A Study of the Idea of "Woman" in the Western Tradition

by

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Submitted to the Salary and Leaves Committee
for the Sabbatical Leave Program 1999-2000

September 11, 2000

Sabbatical Project Proposal for Fall 1999-Spring 2000
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Project Overview

There has been a tremendous growth of interest in and research into both women's images in literature and their role in creating literature, especially in the last decade. Interdisciplinary approaches to literature have also become more popular, incorporating the role which history, philosophy and religion have played in the creation of literature. While most textbooks have taken an archetypal approach to women's images in literature, I am interested in developing a more interdisciplinary and chronological study. I propose a systematic program of study into a range of historical, philosophical and literary texts to outline the spectrum of women's images in literature throughout the Western tradition, with a special emphasis on women writers.

Literally within the past two years, the Internet has developed into a valuable resource for information in many fields. It is a particularly rich resource for women's studies. While a definitive listing of Internet sites is impossible, due to the ever-changing nature of its information, a basic listing of reliable sites, which could be used by both faculty and students, would also enrich this project.

Project Report

The product of this course of research will be (a) systematic notes for each of the periods (b) an annotated bibliography for each period and (c) a brief list of basic web sites for each period. First, the notes will contain both an outline and overview of the standard images of women for each period drawn from interdisciplinary sources relevant to each of the periods. They will also provide information on key women authors relevant to each period. The second component, annotated bibliographies, will provide source and content information for both the interdisciplinary sources and the works of women authors discussed in the notes. The third component will provide listings of reputable, well-

established websites which can provide further information for each of the periods.

The final report will compile all three components together in chronological order with a brief introduction and overview. This format will allow anyone using the report to access all the information for each of the chronological periods. This format will be useful both as a teaching tool and as research tool for faculty and students.

A time line for my research for both semesters is provided at the end of this proposal.

Benefits to Students, Department and College

This project will provide benefits to myself as a scholar and teacher, to my students, to my department and to the college. As a teacher and scholar, a systematic study will allow me to expand my knowledge of primary, secondary and electronic sources. I plan to incorporate much of this information into components of composition, critical thinking and literature courses which I already teach; this course of study will allow me to be a far more knowledgeable instructor for my students. Having already demonstrated great interest in this area, my students will profit from this project with resources to expand their own knowledge as well as providing insight into an ever-expanding field. This project will also provide a resource base for other faculty in the English department. And since it is an interdisciplinary project, it will provide resources for faculty in other departments who teach courses in women's studies as well as those who wish to add this component to their classes.

Proposed Timeline

August -September 1999: Ancient and Greek
Sample texts: Gerda Lerner *The Creation of Patriarchy*; Plato, Aristotle, Sappho

October- November 1999: Roman and Early Church History
Sample texts: Elaine Pagels, Ovid, Vergil, Plutarch, Augustine, Jerome, Aquinas

November-December 1999: Medieval
Sample texts: Henrietta Leyser *Medieval Women*; Chaucer, De Pizan, Marie de France

January-February 2000: Renaissance
Sample texts: Montaigne, Castiglione's *The Courtier*, the Paston letters, Milton, Shakespeare, Lady Mary Wroth

February-March 2000: Eighteenth-Nineteenth Centuries
Sample Texts: Locke, Hume, Aphra Behn, Defoe, Richardson, Sand, Wollstonecraft, Mill, Marx

April-May 2000: Twentieth Century
Sample Texts: Freud, Woolf, de Beavoir, Friedan, Butler, Gilligan, Morrison, Cisneros

Statement of Purpose

This project came about out of two continuing interests: women's studies and critical thinking. In the course of teaching English 1C over the past five years, I had begun teaching a component on modern feminist psychological theory; it quickly became clear as I developed this component, that my students needed to understand that the history of women began long before the rise of modern feminism in the 1970's. Most students, male and female, thought that they already had an understanding of women and women's history but in most cases what they really had were assumptions, and mainly negative assumptions at that. Because I began my 1C curriculum with the two major Greek thinkers, Plato and Aristotle, returning to their ideas about women seemed the logical place to start within the context of the class. After all, as a class, we discovered over and over that most of the "great ideas" of Western civilization which we studied throughout the semester were deeply rooted in the philosophical ideas of Plato and Aristotle -- and I wanted my students to see that concepts about women were no different. Both my students and I were surprised to see how influential Aristotle's definition of woman as a "deformed man" has been up to, and including, the present. I also knew from my own research that much of postmodern theory addressed this same concept. Since I wanted to find a way to help my students deal with the complexity and difficulty of understanding and critiquing theoretical argumentation, especially postmodern theory which is now omnipresent in most fields of the "academy", this approach seemed like a way to accomplish multiple teaching objectives. However, I quickly learned that I did not realize the extent of the topic.

In order to understand the role of women in Western history, it is essential to understand how women were defined and represented by their culture. So this project will be organized chronologically to show first, the prevailing philosophical construct of "women" in each period; second, the prevailing stereotypes and idealizations as seen in

literature and other sources of the period; and third, whenever possible, the voices of the women themselves from each period. Thus the texts used cover not only literature, but also history, science, religion and philosophy from a variety of books, journals and electronic sources.

The purpose of this project is not to draw theoretical conclusions but to provide a number of resources and options to allow our students help with drawing their own conclusions. Thus I have elected to proved a wide range of both primary texts and secondary resources to provide for a number of pedagogical options. And since I want this project to provide resources readily available to both professor and student, I have tried to derive as many sources as possible from textbooks and anthologies. In the end, what might be surprising about this study is how "modern" much of the past rhetoric and reasoning might sound -- showing that the gender struggles of today have developed directly from the past -- hence our need to understand it.

Table of Contents

Report

Overview

In order to understand the role of women in Western history, it is essential to understand how women were defined and represented by their culture. Much of the following will depict what Howard Bloch has called the "cultural constant" of misogyny that runs throughout Western tradition.[1] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese also states that "misogyny can be found in all periods, all communities, all societies, and in many male texts" but she warns that:

> To emphasize men's hatred and fear of women is to personalize gender relations and detract attention from the various forms of sexism that characterize them. Nor is anything gained by homogenizing all forms of male domination as 'patriarchy' and thereby obscuring the specific characteristics of such genuinely patriarchal societies as that of ancient Rome. Misogyny and patriarchy exist in, not outside of, history and must be used with precise reference to historical relations of gender and class.[2]

She continues by pointing out that "despite temptations to essentialism or ahistoricism, the best recent work in women's history explicitly or implicitly confirms the centrality of historical development to women's experience".[3] Gerda Lerner also argues that "in the course of establishment of patriarchy and constantly reinforced as a result of it, the major idea systems which explain and order Western civilization incorporated a set of unstated assumptions about gender, which powerfully affected the development of history and human thought".[4] While Fox-Genovese and Lerner might disagree on the

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[1] R. Howard Bloch, "Medieval Misogyny Woman as Riot", Representations 20 (1987): 14.
[2] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Culture and Consciousness in the Intellectual History of European Women," Signs 12.3 (1987): 531.
[3] Fox-Genovese 531.
[4] Gerda Lerner, The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy (New York: Oxford UP, 1993) 1.

specifics, both point to a clear consensus that the study of history requires the study of both genders, including how both genders perceive each other as well as how they perceive themselves. This study will attempt an overview of how the idea of "woman" was constructed in each of the major eras in Western tradition; thus it focuses on the philosophical, literary and historical constructs of each period to understand "the major idea systems which explain and order Western civilization" and how they "incorporated a set of unstated assumptions about gender" which in turn "powerfully affected the development of history and human thought".

The Ancient World

I. The Philosophy of "Woman"

As the cornerstones of Western tradition, ancient Greece and Rome provide the starting point for this study. In particular, the ideas of Aristotle as well as the literary images of Greek and Roman playwrights and poets will provide images of women that will permeate the rest of the Western tradition.

