

**Women's Caucus History
2005**

2005

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INTRODUCTION

Alison Conway

Four years ago I put together a few documents in a “brief history” to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the ASECS Women’s Caucus. This year I am happy to present you with an expanded version of that document, to honor thirty years of Women’s Caucus activism. Collecting material for this history has proven immensely rewarding. I have dug deep into the boxes that house the ASECS archives at the Clark Library, engaged in animated conversations in the hallways of ASECS conventions, and listened to many, many interesting anecdotes at the Women’s Caucus annual lunch. My thanks to all of you who have shared your thoughts both in conversation and in written form for inclusion here.

What does the future hold in store for the Women’s Caucus? I hope it includes the practices of mentoring, sharing, and support that have characterized our members’ interactions since the caucus’s inception. That we routinely vote to include a panel that addresses issues of gender and the profession in the ASECS program suggests that women continue to face discrimination in the academy. My own hobby-horse is the issue of child-bearing and tenure-clocks. Others have spoken to the persistence of homophobia in the ivory tower. Facing four more years of George W. Bush, academics in general, and women in particular, can anticipate anti-progressive attacks on a number of different fronts. More than ever, it seems imperative to maintain the political focus that has always characterized the Women’s Caucus agenda. (See “Selected Correspondence.”)

This history lacks representation from the graduate student members of the Caucus. I hope this omission, which I tried, without success, to redress, does not speak to any sense among graduate student women that our caucus does not speak to their needs. I will spend more time in the years to come seeking out the voices of the caucus’s next generation.

In the meanwhile, final thanks go to my undergraduate research assistants: Christine Micallef, who is responsible for uniting all of the files I have sent her way for months into the text you have in your hands; and Jessica Olliver, who compiled the bibliography included here. (Please note: this “Selected Works” contains only the more recent publications of our most prolific members).

RECOLLECTIONS

Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg

I did not attend the ISECS meeting at Yale in 1975 so was not a part of the founding group of the ASECS Women's Caucus. I did, however, participate in the 1976 ASECS meeting in Charlottesville. The Caucus meeting was scheduled for late one afternoon, after the regular sessions. (This was not unusual for the time. I was then Secretary-Treasurer of the women's caucus of the Southern Historical Association; we were only able to get a meeting time in the late afternoon, usually conflicting with various cocktail parties, and in obscure rooms behind the garbage cans.) I believe there was a paper or two in Charlottesville, as well as a discussion of whether the Caucus. We met in a room which was not large enough for the number attending. The events of the previous year were rehearsed; those present agreed to continue the very informal organization to monitor ASECS on the number of women participants on the program, the number of women in appointed and elective positions, and the number of presentations on topics related to women on the program. We would gather again at the 1977 meeting and ask to have a time, and a larger room, for women's studies papers. I offered unspecified help.

Sometime during the 76-77 academic year I had a call from Cynthia Matlack (Theatre History, Pittsburgh, I believe) asking if I would chair the Caucus meeting at the 1977 ASECS meeting as she was unable to go to Vancouver. I do not remember having anything to do with the choice of papers. Once again we were scheduled for late afternoon, in a large lecture room at the University, while others had fun in town. I agreed to see what I could do about this scheduling for the following year. There were several papers; the only one I remember was Miriam Lerenbaum's on the Nine Living Muses.

The 1978 meeting was held in Chicago. The local arrangements people offered us a lunch spot (Gwin Kolb was a sympathetic presence) which I accepted despite the price of hotel meals. This was our first lunch meeting and was well attended, though I do not believe this time slot became automatic until several years later. We combined the meal and papers. I accepted too many papers, for I could not easily turn down such proposals as Ruth Perry's "Veil of Chastity." Most of us in those days were so excited by the wonderful "new" works and women never before discussed at ASECS or other scholarly meetings. Our desire to share our discoveries was such that we found it difficult to stay within the statutory 20 to 25 minutes. In 1978 the future of the Equal Rights Amendment was hanging in the balance. Those of us in various women's caucuses were active in trying to get organizations to adopt resolutions not to meet in states which had not ratified the amendment. I moved the resolution at the ASECS business meeting; attendance seemed to me very large. ASECS had already accepted an invitation to Atlanta for 1979, and Georgia had not ratified ERA. On behalf of the Caucus I acknowledged that we could not change the next meeting, and admitted that the resolution would probably not have any impact on ASECS as the amendment's time limit was running out. Nevertheless, I argued that the principle should be supported. There was, it seemed to me at the time, endless debate including opposition by various distinguished male scholars. The one I remember particularly was Robert Halsband. The resolution passed.

I handed over the Caucus chair's work to someone else after the Chicago meeting; I am sorry to say I can't remember who it was. I do not remember the Caucus at all in Atlanta; I was that year President of SEASECS, the host regional, so concentrated on that. However, I believe that it was after Atlanta that the Caucus asked the ASECS Executive Board to give us a designated slot on the regular program as we were still not entirely satisfied about the representation of women and women's topics on the program. I was asked by the Board to come to their meeting preceding the 1980 ASECS meeting in Washington to discuss this proposal and the arguments for it. The Board accepted our views; since 1981 there has been a Woman's Caucus session. This was, I believe, my last major activity specifically on behalf of the Caucus. In the mid 80s, I was elected to the ASECS Board and then served as Treasurer. I always tried to represent the interests of the Caucus during my tenure on the Board.

The ASECS Woman's Caucus has been a source of great pleasure and satisfaction for me over the past 25 years. We have without question achieved what were our original objectives: to have women elected and appointed to ASECS positions in numbers commensurate to our portion of the membership; to make the program open to papers on women's topics and to female presenters. We still exist to make sure our objectives continue to be met and for the conversations, scholarly exchanges, and fellowship which are the continuing benefits of the Caucus.

ASECS Women's Caucus Response

Madelyn Gutwirth

I simply can't convey to you adequately my astonishment at the news that the Women's Caucus had decided to devote a session to my career. It's something I'd certainly never dreamed of, out there in my Philadelphia suburb. Fortunately, I've had some months to get used to the idea. By now I've entered into a phase of distinct cheerfulness over having lived into the 21st century and my 79th year, beyond a number of equally meritorious colleagues, so as to see it happen.

So I thank you all heartily for this honor. Particularly I want to thank Kate Jensen who so patiently and efficiently organized the session. And I'm especially grateful to the distinguished panelists, not merely for their overgenerous remarks. I deeply admire each one of them for her curiosity, incisiveness, independence, and breadth as a scholar, as well as for her willingness to share in this rite. Each of you has elaborated so searchingly and rewardingly on various aspects of my work that even I understand it far better than before. I'm grateful to each of you for such flattering attentiveness. I want particularly to acknowledge my debts to those with whom I've collaborated fruitfully over the years: Karyna Szmurlo, my companion in furthering Staël Studies on this continent, for her astute, persistent, and devoted efforts; Carol Blum, for inviting me to share in teaching the wonderful National Foundation for the Humanities summer seminar on "Eighteenth-Century French Literature and Women's Place" we held at Stony Brook in 1996; and Avriel Goldberger, my beloved graduate school friend, who took on her fine translations into English of Staël's Delphine, Corinne, and Dix-années d'exil, in part out of sisterly solidarity.

When I joined ASECS in the 1970's, there simply was no such organism as the Women's Caucus. In speaking today to several age cohorts younger than myself, I feel a need to specify why it was thought necessary to form one. What was then the situation, for both eighteenth-century scholarship on women, or for women scholars?

In those days, this society, though some of its male members might or might not be matey with minority members of the opposite sex, retained very much the aura of a men's club, sometimes gracious, sometimes distinctly cool, to women interlopers. The Age of Reason, it was felt, was serious and philosophical: scholarly in an Altgermanisch 19th century mode, not totally unsuitable for an occasional female scholar, but she would have to maintain a jocular mien and certainly not dream of upsetting established canonic saws, categories, or practices. A sample of this last, especially discomfiting to me today, is my lack of success when petitioning for special sessions: first, for one to explore reactions to Carol Blum's groundbreaking Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue; and then, after Gloria Flaherty's premature death, for a session celebrating the career of this former president of ASECS. Both were esteemed by program committees to be "out of bounds."

Already in 1976 the second 20th century feminist wave had begun to bathe the feet of ASECS. Marlene LeGates, for example, published an article entitled "The Cult of Womanhood in Eighteenth-Century Thought" in Eighteenth Century Studies that year. And of course some female colleagues more than held their own. They might occasionally even preside over it, as did Patricia Spacks, or Gita May. But they knew themselves to be exceptions. Few members, particularly among women, specialized in women writers, artists, or thinkers or on gender issues. By 1974, however, the women's movement had blown such wind into our sails that a whole new cohort of excellent scholars, a number of whom are here today, were making a distinctly greater impact on eighteenth-century studies. A set amongst them felt compelled to solidify our entry in materially greater numbers by establishing the Women's Caucus. The Caucus has always had a dual purpose: to foster the aim of enriched scholarship on women via its special sessions and its graduate student essay awards; and to have a continuing care to guard the hard-won advance of eighteenth-century women scholars' careers in academe.

It's tempting, almost too vulgarly tempting, for me to try to recreate and denounce the professional atmosphere I hoped to enter at the outset of my own career. When, in 1948, I married a man, Marcel, who went to teach in suburban Philadelphia, I entered Bryn Mawr College for graduate study. In an initial interview, my distinguished woman professor of Old French, who was married, told me that being married as I already was was alright, even a good thing, but that if I were to have children, I would of course have to give up plans for a teaching career. She also told a classmate with luxuriantly long wavy chestnut hair that she'd never get anyplace professionally unless she cut it. This classmate, strangely enough, dropped out after a year. Being already from childhood a person with feminist leanings, I expressed to my professors a desire to write my dissertation on a woman writer. To my surprise, they were distinctly cool to this notion, though eventually it was Prof. Margaret Gilman who proposed Germaine de Staël to my attention. Far from fostering the careers of young women, Bryn Mawr at that date hired each and every year a dashing young man, freshly graduated from France's Ecole Normale or from Yale, to instruct the little band of maybe eight of us women.

As to my professors, the brilliant Germaine Brée went on to a distinguished enough career at NYU, the University of Wisconsin, and finally Wake Forest University. But the Ivy

League she would surely have graced, as at least the peer of any of her male contemporaries, never enrolled her to teach in any of its faculties. Yet today several Ivies are presided over by this improbably competent sex.

To compare great things to small, akin to that perennial exile Germaine de Staël who referred to hers as a "miserable gypsy life," I part-timed at three different local institutions before gratefully finding asylum and tenure at West Chester University. I must also salute the several support groups I joined in the '60's, in one of which I made a lifetime friend of Rusty Shteir. Such groups, like the Caucus itself, provided the sustenance of solidarity to the aspirations of a generation of women. Other friends of my youth, who, like me, were thought of in our social circles as just "faculty wives," ended up achieving academic careers that certainly seemed to us in the 1960's beyond the realm of possibility. Each of us felt a trepidation that women now, happily, face far more rarely, since our careers were wrested from what we strongly suspected was an overwhelming likelihood of failure. The more's the miracle we celebrate today.

Nowadays we guard our professional gains with sobriety, but without benefit of the double-edged rancor that fuelled our first efforts. But it is of the broader Caucus issue of our understanding of women's configuration in the eighteenth-century that I want to speak a bit more fully.

The tie that links my book on Germaine de Staël with the later Twilight of the Goddesses - Women and Representation in the French Revolutionary Era is Staël's own remark in On Literature that Karyna has referred to, that "since the Revolution men had found it politically and morally useful to reduce women to the most absurd mediocrity." Staël thereby presented me with an intriguing mystery, virtually untapped as such, that could only begin to be unraveled by delving for evidence into areas that literature alone could not wholly divulge. Janet, Sarah, and Madeleine have all referred to my recourse to interdisciplinarity. When I turned to it, it was because that is the way I always taught. Like many in my generation, to whom the then ambient notion of Kulturgeschichte was congenial, I used history and the arts to ground students' perceptions of literature in the aesthetics and politics of the target mentality. My teaching, since 1971, of the basic interdisciplinary Women's Studies course, intensified my embrace of this method. I knew I was treading on dangerous ground in bringing it with me into print in Twilight of the Goddesses, but tenured and not expecting elevation except, perhaps, to Heaven, I had nothing to lose but face by making errors of judgment. So I enjoyed the liberation of roaming away from my literary base, and was rewarded by the cordiality of historians, and especially of art historians, who didn't find it aberrant that someone "outside" their field should be fascinated by it. Like one of those dry magic flowers that gain color and density once immersed in water, the dip into disciplines new to me, like medical history, fashion, demography, and even the anthropology Madeleine alluded to, renewed and opened out everything I was trying to explore about changes in gender relations in later eighteenth-century France.

Not long ago in an issue of TLS, Michael Londry quoted from a recently recovered commonplace book this remark by a late eighteenth-century woman: "That a woman should dare to have any thoughts that wander beyond the scanty Limits allow'd her by the other Sex, she knows will be consider'd by those haughty Monopolizers of all Sense and knowledge, as the highest presumption,/ she therefore resolves so cautiously to conceal her Treason that it shall

never break out into any overt act..." (3/5/14) This eighteenth-century speaker's reference to a need to be covert in her Treasons inspired two reactions in me: the first, intense relief that our own thoughts no longer require such tyrannous inner censorship. But the second was how much of such caution respecting our own Treasons still hobbles us.

