



Episode 1,407: Does Study of the Middle Ages Have a “White Supremacy” Problem?

Guest: Rachel Fulton Brown

WOODS: I decided to bring you back, because as I was telling you before, I saw an article in *The New York Times* about medievalists, and there you were quoted in there. And it's not that common for a medievalist to get a mentioned in *The New York Times*. Then shortly thereafter, there was a lengthy piece in *First Things* – and you sent me this – that talks about you. It's all about you and your travails within the field. And I thought, you know, I've talked to you about this a little bit before, but there's an awful lot to say. The fact that it's now in *The New York Times* means that it's getting people's attention. So I am very, very interested in what's happening in medieval studies.

And what I loved in the *First Things* article – I'm going to link to both of these on the show notes page, TomWoods.com/1407 – is the quotation from the anonymous scholar who said something along the lines of, up to now, medieval studies have been pretty sheltered from the SJW, craziness because most of those people frankly aren't smart enough to have the background you need to be a medievalist. You have to know Latin. You have to actually have done something other than activism your whole life. But now, there was the feeling in the article that standards have been falling, and so now it's been easier and easier for SJWs to creep in. But I just loved that sort of thing.

Can you, before we get into any details, just set the stage about, let's say, where medieval studies has been and what the current trajectory is?

BROWN: You're asking a historian to give you a short answer on a history? Oh, dear [laughing].

WOODS: With Rachel Fulton Brown, I want as long an answer as you choose to give.

BROWN: Well, you know, I write 600-page books. I'm not sure I do short. The medium-sized answer is this has been an argument that's been developing in medieval studies most of my career. I remember being asked by one of my future colleagues when I was interviewing for my job here at Chicago, back in 1994, what I saw as the big sort of up-and-coming conversation that we were having in medieval studies. And I thought about the kinds of things that I'd been seeing in the conference programs and the discussions that seemed to be animating people most, and I said – you know, naive and young and just finishing my dissertation, having been thinking about devotion and scriptural exegesis for some time – identity. And I was talking to Andrew Abbott, who's one of our professors of sociology – he was then master of our social sciences division and the college, so he was interviewing me as part of my campus visit. And he nodded and said, "Well, yes." I mean, of course, that's what's coming.

But I think even back in 1994 that he pushed me in saying what was the major sort of trend coming, I don't know that I really appreciated how much it was going to transform our field over the next 25 years. I mean, even though that was my answer back in 1994, I was thinking in particular about the way in which there were many sessions then starting to be put together on relations between Christians, Muslims, and Jews. I mean, here I was trying to write about Christianity and devotion and liturgy and exegesis, and it was back in the day when we were still sort of almost talking about post-modernism as a problem of the linguistic turn, when we were worried about language and the way language worked. And I'd done a lot of reading on things like Roland Barthes on his ideas of polysemy and said, oh, that's what I'm working on in medieval exegesis. Clearly, the early '90s, I spent a lot of time sort of reading around literary theorists to understand where my work might place within their discussion. But that discussion vanished on us, and was over the next couple decades replaced by this conversation about the relationship between religious communities, which is what I meant when I told Andy that I thought we were looking at identity.

It's been a frustrating 25 years for me in the sense that, most the time I think when people are talking about these relations between Christians, Muslims, and Jews, which is the sort of default for the period that we're looking at – those are the major tensions and conversations – it tends to take place simply at a social level. I've been very frustrated over the years that almost nobody seems to want to talk about the actual differences in theology that are at stake in those conversations, the actual differences in religious beliefs, devotion. Most of it takes place on the level of sort of abstract at others and the degree to which those stereotypes are projected onto these different groups.

I have been trying in my own conversation over the recent years to, at least let's have some substance of the religious differences in these conversations. And that, to a large extent, has been some of the things that I've been writing about on my blog, Fencing Bear at Prayer. They're some of the reasons that I've continued to push back in social media on this conversation, because I think we've fallen into this identity politics in our field and lost the complete substance of what we're actually trained to be able to think about, which is the deep cultural, theological, intellectual, artistic differences between these various groups and their overlaps. And I've done a little bit of that in my own scholarship. I've reviewed works that tried to bring that part of the conversation into the forefront.