Gerda Lerner's The Creation of Patriarchy is a detailed description of how patriarchy arose in the ancient Near East; she contends that the original "class" system was based on gender rather than socio-economics. Lerner contends that women's status as "second-class" citizens is an inherent part of the structure of Western society. Lerner pinpoints the turning point as the demise of matriarchal, hunter-gatherer based societies, which were invariably organized around a religion based on fertility goddesses.[5] When these societies were replaced by more urban societies based on centralized state and economic structures, women's roles were severely diminished since they were excluded from the public realm, and its attendant power.

In the classical era of ancient Greece, the two major philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, would have diametrically opposed views on the idea of woman. In the *Republic*, Plato argues for the essential equality of men and women; he will be one of the few to make this argument until the eighteenth century. First he states that women should receive the same education as men since men and women do not have significantly different natures: "But if the difference consists only in women bearing and men begetting children, this does not amount to a proof that a woman differs from a man in respect of the sort of education she should receive; and we shall therefore continue to maintain that our guardians and their wives ought to have the same

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[5] See also Mary Kinnear, The Daughters of Time: Women in the Western Tradition. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1982; especially Chapter Two.

pursuits".[6] Plato also states that just as some men are better than others, some women are better than others and the sexes should be grouped together according to their "goodness" rather than their gender. He concludes by stating "You agree then, I said, that men and women are to have a common way of life such as we have described -- common education, common children [...] and always and in all things, so far as they are able, women are to share with the men? And in so doing they will do what is best, and will not violate by preserve the natural relation of the sexes".[7] Plato is also famous for introducing the first woman philosopher, Diotima, in his dialogue the *Symposium.* Although Diotima is really only a rhetorical construct introduced by Socrates to further explain the steps in the ladder of love, her image still evokes the concept of woman as philosopher.[8]

However, it is Aristotle's detailed description of women's biology which will have by far the greatest impact on the Western tradition. In his *Generation of Animals*, Aristotle will create the concept of woman as a deformed and impotent man which will underlie philosophical, political and medical thought for the next 2,000 years. He directly refutes Plato's arguments in the *Republic* by stating that "the temperance of a man and of a woman, or the courage and justice of a man and a woman, are not, as Socrates maintained, the same; the courage of a man is shown in commanding, of a woman in obeying".[9] Aristotle defines woman as "as it were an impotent male, for it is through a certain incapacity that the female is female, being incapable of concocting the

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[6] Plato, "Women as Equal to Men in the State," History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book, ed. Rosemary Agonito (New York: Perigee Books, 1977) 29-30.

[7] Plato 39.

[8] In his article "Is Diotima a Woman?", David Halperin argues that Diotima is not at all a female-centered image but a metaphor for male-centered philosophical discourse. David Halperin, "Why is Diotima a Woman?," Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World, eds. David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990). Diotima is also the name used by the primary website for research into women in the classical world: Diotima: <http://www.uky.edu/ArtsSciences/Classics/gender.html>.

[9] Aristotle, "The Differences Between Men and Women," History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book, ed. Rosemary Agonito (New York: Perigee Books, 1977) 54. See also Maryanne Horowitz, "Aristotle

nutriment in its last stage into semen [...] For the female is, as it were, a mutilated male".[10] The inability to concoct semen is particularly damaging as "it is plain therefore that semen both has soul, and is soul, potentially"[11]; that is, the woman provides the body of a child but it is the man's sperm which provides it with life and soul and thus its "reality". Aristotle also points out differences in the "mental characteristics" between the sexes where the woman is "softer in character, is the sooner tamed, admits more readily of caressing [...] is less spirited than the male [...] is softer in disposition [...] more impulsive and more attentive to the nurture of the young".[12] But perhaps the most damaging of Aristotle's observations is that man is perfect and complete: "The fact is, the nature of man is the most rounded off and complete, and consequently in man the qualities or capacities above referred to are found in their perfection".[13] And thus, by definition, woman is incomplete and imperfect: "Again, the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior".[14]

The Romans tended to build upon the structures created by the Greeks. While the Greeks severely limited the role of women, ranking them only slightly above slaves, the Romans were not quite so strict -- particularly in the realm of education. However, both societies were profoundly patriarchal, allowing women almost no legal or political rights and confining their sphere to hearth and home. In both societies, the ideal woman was a well-behaved (i.e. submissive) wife.

II. Idealizations and Stereotypes

A dominant theme in Greek drama, particularly Greek tragedy, is the vengeful woman. Perhaps the most famous still is Medea who kills her children in order to revenge her husband's abandonment of them and her. Although Euripedes' portrayal of

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and Women," Journal of the History of Biology 9.2 (Fall 1976): 183-213 for a good overview of the historical effect of Aristotle's writings on the concept of woman.

[10] Aristotle 44, 46.

[11] Aristotle 44.

[12] Aristotle 48-9.

[13] Aristotle 49.

Medea is sympathetic and casts her as the tragic heroine, his emphasis on her passion and rage also reinforces the old cliché of "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned". Although in the end, Medea escapes unpunished (an ending which literally created a riot by the first audience), her name will stand as a continuing marker of what evil a woman is capable of. Another heroine in the same vein is Clytemenestra who killed her husband, Agamemnon, in revenge for his sacrifice of their daughter. Greek and Roman mythology also reinforces this image with the Furies (also known as the Harpies), three women who revenge family murders for the gods.

Yet another stereotype is the shrew, which was particularly popular in Greek and Roman comedy. The standard portrayal in comedy is a wife who will invariably take her husband's goods and youth while cuckolding and scolding him. Ironically, one of the most famous shrews is Socrates' wife, Xanthippe. Of Xanthippe, Rogers writes " Perhaps the most egregious shrew in history, she constantly tried even the exceptional fortitude of her saintly husband".[15] Socrates famously told a student who asked about whether to marry:

> On the one hand loneliness, childlessness, the dying out of your stock, and an outsider as your heir will be your destiny; on the other eternal worry, one quarrel after another, her dower cast in your face, the haughty disdain of her family, the garrulous tongue of your mother-in-law, the lurking paramour, and worry as to how the children will turn out.[16]

On the other hand, an equally popular image is that of the good wife. The first example is Homer's depiction of Odysseus'' faithful wife, Penelope, in the *Odyssey*. Penelope holds off a household of suitors, intent on acquiring her and her fortune, while

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[14] Aristotle 51.
[15] Katherine Rogers, The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1966) 26.
[16] Qtd. in Rogers 26.

she waits ten years for her husband to return from the Trojan War. Penelope stands throughout the history of literature as a symbol of faithfulness, loyalty and trust. The good wife was also a dominant image in Rome, with the Roman wife an example of the best of womankind: "The Roman matron was not generally treated like Menaechmus' wife [i.e. a shrew]: she enjoyed much higher status than her Greek counterpart, and thus was able to make a greater contribution to her husband's happiness and was more apt to be loved and respected by him".[17] Plutarch, in his *Conjugal Precepts*, outlines detailed guidelines for a good marriage including the idea that mutual friendship and affection is possible in marriage. However, Plutarch also outlines the "two great duties of a virtuous woman, which are to keep at home and be silent".[18]

The final image is that of the faithless and inconstant woman. In particular Roman poets, such as Ovid, begin to paint a picture of woman as inconstant, fickle, lustful, greedy and vain. Ovid's three-part poem , the *Ars Amores*, outlines how to win the love of a woman in its first two parts and then details cures for this love in its third part. (Ovid also wrote a poem called "On Facial Treatment for Young Ladies" with detailed descriptions of how to make facial masks and potions.) This picture of woman as insatiable and incapable of control is one we will see throughout this study.

III. Woman's Voices

Greece: We have textual evidence of only one woman writer in the classical period, Sappho. However, Sappho's literary reputation and fortunes have tended to reflect more on the prevailing culture's willingness to tolerate her homosexuality than on the worth of her poetry. A resident of the island of Lesbos, Sappho wrote love poems directed toward other women (leading, obviously, to the modern term, lesbian). We have few of Sappho's poems but do know that her poetry was well received and respected in her lifetime. In her poetry she focused on a woman's emotional expression of love.