Our scholarship on women and gender has been virtually prodigious, so much having been achieved in the space of thirty years. But we've moved into an age of misogynistic backlash which threatens to weaken our nerve. As we scan course syllabi and professional journals, we have to admit that canonic structures, despite important emendations, still basically persist. I'm fully aware what bad form it has become to speak of master narratives. Yet I appeal to you all: As we look about us in the world we live in, we are witness to the dynamism of women. Yet the bigotries of the categories we continue to employ in recording culture may well serve to falsify future accounts of our age just as they have done in the past. We now realize how wholly the suppression of issues of gender has served to mask cultural memory. When the record we're transmitting of the past is so deeply defective, surely it must be vitiating to our comprehension of the present. The so-called Age of Reason, so dominant in the intellectual world I entered as a student has suffered a kicking around from virtually every quarter in recent years, as nobody here needs to be reminded. However, as German novelist Peter Schneider has observed, one of that age's most valuable formulations--one that allows us to reconstruct Enlightenment infinitely--was that of human fallibility.* Feminist scholars have not lagged in their critiques. In fact, they're illustrating handsomely how it was rather Unreason that then governed gender relations, no less than it does in our own time. But Reason's misappropriation of gender issues in the age that produced our secular modern societies is an Achilles Heel that dampens Reason's prestige in the present. This is why new paradigms of Enlightenment that might melt our rigid categories seem to me so necessary. Many among us are attempting precisely to uncover them. It cannot suffice us to merely add female presence into the mix, since to do so will always only constitute it as a reflection. What we need are more adequate frameworks that incorporate the eye-popping and mind-blowing racial and gender critiques we've developed over the years. The Women's Caucus, with its built-in cross-national and disciplinary membership, might foster more extended and speculative efforts with collaborative, longer-range projects. Such a widened spectrum of vision of the past must inform the broader and deeper Enlightenment of the future.

Allow me a last simile. I've been thinking of women's place in cultural memory as akin to an Engulfed Cathedral. In the Breton myth, the Cathedral of Ys lies under the sea, rising through morning mists into visibility by daylight, but lapsing back into invisibility with the day's ending. We've brought our cathedral up out of the depths where it can now be seen, glittering in the sunlight, but we haven't yet secured its structure from engulfment when the dark sets in.

I can only wish to each of you a joy similar to that I felt in waging, through scholarship, the struggle to keep its structure in view. Thank you all, panelists and friends, for arranging this gratifying tribute, to me and to our Caucus. It's been a terrific victory as a collaborative, ever-renewing effort. Long may it flourish, at least until we ourselves have decided its job is finished.

* "Separated by civilization," International Herald Tribune -The IHP Online. 7 April 2004 <www.iht.com/articles/513613.html>. [Link no longer works. See <http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/NATO/Schneider-Peter/Separated-by-civilization> OR

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**The *Bijoux* Talk Back:
Some Thoughts on Women in Eighteenth-Century Studies**

Heidi Bostic

At the 2004 ASECS meeting in Boston, during a Women's Caucus Roundtable devoted to her work, Madelyn Gutwirth remarked that despite the many gains of feminist scholars, "canonic structures still basically persist." With this sobering observation in mind, my remarks here will center on the general question: What does it mean to be a woman scholar whose research focuses on women writers, particularly within French studies? I will touch upon three points: a problem in the field, a problem with how the field is perceived, and an idea about one strategy for confronting these problems.

First is a problem in the field of French eighteenth-century studies. Not long ago, I received a notice via an e-mail listserv that a new anthology had been published entitled *Être dix-huitiémiste* [*Being an Eighteenth-Century Scholar*]. I was intrigued by the description and ordered the book. It is comprised of autobiographical pieces (or in one case, an interview) with thirteen eighteenth-century scholars. Much to my disappointment, the book creates the impression that there are no women in eighteenth-century studies: all of the contributors are men. It furthermore conveys the perception that no one in the field focuses their research on women. The editor's introduction describes prominent scholars and teachers using exclusively masculine terms such as *maître* ["master"] and even *patriarche*. One scholar describes the French state, which is funding his retirement, as a *bonne fille* ["good girl/daughter"]. Another scholar, when asked by an interviewer about the absence of women in his work, points in self-defense to his analysis of the novel *Thérèse philosophe*, a frankly pornographic work featuring, for example, the sexual exploitation of a young girl by a priest, which this scholar describes as a "manifesto for women's liberation." Overall, the tenor of this collection is accurately reflected in its visual aspects: each selection is accompanied by a photograph of the scholar, emphasizing the all-male cast, as well as the predominant whiteness of the contributors (calling to mind what Susan Lanser and others have diagnosed as "the whiteness of eighteenth-century studies"). The book's cover (see Figure 1), a portrait of an unknown man by Thomas Frey (dated 1760), accurately reflects the book's exclusive focus on men.

Other recent book covers in French eighteenth-century studies do, however, acknowledge that the century included women. Take, for example, the cover of an anthology of eighteenth-century French libertine novels, *Romans libertins du XVIIIe siècle*, published in the popular Bouquins series. This cover (see Figure 2) features a detail from François Boucher's painting *A Woman Fastening Her Garter, with Her Maid* (1742). While the painting in its entirety includes a scene of a whole room, with the woman's maid looking on as she dresses, the book cover crops the painting in such a way that it dismembers the woman, featuring her

leg, a cat, and a fire. Nancy K. Miller, in her book *French Dressing*, offers an analysis of this image in which she links the book's cover design to a discussion of the gender politics of libertine literature, including Diderot's *Les Bijoux indiscrets* [*The Indiscreet Jewels*], in which women are shown to speak through their *bijoux* or "jewels." Miller calls this cover image an "elegant crotch shot" and analyzes, among other things, the presence of the cat between the woman's legs.

And yet, you may be thinking, surely the publisher was justified in selecting a rather licentious image for the cover of a collection of libertine works. But what about the cover of another book in this same series, an anthology of novels by eighteenth-century French women writers? This one is quite unbelievable. Entitled *Romans de femmes du XVIIIe siècle*, the anthology includes works by the most prominent women writers of eighteenth-century France, including Françoise de Graffigny's *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* and Marie Jeanne Riccoboni's *Lettres de Mistriss Fanni Butlerd*. For this book cover, the Laffont publishing house selected Antoine Watteau's painting *La toilette intime* (circa 1716–1721) (see Figure 3), calling to mind Diderot's idea that women speak through their jewels, that a woman is reducible not just to her body but more specifically to her genitals. And when I consider the important work of scholars who study the reception of women's writing by women readers, the use of this image in this context seems particularly disturbing: the metaphorical "reader" here is a kneeling servant woman holding a washbasin and sponge, gazing affectionately at her mistress's exposed *bijoux*.

Now, I do not claim any scientific status for this ultra-brief survey of book cover images. However, this anecdotal evidence points to a real problem in the way eighteenth-century French literary studies is represented, at least in France. Women's work still tends to be excluded; when it is included, the ways in which it is represented leave something to be desired.

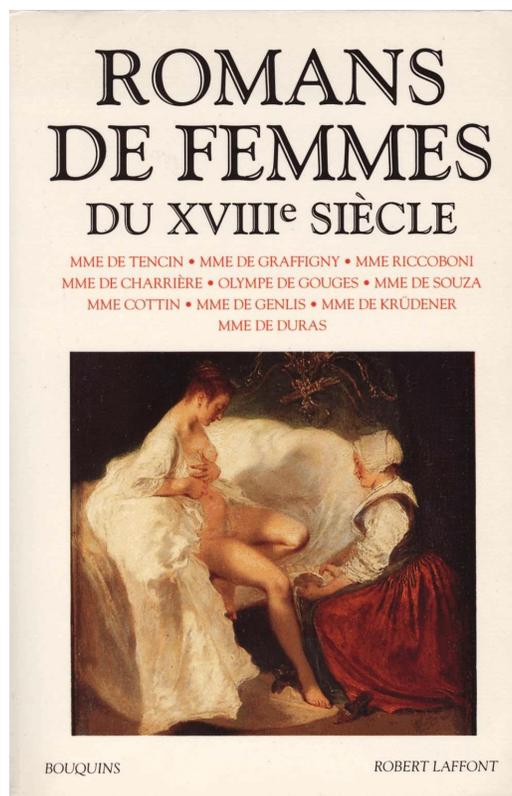
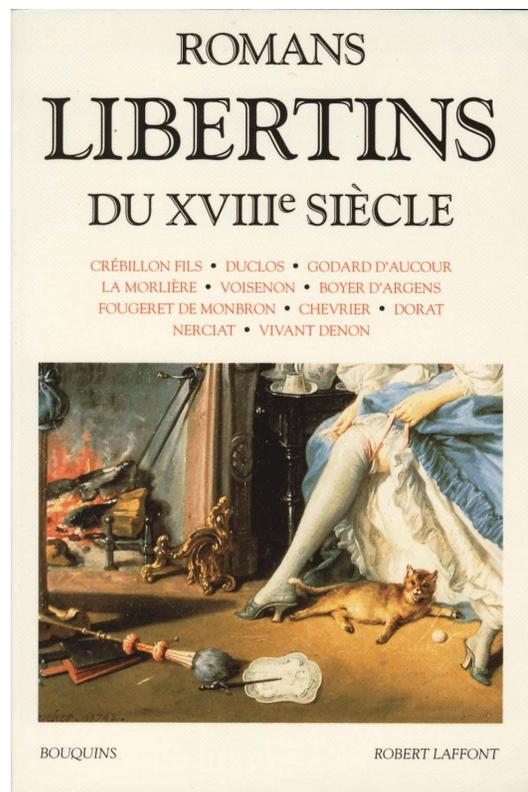
I turn now to my second point, that is, the problem of perception. A couple of years ago, the cognitive scientist Virginia Valian visited my campus to talk about her book *Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women*. Her book provides scientific, experimental evidence of continuing discrimination against women in academe, including a case in which women researchers were systematically given less lab space than men and a study showing that identical grant proposals were given a lesser score if a woman's name appeared on them as opposed to a man's. During that visit, I had the opportunity to ask Valian about the advisability of women scholars like me pursuing research about women. She unequivocally recommended against it, on the grounds that such work would not be taken seriously. Valian established herself as an accomplished scholar in areas other than gender studies before moving on to the study published in *Why So Slow?*. This exchange has left me thinking, though, that if no one ever challenges such advice, then women may continue to be left out of the picture, so to speak, both on the covers and in the books.

And, finally, my third point: what can we do? I don't have any definitive answers, but I can describe a positive aspect of my own experience. I have drawn support and encouragement for my work on women writers from a cross-disciplinary Gender Research and Writing Group in which I participate on my home campus. This group includes colleagues from film studies, linguistics, new media, organizational communication, philosophy, and rhetoric/composition. It has been a site of positive strategizing, networking, and cross-generational mentoring. For me, being called upon to explain to this admittedly sympathetic audience why literary studies

matter, and why the Enlightenment matters, has helped me learn how to engage in advocacy for the importance of the work we do in eighteenth-century studies. I think this advocacy needs to occur among our colleagues in the humanities, and to move beyond to include colleagues from other disciplines, students, and the wider communities in which we live. In this way, the *bijoux* can claim the right to talk back. More importantly, we can prove that women are not mere adornment to the serious work of eighteenth-century studies. In the conference presentation I cited above, Madelyn Gutwirth urged us to keep working to confront women's exclusion. According to her, one way to do so is by creating "zones of solidarity," what the Women's Caucus has been, is now, and will continue to be for future generations.

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“Editing Women—By Way of Egypt”

Margaret Anne Doody

It is a little difficult this year to focus on the concerns of ASECS. I have just come back from a visit to Egypt, and I am still gripped by the gigantic remnants and bright images. It is a place of which one has always, so it seems, known something, and yet of which one really knows nothing—so I felt, at least. One of the striking things is that Egypt’s history was lost to us—pretty much—for about one and one half millennia. Since the early nineteenth century, scholars have been working at reconstructing that history, having learned to read the Egyptian hieroglyphs, through the Rosetta stone—and not that alone (it took some years) but through the scholar Jean François Champollion’s breakthrough registered with the world in 1822-23. A major language, a language of a civilization of central importance to the Near East and to Europe, had been totally lost. Only recently was this “lost” language recovered, at least partially. Partially, as yet, since it is still not for us a spoken language; Egyptologists still insist that we cannot know what the language sounded like, although survivals in Coptic first provided the clues as to the written tongue, and a more hospitable consideration of Egyptian as a Semitic language might help. It is a language still in the process of recovery. But that is not to deny the major importance of the sudden readability of all those inscriptions and papyri. What long seemed meaningless peculiar if grandly obscure marks had meaning, human meaning, restored to them. Yet—even so, there are other barriers to understanding. We (the scholarly world’s “we”) find it hard not to keep studies of Egypt on one side of a wall of separation, in the region labelled “Biblical Studies” and there is a reluctance to admit them to the other side, the higher purer region called “Classical Studies”.