But for the most part, what you see in things like the *New York Times* article or the very wonderful piece that Charlotte Allen did – wonderful in the sense that Charlotte, writing for *First Things*, Charlotte is herself a PhD in medieval literature, so she has a deep background in our field and has written about our field before – that, in the *First Things* article, she's able to really go into depth about the stakes in the conversation, where it's being played out, the kinds of things said about me, but also the ways in which my colleagues in the field have been voicing their concerns.

So I mean, the medium-length answer is it's been building for pretty much the entire time I've been in the profession. It still took me to a certain extent by surprise. Now, three and a half years ago, when I became part of that conversation, because Professor Kim found the blog posts that I'd done on chivalry and consent and vote, which I called "Three Cheers for White Men" – which I'm sure your listeners have already read [laughing].

WOODS: They may have, but I think you and I are pretty deep into the weeds in this stuff, and some people may not have, so I do want to return to that post, because that's partly

where the trouble began for you. But the person who really took you to task for that is this Dorothy Kim, no longer at Vassar, now I think at Brandeis, am I right?

BROWN: Yes, she's at Brandeis now.

WOODS: Okay, so she just has just come right out and just flatly called you a Nazi. Now, the way Nazi is thrown around these days is going to leave the youngsters with the impression that the Nazis were people who said rude things once in a while and wrote articles that you didn't like. That's the impression they're going to be left with, when you call a medieval scholar a Nazi. That's the problem.

But also this term, anybody using the term "white supremacy" in a non-jokey way, like in a non-ironic way in 2019, I think is mentally ill, because they're really – white supremacy meant that you favored a system where whites had legal privileges, supremacy, if you will, over other races. Today, I know of nobody who even comes near supporting anything like that, but they deliberately use the term because they know it'll evoke images of the 1950s and '60s, let's say.

But also, just on the whole white supremacy matter, the other day in my email newsletter, I pointed out that if you want to see a case of mild but nevertheless clear supremacy of one race over another, look at Malaysia. The Chinese minority in Malaysia has never lived on a level playing field with native Malays. To the contrary, the Malaysian constitution expressly privileges native Malays over other peoples. This is expressly part of the very fabric of life in Malaysia. So the natives get all kinds of special privileges throughout the economy. Certainly in the university system, it's been harder and harder for the Chinese minority to get a foothold in there. Most of the people leaving Malaysia are Chinese.

Now, that would be an example. Now, that's mild. There's no violence involved, so it's a mild case of racial supremacy, but that's racial supremacy. There's no affirmative action in that country to help the Chinese. It's affirmative action to hurt the Chinese. Whereas we have a country that's exactly the opposite in every conceivable way. There's affirmative action for minority groups. In everything you can think of, there's affirmative action programs. That's not white supremacy. Again, there has to be something wrong with you. And yet, you are just casually referred to as if it's simply obvious to everyone that you're a white supremacist. How about you comment on that?

BROWN: Well, I think often "white" is being used as a cover for "Christian," in the sense that it's actually a cultural debate, but they're casting it as a racial problem. And that's why I think it's interesting that, in medieval studies, this whole racial question has overshadowed what I still think are the real difficulties in talking about the ways Christians, Muslims, and Jews related in the period. And the more my colleagues in the field can call me a white supremacist for standing up for Christian values and doctrines, the more they obscure that. They make me out to be a white supremacist, because what I'm actually arguing for is an understanding of the way in which Western culture depended upon Christian doctrines and institutions.

Now, you can end up in a very fraught argument about the degree to which those institutions and values can exist outside of a Christian understanding of reality. I say, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth," I mean it; can you then have the kinds of understanding of human relations, the relationship between men and women, the relation

between people of different ethnicities, the relation between people of different classes, without the Christian underpinning of, in baptism, there is neither slave nor free, Jew nor Greek, male nor female? Well, that's a pretty difficult and big question.