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[17] Rogers 28.

IV. Bibliography

Agonito, Rosemary. History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book. New York: Perigee Books, 1977.

Excellent chronologically organized anthology of primary source excerpts from the philosophers, theologians, scientists and who constitute the Western history of ideas. Excerpts are brief and to the point making this an excellent supplemental text for any course.

Allen, Prudence. The Aristotelian Revolution 750C -1250 AD. Montreal: Eden Press, 1985.

Analyses the philosophical tradition concerning the concept of woman in relation to the concept of man within the field of philosophy of the person. Categorizes them in terms of a theory of sex unity, sex polarity, or sex complementarity.

Halperin, David. "Why is Diotima a Woman?" Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World. Eds. David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler and Froma Zeitlin. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990.

An essay which convincingly argues that Diotima is a metaphor for masculine discourse in what is an exclusively masculine pursuit of philosophy.

Horowitz, Maryanne. "Aristotle and Women." Journal of the History of Biology 9.2 (Fall 1976): 183-213.

Good overview of the effect of Aristotle's writings on the concept of woman.

Kinnear, Mary. The Daughters of Time: Women in the Western Tradition. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1982.

An excellent chronological overview of women in the western tradition. An excellent research resource.

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[18] Plutarch, "The Roles and Virtues of Men and Women," History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book, ed. Rosemary Agonito (New York: Perigee Books, 1977) 63.

Lerner, Gerda. The Creation of Patriarchy. New York: Oxford, 1986.

Provides a detailed, scholarly account of how patriarchy developed in the ancient world. Lerner focuses on how class and social control impact on gender constructs. Both her notes and bibliographies are exceptional resources for both professor and student.

Rogers, Katherine M. The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1966.

Although slightly out of date, this is still the only text to attempt an overview of the history of misogyny in western literature. Still an excellent resource but not as up to date as it could be in terms of feminist approaches.

V. Websites

Argos <http://argos.evansville edu>

Diotima: <http://www.uky.edu/ArtsSciences/Classics/gender.html>

Early Christianity

I. The Philosophy of "Woman"

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the only institution able to maintain cultural and philosophical ideas was the Christian Church. Since most of the early Church fathers, the patristic authorities, wrote against women, particularly their sexuality, anti-feminism continues in this period. But now what was defined as women's deformity and imperfection based on biological terms is conflated with religious and moral terms as well.

St. Paul is the first to bring Christian principles to bear on the anti-feminist tradition. Agonito points out, "There is evidence, consistent with Jesus' example, that women played an important part in the earliest days of the new church, even to engaging in such evangelical work as teaching the faith and converting large numbers to Christianity".[19] However, Paul is against such a role for women: "Whatever his reasons, Paul explicitly objected to this new turn, and his reactionary efforts in the matter of women succeeded in setting the tone for thinking about women that would be continually reinforced in the intellectual and practical tradition in the West for the next two thousand years".[20] The strictest proscriptions appear in 1st Corinthians where Paul states "let your women keep silence in the churches for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also satin the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church"(1 Cor 14: 34-5). Paul also articulates the relationship between the sexes as follows: "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor 11:3). Furthermore, Paul advocates celibacy as the purest lifestyle and the best way to lead a Christian life. Clement of Alexandria attempted to further refine and redefine Paul's

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[19] Agonito 68. See Also Elaine Pagels book The Gnostic Gospels for moiré eon women's roles in early Christianity.
[20] Agonito 68.

views by establishing acceptable parameters for Christian marriage but as Pagels notes, "Even at best, Christian marriage remains inferior to chastity".[21]

Jerome's *Against Jovinian* becomes the standard anti-feminist text for the next thousand years. Jerome's work, a refutation of Jovinian's argument for Christian marriage, is a detailed diatribe against both marriage and women. It contains images and descriptions which will be used over and over in the Middle Ages: woman as temptress or devil, as inconstant, as greedy and insatiable in all things whether material or sexual (i.e. she will make your life a living hell). Augustine demonstrates a similar revulsion for sexuality which also permeates much of his writing; he, like Jerome, writes often of how deeply ashamed he is by his own past sexual conduct. Although women may be wives and mothers, for these writers she is also a temptation, and just as Eve led to Adam's fall, so may any woman lead to a fall for the unaware. In the *City of God*, Augustine explains the difference between life here on Earth, the city of man, and life in paradise, the city of God. One of the most influential Christian thinkers, Augustine establishes the image of woman as a dichotomy: in her earthly, sexual role she leads to damnation, but in her role as good wife and mother she will be a blessing to herself and to her family.

II. Idealizations and Stereotypes

Eve and Mary are the dominant poles of female representation in this period. The figure of Eve is reviled on two accounts: her sexuality and her role in the loss of paradise. Her polar opposite is Mary who redeems mankind through the conception and birth of her son, Jesus Christ. Both of these images again show how the idea of woman has now been conflated with both religion and sexuality. Again those who fall under the guise of sexual temptress will follow in the path of Eve but those who follow the role of good Christian wife and mother can hope for redemption through Mary.

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[21] Elaine Pagels, Adam, Eve and the Serpent (New York: Vintage Books, 1988) 29.

The martyr is another predominant image of this period. The stories of martyrs, called hagiographies, follow a fairly standard set of conventions: conversion, torture and martyrdom. What is often most dominant in the stories of female martyrs are bodily torture and threats to their virginity. Details are invariably gory and vivid -- i.e. breasts and other body parts mutilated, rapes, beheadings and mutilation of corpses. The moral of these tales is also invariably the same: to follow the path of Christian behavior regardless of bodily or earthly suffering.

III. Woman's Voices

Again we have very little textual evidence from women themselves. Perhaps the best known is the testimony of Perpetua, written while she was arrested and awaiting execution. Living in second century Carthage, Perpetua is converted to Christianity, arrested and thrown to the lions. The night before her death, Perpetua dreams that she is fighting in hand to hand combat: "My clothes were stripped off, and suddenly I was man [...] Then I awoke; I realized that it was not with wild animals that I would fight, but with the devil; but I knew that I would win the victory".[22]

IV. Bibliography

Agonito, Rosemary. History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book. New York: Perigee Books, 1977.

Excellent chronologically organized anthology of primary source excerpts from the philosophers, theologians, scientists and who constitute the Western history of ideas. Excerpts are brief and to the point making this an excellent supplemental text for any course.

Kinnear, Mary. The Daughters of Time: Women in the Western Tradition. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1982.

An excellent chronological overview of women in the western tradition. An excellent research resource.

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[22] Qtd. in Pagels 34.

Lerner, Gerda. The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy. New York: Oxford UP, 1993.

Constitutes a sweeping view of women's history from the Middle Ages to 1870. Both her notes and bibliographies are exceptional resources for both professor and student. See especially Chapter Seven.

Pagels, Elaine. Adam, Eve and the Serpent. New York, Vintage Books, 1988.

Still considered the best text on how early Christianity dealt with issue of gender, sex and religion.

Rogers, Katherine M. The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1966.

Although slightly out of date, this is still the only text to attempt an overview of the history of misogyny in western literature. Still an excellent resource but not as up to date as it could be in terms of feminist approaches.