A journey to Egypt is certainly very salutary for anyone considering the nature of History. It provides us with many paradigms of erasure, forgetfulness, and separation. This story reminds one that even a powerful, dominant (phallogocentric if you like) history can be lost. Egypt’s history was in effect erased. We relied on the Greeks’ account of it, on their historian—chiefly Herodotus—which is something like relying on rumour. The Greek writers (not necessarily men of Greece) sometimes made a hash of it. The throne name of Ramses II, for instance, we now know to be Usermaatre. Thanks to Herodotus we get “Ozymandias,” which is what was passed on to P.B. Shelley. Shelley was pretty lofty about Ozymandias, but really when you are in Egypt you still can gaze on plenty of works by and regarding the terrific Ramses—and he does seem pretty impressive. “Look on my works, ye mighty” need not be felt ironically. Shelley tries to erase the Egyptian pharaoh beneath the low and level sands, but the sands keep divulging new works.

What we think unimportant or obscure at one moment may come into focus at some other time.

But as well as thinking of the terrific and prolific Ramses, falsely called Ozymandias by people who couldn’t get their tongue around Egyptian, I have been thinking of the one female pharaoh of antiquity: Makare Hatshepsut, who ruled (according to our calendar) from 1503-1452 BCE. Daughter of a Pharaoh, she pre-empted her nephew and declared herself ruler. Like other pharaohs, she announced herself begotten by the god Amun on her earthly mother—in

her temple she has pictures in relief of Amun approaching queen Ahmose in the guise of Tutmose I. And she shows herself in infancy being suckled by Hathor. This kind of thing was *de rigueur* for pharaohs, and Alexander was falling in with local tradition when he had the revelation at Siwa

that his father was the god Amun--Alexander wasn't going off his head, or insanely megalomania, he was just a quick study. Hatshepsut tried to record the deeds of her reign in the truly magnificent, large, and elegant temple designed by her architect Senenmut--you can see this temple in the Valley of the Kings. But her successor was not pleased with a woman's interpolation of herself into the story of Egypt. Tutmose III went about erasing Hatshepsut's name in the royal cartouches. He was trying to disempower her in the world beyond, as well as erasing her record. So I think of this dual erasure--the erasure of Egypt's story by time, and the erasure of Hatshepsut's story by Tutmose III--a proper male pharaoh.

That story seems certainly indicative and familiar. If we talk of any kind of history regarding women--certainly including literary history--then we have to look at constant erasures. In the last three hundred years women writers have often risen in Europe in America--and have even been widely read, celebrated, and influential. But, as is not the case apparently with most male authors, the dip in reputation that follows after death is not counterbalanced by subsequent rise. Even an author undergoing a lengthy eclipse in prevailing taste (say Pope in the early nineteenth century) still gets space in the literary history book, and his works in some form are still in print. Once the woman goes down, she's out. The waters close over her head. She may be alluded to briefly as an example of bad morals or of a generally outmoded taste (Aphra Behn is an example of the former and Madeline de Scudéry of the latter.) Twaine cites and quotes Scudéry, but only as the example of a *document*--his term of distinction for writings that can tell us about the period in which they were written, as shells tell the biologist and geologist about a former life in a level of sand or rock. But the work is not a literary work, it is a dead curio, and no time need be spent on it in itself.

So looking at the history of literature over the past three hundred years say, is somewhat depressing. Erasure happens. Names are taken out. Since the nineteenth century one honorary female name--or borrowed male name of a female author--may glimmer in the multitude of examples: George Eliot was required reading for civil servant applicants in their exams in the High Victorian period. But for every name allowed to remain in the histories--about one for every fifty-year span--hundreds and hundreds are written out again. The fashion of presenting women writers as solitary curios is still not dead. Neither is the fashion of eliminating them altogether. Just watch *The New York Sunday Times* for its next big article (they come at regular intervals) on the state of the American Novel. I have seen such articles in the recent past in which no woman's name figures. We solemnly canvass the merits of Mailer, Updike, Roth, peering about for their successors, lamenting in passing the passing of Raymond Carver, speaking praisingly of Cormac McCarthy--oh yes, the conversation can be kept going for quite a while with no word of women writers or black writers. Since the Nobel Prize one might--just might--expect one sentence on Toni Morrison. But the usual tone of such articles is the boy's club one of looking for successors, or college of Heralds looking for a Prince of the blood.

A Big Male Name in a certain period can cancel out a Female Name in the same period, especially if it seems the two writers did much the same thing. Henry James could cancel out Edith Wharton--who was extremely popular and well-thought-of in her own time. She is slowly

making her way back to the center. And I think we owe a lot to Martin Scorsese for giving us his version of *The Age of Innocence*. A cinema director affects literary history quite profoundly by pointing out elements in a work, in one magnificent reading, that have been muffled in the critics' conversation. But I would not rely on the effect as being lasting.

In the eighteenth century, the picture now is entirely different from what it was when I started out. The one person who told me about women's writing in the period was B.G. McCarthy, whose invaluable book, coming out of Cork Ireland in the 1940s, was an amazing achievement of going against the cultural grain. (Perhaps only an Irishwoman could do it.) When I wanted to read Eliza Haywood, or Ann Radcliffe, or Jane Barker, or Francis Sheridan I had to go to the Bodleian Library. My book on Richardson was unusual in that it took the women writers into account as an influence. But I could not have calculated their influence without being at the site of a major old library that had these forgotten novels (and poems and plays).

The work of the last thirty years has meant an amazing improvement. We can get editions (serious hardback scholarly works and paperbacks) of women writers. We have a history of them; various forms of literary history have been constructed. That we can get their books themselves seems to me the most living aspect of the literary history. What price history and plot summary when you never see the original work? Only by making the books available can we save them from becoming curios. We owe a debt to all editors who have brought the women writers back--and that includes males as well as female. Peter Sabor and Stewart Cooke, for example, have made Frances Burney's unpublished plays available to us.

Of course as soon as you start editing--and editing seems to me the most demanding if least glamorous form of scholarly activity--the difficulties appear. How much do we really know about Aphra Behn? How much is mere speculation, gossip that has been routinized? Did this writer really write everything attributed to her? Did she want her poem published or not? Is this edition a piracy against her will, or her own design? What about the poems or stories that didn't get published in her lifetime? Which are genuine and how do we know? What happened to works that others refer to in her time, but have disappeared?

All these questions apply to the male authors of the same period. It is folly to think that difficulties in establishing texts apply only to female writers, or that works by male writers haven't been lost or maltreated (especially by former editors). Editing is where literary history really happens. Editing raises questions you cannot--as you can in critical discourse--dodge by a clever duck and weave. Only by trying to produce editions--real *editions* not scandalous bad versions based on any old copy with misprints galore--will you really find out what literary history is. Such history cannot be written on speculation. We have to take the way the sands of time in which it has been covered and find the work itself and contemplate it in a serious way. We have to do that even *before* we know whether the book is good enough to merit such treatment. Because only by treating books (poems, plays, novels) as if they *were* good and had serious meaning can we hope to rescue them and bring them back into the arena of public discussion. As we do this work of excavation and archaeology, this Egyptology of the recent past, we have to entertain views, images, mythologies that are not ours. The 1970s feminism which gave such a stimulus to discovery of older texts by women--a splendid jolt--was also handicapped by a desire to find women's writing of the past only statements and overtly displayed sentiments that were suited to the politics and feelings of the 1970s in England or

America. This whole impulse has been derided as merely Recuperative Feminism--but a lot still remains to recuperate. If we say we know enough already, we are withdrawing from the task of history--which is never finished.

The desire for immediate relevance is very natural and in some ways even good--but we must never press it too far, even expect any author (male or female) to be speaking in our current terms. We have to have patience, imaginative patience if we are to write a good literary history. This means an attentiveness, a hearing of the books rather than talking to them straight away and overcrowding them with our interests, concerns, demands. A writer may have more to say than you are aware of. What she has to say may come as a surprise--and it may come in a way that seems halting or bizarre, because it speaks through a space--a space which may have been empty darkness, a void for her. Margaret Cavendish, for example, speaks to us at last loud and clearly--the difficulty is not in her words but in the void of some 300 years in which she was seen as meaningless. We have no transmitters for her from the 18th or 19th century--they could not hear her. So any literary history written in those periods, no matter how well-intentioned--even up to and including Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*--is likely to be defective, severely defective, when it comes to Margaret Cavendish. We may rejoice that now we understand this brilliant imagination. But it might make us uneasy, too. What voices are we unable to hear now? What is passing through us as a void--sent out from a past long ago or recent, searching for hearers and searching our era in vain?

Editing texts, making them available, discussing them--thus the study of women's writings can be normalized--to an extent. We can make our own histories--each one of us--and they may be different from each other, for there is no law that says historians have to agree. I cannot prescribe too much about what ought to be done, for the Spirit bloweth where it listeth. I have one suggestion, however, which I will make in a moment. First, things that ought not to be done by the feminist literary historian:

DON'T DO THE FOLLOWING:

A. Don't join with the enemy in heaping insult on the head of a writer. It is very well to say that you don't think her works are good, and it is then obligatory to point out in what way they seem to falter and to fail. But do not use sexist words to dismiss the poor writer. I want to rail here against the recent fashion of terming female poets that the critic/historian dislikes or feels unworthy "poetesses". That is the critic may term Elizabeth Barrett a poet, and Felicia Helms "a poetess". Do NOT--pray. Do not--do so. Use the useful phrase "bad poet" if you must (though not in my hearing of Helms if you don't want a little argument). Say "minor poet" if you will. But as long as there is no equivalent nasty name for failed or conformist or feeble male poets, so long as such a distinction a piece of opprobrium heaped upon all women. It is so easy to imagine that women's writing is not the work of "real" writers, and that especially in the highest mode (poetry) women are only pseudo. This is a way of undermining the whole project. You may find one or two female writers who escape this band and are termed poets--but you in your scornful knowingness when you use the word "poetess" are leading the way back to the point where there are no histories of women's literature at all.

B. Don't write out of ignorance. We are all ignorant to some extent, and that condition inevitably is never finally cured. But don't be glad of it. Never write literary history that doesn't know as much of the history as anyone could be expected to muster. This means that the feminist literary historian has to know much more than the male-or rather, masculinist-- literary historian. She must know all the male works, and the controversies theological and philosophical--and she must know the works by women and their interests. It is still true that male writers can get away without knowing anything of the women's works, but it is a mistake to suppose that we strengthen ourselves by imitating them.

C. Do not despise the learning of languages--particularly older languages. Yes, the knowledge of Latin and Greek or Hebrew, has at different times and in different ways been used for purposes of snobbery and cultural control. But that's no reason not to know these ancient languages. In fact, without access to cultures before our own we will have a limited understanding of the discourse. We are already at a grave disadvantage in understanding the writings of French theorists of Post World War II fame, for they were educated in the old classical manner, and they base their words and concepts on plays with Greek, and references quite lost on many who enter the discussion with barely any knowledge of anything earlier than the year 1800. A little Latin, at least, is a good thing--it offers a passport to the past, and the idea that there are other patterns and paradigms. (One can even learn what a paradigm is.) If we say we believe in multicultural study, then we can start by noting that the Western tradition is multicultural too. It is polyglot, not monoglot, and differentiated and various, not uniform. It is good to know more about antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance than vague gossip allows. It is weakness of most literary history written of the 18th and 19th centuries that for the writers the ancient world is a pale hearsay and the Renaissance little better than rumour. Shallow history is the result.

POSITIVE ADVICE:

As "advice" this is not just directed to the young scholars, but to myself and to everybody who shares the interests we have. I think that more women ought to write general histories of literature. We have been doing so for a long while--think of Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance* (1785). I'm not decrying the books on particular aspects of women, or particular authors--heaven knows, I have done both. But I think one way of trying to secure the perpetual presence of women writers in that mysterious thing called the canon is to write overarching or grand style or detailed or curious general histories--of a period, a genre, and an idea--which include as if it were quite natural, works by both men and women.

Within this, I accept the larger proposition that a woman's literary history may look very different from a man's. I think my own *True Story of the Novel* looks very different from *The Rise of the Novel*, or from McKeon's book. But a woman cannot write a general literary history of any kind without grappling seriously with what history is meant to be and with what people of all kinds have written--and we could get a larger and yet more delicate more subtle kind of literary story.

History, after all, is just a story. Literary History is a story about stories, pretty well. Ultimately, "Historia" means enquiry--and Herodotus who wrote the first *Historiai* that we have,

was making an enquiry--into, among other things, Egypt. Our enquiries may be valuable and limit at the same time--they almost always will be, even Herodotus'. And history itself has a way of disappearing. Not only the texts, or canon, but the world historians talked of can fade from view. Egypt sank from view, lost intelligibility--it was known to have existed but its meaning was lost. We know at any moment that any historical project is subject to that doom--the whole context that gave it meaning may go. But Egypt also gives hope that from the sands of time lost histories and lost stories can be resurrected.

