

Preface

The production, suppression, and exploitation of emotions play roles in two clusters of articles in this issue of *Feminist Studies*. The first cluster consists of three essays focusing on early modern European women. Together, these three pieces take issues that reverberate into the present while also rewriting historical and literary critical feminist discourses about the period before industrialization. Two other essays attentive to twentieth-century American women's reproductive experiences make up the second cluster. These two articles explore how women's emotions have been variously ignored and subjugated to medical authorities or produced and manipulated for political purposes.

The articles in the early modern European women cluster were first presented in workshops at the November 2000 conference, "Attending to Early Modern Women: Gender, Culture, and Change," at the University of Maryland, College Park. The conference sponsor, the Center for Renaissance and Baroque Studies at the University of Maryland, allowed us to solicit articles from conference participants for this cluster and we are delighted to have had the opportunity to work in collaboration with them.

The first article in this cluster is Frances E. Dolan's "Battered Women, Petty Traitors, and the Legacy of Coverture." Here she describes the fatally limited set of opposing choices that popular discourses even today offer the wife battered by her husband. In such straits, would murdering her abuser be self defense or merely an "abuse excuse" demeaning to women's agency? Dolan shows how this contemporary conflict has its roots in the seventeenth century concept of coverture, a legal fiction that implies that husband and wife together are one person, his rights and responsibilities "covering" hers. When a desperate woman kills her husband, then, often after a prolonged history of abuse, she apparently gains selfhood and agency, but only at the expense of committing a capital crime. Dolan's essay contextualizes modern discussions by examining this legal history in England and its American colonies, in which the institution of marriage is defined as a potentially lethal universe. Because, according to the ideology of the time, husbands were to rule over wives as beneficent kings ruled over their people, wives who killed their

husbands were called petty traitors and could be burned at the stake, a striking example of the degree to which the personal was conceptualized as political long before feminist uses of this idea.

The second article of this cluster takes as its subject Catholic women during the Protestant Reformation. The sixteenth-century nun Jeanne de Jussie wrote the story of her order, the Poor Clares of Geneva, during this turbulent time. Although, among Catholics, the committed virginal life of the nunnery was recognized as one legitimate alternative to marriage, but the lives even of cloistered nuns were organized according to their fears of male violence and violation. As Carrie F. Klaus demonstrates in her essay, "Architecture and Sexual Identity: Jeanne de Jussie's Narrative of the Reformation of Geneva," Jussie asserts a personhood centered in the defense of virginity and graphically represented in the very architecture of the convent in which the women were to be kept safely separate from men in the outside world. In her narrative, Jussie cast the Reformation as an assault on the nuns' right to their own spaces. When Protestant zealots decided that convent life was hypocritical and sinful, they stormed the convent. Jussie vividly depicted their actions, and the Reformation as a whole, as a rape, thus suggesting that she and other religious women possessed strongly sexualized identities. In contrast to monks, who gained a public persona different from other men's by becoming celibate, the nuns, as "Brides of Christ," remained defined by their sexuality, just as secular women of their time were.

The third and final article in this cluster discusses one of the most famous women accused of killing her husband, Marie Stewart, Queen of Scots, executed by order of her Protestant cousin Queen Elizabeth I, not for that "petty treason" to which common women were subject but for purportedly plotting to kill England's Queen. Stewart's love poetry was used as evidence of her adulterous criminality in order to justify her execution. In Sarah M. Dunnigan's discussion of "Undoing the Double Tress: Scotland, Early Modern Women's Writing, and the Location of Critical Desires," however, Stewart is of feminist interest less for her passionate life and death than for the questions her French and Latin poetry pose for the formation of a canon of early modern Scottish women's writing. Unlike Irish literature, which has boasted its anticolonial rebelliousness for centuries, Scottish literature in Gaelic, English, French, and Latin has often been subsumed under the rubric of English literature when it is not simply ignored. While Dunnigan chronicles a belated feminist attention to "composing a provisional female canon" for Scottish literature, she argues that this anomalous case more generally calls into question "the problematic relationship between women/'Woman' and 'nationalism' *per se*." The classroom may be one place where the work of feminist canon making can be explored, she suggests, and the "linguistically monologic" assumptions of current literary critical practices questioned.