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The Middle Ages

I. The Philosophy of "Woman"

The Middle Ages continues to draw much of its thinking from the classics and the patriarchal fathers. For instance, Pope Innocent III, in his work *On the Misery of the Human Condition*, outlines the biology of woman thus:

> Menstrual blood ceases in the female after conception so that the child in her womb will be nourished by it. And this blood is reckoned so detestable and impure that on contact with it fruits will fail to sprout, orchards go dry, herbs wither, the very trees let go their fruit; if a dog eat of it, he goes mad. When a child is conceived, he contacts the defect of the seed, so that lepers and monsters are born of this corruption.[23]"

Medieval views of marriage are also continuations of the themes found in the classical and patristic sources. Turning again to Pope Innocent we find the wife depicted as a shrew:

> There are three things which keep a man from staying home: smoke, a leaky roof and a shrewish wife...If she be beautiful, men readily go after her; if she by ugly, she as readily after them. It is hard to keep what many want, and annoying to have what no one cares about [...] When you buy a horse, an ox, a dog, clothes and a bed, even a cup and a pitcher, you get the chance to look them over. But no one displays a bride, lest she displease before marriage.[24]

Thus, the standard representation of women was very similar to what we have already seen. Note that the above quotes are from the Pope, the titular head of the Catholic Church which provided the overriding political and moral views of the time. Women are still seen in the dichotomous role first articulated by Augustine and the other patristic

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[23] Qtd. in R. Howard Bloch, "Medieval Misogyny: Woman as Riot." Representations 20 (Fall 1987): 20, n.1.

fathers; Eve or Mary. As Kinnear notes, "'Eva/Ave' was the medieval palindrome which crystallized the two predominant images of woman in the literary imagination".[25]

However, the Middle Ages is the first period in which we find substantial evidence of female voices. This was due to multiple factors. First, education was much more available, although mainly for aristocratic women. Second, many women found an alternative to their traditional roles of wife and mother through the Church, becoming nuns and anchorites instead. This was also a way of living up to the ideal of the chaste life which was still popular in this period. Third, there were also a number of women who found themselves in roles of privilege and power as queens. This afforded an image of woman as ruler that had not really been seen in the earlier periods except in myth. And by the end of the period, shifts in society and economics allowed more entry for women into trades and guilds which also give them a measure of power.

II. Idealizations and Stereotypes

Again the shrew is one stereotype of the wife. There are multiple sources in the Middle Ages which depict the same conventions we saw in the previous two periods: the most famous is the *Roman de la Rose*. Perhaps the example which students enjoy the most is Chaucer's Wife of Bath, whose famous Prologue recounts the story of her five marriages. What makes the Wife so interesting is that her argument is based in part on the primacy of trusting the authority of her own experience over trusting cultural authority. Her prologue is ambiguous enough to be read as a portrait of the shrewish wife, or alternatively, as a defense of women against such attacks. The French fabliaux, bawdy folk tales, which were highly popular in this period also contain many examples of the shrewish wife.

And again, the opposite of the shrew is the good wife. The patient Griselda, the constant Constance, and the noble Lucretia are all examples of good wives. The *Medieval Home Companion*, a guidebook for wives written in the fourteenth century

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[24] Qtd. in Bloch 6.

gives a detailed picture of the daily realities of maintaining hearth and home. Written by an elderly husband for his much younger wife, he advises her, in part, so that she will be well prepared for a second husband since she is sure to be widowed:

> Nevertheless, although, as I said, no great service is due me, I want you to know a great deal about virtue, honor, and duty, not so much for my sake, but either to aid another husband if you have one after me, or better to teach your daughters, friends, or others, if you so desire and have the need.[26]

Another idealization is the godly woman: the nun, the saint and the martyr. The *Ancrene Wisse*, an English guidebook for nuns, outlines the proper behavior and daily routine required of women in this position. In Germany, Hildegard von Bingen was such a famous abbess, author and composer that she regularly corresponded with the leading thinkers and political figures of her time. Heloise, an abbess in fourteenth century France, was also a well regarded religious figure (despite her notoriety as the wife of Peter Abelard). Hagiographies continued to be very popular forms of literature and moral teaching. And an English laywoman, Margery Kempe, in her autobiography, outlines her attempt to lead a true Christian life despite her status as an uneducated wife and mother.

But easily the most famous of all images of medieval women is the courtly lady. First appearing in troubadour love lyrics in the early twelfth century, the courtly lady becomes an enduring image of women well into the sixteenth century. The courtly lady is beautiful but usually unattainable (often because she is already married); her love is most desirable because of her beauty, nobility and honor. But it is the nobility of the often unrequited love which the knight bears for his lady which spurs him on to great deeds. Although there is much critical controversy as to whether courtly love was a real

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[25] Kinnear 61.

phenomenon, as a literary construct it is a new image of women; however, whether that provided any actual change in women's status is doubtful. Dante created the most famous of all courtly ladies, Beatrice, whose image is used not slay dragons, but, instead through her guidance Dante is led to God.

III. Woman's Voices

The trobaritz, female troubadours, writing in southwestern France during the twelfth through thirteenth centuries, provide a women's point of view into the courtly love tradition. Marie de France, also living in twelfth century France, wrote a series of *lais*, short narrative tales, which explore the courtly love tradition from both gender's perspectives. Heloise, in a series of letters to her estranged husband, Peter Abelard, writes of their relationship in a striking and unusual way; arguing that she would have preferred to remain his mistress rather than become his wife. Julian of Norwich, a famous English anchoress, wrote a book of her "showings" or visions of the divine. And Margery Kempe. although illiterate, hires a scribe to write her remarkable "autobiography". But perhaps the most famous of medieval female authors is Christine de Pizan whose *Book of the City of Ladies* literally rewrites Augustine's *City of God*, and most of the anti-feminist tradition, to show that, in fact, women are constant, prudent and good. Christine is often called the first feminist writer in the Western tradition.

IV. Bibliography

Agonito, Rosemary. History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book. New York: Perigee Books, 1977.

Excellent chronologically organized anthology of primary source excerpts from the philosophers, theologians, scientists and who constitute the Western

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[26] Bayard, Tania, ed., A Medieval Home Companion: Housekeeping in the Fourteenth Century, trans. Tania Bayard (New York: Harper Collins, 1991) 28-9.

history of ideas. Excerpts are brief and to the point making this an excellent supplemental text for any course.

Bayard, Tania, ed. A Medieval Home Companion: Housekeeping in the Fourteenth Century. Trans. Tania Bayard. New York: Harper Collins, 1991.

Originally written by a husband for his young wife, this guidebook from the fourteenth century covers all aspects of daily life in the fourteenth century; it would make an excellent textbook.

Bloch, R. Howard. "Medieval Misogyny: Woman as Riot." Representations 20 (Fall 1987):1-24.

Bloch argues that the history of misogyny is inherently intertwined with the history of rhetoric and interpretation and that misogyny as a cultural construct is endemic in western culture. This article is fairly advanced and is probably better as a teaching resource than a student text.

Casey, Kathleen. "The Cheshire Cat: Reconstructing the Experience of Medieval Women." Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays. Ed. Berenice A. Carroll. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1976.

A social-historical categorization of women's work and roles in the Middle Ages. Good resource for lectures.

Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. "Culture and Consciousness in the Intellectual History of European Women." Signs 12.3 (1987):529-47.

Excellent and balanced overview of feminist thought and its relationship to European intellectual history. Her footnotes provide a wealth of research citations.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, eds. The Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1996.

Still the best single source for prose and poetry by women in English. Covers the Middle Ages to the present. Useful introductions.

Kelly, Joan. "Early Feminist theory and the Querelle des Femmes." Women, History and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly. Ed. Joan Kelly .Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984.

Kinnear, Mary. The Daughters of Time: Women in the Western Tradition. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1982.

An excellent chronological overview of women in the western tradition. An excellent research resource.

Larrington, Carolyne. Women and Writing in Medieval Europe: A Sourcebook. New York: Routledge, 1995.

An excellent anthology of writing by and about women in the Middle Ages. Very useful introductions to sections and individual selections. This would be a good textbook.

Lerner, Gerda. The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy. New York: Oxford UP, 1993.

A sweeping view of women's history from the Middle Ages to 1870. Both her notes and bibliographies are exceptional resources for both professor and student. See especially Chapters Four and Seven.

Power, Eileen. Medieval Women. Ed. M.M. Postan. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975.