And of course, the more of my colleagues in the field call me a white supremacist so that people will be terrified of listening to me because they might get cooties from me and no longer be invited to the right cocktail parties and conference panels, the less we're going to be able to talk about the deep ideological differences that are straining our culture. And that has been what I've been saying all along. And of course, the more I say that, the more people like Professor Kim are going to call me a fascist, because they're not willing to engage in the debate on the terms that I see as actually the ones that we aren't willing to talk about.

I did a post on the blog called "The Unbearable Whiteness of Medieval Studies," which was an answer to an op-ed that a graduate student in the divinity school here in Chicago did that – this is about two years ago now – where he's lamenting the fact that there are not very many black people interested in studying Anglo-Saxon studies. Now, the irony of that was he himself in his theology is a pagan and wants to bring back Norse religion, as far as I can understand. But his solution was: we need to go out into the high schools and the community centers and stuff like that and get people interested in studying Beowulf. And I'm like, so you're suggesting that we need to convince more black people to be interested in something that you're interested in studying. Otherwise, you feel guilty about wanting to study Anglo-Saxon.

I [inaudible] that that is largely what's at stake. I mean, if you want to make Beowulf exciting, sure, make Beowulf exciting, but it's going to appeal to certain readers and not to others. And one of the other things I've been trying to convince my colleagues at Chicago of is that if we want to attract, for example, more black students and faculty to come to the University of Chicago and teach and study, maybe we should talk about things that black Americans actually care about, like Christianity. So I think that the racial language is being used to obscure the real religious tensions that are at play in this discussion.

WOODS: Let's try and figure out what exactly is Professor Kim's argument. It seems like – the funny thing is, she accuses everybody of hate. But my gosh, every single conference presentation she gives is about resentment of somebody, anger at somebody. It's constantly anger, lashing out. It's bizarre. whereas you don't sound like a particularly angry or hateful person to me. That's how it always seems to go. But what exactly is she saying that medieval studies is missing out on? Because in her view, it's not just that they're not recruiting enough people of color to be interested in medieval studies; it must be something about the concentration and focus of medieval studies itself. What does she want you guys to do that you're not doing?

BROWN: I'm not entirely sure [laughing].

WOODS: [laughing] Okay.

BROWN: Because, well, I mean, I came to everyone's attention when I pushed back against the blog posts that she did about, you know, proclaiming ourselves not white supremacist in the classroom; otherwise, our students would believe we were. And that seems to continue to be the thing that she's most anxious about, that if we as individuals don't declare ourselves

not proponents of an ideology none of us are, then everyone will assume we are because we're white.

I did attend one session. I've only heard her speak in person once, and it was at the Naval Academy not this most recent year, but the year before. And I went to a session specifically to find out what it was that they wanted, this group of medievalists. And they didn't end up with any time for questions, and I sat up close in the front because I wanted to be able to ask a question, which they noticed and then tweeted about how there were trolls in the audience. What I sincerely wanted to ask was: what do you love? Why do you study the Middle Ages? What is that you love about this material?

And many of them in the panel did talk about it. They talked about loving Chaucer; they talked about studying the literature. None of the panelists – there were five panelists in this particular session. None of them mentioned Christianity or religion at all. So my guess is they have a fairly secular vision of what it means to study this period. They tended to talk more about what it meant to be in the profession, and I think some of these – like you could say we're dealing with the romance of academia, that I hope it survives all of this, the idea of that you want to be a professor and immerse yourself in books and argument and thought and writing. You can imagine the movie montage that we'd get one of us working on our dissertation or our book.

But in the *New York Times* article, one of our colleagues was quoted as saying most medievalists tend to have a fairly monkish existence, that indeed, most of my colleagues in the profession prefer not to be on social media and prefer not to be in the fray, and they're constantly telling me, you should get back to your scholarship. But that comment about being monkish got a fair amount of pushback on Twitter, particularly, so that there's a hashtag like #notallmonks, or something. They know we're not all monks. We want to be activist. We want to be out there in the public sphere, pushing against whatever, right?

WOODS: Yeah.