Our cover art was selected to highlight the creativity of early modern women. On the cover and throughout the issue we have reproduced a number of hand-colored engravings by Maria Sibylla Merian (German, 1647-1717), courtesy of the National Museum of Women in the Arts collection. According to the descriptions from the museum's website <www.nmwa.org>: "Maria Sibylla Merian made observations that revolutionized both botany and zoology. . . . From early childhood, [she] was interested in drawing the animals and plants she saw around her. In 1670, . . . Merian published her first illustrated books. In preparation for a catalogue of European moths, butterflies, and other insects, Merian collected, raised, and observed the living insects, rather than working from preserved specimens, as was the norm. . . . [In 1693, at the age of 52, Merian, then a mother of two and recently divorced,] took the astonishing step of embarking—with her younger daughter, but no male companion—on a dangerous, three-month trip to the Dutch colony of Surinam, in South America. Having seen some of the dried specimens of animals and plants that were popular with European collectors, Merian wanted to study them within their natural habitat. She spent the next two years studying and drawing the indigenous flora and fauna. Forced home by malaria, Merian published her most significant book in 1705, the lavishly illustrated *Metamorphosis of the Insects of Surinam*," from which these illustrations are reproduced.

Kristin Barker's article, "Birthing and Bureaucratic Women: Needs Talk and the Definitional Legacy of the Sheppard-Towner Act," inaugurates our second cluster. Barker demonstrates how reproductive needs came to be narrowly construed as prenatal care in the twentieth-century United States, requiring suppression of women's own notions of their emotional and physical needs. Barker examines letters exchanged between lay women and the women physicians of the Children's Bureau in the wake of the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act in 1921. The act was the first federal welfare program in the United States, and it sought to reduce maternal and infant mortality. Barker finds that women expressed a wide range of health needs in broad social terms in their letters, but that physicians responded with needs talk that narrowed the claims women could make on the state by equating maternal health with prenatal care. The medicalization of pregnancy involved an alienation from personal experience and community wisdom and required harnessing one's emotions, particularly fear, and placing the reins in the hands of the doctor. In addition, doctors refused to recognize class- and race-based claims for maternal care, and such claims, according to Barker, remain depoliticized to this day. Barker argues that women physicians' responses must be seen as attempts to institutionalize women's diverse needs to fit into their own professional agenda, itself quite constrained as they sought to promote maternal health without the capacity to provide financial assistance.

While Barker shows how medical authorities ignored women's diverse claims and emotions, Leslie J. Reagan explores how medical institutions produced and shaped women's experiences and emotions after miscarriage. Her article, "From Hazard to Blessing to Tragedy: Representations of Miscarriage in Twentieth-Century America," argues that views of miscarriage have changed dramatically. Early-twentieth-century periodicals represented miscarriage as a grave danger to pregnant women's health. In the middle of the century, periodicals combined a representation of miscarriage as fortunate, because it often occurred because of fetal deformities, with a promise that a woman who miscarried could still become a mother in the future. Since the 1980s, antiabortion rhetoric has influenced the ways hospitals construct miscarriage: it is now cast as the tragic loss of a life, with women needing assistance in a grieving process. Medical professionals, social workers, and reporters utilize politically-loaded terms and symbols to instruct women how to feel about their miscarriages. Because this article is not just about policy, or medical practices, but the traffic in emotions, it appropriately begins with Reagan's own personal experience, to both draw upon and critique the way that contemporary U.S. culture grants authenticity to our most subjective experiences and therefore quarantines them from historical and political analysis.

The review essay, "Caring about Care," by Joya Misra, looks at six recent books on carework. While the articles on reproduction in this essay look at how women's emotions are ignored or shaped politically, this review essay explores how women's care is both marketed and exploited, in part because of its close association with women's emotion. Although feminist scholars have always been at the forefront of the study of women's caregiving, a recent surge in scholarship on carework prompted this essay. This new body of scholarship explores how race, nationality, and class intersect with gender to marginalize carework as an occupation, paid and unpaid, and looks broadly at the interaction between families, markets, and government in a society's provision of care. Books reviewed here analyze the words and experiences of caregivers and clients in local settings, as well as the impact of globalization on caregiving.