Janice Thaddeus
 “Sestina for Mary Shelley” from *Lot’s Wife* (Saturday’s Press, 1986)
 Reproduced courtesy of Saturday Press and the Thaddeus Family

Sestina for Mary Shelley

The screams began when Claire was our boarder.
 Those nights, groggy from garden trails,
 we needed a bite of terror to slice us free
 from the price of endings, dead leaves, fall,
 from the coming of winter’s bare
 limbs, from tomorrow’s separate blow.

I was the dormouse: puff and blow
 as I might I was caged on the border
 where pregnancy is prison; my body feared to bear—
 a child in a child—and I could only trail
 after Shelley and Claire—blunder, fall
 like a sexless ghost embedded while they danced free.

Harriet, stuffed with water, left us free
 to marry; my sister chose her own death-blow,
 and our wedding music whined a dying fall—
 joined, our lives are severed at the borders,
 where even Willmouse rots, my baby trailing
 no more glory. I am empty, yet I bear.

The monster will live longer than any child I bear.
 He was Adam, mummy, abortion, free
 to follow any trail,
 to murder the extra wife at a blow,
 assault his hatred past all borders,
 and whip himself as he watched each enemy fall.

Life is obstinate. Whatever falls
 away, I continue to bear
 whatever comes, drifting over the border
 only when Shelley’s Double, sneaking free,
 strangles me in visions, blows
 my eyes dark—monster hard on my trail.

Full sail down darker trail
the Don Juan ran to a dying fall,
sank angry while the waves blew
graves, releasing the shredded corpse we bear
and burn in iron. He is free.
The rest of us remain, as boarders.

This loneliness is the daily blow beyond all bearing.
If I can wander far, perhaps I can fall free.
Do you know the trail? I walk forever on borders.

Tribute to Janice Thaddeus

Patricia Brückmann

In 1979 a paper on David Garrick's wife, sent from Barnard from Dr. Janice Thaddeus, didn't fit any of the panels already devised for a Toronto eighteenth-century studies meeting. But we wanted the conference to hear the paper, so we built a session: "Women in Eighteenth-Century Theater." Our meeting was only one of many times when Jan, as writer, critic and teacher, made the invisible visible – to the academy and to a wider reading public.

She converted most eighteenth-century scholars to calling Burney 'Frances.' 'Fanny,' she said, 'diminishes her.' We think of Lot's wife as a foolish woman, disobeying, turned into salt. Jan's poem, which also titles her 1986 collection, centers on the wife's son, climbing through the cherry blossoms, sees her turning to this "kinder vision/ fixed like a solid tear to that barren ground." Students reading Frankenstein with me were always excited by her "Sestina for Mary Shelley," not least the ending:

This loneliness is the daily blow beyond all bearing.

If I can wander far, perhaps I can fall free.

Do you know the trail? I walk forever on borders.¹

I still read her poems to our undergraduates, responding with direct simplicity to their questions about the subjects of poetry, lecturing faculty the next day on Burney's mastectomy.

"Hard" was her adjective. Writing was hard. So were reading and teaching. And they are, all three, for a reader, writer and teacher who had to get things right, from the rapping spoons on Lot's wife's clavicle to her evocation of Frances Burney in 1812, facing possible confiscation of part of The Wanderer manuscript. Jan's commitment to doing what was right, however hard, from reading, writing and teaching, to the loving care of persons (among whom we included four-footed members of our families) is rare. As I wandered about my house after the news of her sudden death the noun often in my mind was 'rectitude.' Not many have that. I re-read poems and Frances Burney: A Literary Life, where, typically, she gives Burney's namesake the last estimate. I think it is right for Jan.

A passion for writing....innate conscientiousness, strength of mind, self denial, rectitude of principles, precision of judgement, keenness of apprehension, depth of feeling and warmth of heart informed....her character; to which was added generous appreciation of the merit and character of others; discriminate selection,clear-sightedness; every power of heart and intellect.²

¹ Janice Thaddeus, Lot's Wife (Upper Montclair, N.J.: Saturday Press, 1986).

² Frances Burney, Egerton MS, in Hemlow, p. 489. Quoted in Janice Farrar Thaddeus, Frances Burney: a Literary Life (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 223.

Feminist and Frum (observant)? Teaching Women's Studies at a Religious Institution

Nora Nachumi

Two years ago, I was invited to create a course that I've since entitled "Introduction to Women's Studies: Theory and Practice" as part of a newly-created Women's Studies minor. Although I agreed, I was wary. This wasn't an ordinary assignment at an ordinary school. I teach at the women's undergraduate college of an Orthodox Jewish University that embraces the philosophy of Torah Umadda, or Torah and Western Learning. Our students, almost all of whom are Orthodox Jews, take a double curriculum, combining Jewish Studies with a secular education. Recently, the university administration has made a commitment to render its undergraduate colleges more competitive. Some of the senior faculty from various departments on the secular side of my college argued that we needed to offer our students the opportunity to minor in Women's Studies. The administration agreed. Feminist theory would, of course, be required but the question of how to teach it was daunting.

Before creating the course I had to consider a number of factors. Professors on the secular side of my institution are discouraged from debating religious issues with students. In literature courses this stipulation is easy to follow; if a student has a problem with *Paradise Lost* or *On the Origin of Species*, she can go talk to her rabbi. However, a Women's Studies seminar like the one I was planning required both students and teacher to express their opinions about the topics under consideration. At times, I would be advocating positions that would contradict the religious beliefs with which my students were raised. How, for example, could I posit the argument that gender is a cultural construction when Orthodox Judaism holds that men and women are essentially different? Jewish law, or Halacha, allots different roles to men and women within their communities. Under the circumstances would my students resist recognizing that gender discrimination exists in education, in the workplace, and in the home? Sexual topics, I feared, would be problematic.³ How would they handle topics like birth control, sexual harassment, rape, and homosexuality? What about their take on a woman's right to choose? Could Orthodox Jews be feminists or were the positions too different? I hadn't a clue. Nor was I certain about my own goals for the course. At my former institution, a secular school, I required students examine their beliefs and their lives; I wondered whether I had the right to ask these students to do the same.

I decided to forestall any problems by planning the syllabus strategically. Issues I suspected to be controversial – like those involved in "Women's Bodies and Health" – followed topics I considered comparatively benign, like those concerning "Beauty and Representation." Sometimes, however, I had little choice. We had to discuss the nature/nurture debate early in the semester or the rest of the course would make little sense. Although I knew some of the readings might offend certain students, I included them anyway, lest I risk the integrity and purpose of such a course. However, I made sure that the syllabus was posted on my office door

³ Some of students abstain from all physical contact with their partners until after marriage. As a whole, the student body is less – how shall I put this? – "experienced" than most students are at secular schools.

several weeks before registration began.

The course itself is unlike any I have ever taught anywhere else. In secular institutions, students who enroll in Women's Studies classes tend to be liberal and open-minded; almost all call themselves feminists. At my school, students who take the class are incredibly diverse. A few are quite frum; they wear long skirts and turtlenecks and refer to Halacha in debate. Others are mainstream in their appearance and attitudes. A fair number plan to be housewives; others intend on combining motherhood and marriage with full or part-time careers. A few enter the class calling themselves feminists. Others refuse to consider the possibility.

All are quite brave in taking the course. "Feminism" is a dirty word to many at my institution. Stereotypes abound. "Burning bras, hating men, wearing colorless baggy clothes ... this is what I thought the daily life of feminists entailed," one student explained (DLi).⁴ "To me they were 'man-haters'" another remarked, "I never gave their argument the time of day" (DS). Several enter class justifiably worried that taking the course will affect their lives outside of the classroom. With few exceptions, the students at my institution marry early. By taking this class, the single girls may risk their appeal to certain men.⁵ All wonder about alienating their friends and their families. Nevertheless, they take the class, engage with the material, and—at times—fight tooth and nail, both with me and each other.

Initially, I was surprised by the wide range of opinions and the vehemence with which these students defend their positions. They take me seriously when I explain that this class is a place where they can express themselves freely and that we don't have to agree. The only requirements are that personal experience be theorized, and that debates don't devolve into personal attacks, and that Orthodox Judaism be discussed as a sociological perspective (no one is allowed to cite "God's opinion"). At times, factions form. At first, all feel a need to defend their beliefs. Those who tend to hold conservative views can be close-minded. Those who take a more liberal approach occasionally feel criticized for being bad Jews.⁶

The students benefited from these interactions, however. In introducing the course, I mention that more differences exist among women than between women and men. One of the biggest challenges faced by the Women's Movement is to figure out how we can work together while respecting our differences. The fact that students learn to listen to each other as the semester progresses involves them in this endeavor. Halfway through the first semester teaching the course I decided to add an oral component to the final exam. Having listened to each other for so long, I felt that my students deserved – and when asked, they demanded – the right to hear what their peers had gleaned from the course. Each student was given five "safe" minutes to say whatever she wanted about her own experience in the class and with the

⁴ The students quoted have granted me written permission to use excerpts from their papers in this essay. In order to respect their privacy, they will be identified by initials, rather than by name.

⁵ A concern expressed by several of my students over the past two years.

⁶ This is, of course, a generalization. Not only do students change their views throughout the semester, but the degree to which they resist or sympathize with feminist arguments often depends upon the specific topic under discussion.

material. No one was allowed to interrupt or reply.

Rather than summarize their responses, I'm going to let some of the students speak for themselves. The following are excerpts from the written reflections upon which they drew when they spoke to their peers. The first is from a student who entered the class already calling herself a feminist. Although she admits that "some of the opinions of the group really frustrated me," she concludes that she was "happy to have the contrasting perspectives of people in the course who encounter feminism from such different viewpoints....I have come to understand ... that we are all just trying to create a life where we can feel comfortable in our own skin ... Listening to the opinions of people who don't consider themselves or won't admit they are feminists caused me to think about feminism less as a movement trying to change the world but as an understanding of how real women view themselves in relation to the world" (SL). After reading this essay, I stopped worrying about whether the more liberal students were being "held back" by the more conservative ones. After all, many have to deal with individuals far more conservative than they are on a daily basis.

The more conservative students also find themselves far more tolerant than they had been at the beginning of the semester. "I must admit that I have developed a great respect for those women who I used to think were crazy rambling lunatics, as foreign to my world as eating at MacDonald's," one student wrote (DG). Another, called the class a "huge eye opener" that "allowed her to see how women from all sorts of backgrounds and ethnicities ... [feel] ... and what they are doing about it" (AZ). Nevertheless, several of these students choose not to call themselves feminists.⁷ A few have explained that they see themselves as "a Jew first and then a woman" (DG, DLi).⁸ "I can't only take into account women's rights," one student points out, "I also have to think about Jewish law" (DG). Consequently some find certain issues – including the feminist pro-choice position – "difficult to resolve" (DLi).

Others feel differently. During this past semester, two students went to Washington D.C. to participate in the March for Women's Lives. "This class helped me assemble and organize, to take action on an issue I have always felt strongly about" one of them wrote (AR). "After our heated discussion on abortion, the thought of *not* going was no longer an option....I could no longer sit back and watch other feminists do my dirty work for me" said the other (YR). As one student points out, the class made her realize "that women's issues can be important to me even if they ... have never affected me ... I should ...think about [issues like abortion] and come up with an I opinion that I [have] researched and understand" (DLy).

A few students leave the course angry and confused by the lack of simple, straightforward answers. "I ... fear that this class has made me think about certain things which cause me to make an issue out of something that did not previously bother me and I hate that" (MP). "Somewhere in the middle of the Women's Studies class, I began to resent it," another admits. "I was happy before I signed up for the class, and now I was just pissed off" (DS). A

⁷This position was far more prevalent the first year I taught the class than the second. One reason, I suspect, is that fewer conservative students took the course the second time it was offered (by then it had a reputation among the student body).

⁸ Other students have also defined themselves thus; however, since I don't have permission to include their comments, I cannot include them in this essay.

third found herself annoyed because I felt that “smaller groups detract from the larger movement as a whole (“So you’re an orthodox Jew, so what!”).” Although she concludes that “feminism is a movement geared towards individuals,” she wonders how she can tolerate “women who[se] solutions I detest?” Mutual tolerance, she decides, must be the answer (RB). Women’s Studies, notes a fourth, has allowed her to “articulate *why I’m angry*” (YR).

Perhaps their confusion is appropriate, not just because these students are Orthodox Jews, but because they are young women living in the 21st century. As one student argues, “the hardest hurdle to overcome is not what men think of us, or what advertising thinks of us, or any of the myths that haunt us. The most energy is needed to overcome our own perceptions of ourselves” (SC). I think that my attitudes and ideas towards feminism, as well as the syntheses [between] feminism and my religious beliefs, is going to continue to evolve the more I experience new situations and am exposed to new points of view” writes another; “I am rather optimistic regarding feminism and my future. Although I now recognize the difficulties women face, I hope that we can all continue making the choices and decisions right for our own lives” (NC).