A classic in the field, this is a concise (99 pages), clear overview of the role of women in the Middle Ages. It would make an excellent textbook.

Rogers, Katherine M. The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1966.

Although slightly out of date, this is still the only text to attempt an overview of the history of misogyny in western literature. Still an excellent resource but not as up to date as it could be in terms of feminist approaches.

Stuard, Susan Mosher. Women in Medieval History and Historiography. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1987.

Overview of historiography of medieval women in the twentieth century. Each chapter focuses on the tradition in a different country including France, Germany, Italy and North America. A good text for understanding how medieval women have been viewed and studied by academic historians over the past 150 years.

V. Websites

Argos <ht.//argos.evansville edu>

Medieval Feminist Index:

<http://www.haverford.edu/library/reference/mschaus/mfi/mfi.html>

Medieval Women Page:

<http://www.millersv.edu/~english/homepage/duncan/medfem/medfem.html>

The Renaissance

I. The Philosophy of "Woman"

The Renaissance, known as the rebirth of man's meaning to man, mostly left women out: "few of the typical activities of the would-be Renaissance man were available to women."[27] The rebirth of classical learning meant for women simply more classical sources of anti-feminist rhetoric. The image of woman as a shrew or viper continues, with celibacy still often seen as the best alternative. For example Francis Bacon writes "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief".[28]

There are other images of women which appear in this period. Certain women fell into no easily definable category: Elizabeth I, perhaps the most famous woman of the Renaissance, is an instructive case. She was seen in two lights, either as the Virgin Queen or as a virago (a manly woman). Castiglione argued that a humanistic education was necessary for the aristocratic woman who would live her life at court. The issue of the nature of women was so popular that a literary debate known as the *querelle des femmes* raged for over a hundred and fifty years. But most women fell under the central principle of proper female behavior as demonstrated by the character of Hero in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*: silent, chaste and obedient.

Although at first it seemed the Reformation, which caused so many changes in religion, philosophy and history, would cause attendant changes in the image of women. Based on the ideal of spiritual equality before God, Reformation ideals, in the end, fell back on the misogynistic statements of St. Paul for its picture of women. But now the woman was more subject to her husband for religious guidance than she had been under Catholic theology. So silence, chastity and obedience to the husband continue to be the

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[27] Kinnear 79.

[28] Francis Bacon, "Love and Marriage as Impediments to Man," History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book, ed. Rosemary Agonito (New York: Perigee Books, 1977) 93.

ideals of womankind even after the Reformation. The most famous depiction of this is probably John Milton's Eve in his *Paradise Lost*:.

II. Idealizations and Stereotypes

The idealization of the courtly lady continues into the Renaissance. Castiglione's *The Courtier* details the rules of courtly behavior for both men and women. Women, like men, should have temperance, *mesure*, constancy as well as kindness, discretion, beauty and charm. Petrarch, following in the tradition of his literary idol, Dante, also writes in honor of his lady love, Laura. His fame was widespread even within his own lifetime and his influence is seen throughout European sixteenth century poetry, both in form (the sonnet) and in content (the Petrarchan conceits). In fact, his depiction of the courtly lady proves so popular that Shakespeare parodies it in his sonnet, "My Mistress' Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun" listing all the ways the poet's love is <u>not</u> like the courtly lady of poetic fame. Edmund Spenser's variation in his sonnet cycle, the *Amoretti*, is to make the courtly lady not an abstraction like Petrarch's Laura, but a real woman, Elizabeth, whom he would eventually marry.

One of the most famous idealizations in the Renaissance is Milton's depiction of the wife as helpmate. Eve, in his *Paradise Lost*, is depicted as created from Adam and for Adam. This Eve, unlike the Eve seen in the Middle Ages, causes the fall when she attempts to achieve equality with Adam -- this is what leads her to eat the apple and cause the fall of mankind. Milton's depiction is highly influential in both England and its colonies in America.

Another image is the virago, the manly woman. As Gerda Lerner notes, the idea of the virago is one way to account for "the heroic, 'the exceptional,' the learned

woman without seeing patriarchal gender definitions as problematic".[29] Thus this category can explain woman such as Queen Elizabeth, finding them exceptions rather than the rule. Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women*, a literary catalogue of such women, becomes a popular model for defenses of women in the *querrelle des femmes* tradition.

III. Woman's Voices

One of the best sources for insight into a women's life is the series of letters, written by members of the Paston family, which cover over a hundred and fifty years in the family's history. The Paston letters give a detailed picture of what life was like for women in the English Renaissance. Other examples include essays by Queen Elizabeth and the Countess of Pembroke and poetry by Aemilia Lanyer and Mary Wroth. But perhaps the most interesting works are various texts by women writing in the *querelle des femmes* tradition, including works by Margaret of Navarre, Laura Cereta and Lucretia Marinella (unfortunately, except for Margaret of Navarre, these works are still not available in English translations).

IV. Bibliography

Agonito, Rosemary. History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book. New York: Perigee Books, 1977.

Excellent chronologically organized anthology of primary source excerpts from the philosophers, theologians, scientists and who constitute the Western history of ideas. Excerpts are brief and to the point making this an excellent supplemental text for any course.

David, Norman, ed. The Paston Letters: A Selection in Modern Spelling. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

An easy to read selection of the letters from a family correspondence which extends over a hundred year period. Provides detailed insight into the daily life

[29] Lerner, Creation of Feminist Consciousness 257

of Renaissance England. The modern editing will make a real difference for students.

Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. "Culture and Consciousness in the Intellectual History of European Women." Signs 12.3 (1987):529-47.

Excellent and balanced overview of feminist thought and its relationship to European intellectual history. Her footnotes provide a wealth of research citations.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, eds. The Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1996.

Still the best single source for prose and poetry by women in English. Covers the Middle Ages to the present. Useful introductions.

Gibson, Joan. "Education for Silence: Renaissance Woman and the Language Arts" Hypatia 4 (Spring 1989): 9-27.

Examines both the opportunities and obstacles which humanist education offered women, focusing on the prohibition of logic and rhetoric and the effects this would have on the education of a female would-be philosopher.

Horowitz, Maryanne. "The Woman Question in Renaissance Texts." History of European Ideas 8.4-5(1987):587-595.

Theoretical exploration on the study of the "idea of women" in the Renaissance. Also provides excellent overview of sources and texts in the field; exceptional references and cites.

Kelly, Joan. "Early Feminist Theory and the Querelle des Femmes." Women, History and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly. Ed. Joan Kelly .Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984.

Kelso, Ruth. The Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1956.

A classic which examines books of advice for courtly ladies in the Renaissance.

Kinnear, Mary. The Daughters of Time: Women in the Western Tradition. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1982.

An excellent chronological overview of women in the western tradition. An excellent research resource.

Maclean, Ian. The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980.

Examines the Renaissance use and adaptation of medieval scholastic concepts of scientific, legal and moral literature on women.

Rogers, Katherine M. The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1966.

Although slightly out of date, this is still the only text to attempt an overview of the history of misogyny in western literature. Still an excellent resource but not as up to date as it could be in terms of feminist approaches.

Woodbridge, Linda. Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind 1540-1620. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1984.

Excellent, detailed overview of the idea of woman in Renaissance England. Especially helpful look at literary depictions of women.

V. Websites

Renaissance Women: <http://www.best.com/~fearless/Renaissance.html>

The Enlightenment

I. The Philosophy of "Woman"

The Enlightenment begins a change in the philosophy of human rights that continues to this day. However, the early focus of the shift remained on men's rights rather than women's rights. Philosophers turned to images of the family in order to account for origins of authority and power other than monarchical sovereignty. Both Thomas Hobbes and John Locke argued that a father did not have rights based on natural law, but they disagreed on the status of the mother. Hobbes argued that there was no such thing as natural patriarchal rights since the woman was bestowed, by nature, with the greater reproductive power over children. However, Locke disagreed with this perspective arguing that power in the family unit was equally distributed between the mother and the father. However, when Thomas Jefferson, and others. used Locke's ideas to argue for equal rights , they did not include this perspective: "When Thomas Jefferson, who is often accused of plagiarizing the *Second Treatise* in his Declaration of Independence, copied the phrase 'all men are created equal' from Locke, he did not mean what Locke had meant -- *all* men, male and female".[30] And although Abigail Adams famously asked her husband, John Adams, to 'remember the ladies'; the new government of the United States did not include equal rights for women.