The two clusters in this issue are, individually and considered together, testimonies to the strengths of interdisciplinary conversations in women's studies, and in *Feminist Studies* in particular. The establishment of Ph.D. programs in women's studies raises the stakes of long-debated questions about the shape of the field's future. The authors of "Graduate Education in Women's Studies: Paradoxes and Challenges" ask, what kind of graduate education will generate the most intellectually and politically dynamic future for women's studies as a field of inquiry and action? The authors come to widely different conclusions but place on the table important considerations for ongoing discussions. Key to their conversation is the

degree to which the increase in graduate programs requires women's studies to develop a more coherent disciplinary identity and agenda and the extent to which earlier concerns with feminist activism and pedagogy have a place in professionalized graduate programs. Sally L. Kitch argues that women's studies Ph.D. programs should make interdisciplinarity the distinct research agenda of women's studies as a coherent, albeit broad, discipline. In contrast, Pamela L. Caughie argues that such consolidation asks people to choose between women's studies and another discipline that they may have been trained in, which could cut people off from the creative tension that cross-disciplinary work has fostered. Judith Kegan Gardiner demonstrates ways that graduate education in women's studies can build connections with activism and reminds us that activism has generated much of the research agenda of women's studies over the past three decades. She argues that the need to train students professionally need not be at odds with the activism and concerns with pedagogy that have historically guided the field. We hope that the ideas expressed here will usefully contribute to *Feminist Studies* readers' ongoing debates on the issues raised by graduate education.

If the commentaries on graduate education address issues particularly of concern to women's studies faculty, the perceptions of younger feminists are central to other articles in this issue. According to Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards in "The Number One Question about Feminism," the anxiety of women's studies students today "isn't just about sexism and low self-esteem" but about conceptualizing a different future. "We need to take a step back from rhetoric and put the focus on action," they argue. Committed to feminism, active in organizing against violence, taking women's studies courses, young feminists today nevertheless fear their unworthiness to carry on the goals and ideals of the past Women's Liberation Movement. With inequalities now less glaring than in the Second Wave, Baumgardner and Richards claim, young women feel insecure about their abilities to change situations they perceive as still unjust and to build "a new structure for equality." Anne Mamary describes an experimental new structure of "Interventions" into the life of a small liberal arts college through the institution of an all-woman first year college seminar. Forty-seven undergraduate women students lived and learned together in a program designed to question their assumptions about community, racism, sexism, classism, ethnic chauvinism, and heteronormativity through an attention to the uses of language.

Creative writing and art further enrich the issue. In "The Museum of Tragedy," a short story by Cathleen Calbert, a thirteen-year-old girl begins to understand her own emotions of alienation, self-assertion, and sexual curiosity by tending mannequins representing such icons of female passion as Joan of Arc, Marilyn Monroe, and Jacqueline Kennedy. Another short story, "Wonderful Words of Life" by Pamela Carter Joern,

dramatizes the consequences of past reproductive policies in the United States. It conveys a poignant paradox of isolation and community in women's lives and the legacy of fear, silence, and loss that became part of so many of our family histories. The story beautifully places an attention to issues of reproduction within a setting of women's work caring for children.

Both subtle and forthright language distinguishes the poetry we have selected for this issue. Laurie Lamon depicts "Poetry" that brings the objects of familial memory into articulation, while her poem "A Wonder" gives a poignant twist to a mother-daughter encounter at the oculist. Rebecca B. Rank directly challenges the reader with another poem on the emotions between daughters and mothers, "What You Can't Tell Just by Looking at a Girl (After Her Mother Leaves)," that accumulates force through the suggestive details of stolen trinkets like the "painted faux pearl drops/she's compelled to peel like sunburn."

The arresting visual images of the French artist Agnès Thurnauer featured in this issue of the journal avoid such biographical trinkets, instead opting for fluid, often abstract, compositions suggesting architectural elements. As Anna Hiddleston describes Thurnauer's art, its "pale lines," "uneven and fragile" walls, and transparent floors "bathed in pools of liquid color" evoke for the viewer "an undefined place, within the unfolding spaces of the mind." Thurnauer's intriguing representation of an internal architecture offers a fitting visual location from which to consider the themes of women's emotion, care, and passion that recur in this issue.

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for the editors