essay format can have competitors to other more traditional long form journals, I would say that even the toughest

29 November 2011

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# “Becoming Media” (Sp, 2012)

## Volume 3, Issue 1: Becoming-Media

[^ Top](#)

**Editors:** [Jen Boyle](#), Coastal Carolina University, USA and [Martin K. Foy](#), Drew University

Grappling both with the “post” and the *medhyo* or “middle/medium” of post-medieval, this issue will turn on a series of questions and explorations of the notion of “becoming-media” within and in conversation with medieval and early modern contexts. Becoming-media refers in one sense to our dependence on the recursive circuitry and tangle of technologies, bodies, narratives, spaces, and mediating technics, across historical periods and across literary, scientific, philosophical, and theological modes of expression. Recent theoretical turns in “new media” studies have raised questions about the limits of embodiment, the remediation and interfacing of the human/machine nexus, and the reconstitution of spatial and temporal modalities with the emergence of a digital culture. Yet, the casting of new media studies as itself “new” raises troubling questions. To what extent is mediation ever “new”? Indeed, as the *medhyo* at the center of “medieval” would suggest, mediation appears as an always incomplete “middling” and “meddling” – always becoming, to itself and something other than itself; a troubling, meddling, unstable go-between. This second sense of becoming-media extends questions about the mediating artifact within its historical context to include issues of embodied and historical temporality; periodization as “meddling”; the feedback loop of technics-consciousness; the glance, glimpse, and touch of the mediated image as political and aesthetic affect; and the unstable registers of the trans/hyper-mediation of multiple past-present-futures.

### Contributors

- [Seeta Chaganti](#) (University of California, Davis): “Danse Macabre in the Virtual Churchyard”
- [Eddie Christie](#) (Georgia State University): “Writing in Wax, Writing in Water”
- [Arne Flaten](#) (Coastal Carolina University): “Rethinking New Media(s) in Renaissance Italy”
- [Julia Lupton](#) (University of California, Irvine): “Tapestry and Mediation”
- [Eugene Thacker](#) (The New School): “The Wayless Abyss: Mysticism and Mediation”
- [Whitney Trettien](#) (Duke University): “Becoming Plant: Magnifying a Microhistory of Media Circuits in Nehemiah Grew’s Anatomy of Plants (1682)”

### Book Review Essay

- [Juliet Fleming](#) (New York University)



*a simulacrum of an early warning system*

# BABEL working group

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## dead letter office: a new imprint of BABEL and punctum books

by EILEEN JOY

*The United States Postal Service started a **dead letter office** in 1825 to deal with undeliverable mail. In 2006 approximately 90 million undeliverable-as-addressed*



### Featured Articles

dead letter office: a new  
imprint of BABEL and  
punctum books



# “crowd” review

## postmedieval – crowd review

*The crowd review site for  
postmedieval's Becoming-Media issue.*

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### How to comment

This page has practical information about how you can join the crowd review conversation. If you have a question we haven't answered, [get in touch](#) and we'll get back to you as soon as we can.

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[How will I know when the papers are posted for review?](#)

[Who can post a review or comment?](#)

[Do I need to register in order to post a comment?](#)

[What sort of comments are you looking for?](#)

[Will comments be moderated?](#)

[Will the crowd review comments be archived?](#)

[How can I get in touch with the authors / editors directly?](#)

### When will the crowd review take place?

Papers will be posted on this site in mid July 2011, and the site will then be open to comments until Thursday, 15th September 2011.