BROWN: My sense is they – and I was just posting on my own Facebook some videos by Paul Joseph Watson. Since he was banned on Facebook, I had to go investigate him, right? It's like when I first started writing about Milo, it was after he was silenced at DePaul and not able to give his talk there. And so I'm like, *Oh, well, what's going on here? I need to go find out.* And so I went and watched a lot of his talks three years ago. Paul Joseph Watson was one of the conservatives who was also banned off Facebook a couple weeks ago, along with Milo and Laura Loomer and Louis Farrakhan, whom the SPLC always fails to mention.

Anyway, I've been watching some of Paul's videos talking about the addictive effects of social media. I think some of it is my colleagues – and I have to include myself in this, because clearly I'm in the fray – enjoy it. They enjoy the pushback. They enjoy the sparring. They enjoy the feeling of being sort of in the moment, in the digital moment. Professor Kim has written a fair amount about that. There was one post that she made some years ago, trying to make an argument that Twitter posting should be included as part of our scholarly assessment. So I think one of the things that I did quite bluntly was I showed up in the social media and disagreed with them. And you know, *Wait, no, social media was supposed to be our playground. Who's she, and why is she getting all this attention?*

WOODS: I want to ask you actually about this Kalamazoo conference at Western Michigan University. The Medieval Institute runs this medievalist conference. And in the *New York Times* article that basically prompted this episode, we read the following: that last year, the Kalamazoo conference rejected a number of panels proposed by Medievalists of Color – and that's a group, Medievalists of Color. And it says, "An open letter signed by more than 600 scholars denounced the organizers for 'a bias against or lack of interest in sessions that are self-critical of medieval studies or focused on the politics of the field.' The panels about race that were accepted, some scholars noted, were organized by white scholars." Can you tell me anything more about this?

BROWN: I wrote extensively about this on my blog, and I got tangled up a bit with one of the particularly outspoken members of that group, Eileen Joy, although as I understand it, there have been some splinters in the in the different affiliations over the last year. So Dr. Joy made a Facebook post basically cursing the Medieval Congress Program committee for rejecting a number of these panels, and that generated a fair amount of interest in that petition and the 600 signatures and so forth.

I mean, the problem with Kalamazoo is it's an enormous conference. It's the largest conference of medievalists in the world, although there's a sister conference at Leeds that I think is catching up in terms of numbers. But it's so large that it's gotten sort of unwieldy in the sense of having sessions at time periods when people are very unwilling to attend, like Thursday night, the late session or something like that. And so the program committee has been persistently pressed to figure out exactly how to select from the numerous groups that regularly propose panels. One of the real concerns that people have had is established groups get their sessions placed in the program on the better days, Friday and Saturday of the conference, and independent groups tend to end up on Sunday morning, which is sort of after the dance and when people are tired and many people already leaving. So the program committee is always under pressure from everyone about whether or not they've accepted all of the sessions that any one group has proposed.

And my honest opinion is I think that that's what happened They rejected some of the sessions, were trying for a balance in the submissions that they got, and this was taken as evidence by certain groups that they were being unfairly selected against. My suspicion is that's the last thing that the program committee wanted to do. I mean, they capitulated quite quickly to the petition and said, well, we'll revise our methods. But people have found that this kind of protest is effective, and that sort of – it's hysteria, right? It's creating animosity among colleagues who, we're all, in fact, willing to try to make these sorts of conversations happen, including myself. Including myself.

I mean, it's been puzzling to me that the thing that people most want to do is say, you shouldn't talk to her, when I say, well, I tried to propose in my blog, over years of writing about it now, what I'm actually concerned about. And even my own department, I think in the long run, has had to acknowledge that some of the things they were worried I was thinking were unfounded and that the sorts of things that I'm actually arguing about – for example, bringing more questions to the table that affect black Americans – those were the sorts of things I was always wanting to be able to talk about, but in the current sort of climate, as we like to say, even mentioning that that might be the problem and it's not the way it's been cast in other fora becomes cause for outrage and banning.

WOODS: You were saying that, if I heard you right, that it's not like the Medieval Institute really wanted to turn these panels down. It kind of reminds me of where people, they'll accuse some university administration of just not wanting to hire minorities in certain departments. Now, in those departments, it could be that there are only a dozen minority PhDs in the entire United States. So the mathematics makes it impossible for everybody to have someone on campus. And the idea that these administrators would slit their grandmother's throats if it meant they could hire more minority faculty, they would love nothing more than that. And so for them to get attacked, in a way, I think it's poetic justice, because most of these administrators have created this very environment where the presumption is, you're evil, you're racist, you want to do arbitrary harm to other people. Well, those people made that bed, those administrators, and now they have to sleep at it. But it made me wonder if these panels being proposed were just so preposterous that they had to reject them just to maintain any standards. Do you think that's what it is?

BROWN: I didn't see the proposals, so I don't know what the reason was. But what you say about not just university administrators, university faculty – I mean, we have in my own department at Chicago in history, the year I started writing about Milo – and I was on leave, and so I wasn't engaged in that conversation directly. My department was actively working through a policy on promoting diversity among our hires. And I came back the next autumn, and we had a discussion about it in the department. And the student newspaper even interviewed me about what I'd said in that meeting, because as it turned out, I did not, in fact, sign out against this diversity statement, partly because, as I said – and I did a blog post on that called "The Niceness Cosmopolitan Creed," which your more Christian listeners will recognize as a pun on the Nicene Constantinopolitan Creed –

WOODS: Nicene Constantinopolitan – right, right, good.

BROWN: I said, of course, I'm going to sign on to this particular statement; it expresses perfectly the theology of Pentecost, the inclusion of people from all races and ethnicities and cultures and sexes into this one – and then I end the post with saying: I know what this kind of institution is called, as do my colleagues, and I then in the post with a picture from the hymnal, from that week, where it's singing about the oneness of the Church and the inclusiveness of it.

That's a perfect example of the kind of argument that I've made, about the degree to which, even when people think they're making a purely secular argument, they're making it within a Christian expectation of, for example, inclusivity. The inclusiveness that we are attempting in our culture, in our society, is a Christian hope, that we do not exclude on the basis of race, that we do not exclude on the basis of gender, that we do not exclude on the basis of class. And in fact, in that conversation that my colleagues had in my department, one of the things that was not in their original formulation of the statement was class. And I pushed back on that, and I said, why aren't we talking about the real divisions in American society, across class divides? Because that, if you think about what happened to Charles Murray at Middlebury, the pushback against saying we have created a class-stratified society through this university, meritocratic sorting of students, that's the thing that tends to get students most upset, because as he's pointing out, once you once you've taken all of the highly testable students out of the middle of the country, you end up with communities that don't have the kind of leadership that they used to have from those highly educated citizens. And now they're all living on the coasts, telling the rest of the country that they are deplorable.

WOODS: Well, now let's lead in from there to what *The New York Times* basically took as kind of the reason or at least one of the news hooks, let's say, for having an article on the Middle Ages and the scholarship about it. And that is, they'll say that the Charlottesville thing in August 2017 featured people using medieval symbolism or imagery, and this is not an isolated case, and that therefore, people in medieval studies needed to speak up about that. What do you think about the plausibility of that claim? Because, by the way, Charlotte Allen takes that on a little bit in the *First Things* article, and she said, I looked over the footage of Charlottesville. I found precisely two people who could be described as having any kind of medieval regalia. And I guarantee – you know, this is my editorial comment. I guarantee you, given the state of education in America, not one person knew what the hell any of this was.

BROWN: Oh, I'm certain that they didn't. It looks military to them, and as far as I can tell from the footage that I saw, which was not much – I looked at some of it. But I mean, it's a mishmash of all sorts of symbolism they're using. I mean, the funniest to me is when medievalists are worried about the use of religious symbolism, and often again, it's pagan Norse symbolism, and then they'll say that I am a proponent of white supremacy, because – I'm not sure what. Because there were some people that went to the Leeds conference, the sister conference of Kalamazoo, and were complaining afterwards that there were booths selling Celtic crosses, and that was evidence of the white supremacy. I mean, it's turned into any symbols of European culture can be described as white supremacist now. So as far as I'm concerned, if a few guys at the Charlottesville march had shields, it's akin to pulling down absolutely all of our historical monuments. You're basically saying the only way we can protect ourselves from white supremacy is to erase the past. And it's Orwellian. It's Cultural Revolution-style.

It's, in fact, what real regime change looks like. And the Tudors tried to do that with the previous monarchs in England. The Reformation was an incredibly successful exercise in eradicating England's past. They wiped out most of its Catholic imagery. You can't tell stories about the late medieval kings without seeing them through Shakespeare's plays. And whether Shakespeare's sort of accurate or not, or he's pushing back against the Tudors' version of things, I mean, this is straightforward – you could say it's the tyranny of wiping out the past. And I think those are the real stakes in all of this, which is why I'm willing to continue to stand up to being called these names, because I do think if we lose the stories that we've been so laboriously cultivating in our scholarship over the last several hundred years of, in fact, how complicated all of these transitions have been, we are going to be in for some serious social disruption. And it has nothing to do with a few guys carrying shields in that march.

WOODS: I can understand how you would feel when somebody says to you, "Oh, for heaven's sake, get back to your scholarship," because my feeling in that situation would be: 600 people at least signed that petition, and that's probably not all the people who feel the way they do, and so I feel like there are people who, out of sheer hatred, are trying to destroy the foundations of a field that I love. I can't go back into my monkish cell and just do my manuscript when I know that there are people trying to throw dynamite down into my cell. I have to be up at the top there, fighting these people off. Now, having said that, I am curious to know what you are working on right now. And are you working on a scholarly project? Are you fighting back against crazy people? What's occupying your time?

BROWN: All of the above. So *Mary and the Art of Prayer*, my most recent book, came out last year. That took me a very long time to write. I mean, good scholarship is not something that

you can publish in a year, so I'm not coming out with another book this year. What I have been doing is developing the base for the next major project, which is on virtue and the training of the soul through devotion, to cultivate the kind of civic life that we know develops in the later Middle Ages. It's a project or, you know, problem that comes out of *Mary and the Art of Prayer*, because in that book, I'm talking about the devotion to Mary through the Office of the Virgin, and understanding what it meant for medieval Christians to pray to Mary using the prayers that they did. And what I recognized when I finished that book, that the last chapter in that book is on prayer and how medieval Christians understood themselves to be serving Mary, that that service, that training and devotion, that training of your imagination and attention and real cognitive exercise also transform yourself. You expect that. You hope for that. But specifically in virtue.

So in order to be able to make that argument, I needed some more background, and what I've been doing in the last couple years since I finished *Mary and the Art of Prayer* is developing courses to help me read in some of that scholarship. So I did a course the year before this one on towns and cities and the imagery of the urban life in the Middle Ages. This year, I've been working – I did three new courses. I did one on virtues and vices, the treatises on training the soul in the virtues from antiquity through the 15th century. I did a course in the winter on medieval Christian mythology, which was a way of talking through the real devotional effects of the stories that I've been working on in my scholarship. And this quarter, I'm doing a colloquium for our history undergraduates on religion and history, and how to think through the problem of actually, as historians, talking about religion. We are in a very difficult place as scholars in talking about religion, because as my students and I are learning in this colloquium, there's no sort of stable methodology for doing it, doing comparative religion.

And in *Mary and the Art of Prayer*, I've tried to do a sort of imaginative exercise of asking my reader to imagine him or herself saying the Office of the Virgin, imagine yourself into this prayer practice. And it's received mixed reviews from my scholarly colleagues, because they're like, well, we don't want to do this, right? This is too Christian. This is too much like actually believing. And I'm like, well, how are you going to study religion if you don't step inside people's perspective, right? I thought it would be sort of fun and imaginative and empathy, which is what I thought we were all supposed to be trying to achieve. I found for Christianity, that's not always as welcome.

If your listeners are interested, the syllabi for all of those courses are posted on my academic homepage, so if you Google me, Rachel Fulton Brown, the syllabi and readings for those courses are there. This is similar to what I had to do when I started working on *Mary and the Art of Prayer*, which was a series of courses and articles and sort of smaller test trenches, as I called them, on prayer and devotion and how to imagine this practical problem. And the syllabi for those courses are online, too. I did things on spiritual exercises; I did things on books of hours, and praying by the book and so forth.

