

Medieval and Early Modern Student Association

Durham University

Eighth Annual Postgraduate Conference

# On the Fringes: Outsiders and Otherness in the Medieval and Early Modern World

8-10 July 2014

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Now am I maid ane unworthie outwaill,  
And all in cair translatit is my joy.

Henryson, *The Testament of Cresseid*, ll. 129-130

The image of the outsider is a social constant and encompasses a variety of forms: the socially inept, the heretic, the witch, the outlaw, the religiously obscure and the *undefinable*. This idea of the 'other' was not restrained to a single being or sect of society, but also related to physical boundaries or cultural segregation. The 'other' was not contained by society and indeed found solace in the safety of the wilderness, sects, and geographical mobilisation. Such factions were often due to geographical disconnection as well as imposed social constraint and exclusionary misunderstandings. This interdisciplinary conference aims to broaden perceptions of the Medieval and Early Modern eras by focusing on what lay outside social conventions and beyond established borders, and the nature of exclusion itself. MEMSA invites postgraduate and early-career researchers to present and discuss their research on aspects of 'otherness' within Medieval and Early Modern archaeology, theology, history, literature, philosophy, music, art, science, and culture. Possible topics include:

- Archaeological perimeters, remains, and delineations of wilderness
- Outlaws, aliens, and foreigners
- Excluded canonical ideas and marginalia
- Deviation and illegality
- Sexual deviation, racism, and minority exclusion
- Geographical boundaries, borders, and demarcations
- Hermits and heretics
- Philosophical or religious ideas that led to social disruption
- Monstrosities, magic and the otherworldly
- Lepers, disease, dysfunction, and madness
- Colonialism, subjugation and differentiation

Postgraduate and postdoctoral students are welcome to apply for presentations and roundtable discussions. The conference will host keynote addresses by Professor John McKinnell (Durham University) and Dr Sarah Barber (Lancaster University). Tours of Durham Cathedral and Castle as well as a manuscript session hosted by Professor Richard Gameson are scheduled for any interested delegates. Teleconferencing panels are available in order to accommodate international delegates.

PLEASE CONTACT [IMRS.MEMSA@DURHAM.AC.UK](mailto:IMRS.MEMSA@DURHAM.AC.UK) WITH ABSTRACTS OF 200-300 WORDS FOR PAPERS NO LONGER THAN 20 MINUTES BY 28 APRIL 2014.

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