Jean Jacques Rosseau, one of the leading philosophers in France, took a much more familiar line: women as inherently subordinate to men. For him, women and men had entirely separate spheres and functions and the women's was the home. Indeed, as Kinnear notes, "Confinement to the home [...] was woman's lot in life. Here she would guard her chastity and her modesty and find her limited abilities flourishing, untaxed by exorbitant demands that by nature she would be unable to fulfill".[31] Furthermore, Unlike Hobbes and Locke he argued that the patriarchal family was natural, and not

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[30] Agonito 104.

analogous to the state. Rousseau's philosophy was incredibly influential on the French Revolution, which although aided in great part by women did not extend them equal rights either: "it [Rousseau's philosophy] was also a model for subsequent relations between men and women, particularly after the French Revolution [...] The architects of the Revolution adopted not only his radical egalitarianism, if only in principle, but also his elitist pronouncements on women".[32]

Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, written in 1792, was a direct response to Rousseau's, and his adherent's, philosophy. Wollstonecraft argues that women are not lacking in reason but that they do constitute an oppressed class, regardless of socio-economic status, since they are denied education, political and legal rights, and economic opportunity. Although Wollstonecraft still saw a woman's primary function as in the home, her views constitute a profoundly radical stance at the time. In fact, Wollstonecraft establishes the parameters of feminist discourse for the next 150 years.

II. Idealizations and Stereotypes

A new image of woman, the bluestocking or salon hostess, emerges in this period. These women were intellectuals who ran salons, social gatherings of all the leading thinkers and artists of the day. This was a world which was not dependent on the court for power and status; thus women could play a much larger role. These women would not only influence the behavior of women in the social classes below them but they would also eventually play a role in the French Revolution. Rosseau is, in large part, reacting against these women in his description of the ideal woman.

Another new image, the woman as moral center of the home, also appears in the eighteenth century. Though similar to the previous image of good wife, this new version does constitute what Fox-Genovese calls the "first glacial shift since antiquity".[33] This

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[31] Kinnear 97.
[32] Agonito 116.
[33] Fox-Genovese 538.

image of women is based in large part on Rousseau's depiction of the domestic women: "it extolled women as custodians of morality and religion, now reduced to the virtues of the home [..] Although the new vision of women as domestic beings had precedents, it differed in granting women dominion in the home".[34] This image, of the woman as the moral center of the home will be profoundly influential in the nineteenth century.

III. Woman's Voices

Obviously the dominant voice in this period is Wollstonecraft but there were other women writing as well. Mary Astell and Catherine Macauley wrote passionate essays on the issue of women's education. Ann Bradstreet in America and Margaret Cavendish and Lady Mary Montagu in England wrote poetry. The most famous women authors, however, were the novelists Aphra Behn and Fanny Burney.

IV. Bibliography

Agonito, Rosemary. History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book. New York: Perigee Books, 1977.

Excellent chronologically organized anthology of primary source excerpts from the philosophers, theologians, scientists and who constitute the Western history of ideas. Excerpts are brief and to the point making this an excellent supplemental text for any course.

Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. "Culture and Consciousness in the Intellectual History of European Women." Signs 12.3 (1987):529-47.

Excellent and balanced overview of feminist thought and its relationship to European intellectual history. Her footnotes provide a wealth of research citations.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, eds. The Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1996.

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[34] Fox-Genovese 539.

Still the best single source for prose and poetry by women in English. Covers the Middle Ages to the present. Useful introductions.

Kinnear, Mary. The Daughters of Time: Women in the Western Tradition. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1982.

An excellent chronological overview of women in the western tradition. An excellent research resource.

Nye, Andrea. Words of Power: a Feminist Reading of the History of Logic. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Argues for reading logic as a series of historical products created by men in specific material and in historical relation to each other, to women and to the world around them. A good text for critical thinking classes.

Racz, Elizabeth. "Women's Rights in the French Revolution" Science and Society 16.1 (Spring 1952): 151-74.

Examines role of women and women's rights in the historical context of the French revolution.

Rogers, Katherine M. The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1966.

Although slightly out of date, this is still the only text to attempt an overview of the history of misogyny in western literature. Still an excellent resource but not as up to date as it could be in terms of feminist approaches.

The Nineteenth Century

I. The Philosophy of "Woman"

The philosophical fight for women's rights, which didn't occur in the Enlightenment, began in earnest in the nineteenth century. However, it was counterbalanced by an equally powerful cultural movement to de-limit women's sphere to the home.

Women in both America and England began to build on the work of Mary Wollstonecraft. In America, the Seneca Fall Convention of 1848 produced a dramatic political document, the *Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions*. Convened to discuss both abolition and women's rights, this was the first women's rights convention in America. The *Declaration* itself is closely based on the wording of the *Declaration of Independence*, but incorporating women into every aspect. One of the great controversies of the convention was the issue of women's right to vote; it was finally agreed voting provided essential political power. Elizabeth Cady-Stanton, Lucretia Mott and others who were at this first convention continued the fight for women's rights throughout the remaining century.

In England, the work of Wollstonecraft was continued in part by philosophers such as John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx and Frederich Engels. Mill in his essay, *The Subjection of Women*, argued:

> That the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes -- the legal subordination of one sex to the other -- is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other".[35]

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[35] John Stuart Mill, "The Subjection of Women," History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book, ed. Rosemary Agonito (New York: Perigee Books, 1977) 225.

Mill is perhaps most famous in this essay for his analogy of the position of women to slavery. But as Agonito notes, his historical analysis provides the "theoretical foundations for the argument in favor of equality between the sexes".[36] Marx and Engels extended a similar argument to lower-class women, who been effectively ignored by most historians and philosophers before this. They argued that the treatment of women both in the labor required by the factories of the Industrial Revolution and in the subordination of marriage rendered them essentially prostitutes. In the patriarchal family according to Marx and Engels, the man is the bourgeoisie and the woman the proletariat.

Of course, this was not a predominant view by any means. The more typical attitude toward women can be summed up in Friedrich Nietzsche's term of woman as "dangerous plaything". Writers like Darwin and other Victorian scientists continued the idea that since woman was by nature weaker physically, she was weaker mentally. Scientific dogma suggested that if a woman used her brain too much, it would drain away vitality from her womb. Early scientific methodology was used to reinforce such ideas: i.e. women's brains were smaller and weighed less than men', therefore women were less intelligent. Old images still continued; George Eliot in particular was depicted as a virago since her novels were deemed too intellectual to have been written by a true woman.

II. Idealizations and Stereotypes

The primary idealization of women in the nineteenth century was known in England as the "Angel of the House", taken from the astonishingly popular poem of the same name by Coventry Patmore. In America , the same principle was known as the cult of true womanhood. This is a continuation of the ideal put forth in the eighteenth century. What is most interesting is that the woman is not only the moral center of the home, but she is the moral center for the husband as well. Thus her conduct and beliefs

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[36] Agonito 223.

are responsible not only for her own moral rectitude but for her husband's and children's as well. Household manuals became popular during this time and the state and order of one's home is seen to reflect the state and order of one's moral well-being. The home and its concerns are clearly defined as the proper sphere for the woman's place.