So right now what I am is in the early stages of reading in the broader scholarship, rethinking, conceptualizing the big problem. And it's been very interesting for me being in this big public debate, because of course, one, it convinces me that what I'm doing really matters, that the thing that we are lacking, obviously, in the public sphere is any sense of self-discipline and virtue, cultivating the restraint of emotions, but also the sort of artistic production of love, the devotional art so that we're making things that are beautiful instead of ugly. How much of popular culture now is just hideous, right? Again, I've been watching Paul Joseph Watson's videos, and he does a lot of stuff on modern architecture and modern art and how ugly it is. I

think that what I've been doing the last couple years in my teaching is understanding why – that's my next big question: how virtue creates civilization.

WOODS: That's a big project.

BROWN: Yeah, so don't expect that book for a little bit. But I started Fencing Bear at Prayer, my blog, at the beginning of the *Mary and the Art of Prayer* project to talk about what I was learning as a fencer and the spiritual practices that fencing was drawing out of me. And so the blog has always been to a certain extent in conversation with my scholarship. It's like, how do you make not just accessible, but understandable, the transformations that we go through in spiritual life and devotional life? What's funny is some of the pushback that I got from some of my colleagues, saying, well, you should go back your scholarship, or why is your blog posted on your academic homepage, and I'm like, well, on the one hand, there's this argument out there that we should be counting all of this digital work as part of our scholarship, which I never did. I always made sure to make my department chair and my deans aware of the fact that I was doing it, but I recognized the separation. But on the other hand, this has been typically one of the things that people say is frustrating about academia. How do we translate what we do in our scholarship into the public conversation? And I've been trying to do that with this sort of two-pronged approach in my scholarship and my blogging and now my videos and conversations like this one.

WOODS: I will on the show notes page, TomWoods.com/1407, have links to the couple of articles that we've been talking about, but I'll also have a bunch of links to stuff related to your work. But in particular, if you could give out one link to people where they could follow you, which one would it be?

BROWN: Okay, can you also add, Milo did a long article, which has now been published as a book with a new foreword by Mark Bauerlein that's now available as a paperback on Amazon, so if you want a sort of physical memory of this great debate, of his *Middle Rages*, if you could add that as well. To find me, everything is collected on my academic homepage, Rachel Fulton Brown, it's [RFulton, Home.Chicago.edu/~RFulton](http://RFulton.Home.Chicago.edu/~RFulton). But just google me as Rachel Fulton Brown. I have links there to my blog, to my YouTube channel where I collect together the videos I've been in, and to all of my articles and books. All of my articles are posted on Academia.edu, but the links are there on Rachel Fulton Brown. So my homepage is the place to go for the links to everywhere else. But also to Milo's writing about me.

WOODS: Okay, I'll make sure all of that is up there, and I would urge people who have any interest in this at all to check out TomWoods.com/1407. That's the easiest way to get to that homepage without having to remember it. I'll have everything there, but in particular, if you click on that link, apparently, from there, you can get to a lot of other great stuff. Well, at least it's not boring, and at least people are hearing your name. You know, that's good.

BROWN: Well, I want them to hear Mary's name. That's the thing that I'm mostly working on. But to understand the deep beauty of Christianity has been my scholarly goal, and it's, of course, a great pleasure to get to talk about the controversy – you know, it's a great pleasure to get to talk my work. If the controversies are what bring people to my work, that's a good thing.

WOODS: Well, last time you were here – and I'll also link to that, the previous appearance you had on this show – we did start off – because I couldn't help myself, we did start off

talking a bit about some of that, even though I primarily had you on to talk about the controversy. But I just couldn't help myself. And then your answers were so good, and I thought, doggone it, I didn't want to leave this topic. But we had to, but it'll give people a taste. So if you enjoyed this episode, you can go back and listen to the other one. All right, Rachel Fulton Brown, thanks so much for your time.

BROWN: Thank you.