Despite my initial reservations, teaching Introduction to Women’s Studies: Theory and Practice has proven to be a rewarding experience. Whether or not students define themselves as feminists by the end of the semester is less relevant to me than their ability to self-consciously define their own positions regarding the issues we cover and their capacity to tolerate opinions and experiences unlike their own. Their religious beliefs, I’ve discovered, do not prevent them from thinking seriously and independently about issues relevant to women. Overall, the experience has caused me to revise my assumptions about teaching feminist theory to women who also happen to be Orthodox Jews.

It has also reinforced my commitment to fostering Women’s Studies at my institution. Despite their enthusiasm for individual courses, students remain reluctant to commit to the minor. Their concerns range from whether doing so is “practical” to how it might be perceived. Organizational problems are also an issue. Recently, the school paper published an article entitled “Women’s Studies Minor in Crisis.” It noted that a few students had difficulty finding enough courses to fulfill the requirements before graduation. In response, those of us from different departments who are invested in the minor will meet in the fall to coordinate our schedules. Meanwhile, the editor of the school’s paper has agreed to include Women’s Studies in a segment entitled “Departments in Focus.” Hopefully the piece will address the students’ concerns and help the program to flourish.

The Angel in the Academy

Several years ago, I chaired a Women's Caucus panel that dealt with professional difficulties specific to women academics. I was navigating a maelstrom at my own university, but I wasn't brave enough to talk about it with anyone other than close friends, and I wanted to hear stories about other women's experiences. As a feminist, it was an odd experience to feel that shame prevented me from speaking about an abusive experience. The threat to my professional life contributed significantly to that feeling. But the women's caucus panel - and various conversations with my eighteenth-century colleagues - led me to feel that it is an account worth telling.

In the spring of 2002, our department hired an assistant professor to teach poetry and general education classes. Three months after he had accepted the offer, he came to town to find a place to live, and we became romantically involved. Our liaison quickly savaged my life. He had been crafty enough to hide his alcoholism and propensity toward violent behavior and deception, and I'd been foolish enough to let him move into my new house before I could fully assess his character. The summer before he began his job, he systematically alienated my friends by drinking to excess and driving, and by pawing his children off on women colleagues while talking to men about "work" or poetry. I couldn't sleep or work; I was frightened in my own home. After he became violent, I kicked him out. He called and drove by the house incessantly until finally neighbors threatened to call the police.

His performance at work was no better. He arrived late to our first department meeting (where he was to be introduced) because I couldn't shake him out of his drug- and alcohol induced hangover. After our breakup, he was insidious and vindictive. He tried to enlist my colleagues against me and, when that failed, he turned to the student body. He told students intimate details about our relationship; I felt as if my life had been turned into a spectacle and the job that I had otherwise loved was made intolerable. His cult of personality was a hit with some in his poetry workshops, but he was otherwise an irresponsible teacher who missed a number of classes and assigned grades arbitrarily (once, he confessed, without his grade book). He didn't do his fair share of committee work and his relationship with students was unprofessional at best. At a teaching school with a heavy service load, this behavior did nothing to endear him to the faculty. His poorly hidden seduction of an undergraduate did little to further his professional standing. Midway through his second year, his contract was not renewed.

In spite of the official and administrative acknowledgement of his academic problems and failures, several members of my department – both men and women – accused me (tacitly or outright) of having seduced him into his professional failures. In addition to the disgusting male-swaggering innuendo by a male colleague that followed our initial involvement and the clucking disapproval of my romantic life, I was blamed post facto for his haphazard record. Most frustrating, perhaps, was that, while I had discussed the details of my personal life with no one but friends, the romantic involvement ensured that some colleagues viewed me in that light only, and not as a professional who had secured a book contract, taught rigorous and well-reviewed classes, and fulfilled more than her share of departmental- and university-wide service. Some suggested that I not serve on search committees and that I should "keep quiet" for a while. There were, to their credit, a number of colleagues who were incredibly

supportive, and it was difficult, I'm sure, to try to temper my frustration when there was little they could do. But as much as I was angered by his behavior, I resented the atavistic censure of colleagues who disapproved of my romantic involvement as much as they looked askance at his failure to perform his job. At my university (a teaching school in the rural, eastern part of the US) a "softer" kind of sexism pervades, and the hush-hush dismissal of this unprofessional parasite is an ugly example of it. Such conduct in a female colleague would have not been tolerated here. I am certain that there are many schools like this one – where women academics are still judged by their personal rather than their professional lives. It is with the larger issue of this pervasive cultural stereotype that I take issue. In "Professions for Women," Virginia Woolf said she had to kill the *Angel in the House* in order to be able to write. The angel may be dead, but her ghost still haunts the academy.

--Anon

Feminists and Professional Organizations: The American Historical Association

Judith P. Zinsser

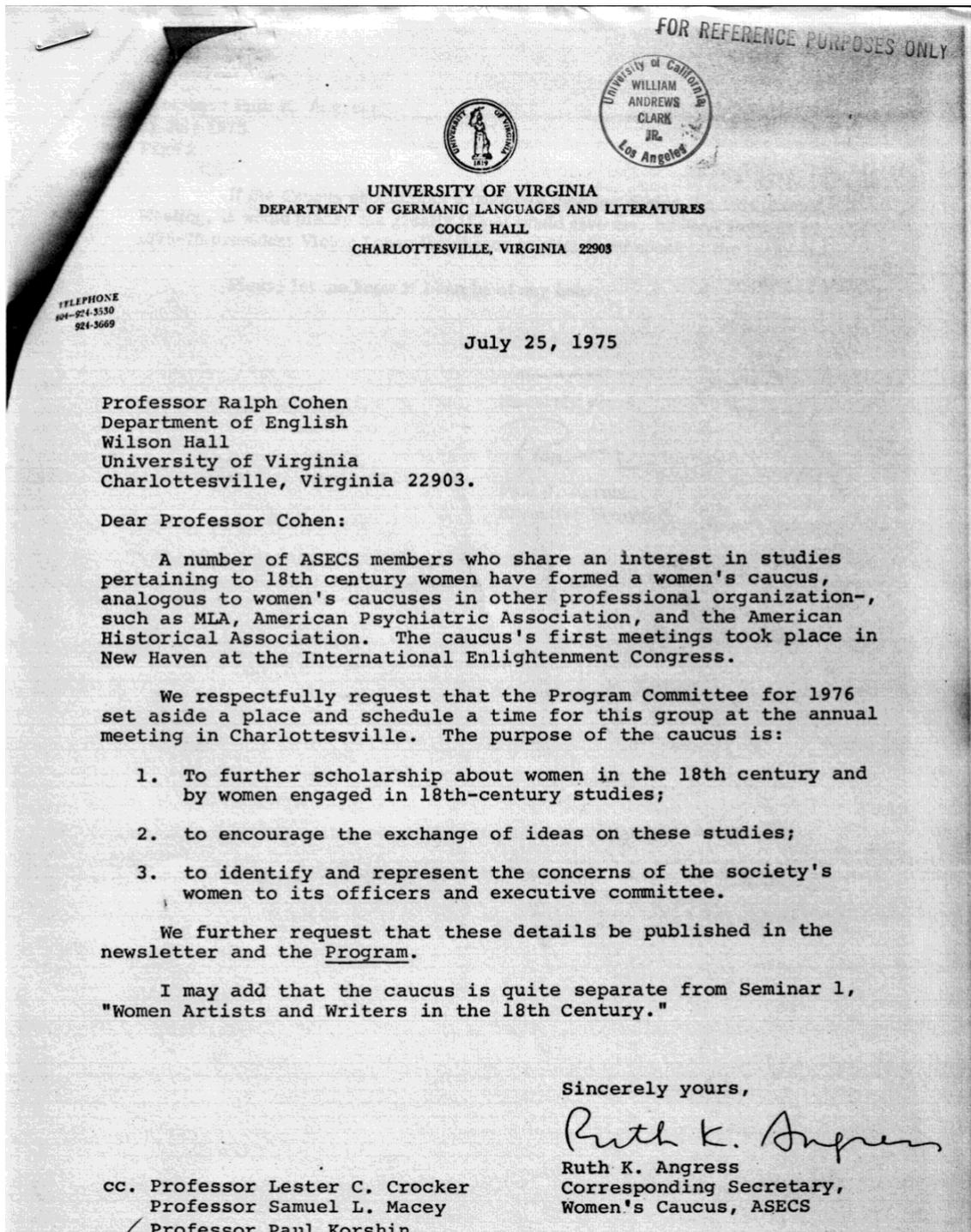
Although I gather that few, if any, historians attended the founding ASECS women's caucus at Yale, I know that the energy, excitement and exasperation mirrored that of the women at the American Historical Association (AHA) annual meeting in 1969. In fact, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, women scholars in all the Humanities and Social Sciences saw clearly how narrowly focused, exclusionary and denigrating the Academy and its professional groups had been to women. They gathered together at one annual meeting after another to assert their value as researchers and teachers, the significance of women's topics, and of the feminist perspective. It's hard to recapture those exhilarating moments of our histories; there was the glory and camaraderie of shared revelation and outrage, and then the hard work of forcing institutional change.

Together, feminist activists, both women and men, effected dramatic changes in their professional organizations. Changes that in turn affected undergraduate and graduate education, research funding, and publishing. In 1969 no women held elected office in the AHA; by 1990 they represented 42% of elected officials, including three of eleven on the governing council. By 2003, as in ASECS, women have regularly served as President of the entire organization. As with ASECS, election to office led to changes in the annual program and inclusion of women scholars speaking both on traditional topics and on the new fields of women's and gender history. A Committee on Women Historians within the AHA and the women's caucus, the Coordinating Committee for Women in the Historical Profession (CCWHP), succeeded in a broad range of initiatives: AHA endorsement of the Equal Rights Amendment and boycott of hostile states for annual meetings; prizes for women's scholarship, a directory of women's historians to give to departments seeking to conform to AHA guidelines on hiring; pamphlets on teaching about women, and a "survival guide" to demystify the "old boy" practices of advancement—how to write a program or grant proposal, tips on interviewing and job applications, and more.

The early 1990s seem, in retrospect, a high point for women historians. Few departments had not hired at least one woman, many had added courses and even fields in women's history. Publishers had separate lists of titles in women's and gender history. Journals of women's history and women's studies had proliferated in the US and around the world, along with Women's Research Centers and Special Women's Collections. However, as part of the "old girl" group, I fear the complacency that comes with success, particularly with incorporation of the "rebels" into institutional structures. In *Three Guineas*, Virginia Woolf applauded women's new right "to join the academic procession." She asked us to consider how we would use this right. As the next generation of women in eighteenth-century studies have pointed out, the needs of women academics may have changed, but "the struggle" continues. I am proud to say that the ASECS women's caucus has worked to respond to new voices, to give younger women authority, and to make our organization both lead and serve. I hope we will continue to take risks with our demands, our scholarship, and the ways in which we use our

power and intelligence. Those kinds of decisions explain our past success and will serve us well in the future.

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AMERICAN SOCIETY for EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES

EXECUTIVE BOARD, 1975-76: *President* VICTOR LANGE, Princeton University • *Past President* GEORGES MAY, Yale University • *First Vice-President* ELIZABETH L. EISENSTEIN, University of Michigan • *Second Vice-President* GWIN J. KOLB, University of Chicago • *Executive Secretary* PAUL J. KORSHIN, University of Pennsylvania • *Treasurer* JEAN A. PERKINS, Swarthmore College • SHIRLEY A. BILL, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle • ROBERT HALSBAND, University of Illinois at Urbana • DONALD J. OLSEN, Vassar College • JULES D. PROWN, Yale Center for British Art and British Studies • LEONARD G. RATNER, Stanford University • MADELEINE B. THERRIEN, Emory University

Department of English D1
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pa. 19174
Tel. (215) 243-7348

31 July 1975

Professor Ruth K. Angress
Department of Germanic Languages
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Va. 22901

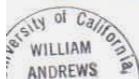
Dear Ruth,

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 25 July to Ralph Cohen. I am sure that he will make available meeting space for the ASECS Women's Caucus during our 1976 Annual Meeting.

I would like to know more about the group's aims, if you wish to make them known. It would be good, for example, if you could let me have a statement about the Women's Caucus which we could print in the October ASECS News Circular. If you want to reach our women members directly, you may find the new Directory (which will be ready in August) helpful, but, if you prefer, you may also have the Society's mailing list on pre-addressed labels. If there are other officers of the group besides yourself (I know only of Cynthia Matlack and Nancy Miller), perhaps you could let me have their names, so that I can invite them, with you, to attend the Executive Board's next full meeting, on 7 April 1976, at Charlottesville.

It would also be helpful to me if you could tell me whether you and your colleagues envisage an official, continuing role for the Caucus in ASECS affairs. If so, I wish you would tell me whether we should list the Women's Caucus and its officers with our other standing bodies and committees in the Society's 1975-76 publications (please let me know promptly, for the first issue of ECS and our new information bulletin are already in the press).

I note that you have also been in touch with the Chairman of the Committee on the 1977 Annual Meeting, Samuel Macey. Since the 1976 Annual Meeting was put together without special regard for women's studies, it would be desirable if scholarship dealing with women were well represented at the 1977 Annual Meeting, especially among the plenary sessions. I would strongly urge you and your colleagues to write to the entire 1977 Committee on this subject.



