

## PREFACE

At a time when U.S. military technology appears unassailable, the concerns of this issue of *Feminist Studies* may seem distant from the realities of world politics. Yet our authors show how women became symbolic of male fears, anxieties, or hopes under a variety of circumstances. Indeed, the unifying theme of this issue is that women are essential to the construction of masculinity, even when seemingly most reviled or remote from masculine concerns. This issue continues our exploration of the complexities of female-male relations in different times, classes, and cultures.

We begin with three articles on French history, ranging from a reconsideration of that most influential late-eighteenth-century thinker, Jean-Jacques Rousseau; to an analysis of the myths made by and about Flora Tristan, the well-known feminist socialist of the mid-nineteenth century; to the public (and historical) creation of the myth of the destructive harridan, the *pétroleuse*, in response to the failed revolution of 1871.

Paul Thomas's article demonstrates the degree to which Rousseau's supreme creation, the independent male citizen, was dependent upon and nurtured by the domesticated woman. Rousseau saw women as the privileged creatures who would save—and damn—men at a historical moment he described as a "moral emergency."

Fear of revolution was embodied in a fear of women by the men who fashioned the *pétroleuse* as a symbol of rampant social disorder following France's defeat by the Prussians in 1871, and the destruction of the socialist *communards* of Paris by right-wing French forces. Gay L. Gullickson demonstrates the ways in which men—and bourgeois women—sustained an image of the sexualized demon-woman as incendiary. The class and gender conflicts that she sketches are also shown in Julia Wrigley's review essay on recent scholarship on domestic workers. Wrigley reminds us that middle-class women—leaders of the feminist movement here and in Latin America—often depend upon the labor of poor women for their freedom.

Margaret Talbot deconstructs the heroic woman martyr image created in the 1840s by Flora Tristan in her public persona. This image was sustained by her loyal followers, Talbot argues, to the detriment of a more broadly based women's movement. As "redemptress" of the proletariat, Tristan was attractive precisely

because socialists felt the need to posit a feminine ideal against the rigors of the "male" marketplace. The theme of domestic life as a refuge from – and source of strength for – the public world is echoed again, obliquely, in Carol Barrett's gently self-ironic poem, "Arguing the Curriculum: Coleslaw."

U.S. feminists know the French theorist Luce Irigaray best as the creator of powerful lesbian metaphors. Christine Holmlund reminds us that Irigaray's focus has moved from the lesbian to the mother and then to her current interest in the heterosexual female lover. Irigaray is "not just obsessed with a difference *from* men," Holmlund argues, but is "engaged in reformulating a difference *with* men." This is an extraordinary leap, carefully delineated by Holmlund, for Irigaray's woman constructs man, rather than vice versa, as in our three opening essays on French intellectual history.

The magnitude of this task is perhaps best seen in this issue's creative writing selections, all of which deal with some aspect of male violence, a topic Judith E. Smith also touches on in her review essay on recent feminist work on family history. Smith's essay, juxtaposed with Elisabeth Rose's "Counting Thunder," indicates some of the complexities of family life after the death of the nuclear family. Time – and human relations – cannot be controlled, as Rose reminds us. Suzanne Stein's "Me and Him," an extraordinary story of a daughter's beating by her father, captures, as no statistics or case reports can, the psychic and physical brutality behind such abstract phrases as "domestic violence." Andrea Collins's "After Picasso's *The Minotaur Carries Off a Woman*" rewrites the male appropriation of women into a fantasy escape, an "effortless sailing away" from the painter's (and the myth's) violence against women. In contrast, Collins's "Iconostasis/Iconomania" and Eléni Sikélianòs, in "Mnemosyne, I Call You Out," refuse to forget, hoarding memories of male violence against which girl children are defenseless.

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for the editors