The other primary image was of the fallen woman. This woman, who did not follow patriarchal mores, and instead followed her own (usually represented as sexual) needs, invariably ended up "fallen". Fallen is a metaphor for the fall from the moral and straight path. A depressing number of stories and novels end with the death of the usually pregnant young woman after she has been abandoned by all who know her. The conclusion also contains the attendant moral lesson for the young female reader to follow. Victorian culture, in particular, was set upon controlling female sexuality to the extent that young women were not supposed to run, or ride a horse in any position other than side-saddle to avoid any "feelings". Thus the fallen woman is another way to remind women of the correct way to behave.

III. Woman's Voices

This is the first period in which there are a multiplicity of female voices, particularly as novelists. There was a substantial female reading audience; and writing was a way a woman could make money and yet still remain within her proper sphere, the home. Women novelists include such disparate writers as Jane Austen, Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Shelley, George Eliot, George Sand, Louisa May Alcott and Edith Wharton. Most of these women achieved both popular and critical success but there were comments such as Nathaniel Hawthorne's condemning the legions of female "scribblers" as not being true artists.

IV. Bibliography

Agonito, Rosemary. History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book. New York: Perigee Books, 1977.

Excellent chronologically organized anthology of primary source excerpts from the philosophers, theologians, scientists and who constitute the Western history of ideas. Excerpts are brief and to the point making this an excellent supplemental text for any course.

Bizzell, Patricia and Bruce Herzberg, eds. Negotiating Difference: Cultural Case Studies for Composition. Boston: Bedford, 1996.

The second section of this anthology is an exceptional collection of primary sources regarding the role of women in 19th century America.

Dijkstra, Bram. Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de Siècle Culture. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986.

Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. "Culture and Consciousness in the Intellectual History of European Women." Signs 12.3 (1987):529-47.

Excellent and balanced overview of feminist thought and its relationship to European intellectual history. Her footnotes provide a wealth of research citations.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, eds. The Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1996.

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Lerner, Gerda. The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy. New York: Oxford UP, 1993.

A sweeping view of women's history from the Middle Ages to 1870. Both her notes and bibliographies are exceptional resources for both professor and student. See especially Chapters.

Rogers, Katherine M. The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1966.

Although slightly out of date, this is still the only text to attempt an overview of the history of misogyny in western literature. Still an excellent resource but not as up to date as it could be in terms of feminist approaches.

V. Websites

Brown University's Women Writers Project:

<http://www.wwp.brown.edu/wwp_home.html>

Celebration of Women Writers: <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/>

Victorian Women Writers Project: <http://www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp>

The Twentieth Century

I. The Philosophy of "Woman"

This is the century which demonstrates by far the most change and is thus the most difficult to categorize. Freud is the most influential thinker at the beginning of the century, arguing , in a return to Aristotle, that woman is a deformed man since she is unable to truly experience the Oedipal complex. Women in both America and Britain win the right to vote. Two world wars mean that women are pressed into jobs and roles they had not experienced before: in fact, one of the propaganda slogans used in the Second World War exhorted, "Free a Man to Fight!".

But the most important development of the century is the rise of the women's movement. Starting with Simone de Beauvoir in France in the 1950's and then with Betty Freidan, Gloria Steinem in the US and Germaine Greer in England in the 1960's, the demand for equal rights finally reached critical mass. Feminism has taken multiple forms and directions in the past forty years. In France, feminism has based itself, in part, on linguistic analysis; showing how language contributes to and reinforces patriarchal constructs. In England, feminism has focused on the class and economic issues first raised in Marx and Engels.

In America, feminism has taken even more directions. Academic feminism focused first on finding the woman in history and literature, discovering and rediscovering the roles women have played in the past. Legal feminism has focused on issues of equality under the law. Feminism in psychology has focused on what is called difference feminism, countering the masculinist bias evident in psychological studies from Freud on. Carol Gilligan, Nancy Chodorow and other psychologists have successfully countered Freud's earlier claims. But perhaps the most controversial direction is gender studies and social-constructionist theory. Argued by Judith Butler and others, gender studies refocuses emphasis from women to both men and women, arguing that both have to be examined to understand the other. Social-constructionist

theory argues that gender is not a natural status (also known as essentialism) but constructed by societal markers and norms.

There is no current consensus in the field of feminism -- which is what makes it so interesting. The dynamism of the field stands in direct contrast to the static quality evidenced in the preceding periods. To try to understand the general direction at this point, I would recommend a book such as Toril Moi's Sexual/Textual Politics which attempt to summarize the directions feminism has taken. Another useful work is Men in Feminism which also articulates one of the most current trends.

II. Idealizations and Stereotypes

There is a long series of stereotypes evidenced in this century which directly reflects women's growing political and economic power. The Gibson Girl of the turn of the century becomes the New Woman of the twenties. Rosie the Riveter from the Second World War morphs into the working woman of the late part of the century. The suffragette and flapper of the twenties becomes the bra-burning feminist of the sixties. However this does not preclude the stereotypes of the past. Sadly many of the stereotypes and idealizations of previous periods still seem familiar today. Many feminists would argue that one common goal would be to make those images seem unfamiliar and antiquated; replaced by new ones we must develop.

III. Woman's Voices

There are so many women writers in the twentieth century that I am merely going to recommend The Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English edited by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, two of the leaders of academic feminism in the seventies. However, the most interesting trend in writing by and about women is the trend to inclusiveness; trying to include women of all classes, races and creeds to present a true picture of women today.

IV. Bibliography

Agonito, Rosemary. History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book. New York: Perigee Books, 1977.

Excellent chronologically organized anthology of primary source excerpts from the philosophers, theologians, scientists and who constitute the Western history of ideas. Excerpts are brief and to the point making this an excellent supplemental text for any course.

Butler, Judith. Gender Trouble. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Still the dominant text articulating the gender-normative stance, this is a very difficult text which I would not recommend for students. However, for those interested in one of the newest directions, it is essential.

Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. "Culture and Consciousness in the Intellectual History of European Women." Signs 12.3 (1987):529-47.

Excellent and balanced overview of feminist thought and its relationship to European intellectual history. Her footnotes provide a wealth of research citations.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, eds. The Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1996.

Still the best single source for prose and poetry by women in English. Covers the Middle Ages to the present. Useful introductions.

Kinnear, Mary. The Daughters of Time: Women in the Western Tradition. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1982.

An excellent chronological overview of women in the western tradition. An excellent research resource.

Moi, Toril. Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory. London: Routledge, 1985.

Excellent overview of a large field; good lecture resource.

Nye, Andrea. Words of Power: a Feminist Reading of the History of Logic. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Argues for reading logic as a series of historical products created by men in specific material and in historical relation to each other, to women and to the world around them. A good text for critical thinking classes.

V. Websites

Brown University's Women Writers Project:

<http://www.wwp.brown.edu/wwp_home.html>

Celebration of Women Writers: <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/>

Distinguished Women: <http://DistinguishedWomen.com>

National Women's History Project: <http://nwhp./org>

Conclusions

Overall this period of study allowed me to discover and trace the pattern of the idea of women as it developed and mutated over the course of 2,500 years. Perhaps the most surprising challenge was that assessing the period which I thought would be the easiest proved to be the most difficult: the twentieth century. The sheer amount of changes in the "idea of woman" in the twentieth century coupled with the explosion in academic thought, research and writing in this field made creating a general picture difficult. However, in the end, I think that a clear pattern emerges over the course of this study which does show that "the major idea systems which explain and order Western civilization incorporated a set of unstated assumptions about gender, which powerfully affected the development of history and human thought".[1]

This project will truly benefit my future teaching. I also hope it can aid those colleagues who wish to incorporate more of woman's history into their own courses. I think that the study of women and women's place in history is no longer a question but fundamental concern for all of our students. As Maryanne Horowitz observes, "The more our grasp of the ideational component, the better will be our histories of the interplay of the fictional constructs of 'woman' in women's own documentary records of their lives, thoughts and works of creativity".[2] This report's goal is to indeed provide a firmer "grasp" on the "ideational component" of woman so that we, and our students, can better understand all our histories.

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[1] Gerda Lerner, The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy (New York: Oxford UP, 1993) 1.