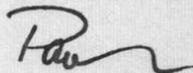
FOR REFERENCE PURPOSES ONLY

Professor Ruth K. Angress
31 July 1975
Page 2

If the Caucus should plan a business meeting during the 1976 Annual Meeting, it would please me greatly if you would give me, or Jean Perkins or 1975-76 president Victor Lange the chance to attend and speak to the members.

Please let me know if I can be of any help.

Sincerely yours,



Paul J. Korshin
Executive Secretary

AMERICAN SOCIETY for EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES

EXECUTIVE BOARD, 1977-78: *President* J. G. A. POCOCK, Johns Hopkins University • *Past Presidents* GWIN J. KOLB, University of Chicago • VICTOR LANGE, Princeton University • *First Vice-President* PHILLIP HARTH, University of Wisconsin at Madison • *Second Vice-President* MADELEINE B. THERRIEN, University of Maryland • *Executive Secretary* PAUL J. KORSHIN, University of Pennsylvania • *Treasurer* JEAN A. PERKINS, Swarthmore College • SHIRLEY A. BILL, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle • ROBERT DARNTON, Princeton University • WALTER GROSSMANN, University of Massachusetts at Boston • ROBERT HALSBAND, University of Illinois at Urbana • JAN LARUE, New York University • JEANNE R. MONTY, Tulane University

Department of English D1
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pa. 19104
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2 December 1977

MEMORANDUM 1977-78 - 14

To: Members of the ASECS Women's Caucus
From: Paul J. Korshin

Dear Friends,

As you know, learned societies around the United States are being urged not to hold their conventions and other meetings in cities located in states which have not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment. Groups of members in the larger learned societies, such as the American Historical Association and the Modern Language Association (to name only two of a much larger group), have persuaded their organizations not to make any further commitments to cities in such states for their conventions.

The ASECS is already scheduled to meet in Chicago (April 1978) and Atlanta (April 1979), both of which are located in non-E. R. A. states. We committed the Society to those meetings in 1974 and 1975, respectively, before concern about avoiding such cities arose. However, we do not want to schedule an Annual Meeting for a later year in a city located in a non-E. R. A. state, particularly if such an arrangement would offend an appreciable number of ASECS members. For 1980, we are scheduled to meet in Stanford, California, and for 1981, in Washington, D. C. Neither location would seem to present any problems in this respect.

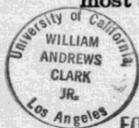
However, for 1982, we expect to have to make a choice between bids from two cities, Houston (Texas is an E. R. A. state) and New Orleans (Louisiana is not a ratifying state). Our sister societies which have not already made irrevocable commitments to New Orleans are avoiding Louisiana; on the advice of the executive secretaries of these organizations, I am writing to a representative group of the members of our Women's Caucus (the list is attached) to ask whether you have any opinion, either singly or collectively.

I would much appreciate hearing your views, in whatever form you think most appropriate, in the next month or two.

With kind thanks for your help, and best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

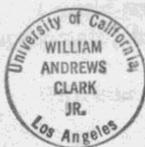
Paul J. Korshin
Paul J. Korshin



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MEMORANDUM 1977-78 - 14 MAILING LIST

1. Ruth Angress, German, Univ. of California, Irvine
2. Paula Backscheider, English, Univ. of Rochester
3. Gloria Flaherty, German, Bryn Mawr College
4. Cynthia Frease, English, Univ. of Northern Colorado
5. Jean Hunter, History, Duquesne University
6. Shirley Kenny, English, Univ. of Maryland
7. Elizabeth MacAndrew, English, Cleveland State University
8. Nancy K. Miller, French, Columbia University
9. Patricia Murphy, French, Univ. of New Mexico
10. Catherine N. Parke, English, Univ. of Missouri
11. Barbara Schnorrenberg, Birmingham, Alabama
12. Cynthia Sutherland, English, Univ. of Pittsburgh
13. Renée Waldinger, French, City College (New York)



FOR REFERENCE PURPOSES ONLY

BARBARA BRANDON SCHNORRENBERG
3824 ELEVENTH AVENUE SOUTH
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA 35222
205 / 595-1683

16 January 1978

Professor Paul J. Korshin
Executive Secretary ASECS
Department of English D1
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pa. 19104

Dear Paul:

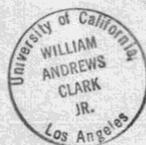
I should have replied earlier to your letter about ASECS and meetings in states where the Equal Rights Amendment has not been ratified. I must add my voice to those who say no to meeting in such places. Thus, with great regret, for it is such a lovely city, no to New Orleans for 1982. Obviously our commitments before then can not be unmade, and perhaps by 1982 the issue will be settled. In the meantime, however, the convention boycott seems to be one of the few weapons that has any real effect, and so it must be used.

As I am sure you know, Southern based organizations are having real difficulty with this issue, since so few states herabouts have ratified ERA. Therefore, especially, I must vote to support this action whenever I can.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg
Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg

JAN 18 1978



FOR REFERENCE PURPOSES ONLY

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
 ANN ARBOR 48109
 COLLEGE OF LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF
 ROMANCE LANGUAGES

March 11, 1981

Professor Ronald Rosbottom, Executive Secretary
 American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies
 421 Denney Hall
 The Ohio State University
 Columbus, Ohio 47210

Dear Professor Rosbottom:

Through our correspondence of the past summer regarding the rejection of the Women's Caucus Seminar by the 1981 Program Committee, it became clear that there is a need to clarify the relation of the Caucus to the Society and the place of women's studies seminars on Annual Programs. I am formally requesting that this matter be placed on the agenda of the Executive Board for discussion and that the following resolution be debated:

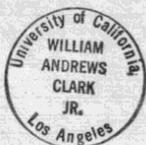
The Executive Board expresses its strong support of Women's Studies as a discipline in eighteenth century studies and will urge future program chairs to ensure that there be representation of this discipline on their program committees, and that future programs include seminars in this area.

Barbara Schnorrenberg and I will represent the interests of the Caucus at the meeting of the Executive Board.

Thank you and I look forward to meeting with you and the other members of the Board for this discussion.

Sincerely,

Maureen F. O'Meara
 Maureen F. O'Meara
 Chair, Women's Caucus



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RECEIVED MAR 20 1981



AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI • 721 OLD CHEM. M.L. 368 • CINCINNATI, OHIO 45221-0368 • (513) 556-3820

English Department
University of Rochester
Rochester, NY 14627
19 June 1991

Professor Carol Barash
Department of English
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ 08903-5054

OK 6/13
\$50

Dear Carol,

As you may know, the Women's Caucus voted to endow a prize for the best paper in Women's Studies presented at ASECS or any of the regional meetings by a graduate student. We are defining "Women's Studies" broadly and will assume if a paper is submitted its author considered it eligible. Both men and women are eligible. This prize will be the Catherine Macauley Graham prize, and Susan Staves will head the first judging committee; she and I are trustees for the fund for ASECS.

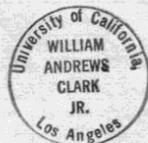
We would like to begin giving ~~this~~ prize with the April 1992 meeting. The prize needs to be endowed generously enough to allow the giving of a respectable prize--at least \$100.00, I think. We began asking for fairly large contributions from "senior women," but we now need help from more of you. We want to encourage people to do good work in the field, and, since many come without any travel support from their universities, offer a little concrete financial boost along with the very meaningful line that this prize will be on the recipients' resumes.

Although any amount will be gratefully appreciated, I hope that you can stretch toward giving \$50.00. You should make the checks out to ASECS and mark them "Women's Caucus Prize." You may send them to me or to the ASECS office in Cincinnati.

Thanks for any help you can give.

Sincerely yours,

Paula Backscheider
Professor
Vice President, ASECS



FOR REFERENCE PURPOSES ONLY

ASECS Women's Caucus Seminar, Austin TX, March 1996
"Profession and Production: Women in Eighteenth-Century Studies."

**Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?
 A History of the ASECS Women's Caucus**

Rusty Shteir

During my recent term as Chair of the ASECS Women's Caucus, I began compiling material toward an informal institutional history of our large group. I did this because the ASECS Women's Caucus is part of the larger historical panorama of second-wave feminism, as well as part of this history -- yet to be written, but which will be written -- of women and the academic professions -- in the mid to late 20th century. I think we need to record and acknowledge what we have done, and why.

The ASECS Women's Caucus had its genesis in the contestatory moment of mid-70s feminism when, at the joint meeting of ASECS and the International Society for 18th-Century Studies at Yale in 1975, a group of women met to effect institutional change. The issue was the representation -- that is to say, the non-representation -- of women on the board of ASECS. Jean Perkins, one of our members, recorded this story from 1975 for us: "It came to my attention that the Nominating Committee (all men) had put together a slate of nominees that included no women at all. When I started to protest . . . I was sharply criticized because [x] said directly to my face: 'Which women could we possibly think could be eligible for this August body?' That made me mad and a group of American members decided to do something about this sorry state of affairs."

Since that time, the ASECS Women's Caucus has developed a series of activities that are regular features of the ASECS annual meeting. A designated Women's Caucus session has been in place since 1978, as has the lunch and business meeting. (Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg played a key part in establishing those.) The Women's Caucus session served as the place for inserting women's studies topics at a point when such topics were less common than now. The Women's Caucus business meeting was a forum for women's issues, including the status of women and of women's studies in the field of 18th-century studies; the Women's Caucus sought, for example, to place "Women's Studies" as a category on our ASECS dues registration card. Most recently, the Women's Caucus established the Catherine Macaulay Prize for the best graduate student paper at an ASECS or ASECS-affiliated meeting on a feminist or women's studies topic.

What has the group meant to those who have attended the lunch and/or the Caucus seminar? Is it intellectual companionship? sociability? a friendly face at a professional meeting? is it feminism in action, and a forum for status of women issues? I wrote to colleagues from the ASECS Women's Caucus who, to my knowledge, began attending sessions and lunches in the late 1970s and early to mid-1980s, and asked for their reflections. I'll excerpt some comments for you. I've also reproduced a paragraph from one response that I've made available for you here today.

Responses suggest that affiliation to the ASECS Women's Caucus has represented various useful things for members at different stages of their careers:

-- a senior colleague has found the luncheon "useful in establishing contacts with younger colleagues."

-- another colleague likes the way the lunch has shown her graduate students "an assembly of successful women professionals, most of whom were friendly and supportive to them and to each other."

-- another senior colleague commented on the way the group "has also been a good support and network for colleagues who have not always had easy lives and careers."

-- one senior colleague wrote that the ASECS Women's Caucus was "one of the first places that I felt validated as a scholar who was interested in women's issues. In the mid and late 70s, it was hard to justify what we were doing without getting a skeptical look."

-- for a slightly younger colleague, the Caucus has helped "develop a feminist identity in the profession" at a time when feminist colleagues at her university consider the 18th century to be "the enemy camp."

Responses show that the ASECS Women's Caucus has had resonance for our long-standing members as **women**, as **women's studies researchers and teachers**, and as **feminist scholars**.

They see the ASECS Women's Caucus as a place for women to gather, for a lunch together during the conference, for the promise of a friendly face. The social dimensions are clearly important. So is the intellectual solidarity of being with women colleagues in 18th-century studies, regardless of critical approach or discipline. Like one version of a classroom, the Women's Caucus lunch is a safe haven.

It also has been a place for those who were developing and promoting 18th-century Women's Studies. The designated Women's Caucus session at annual meetings has been -- at least in principle -- a forum for women's studies topics, and for discussions that cut across the disciplinary divides. Letters to me suggest, however, that the Caucus sessions have an uneven record of success in this area; the hegemony of national groupings, and of discipline-groupings remains perhaps more intact than we might like.

The Women's Caucus, additionally, has been a place for members as feminist scholars, for analyzing professional issues relating to women, or thinking about gender issues more largely in relation to themselves, or their generation, or their colleagues and graduate students. This face of the ASECS Women's Caucus resembles another version of a classroom: the Women's Caucus as a site of struggle. This is the political face of the caucus. One colleague referred to the Caucus as "a stage for interactive feminism in which women with differing viewpoints have found common ground for compromise." Another colleague put it like this: "one of the strengths of the Women's Caucus is that it offers us both solidarity and diversity and a chance for dialogue, where feminist scholars both in and outside women's studies can exchange ideas and support one another."

Looking back to the foundational project of the Women's Caucus 20 years ago, one member who was active back then remarked to me that she and others "did not imagine that the caucus would exist after we had achieved our specific goals." Since that time, however, questions of numerical representation have grown and been shaped into much larger issues of other kinds of representation. But intellectual and professional issues continue to merge. For colleagues who have been part of the ASECS Women's Caucus for 20 years, personal and professional issues have lost neither their punch nor their pungency. Indeed, how could they?

1975 is not very long ago, and gains can all too easily be eroded in an inhospitable climate or when we become complacent and cease to be vigilant.

I'll end with the words of a colleague from a non-literary field who has been coming to ASECS meetings since 1980: "It's heartening to see so many younger women scholars rising through the ranks and adding so much to the field of 18th-century studies. Nevertheless, I do sometimes want to remind them that it wasn't always this way, and things are still far from perfect for women in the groves of academe. We must continue to actively support one another in our careers and research, and the Women's Caucus provides a focus for these goals."

Because the ASECS Women's Caucus is part of the larger institutional history of women, feminism, and the academy, I think that findings from our anecdotal enquiry probably will echo experiences in other academic women's caucuses. For this reason, I expect that our findings probably will be of interest beyond ASECS. I have contacted the MLA Women's Caucus, the MLA Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession, Women in German, and Women in French, to enquire about whether, and how, they are chronicling themselves. They all are very interested in our findings.

**Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?
A History of the AESCS Women's Caucus**

Ruth Perry

Rusty has spoken about what the Women's Caucus at ASECS meant to the generation before ours -- and to ours. Now let me look ahead at the rising generation of feminist scholars. I do so from my own perspective as a senior woman in the field socialized the hard way by colleagues who thought work on women was trivial, searching all my scholarly life for a woman's form in the landscape, *ma semblable, ma soeur*. I strained all the harder to see that form in the eighteenth-century landscape because there were so few women in the field. Now that more women are doing feminist scholarship -- which is just to say scholarship that does not ignore gender -- I notice that I feel freer, I think we all feel freer, to ask a wider variety of questions about the historical dimensions of gender. It is not so urgent anymore to establish that women in the eighteenth century were more than just props in men's narratives.

What we hope for this generation is that they will carry on the tradition -- keep alive the flame lit by Julia Kavenaugh, Myra Reynolds, Doris Stenton, J.M.S. Tompkins, Katherine Balderston, Bridget MacCarthy and in our own day Margaret Doody, Katherine Rogers, and half the people in this room. What they want from us is quite another matter.

What do women want? At least, what do younger women want from older feminist women? First, they want jobs or advice on how to get jobs. They want us to read and edit their works; to suggest subjects for research; to use our friends in their service; and to write letters for them. They complain that they do not get enough mentoring from senior women in their departments or their fields.

True enough: many senior women are selfishly focused on their own careers, looking out for their own interests, unwilling to use their precious time on, so to speak, non-remunerative work. These are old habits, developed in those 15 years or so when fighting for one's own personal academic survival was the same thing as fighting for the survival of the field. Although the field may be established now, those habits die hard.

Then too, you could just call their behaviour "professional." If your judgment is going to count for anything, you have to be selective. You can't be too free with your recommendations or else people sitting in hiring meetings across the country will discount your letters: "Oh she always writes positive letters for younger feminists. This is just political."

The truth is, there are not enough senior women to go around. After "re-engineering," there won't be enough faculty to go around, period, to do the business of a department. But there certainly aren't enough senior feminist women in any single department since departments never hired but one or two token feminists in the first place, to help all the women graduate students, who now number more than 50% of the cohort. This is especially true of those senior women whose high wattage names have a market value that everyone wants to cash in on.

This commoditization of feminist criticism in the academic marketplace creates a number of paradoxes for the rising generation. Many of our students came to feminism through literary studies. What they know may be grounded in their embodied lives but it did not necessarily originate there. Younger scholars choose "feminism" as the banner under which

to peddle their wares, among a number of other professional labels: “post-colonial,” “psychoanalytic,” “Marxist,” “New Historicist.” Abstracting their intellectual interest in gender from the socio-economic conditions that gave rise to it in the first place, they don’t have to “be” feminist so long as they know the literature and the critical issues. “Feminism” has become one intellectual choice among many for purposes of self-presentation and self-marketing.

In my generation, feminism came into our lives first and our work second. There were no women’s studies, no context for the work we did. We were discovering/inventing feminist scholarship at more or less the same time as we were discovering/inventing feminist ways of thinking about our lives. Our insights came from our conversations with friends, discussions in our consciousness-raising groups, and from reading the mind-blowing scholarship of the ‘70s. We tried to extrapolate these insights -- these revisions -- to our studies of eighteenth-century literature.

Our limited success, in concert with the job crisis, has led to a serious mind-body split for our junior colleagues. Nowadays a department might hire a woman to teach feminist criticism while it denies the reality of her embodied self, her actual female physicality. On the job market, candidates without “significant others” are preferred because people think that lesbians are troublemakers and that straight women will give up their jobs to follow their men to his job. No one wants a woman to have a baby because it will interfere with so-called “productivity.” (I have yet to hear a promotion committee recognize that raising children, or caring for aging parents, has an intellectually clarifying and morally refining effect on a scholar’s thinking -- a deepening and broadening of humanistic understanding -- and as such ought to count in favour of a person’s accomplishments.) So, young women who teach feminist theory in the classroom are reluctant to take advantage of maternity leaves, or to challenge prospective employers who ask if they are married -- because jobs are so scarce and tenure so precious. Young women, like young men, are afraid to protest and rock the boat.

In my generation there was nothing to lose and everything to gain. The likelihood of a woman being hired at all was so slight -- and the chances of her being tenured infinitesimal -- that we fought all the barriers to our professional participation simultaneously. You might say that feminism in the academy has lost its political bite because now it has something to lose.

Our junior colleagues want us to defend the right of women to bear children and to tell them our stories about how we managed -- or despaired of managing -- our personal and professional lives. They also want to see us talk back to the boys rather than trying to be one of them. They look to us to tell it like it is, to call it when a male scholar publishes a piece announcing what feminists have been saying for years as if he just discovered it, or ignores the feminist scholarship on a subject, or baits us in public, or teases a younger woman about sexual harassment policies and the like. Our accommodation to our sexist colleagues confuses them and exacerbates their mind-body problem.

When Carolyn Heilbrun left Columbia in protest over her department’s refusal to give tenure to a deserving woman, another modernist, someone in her own field, her friends and colleagues in NYC staged a daylong celebration for her. Heilbrun’s remarks on that occasion, about the continued isolation of women in the profession, despite the efflorescence of feminist criticism, deserve to be repeated here. “The greatest danger is to be afraid to speak out, to be afraid of being discourteous, or worse, a troublemaker,” she said. The Anita Hill hearings had

just happened, and she observed that when they were over, the Senate Judiciary committee saw fit to investigate the leak rather than the problem of harassment. Then she said:

All of you must work where you are -- not to soothe the old men or the new old men who cannot be soothed -- but to make sure that there are others of your own mind where you are so that you are not isolated in your field, department, college, or university. Make sure that if they do not talk to you, you still have someone in your field to talk to.

And when you get tenure, challenge them to argue with you in front of their colleagues and yours, in front of your students and theirs. Make them listen as well as assert, understand as well as smear. Let them discover that if they let you into their meeting, if you give your evidence, they will not die of it.

The Women's Caucus becomes more, not less, important in light of these observations. As our full-time faculty numbers shrink and e-mail replaces human contact, or, to use the dreadful euphemisms of our day -- as the academy goes on-line and downsizes -- we need more than ever to come together in the flesh: to talk, to tell one another our stories, to laugh, to eat, to sit together and to experience our commonalities and differences.⁹ We will need each other in the years to come to talk about life and to talk about literature: let us preserve the precious space that we have made for ourselves in this organization.

⁹ How ironic that I am not here in person to read this sentence. But you, Rusty, are present in the room -- a fine surrogate.

Excerpt from the response of a Women's Caucus member to the question: What does the ASECS Women's Caucus mean to you?

The Caucus at its best is feminism in action for me, but I realize that others of its members, perhaps better placed than I've been professionally, may not regard it in that light, but rather as a rather cozily clubby entity, a place of reassurance rather than of struggle. For me, the furtherance of feminist scholarship, which has been one of the Caucus's objectives, means nothing less than a rereading of and restitution to its rightful place of women's cultural activity in our century, and hence in cultural history. This involves a radical revision of our cultural commonplaces. Many of us do work in this vein, of course. But I fear we've not fully broken through the veil of hostile indifference to our work in the profession as a whole, or within ASECS, despite the magnificent work already done. And, now that women have achieved so much more significant a place in academe, I fear that backlash has already begun to wear down our resolve to alter the paradigms more decisively. Inactivated by the hungry and unsatisfied will to achieve that fueled my generation, a number of younger women seem satisfied with safer approaches, less menacing to the status quo, and hence themselves. It is hard to blame them, but I devoutly wish it were not so.

Where Have We Been, Where Are We Going? Response

Katherine Binhammer

I still quake as I remember the first ASECS Women's Caucus luncheon I attended. Tucson, 1995. I am a graduate student and my dissertation supervisor, Rusty Shteir, is chair of the caucus. Although I participate in feminist activism in Toronto and am writing my dissertation on 1790s feminists, I'm not quite sure what the ASECS women's caucus is or does or has been. I only know that Rusty told me to sign up for the lunch and to go with her. So I do. This is my first ASECS conference and I'm star struck seeing the faces of the critics I've been reading, including Ruth Perry, whose Mary Astell biography inspired me to try to match its high standard of feminist scholarship in my own work. Rusty told me she'd take me to lunch and introduce me to Ruth. I am thrilled and terrified. The lunch itself goes by in a blur, as memorable as the expensive rubber chicken we eat year after year. I vaguely remember saying something stupid to Ruth (or, at least, in my vulnerable graduate student mind, I convince myself it was the stupidest thing in the world to say; I'm sure she doesn't remember me saying anything at all), and I recall being rather baffled by the business of voting and discussing panel topics. But what I do know with Cartesian clarity is that, at the time, I wanted all the things Ruth Perry says young women want from senior feminists: a job, someone to read my work, letters of reference, guidance in research. I didn't see myself as being blatantly careerist or over-professionalized. I saw a future filled with insecurity, unemployment, and a liberal arts PhD worth nothing. Years of underfunding of universities meant that jobs were scarce and the climate of anti-intellectualism that surrounded me -- from which feminist activism was not immune -- meant that the act of scholarly research in the eighteenth century was a marginalizing endeavour.

Six years later, I have a tenure-track job in a department with other feminist scholars, publications in feminist journals, and women graduate students of my own. Without a doubt, this success is partially if not entirely due to the success of feminism and the power and influence of the women like Rusty, who both mentored me and gave me my job (the Dean of Arts and the Chair of English at the time of my appointment were feminists). This personal narrative has a point apart from my continued astonishment that I have been one of the lucky few to find a job while many of my equally qualified friends have not. My point is that feminism within the academy has made a difference. It has achieved a level of institutional power. I came of age in the generation where earlier feminist academics had made it possible and easier for me to engage in feminist scholarship. While I never took feminism within the institution for granted, I did reap its rewards. I never fought for the ASECS women's caucus but I'm part of its legacy of success.

I offer this rather obvious observation because in the struggle to make the women's caucus remain politically relevant today and in the future, we must celebrate the success it has already achieved. When my students in an early women's writing course last year told me that they've experienced nothing but support for their feminist interests within my department and have found an environment that challenged and fostered their thinking about feminism and gender, I believed them. The nostalgic feminist in me wants to say "no you must have

experienced sexism in the academy and you just don't know it." But this is neither fair in its assumption of a false consciousness that feminists have thoroughly critiqued, nor is it historically accurate. Feminism has moved beyond the second wave and students and junior female faculty are coming of age in a different moment. Are we beyond feminism? Obviously not. But the difference and slippage between the two – beyond feminism and feminism beyond – provides a way to think about the present historical moment.

Anti-feminist "postfeminist" discourse, circulating both inside and outside the university, has declared that we are beyond feminism. The backlash insists women have won their demands, there is no oppression, and therefore feminism is irrelevant and organizations like the ASECS women's caucus should cease to exist. Wrong. But "postfeminism" also circulates as a signifier of third wave feminism, as marking a generational shift *within* feminism. I call this movement "feminism beyond." Third wave feminism seeks to separate itself from a feminism which singularly emphasizes women's victimization at the hands of patriarchy and it engages with questions of difference differently; the category 'woman' for third wave feminists is always already problematized by differences of race, class, geography, sexuality. It is not that third wave feminists deny that sexism still exists – far from it – they've just taken a different approach. This feminism is more likely found in cyberspace than in the quad at Yale. As feminists, we must counter the myth that women have 'won' their demands, absolutely. However, I think it is important to interrogate how we are doing the countering for we may be feeding into a slippage between 'beyond feminism' and 'feminism beyond'. That is to say, our rejection of one may lead to a denial of the second. I do think that a certain post-/anti-feminist apathy informs contemporary politics within the academy, but I do not want to criticize young women in the name of a nostalgic vision of the good ol' days of feminism when women were women and out on the streets. What might it mean, I wish to ask, for feminism to acknowledge that *feminism* is now part of the system of gender through which young women come to understand themselves *as women*? The ASECS women's caucus is part of that system and we must both celebrate this and take our responsibility seriously.

How does one write a history of the ASECS women's caucus that could account for the changes within the academy since the 1970s but one that does not also invoke nostalgia or monumental histories, one that maintains a radical critique of gender in the present? Let's look to our own examples. In her history of feminism in France, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, Joan Scott begins by claiming that she wants to avoid writing a teleological history, one "of cumulative progress toward an ever-elusive goal" because this story will involve taking "the disparate and discontinuous actions of women in the past" and turning them into "an orderly and continuous historical tradition."¹⁰ Such a history, I would add, becomes a history of the same (the same battles, won or lost, the same heroes, the same problems) rather than a history of difference, and assuredly a history of feminism, if anything, should offer a history of difference. Certainly, there are continuities, and we need to think about the continuity in the institutional barriers still facing women today (why are women still paid less? why do they continue to provide most of the unpaid domestic labour?). But equally crucial are the discontinuities: we cannot assume

10 Joan Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996), 1.

that a 1970s understanding of sexual difference and its import in the university should completely overlap with how sexual difference operates today and how young female students see it influencing their lives and thought. While the most continuous and persistent motif in the history of feminism from Mary Astell to the present is the interrogation of the nature of sexual difference, we must not assume that that sexual difference has always corresponded to the same historical object. In rejecting a history of feminism that would tell a story of the inevitable progress towards liberation (one which would see the present backlash as a set back and judge past feminist action in terms of its success or failure in forwarding this liberation), I am not rejecting history within feminism. Young women need to read this history in order not to forget the struggles of the past and to read it with the same historical curiosity and rigorous analysis we bring to our study of eighteenth-century feminist history. It was my responsibility as a young graduate student to learn about what the ASECS women's caucus was and did; documents like this one make that task easier.

Mary Astell argued, like third wave feminists are still arguing, for minimizing the importance of sexual difference. But while certain themes, issues, and concerns have been repeated throughout feminism's history, Astell's argument against sexual difference provides a political intervention specific to its time and reveals how gender in the eighteenth century was deeply imbricated with questions of differentiating social class. In her *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* she proved that men aren't superior to women by arguing that some women (i.e., Queen Anne) are superior to some men (i.e., the Queen's footman). I don't just see this as simply a blind spot on Astell's part, as an unfortunate mistake, a strategic error in the grand pursuit of the feminist goal, but as revealing historical knowledge of the system of gender at her time. We can easily see the difference in thinking about sexual difference between 1700 and 2001 but what about between 1980 and 2001? What is today's difference? I don't think we know. Perhaps part of the continuing work of the ASECS women's caucus should be to put our knowledge of the history of feminism to work and make sure we develop a rigorous political critique of gender not in the 1980s or in the 1790s, but a critique of gender now. We need to take our feminism beyond the second wave, but we need to do so with a passionate assertion that we are not beyond feminism.

Three Prizes and a Fund-Raiser

Lisa Freeman, Jill Campbell, and Misty Anderson

At the March, 1999 Business Meeting of the Women's Caucus, chaired by Nanette LeCoat and Sally O'Driscoll, two ad-hoc committees were formed to explore new ways to support women's scholarship: the Independent Scholar Committee (Susan Lanser, Chair, Katherine Kittredge, and Miriam Wallace); and the "Other" Prize Committee (Lisa Freeman, Chair, Jill Campbell, and Laura Rosenthal). While the committees worked over the course of the year to draft proposals for these potential new prizes, thinking soon turned as well to how we might support these new awards financially. An inquiry was sent out to the ASECS central office, and we soon learned that ASECS could provide administrative support for such an effort. And the momentum began to build.

At the ASECS meeting in spring 2000 the two committees presented proposals for three new prizes. The first, the Émilie du Châtelet Award for Independent Scholarship was to provide support for work by an independent scholar on a project designed either to advance understanding of women's experiences and/or contributions to eighteenth-century culture, or to offer a feminist analysis of any aspect of eighteenth-century culture. The "Other" Prizes committee proposed two possible awards: a prize for the preparation and publication of editions of women's works and writings, and a prize for the best article on women's works, women's writings, feminist or gender studies. After much discussion about priorities, the caucus decided that it would be best to work first to foster professional opportunities and collegial support for women scholars within ASECS who were working independently. The other prizes would be phased in over time as funds became available. Together these initiatives were meant, "to recognize the variety of positions, inside and outside academic institutions, in which women scholars have pursued their work; to preserve and make accessible the writings and other works of 18th-century women; and to honor the scholarly achievements of women writing today."

With this in mind, the Women's Caucus 25th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign was launched in October, 2000, with Jill Campbell, who had prepared and circulated an extensive proposal for the campaign, as chair. Misty Anderson, Ann Jessie Van Sant, and Lisa Freeman rounded out the committee. This truly collaborative committee debated, discussed, and coordinated efforts on everything from drafting the fundraising letter to designing special commemorative labels and donor cards. Fundraising mailings went out to all ASECS members and the campaign was publicized in the ASECS New Circulars. Campaign supporters were invited to honor former teachers and mentors with their donation, and separately designed acknowledgement cards were sent out to the donors and to their designated honorees. This aspect of the fundraiser was designed to reflect ongoing discussions within the caucus about intergenerational exchange as well as to cultivate and acknowledge our ties and debts to each other, across generations.

Ultimately, with the unflagging support of Vickie Cutting in the ASECS office, the campaign raised \$7580, with ninety-five donors, honoring seventy-eight women scholars and teachers. All of the donors and their honorees were listed in a special section of the Winter

2001 News Circular. With these new funds in their account, the Women's Caucus was able in 2002 to announce and award the first Émilie du Châtelet Award for Independent Scholars.

The Caucus continues to engage in fundraising activities with an eye toward supporting the other proposed awards. Just look for the Women's Caucus Fund line in the gift section of the ASECS news circular. All donations will help us continue to expand opportunities for feminist studies, women's studies, and gender studies and to support and celebrate the rich legacy of women in the field—in the eighteenth century, the twentieth century, and now in the twenty-first!

**2002 Émilie Du Châtelet Prize
Women's Caucus
American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies**

**Final Report
for
Kathleen M. Oliver, Ph.D.**

In 2002, the Women's Caucus of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) awarded the Émilie Du Châtelet Prize for Independent Scholarship to my work-in-progress, entitled "*The Intended Heroine of this Work*": *The Adolescent Female in Georgian Society, 1714 - 1830*. The \$500 in award funds was to be used for travel to the Yale Center for British Art in order to view its collection of drawings, etchings, and paintings as possible illustrations for "*The Intended Heroine*."

This report details the use of Du Châtelet Prize funds, as well as progress on the project as a whole.

Project Summary

The intent of "*The Intended Heroine of this Work*" is to represent that omnipresent yet ever-elusive figure found in the majority of eighteenth-century English novels, the young adolescent female, aged fifteen to twenty-one years of age, who comes from the gentry or lower levels of the aristocracy.

The social history looks at the material aspects of the young adolescent female's life, such as food, clothing, pets, exercise, and more. In addition, as much as possible, the work combines a variety of disparate elements—such as law and property rights, clothing, education, food, entertainment—as they relate to the eighteenth-century adolescent female, so that her entire world, so to speak, can be seen.

This work is not meant to replace or supplant other social histories, but instead to bring together—in handy reference format—information from a wide and disparate group of sources and about a wide-ranging group of topics (clothing, deportment, education, etc.) as it relates to the eighteenth-century adolescent female; this information should aid and interest readers of eighteenth-century novels, particularly novels of sensibility, as well as those readers interested in a general, yet highly detailed and materially-based introduction to eighteenth-century life and culture.

Progress on the work has been slower than expected, though progress is indeed being made. I am still reading eighteenth-century journals, letters, and diaries, but the stacks of books to read gets progressively lower. Some additional research using secondary sources has also been completed.

I can't, with honesty, say the book will be completed in 2003; I do however expect most of it to be completed by the end of 2004. Also, in May 2003, I applied for an NEH Fellowship to assist in completing the manuscript in a more timely fashion. Competition for NEH Fellowships is intense, and I do not expect to receive a fellowship this time out, though I will continue to reapply.

Use of Du Châtelet Prize Funds

The prize funds were to be used for travel to the Yale Center for British Art to view possible illustrations for "*The Intended Heroine*." The Yale Center for British Art houses the largest collection of British paintings, sculptures, etching, drawings, etc. outside of Great Britain. As such, it is a true treasure trove for researchers.

Originally, I had thought that one must actually be at the Yale Center for British Art in order to view its considerable holdings; however, that is no longer the case. The Bridgeman Art Library now acts as a liaison for the Yale Center for British Art in many image-related matters: Most paintings, sculptures, etc. from the Yale Center for British Art Collection are available for viewing through the Bridgeman website (<http://www.bridgeman.co.uk>). In addition, permissions to reproduce color images from the Yale Collection must be directed to the Bridgeman Art Library, and color transparencies and slides are available only from Bridgeman. (For black and white images, one must still go through the Registrar's Office at the Yale Center for British Art). I currently have an account with the Bridgeman Art Library, so I am able to view the images from my home computer.

Despite the fact that I could view most of the images from home, I thought a trip to Yale would be worth it—and it was! I went this July (2003) to Yale, and, while there, visited the Yale Center for British Art and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. At both institutions, I was able to perform research necessary for my work on the adolescent female.

The Yale Center for British Art was absolutely wonderful. It is one thing to see images in books, but quite another to see the paintings or sculptures in person. I felt like I was visiting with old and very dear friends. There was a full-length portrait of one of the Gunning sisters, one of the most acclaimed beauties of the Georgian era who tragically ruined her life through her use of lead-based makeup. (One of the Gunning sisters died of lead poisoning at a young age; the other sister lived to a considerable age but with a horribly ruined face, eaten away by the lead). Francis Hayman's *The Harlowe Family* was there, and it was delightful to see Clarissa more clearly than she can be seen on the book cover of the Penguin edition. I must admit that my favorite items were the marble busts, situated so that they were at face level with the viewer. Thus, I looked into the faces of Alexander Pope, Samuel Johnson, George III, George IV, William Pitt, and more. It was great fun.

Attending more directly to business, I also spoke with Melissa Gold Fournier, Assistant Museum Registrar, who informed me in detail about permissions, reproductions, and other sundry issues related to the Yale Center for British Art and the Bridgeman Art Library. She also provided me with her e-mail address should I have any future questions or concerns.

At the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, I set up an account, and I was able to view John Trusler's *The Honours of the Table; or, Rules for Behaviour during Meals: With the Whole Art of Carving, Illustrated by a Variety of Cuts. Together with Directions for Going to Market, and the Method of Distinguishing Good Provisions from Bad; to which is Added a Number of Hints of Concise Lessons for the Improvement of Youth, on All Occasions of Life*. This very small (only about 3 by 4 inches, 120 pages) book is jammed with a wealth of information about dining etiquette. For three years, I have been trying to get access to this book, even in microfilm format, through Interlibrary Loan, but without avail. Only ten (10) libraries worldwide own an original copy of it, and there are limited microfilm versions available (none of which were available through Interlibrary Loan). (An excerpt from Trusler's book, entitled "The Whole Art of Carving," was reissued separately, and copies of these books are more widely available, though information on carving is not what I was looking for). Having literally laid my hands on this little gem, I can now finish my section on "Eating and Drinking" secure in the knowledge that I know the differences in etiquette required with promiscuous and conventional seating.

In regards to travel costs, the prize money awarded was \$500. My roundtrip plane fare to New York City was approximately \$180; roundtrip train fare from New York to New Haven was \$65 each day (with my AAA discount). (I had no hotel expenses because I stayed with my sister in New York City). As you can see, the \$500 more than covered my travel expenses.

All in all, my trip to Yale was successful. Not only was I able to view the artworks and speak with the Assistant Registrar at the Yale Center for British Art, but I was also able to conduct some important research at the Beinecke. (And, while at the Beinecke, I was able to see two exquisite little chairs owned by Gertrude Stein: The backs and seats were designed by Picasso and the needlepoint was done by Alice Toklas!) I had a wonderful and productive time, and I look forward to returning some day.

Conclusion

I sincerely thank the Women's Caucus and the members of the Émilie Du Châtelet committee for providing me with this very distinguished and highly useful award.

It is difficult for independent scholars to find the time and the resources to conduct research for their projects; however, thanks to the funding provided by the Émilie Du Châtelet Prize, I was able to travel without depleting my personal resources and, in fact, the award money covered virtually all of my travel expenses.

In addition, to be awarded the Émilie Du Châtelet itself is a great honor. (Beginning this August, I will no longer be an Independent Scholar—I will be joining the faculty at the University of

Central Florida as a tenure-track faculty member! I believe that the Du Châtelet Award was a factor in helping me obtain this position).

Again, my sincere thanks for the work of the ASECS Women's Caucus: It has made a difference in my life, and no doubt has done and will do so for many others.

Mary Astell Jane Austen Jane Barker Marie
 Emmanuelle Bayou-Louis Aphra Behn Frances
 Burney Rosalba Carreira Margaret Cavendish
 Susanna Centlivre Isabelle de Charriere Emilie du
 Châtelet Hannah Cowley Judith Drake Louise
 d'Épinay La We all thank you ^{ise Gottsched}
 Françoise ^{et} Elizabeth
 Inebald Angelika Kauffman Catherine MacCauley
 Mary Moser Katherine Philips Mary Pix Clara
 Reuss Marie Riccoboni Sophie von La Roche Sarah
 Scott Germaine de Staël Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun
 Maria Antonia Walhurgis Mary Wollstonecraft ...

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