### How will I know when the papers are posted for review?

### Recent comments

- Julia Lupton (@juliaLupton) on Julia Lupton – “Thinking with Things: Hannah Woolley to Hannah Arendt”
- Valerie Allen on Julia Lupton – “Thinking with Things: Hannah Woolley to Hannah Arendt”
- JB on Whitney Trettien – “Becoming Plant: Magnifying a Microhistory of Media Circuits in Nehemiah Grew's Anatomy of Plants (1682)”
- Julia Lupton (@juliaLupton) on Julia Lupton – “Thinking with Things: Hannah Woolley to Hannah Arendt”
- D.E. Wittkower on Julia Lupton – “Thinking with Things: Hannah Woolley to Hannah Arendt”
- Martin Foy on Eddie Christie – “Writing in Wax, Writing in Water”
- aharris1969 on Arne Flaten – “Reproducible Media(s) in the Early Fifteenth Century, Mostly Italian”
- rdc009 on Arne Flaten –



# postmedieval – crowd review

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## Home

Welcome to the archive of the Crowd Review for [postmedieval](#)

The Crowd Review ran from July 15th to September 15th 2012. All comments are permanently archived on this site, but papers are no longer accepting comments.

Share this:



Seeta Chaganti – “Danse Macabre in the Virtual Churchyard”

Eddie Christie – “Writing in Wax, Writing in Water”

Arne Flaten – “Reproducible Media(s) in the Early Fifteenth Century, Mostly Italian”

Julia Lupton – “Thinking with Things: Hannah Woolley to Hannah Arendt”

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- Martin Foys on Eddie Christie – “Writing in Wax, Writing in Water”
- aharris1969 on Arne Flaten – “Reproducible Media(s) in the Early Fifteenth Century, Mostly Italian”
- rdco09 on Arne Flaten –

# Shakespeare Quarterly

media**commons**press  
open scholarship in open formats

Shakespeare Quarterly  
Open Review: "Shakespeare and New Media"

REGISTER

For Shakespeare critics and scholars, among the most significant consequences of media change will be transformations in how we communicate with each other about our work and publish new research. In keeping with the topic of its special issue, 61:3, "Shakespeare and New Media," *Shakespeare Quarterly* conducted an experiment in [open peer review](#), for this issue, which ran from 10 March to 5 May 2010.

See "From the Editor: [Gentle Numbers](#)" for an introduction to the issue and summary of the experiment.

This site archives the experiment itself: the exchanges that took place around four essays under consideration for possible publication in *SQ* 61:3 and three scholarly reviews that had (unlike the essays) already been accepted for publication. The editors invited thoughtful feedback from Shakespeare scholars and other readers on any essay that fell within their areas of expertise — in terms of its originality, accuracy, and stylistic and rhetorical merits. Because scholars whose work is being reviewed may need to show that experts in the field participated in this process, we asked readers to register in their own names.

**Comments on the essays are now closed but the site is still open for general conversation about the experiment and reactions to it. You may find these at the [guest editor's blog](#) and at the [general comments](#) page.**

**Reading the essays and comments:** Select a title at right, then page forward or back by clicking the arrows at the top of the reading window. Read comments by clicking the bubble at the upper left of each paragraph to open the comment window for that paragraph, or clicking the respective comment bar at right.

**The Process:** After the initial editorial evaluation, authors were invited to opt into the open review process. The essays of those who opted in were posted here for public commentary and feedback by the journal's readers. Authors have been invited to respond to this feedback in revision, before submitting their revised essays for final selection. The publication decision was based on the revised essays. (Declining the open review and opting for a traditional review would not negatively affect the selection process — it simply established a

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## 1. Shakespearean computing

Thou in our wonder and astonishment  
Hast built thy selfe a lasting Monument:  
For whils't to th'shame of slow-endavouring Art  
Thy easie numbers flow, and that each part,  
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued Booke,  
Those Delphicke Lines with deepe Impression tooke  
Then thou our fancy of her selfe bereaving,  
Dost make us Marble with too much conceiving

John Milton, "An Epitaph on the admirable Dramaticke Poet, W. Shakespeare"<sup>[1]</sup>

I would like to think that Milton somehow knew he was writing about computing. Since the advent of digital textuality, Milton's encomium to Shakespeare in the 1632 Second Folio has acquired significance he could not have foreseen. The word "numbers" in particular gathers together several meanings: numbers as the metrical units of Shakespeare's verse (OED "number" *n.* def. 17a); numbers as musical signs of order in the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic qualities of Shakespeare's poetry (def. 17b, 14a, 14b); numbers more generally as objects in a collection that may be enumerated in a totality, in the manner that John Heminge and Henry Condell (inaccurately) describe the First Folio plays as being "absolute in their numbers"<sup>[2]</sup>; the numbers of Shakespeare's sonnets, which we use along with first lines as identifiers; the Old Testament book of Numbers, which deals with a census (the same type of event that led to one of the first pre-electronic computers, the Hollerith Tabulator); and numbers as the type of data usually associated with computation at its most essential —computers have their historical roots in the processing of numbers, not text. In addition to the computing resonances of the word "numbers," Milton also evokes a form of textual transmission familiar to anyone who uses a personal computer, that of making exact copies in an instant and on practically any scale. As anyone who has suffered major data loss can attest, modern computing forces upon us an equivalence between copying and

### Comments

#### COMMENTS ARE CLOSED

0 Comments on the whole page

0 Comments on paragraph 1

0 Comments on paragraph 2

1 Comment on paragraph 3

1 Comment on paragraph 4

3 Comments on paragraph 5

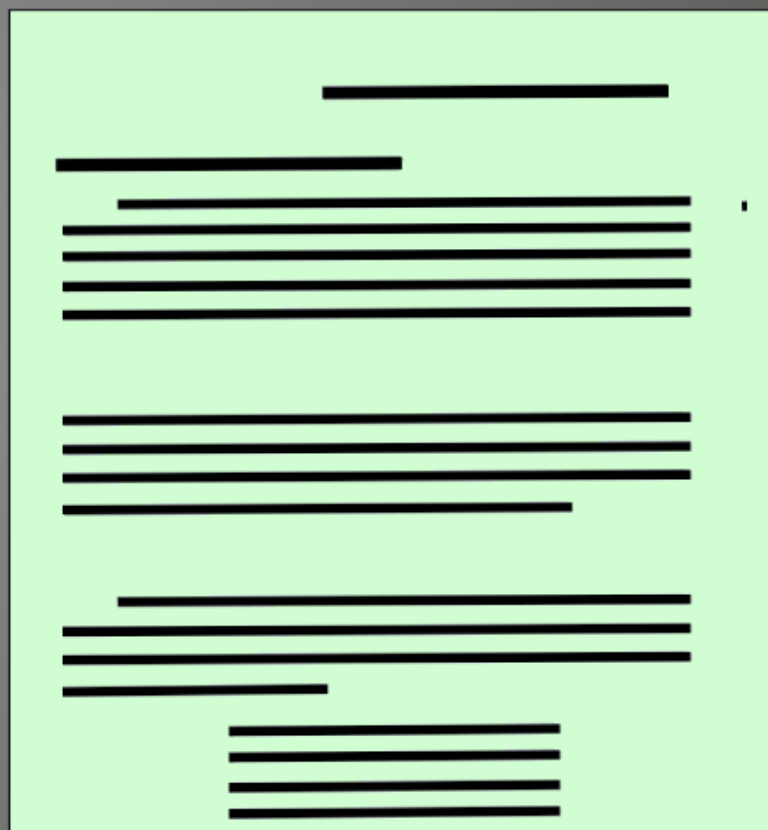
0 Comments on paragraph 6

0 Comments on paragraph 7

0 Comments on paragraph 8

2 Comments on paragraph 9

0 Comments on paragraph 10





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When did we  
become  
post/human?



# Hypothes.is



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## The Internet, peer-reviewed.



Dan Whaley  
On Hypothes.is

### Imagine:

*If wherever we encountered new information, sentence by sentence, frame by frame, we could easily know the best thinking on it.*

*If we had confidence that this represented the combined wisdom of the most informed people--not as anointed by*

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## 12 Principles.

1

Open

Open source, open standards.

2

Work everywhere

To the extent practical. Without consent.

3

Non-profit

Sustained by social enterprise.

4

Neutral

Favor no ideological or political positions.

5

100% Community moderated

Bottoms up, not top down.

6

Merit based

Influence based on track record.

7

Pseudonymous

Credibility without public identity.

8

International

By design.

9

Transparent, auditable

In systems. In governance.

10

Think long term

Infrastructure for 100 years? Or longer?

11

Many formats, many contexts.

HTML, PDF, video, books. News, blogs  
scientific articles, legislation, regulations,  
Terms of Service, etc.

12

Work with the best

Remain humble.



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## Advisors & Collaborators.



John Perry Barlow  
*EFF*



Charles Bazerman  
*UC Santa Barbara*



Phil Bourne  
*UC San Diego / PLoS*



Adam Christian  
*Sauce Labs / Slide*



John W. DuBois  
*UC Santa Barbara, Linguistics*



Kaliya Hamlin  
*Internet Identity Workshop*



Steve Hazel  
*Sauce Labs / Bittorrent*



Darian Rodriguez Heyman  
*Nonprofits 101*



Salim Ismail  
*Founding Exec Dir, Singularity U*



Stacy Jackson  
*UC Berkeley*



Brewster Kahle  
*Internet Archive*



Jared Kopf  
*Paypal / The Founders Fund*





Franco Moretti,  
*Graphs, Maps,  
 Trees: Abstract  
 Models for a  
 Literary History*  
 (2005)

FIGURE 7: British hegemonic forms, 1760–1850

The anomaly constituted by the epistolary novel's slump in the 1770s is only apparent, and easily explained: what declines in these years is the publication of all novels, and in fact, as figure 8 shows, epistolary novels were then even more hegemonic on the market—as in 1776, when an impossible 70 per cent of new titles were novels in letters.

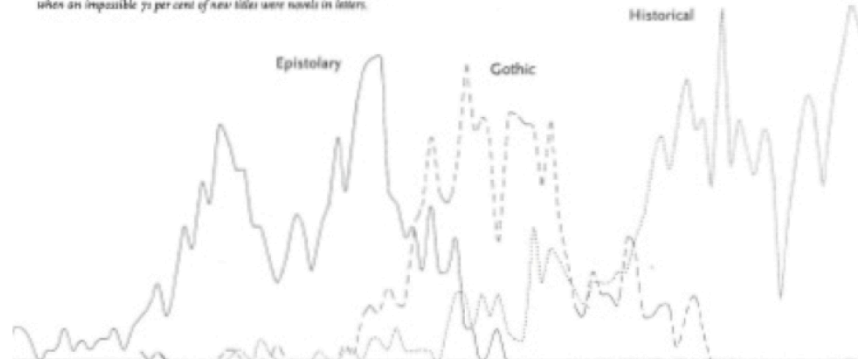


FIGURE 11: US comedies as a percentage of top five box office hits, 1986–95

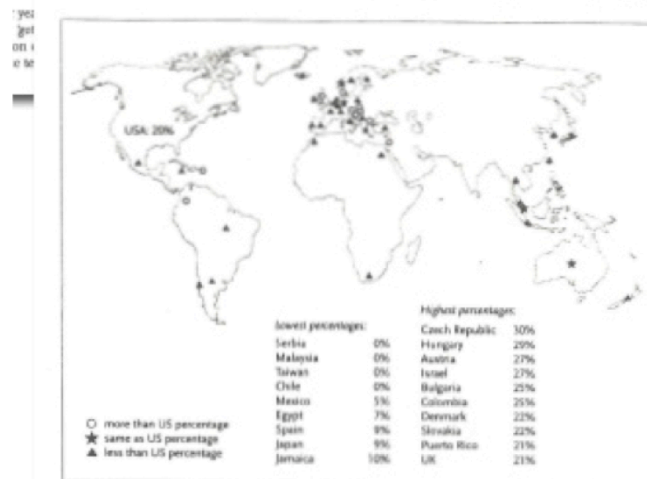


FIGURE 9: British novelistic genres, 1740–1900