[2] Maryanne Horowitz, "The Woman Question in Renaissance Texts," Journal of European Ideas 8.4/5 (1987): 589)

Appendix A

Annotated Bibliography

Agonito, Rosemary. History of Ideas on Women: A Source Book. New York: Perigee Books, 1977.

Excellent chronologically organized anthology of primary source excerpts from the philosophers, theologians, scientists and who constitute the Western history of ideas. Excerpts are brief and to the point making this an excellent supplemental text for any course.

Allen, Prudence. The Aristotelian Revolution 750C -1250 AD. Montreal: Eden Press, 1985.

Analyses the philosophical tradition concerning the concept of woman in relation to the concept of man within the field of philosophy of the person. Categorizes them in terms of a theory of sex unity, sex polarity, or sex.

Bayard, Tania, ed. A Medieval Home Companion: Housekeeping in the Fourteenth Century. Trans. Tania Bayard. New York: Harper Collins, 1991.

Originally written by a husband for his young wife, this guidebook from the fourteenth century covers all aspects of daily life in the fourteenth century; it would make an excellent textbook.

Bizzell, Patricia and Bruce Herzberg, eds. Negotiating Difference: Cultural Case Studies for Composition. Boston: Bedford, 1996.

The second section of this anthology is an exceptional collection of primary sources regarding the role of women in 19th century America.

Bloch, R. Howard. "Medieval Misogyny: Woman as Riot." Representations 20 (Fall 1987):1-24.

Bloch argues that the history of misogyny is inherently intertwined with the history of rhetoric and interpretation and that misogyny as a cultural construct is

endemic in western culture. This article is fairly advanced and is probably better as a teaching resource than a student text.

Butler, Judith. Gender Trouble. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Still the dominant text articulating the gender-normative stance, this is a very difficult text which I would not recommend for students. However, for those interested in one of the newest directions, it is essential.

Casey, Kathleen. "The Cheshire Cat: Reconstructing the Experience of Medieval Women." Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays. Ed. Berenice A. Carroll. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1976.

A social-historical categorization of women's work and roles in the Middle Ages. Good resource for lectures.

David, Norman, ed. The Paston Letters: A Selection in Modern Spelling. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

An easy to read selection of the letters from a family correspondence which extends over a hundred year period. Provides detailed insight into the daily life of Renaissance England. The modern editing will make a real difference for students.

Dijkstra, Bram. Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de Siècle Culture. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986.

Examines images and examples of "inherent" female evil and inferiority in nineteenth century scientific, medical and literary authorities; especially interesting in light of how the "gothic" is still a predominant popular culture interest today.

Duby, George and Michelle Perrott, eds. A History of Women in the West. 5 vols. Cambridge: Belknap P of Harvard UP, 1992.

A landmark study of the history of women in Europe edited by one of the leading historians of the twentieth century.

Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. "Culture and Consciousness in the Intellectual History of European Women." Signs 12.3 (1987):529-47.

Excellent and balanced overview of feminist thought and its relationship to European intellectual history. Her footnotes provide a wealth of research citations.

Gibson, Joan. "Education for Silence: Renaissance Woman and the Language Arts" Hypatia 4 (Spring 1989): 9-27.

Examines both the opportunities and obstacles which humanist education offered women, focusing on the prohibition of logic and rhetoric and the effects this would have on the education of a female would-be philosopher.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, eds. The Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1996.

Still the best single source for prose and poetry by women in English. Covers the Middle Ages to the present. Useful introductions.

Halperin, David. "Why is Diotima a Woman?" Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World. Eds. David M. Halperin, John Winkler, and Froma Zeitlin. Princeton: Princeton UP 1990.

An essay which convincingly argues that Diotima is a metaphor for masculine discourse in what is an exclusively masculine pursuit of philosophy.

Horowitz, Maryanne. "Aristotle and Women." Journal of the History of Biology 9.2 (Fall 1976): 183-213.

Good overview of the effect of Aristotle's writings on the concept of woman.

---. "The Woman Question in Renaissance Texts." History of European Ideas 8.4/5 (1987):587-595.

Theoretical exploration on the study of the "idea of women" in the Renaissance. Also provides excellent overview of sources and texts in the field; exceptional references and cites.

Kelly, Joan. "Early Feminist theory and the Querelle des Femmes." Women, History and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly. Ed. Joan Kelly .Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984.

Kelso, Ruth. The Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1956.

A classic which examines books of advice for courtly ladies in the Renaissance.

Kinnear, Mary. The Daughters of Time: Women in the Western Tradition. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1982.

An excellent chronological overview of women in the western tradition. An excellent research resource.

Larrington, Carolyne. Women and Writing in Medieval Europe: A Sourcebook. New York: Routledge, 1995.

An excellent anthology of writing by and about women in the Middle Ages. Very useful introductions to sections and individual selections. This would be a good textbook.

Lerner, Gerda. The Creation of Patriarchy. New York: Oxford, 1986.

---. The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy. New York: Oxford UP, 1993.

These two works constitute a sweeping view of women's history from the ancient Near East to 1870. Lerner focuses on how class and social control impact on gender constructs. Both her notes and bibliographies are exceptional resources for both professor and student. In particular, the first volume, The Creation of Patriarchy, provides a detailed, scholarly account of how patriarchy developed in the ancient world.

Maclean, Ian. The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980.

Examines the Renaissance use and adaptation of medieval scholastic concepts of scientific, legal and moral literature on women.

Moi, Toril. Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory. London: Routledge, 1985.

Excellent overview of a large field; good lecture resource.

Nye, Andrea. Words of Power: a Feminist Reading of the History of Logic. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Argues for reading logic as a series of historical products created by men in specific material and in historical relation to each other, to women and to the world around them. A good text for critical thinking classes.

Pagels, Elaine. Adam, Eve and the Serpent. New York: Vintage Books, 1988.

Still considered the best text on how early Christianity dealt with issue of gender, sex and religion.

Power, Eileen. Medieval Women. Ed. M.M. Postan. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975.

A classic in the field, this is a concise (99 pages), clear overview of the role of women in the Middle Ages. It would make an excellent textbook.

Racz, Elizabeth. "Women's Rights in the French Revolution." Science and Society 16.1 (Spring 1952): 151-74.

Examines role of women and women's rights in the historical context of the French revolution.

Rogers, Katherine M. The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1966.

Although slightly out of date, this is still the only text to attempt an overview of the history of misogyny in western literature. Still an excellent resource but not as up to date as it could be in terms of feminist approaches.

Stuard, Susan Mosher. Women in Medieval History and Historiography. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1987.

Overview of historiography of medieval women in the twentieth century. Each chapter focuses on the tradition in a different country including France, Germany, Italy and North America. A good text for understanding how medieval women have been viewed and studied by academic historians over the past 150 years.

Woodbridge, Linda. Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind 1540-1620. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1984.

Excellent, detailed overview of the idea of woman in Renaissance England. Especially helpful look at literary depictions of women.

Waithe, Mary Ellen, ed. A History of Women Philosophers. 3 vols. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989.

Overview of women philosophers throughout history; good teaching resource.

Appendix B

I. Search Engines

Argos <http://argos.evansville edu>

LookSmart: <http://www.looksmart.com>

II. Webpages

Brown University's Women Writers Project:

<http://www.wwp.brown.edu/wwp_home.html>

Celebration of Women Writers: <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/>

Distinguished Women: <http://DistinguishedWomen.com>

Diotima: <http://www.uky.edu/ArtsSciences/Classics/gender.html>

Medieval Feminist Index:

<http://www.haverford.edu/library/reference/mschaus/mfi/mfi.html>

Medieval Women Page:

<http://www.millersv.edu/~english/homepage/duncan/medfem/medfem.html>

National Women's History Project: <http://nwhp./org>

Renaissance Women: <http://www.best.com/~fearless/Renaissance.html>

Victorian Women Writers Project: <http://www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp>