A Renaissance Woman (Still) Adrift in the World

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Nearly a decade ago, at the 1997 Attending to Women conference, Deirdre Keenan and I organized a workshop exploring the problems and opportunities presented by crossing geographic and disciplinary boundaries to enter new and unfamiliar intellectual territories in teaching and research. We were both trained as scholars of early modern Europe, she in English and I in history. Our graduate training was completely Eurocentric, but by 1997 we were both teaching and writing in areas far removed geographically, and in Deirdre’s case chronologically, from what we had been prepared to do. Deirdre was teaching Milton and Shakespeare, but also post-colonial literature; along with the Renaissance, the Reformation, and European women; I was teaching comparative early modern courses and developing a world history course. Thus we rather irreverently titled our workshop “Renaissance Women Adrift in the World.”

From conversations with colleagues around the country, we realized that our situation was not unique. As department sizes were shrinking, many people were being asked to teach courses for which they had no graduate training, not simply in a closely-related field (Milton along with Shakespeare, the Middle Ages along with the Renaissance) but in completely different cultural traditions or time periods. As more and more colleges and universities added world history to their offerings in Western civilization (or substituted world history for Western civilization) and added world literature to courses in American and English literature, historians and literary scholars were increasingly required to become comparativists, or to teach about cultures in which they had little background. The same thing was happening in departments of art history.
A spirited discussion at the 1996 Berkshire Conference on Women’s History suggested that a disproportionate number of women were being asked—or compelled—to be border crossers. Female faculty were concentrated at junior ranks and thus frequently given challenging teaching assignments, or were teaching a huge variety of courses as adjuncts. Women were often perceived to be somehow more “sympathetic” to non-Eurocentric approaches, even if they were trained in European or American history or literature, and so were more often asked or required to teach broader surveys than were their male colleagues.

As we expected, our Attending to Women workshop provoked a lively response, with participants discussing questions we had posed. Some questions were very basic. How do we begin? What do we seek to gain? Other questions resulted from our first attempts at crossing geographic and disciplinary boundaries: How do we fully integrate new types of materials and not simply view them as “context”? How can we ask the right kinds of questions, so that we are not simply dabbling in an unfamiliar area? How do we measure the credibility of a newly-informed perspective? To what extent can we escape our own cultural perspective, especially one reinforced by graduate training?

Some questions arose from our sense of responsibility toward the material. Knowing that whatever texts or individuals we select to discuss will become representative of a culture, how do we choose? How do we balance difference and familiarity to avoid orientalizing and exoticizing and yet not erase otherness? Are there any borders that cannot or should not be crossed? Others rose from our sense of responsibility toward our students. Should our teaching be affected by the increasing numbers of students with non-European backgrounds in our classrooms, or is this generalized stereotyping and false identity politics, akin to the over-generalizations about “women’s role” and “women’s experience” we have all learned to avoid? How can we balance a wider perspective with the need to prepare students for course work or subsequent tests that are much more traditional in their scope? Finally, we asked, how should and can our teaching and writing about areas beyond Europe shape our approach to European topics?

If issues of boundary-crossing were pressing in 1997, they have only become more so since. As colleges and universities face budget crises, full-
time faculty are replaced by much cheaper part-time or non-tenure-track
lecturers, many of whom teach a far wider range of courses than their ten-
ure track colleagues because they are in no position to say “no” to depart-
ment chairs seeking to hire them. Many of us are now teaching courses
for which we not only lack graduate training, but may lack anything at all
beyond the “peoples of the world” curriculum we had when we were eight
or nine. These changes have also resulted, at both the secondary and post-
secondary level, from universities, departments, schools, or school districts
deciding that they wish to broaden their offerings beyond Europe and
North America. This sometimes means new people are hired, but just as
often means that we who are already there are just expected to widen our
areas of expertise, or at least of competence. Or these changes arise from
state mandates, as states try to figure out how best to prepare students for
the “global” economy, or as they respond to various pressure groups seeking
to shape the curriculum.

This drive to expand geographically has come from inside as well as
outside. Shortly after the 1997 conference, I started work on a book on
Christianity and sexuality in the early modern period, and was working on
another project with a group of people who were specialists in Southeast
Asia. One of them asked me why I was limiting my book to Europe, and
I found I did not have a good answer—somehow “because that’s what I
know” wasn’t satisfying. Christian ideas and institutions shaped sexual
attitudes and activities in much of the world in this era, with the most
interesting challenges—and responses to those challenges—posed by colo-
nial areas. Thus the book came to include every continent, and was part of
a widening of geographic scope among many early modernists, reflected in
increasing research on the Atlantic World, colonial experiences, and global
transformations. The book allowed me to venture in terms of more special-
ized research into areas I had increasingly been teaching, a pattern I was
seeing in a number of colleagues and friends.

Various combinations of such political, institutional, and personal
factors mean that the number of courses and the enrollment in world his-
tory, comparative history, or the histories of parts of the world that used
to be called the “third world” is growing steadily, as is the case in global
and comparative art history courses, and literature courses that include
works by previously non-canonical writers or from a wider area. Deirdre, for example, now regularly offers Native American and Afro-American literature, along with post-colonial (and an occasional Milton course). Looking just at history (which I know best): within this decade, according to many publishers, enrollment in introductory world history courses in the United States and Canada will equal or surpass that in introductory Western Civilization or European history courses. World history is now required for those seeking certification to teach in United States secondary schools in many states, a pattern that started in California. The largest enrollments in college history courses in the United States are still in U.S. history, but as the saying goes—though people from New York or Paris try to forget it—whatever happens in California eventually comes to the rest of the world.

New York and Paris may actually have an easier time accepting the expansion of world history than either one of the Cambridges. Elite schools have lagged behind the trend toward internationalization and globalization of the humanities curriculum. Harvard and Columbia, for example, continue to require courses in Western civilization or European history of all history majors, and Columbia still requires all students to take six specific courses in the Western tradition.\(^3\) They do offer many courses on other parts of the world, of course, but history departments at elite schools are large enough to allow faculty to remain in field even with a broader curriculum. This was brought home to me during the discussion at the 1997 workshop, in fact, when a prominent literary scholar from an Ivy League school was stunned to learn that people at less distinguished schools have to teach whatever they are asked to do. Her doubts about the wisdom of this occasioned rather uncharitable guffaws and comments of “get real” from most of the discussants.

Beyond North America, introductory history courses increasingly provide a comparative or broad geographic framework. Kobe University in Japan has a whole Faculty of Cross-Cultural Studies, in which one can take courses in “cultural interaction” and “transcultural studies.”\(^4\) Students at Witwatersrand University in South Africa start their history with a year-long course on world history after 1945 that until a few years ago was titled “systems in collision,” and is now titled “living with the USA.”\(^5\) Students in
the history program at Stockholm University begin with three courses in world history, and those at the Free University of Amsterdam are required to take non-Western history as one of four subjects in their first year.6

The picture is not uniformly broad, of course. Like Harvard and Columbia, most European and Latin American universities are not global in their introductory course offerings. At Oxford, Frankfurt, and São Paolo, all introductory history courses focus either on their respective national histories, or on general European history. At all three, students can focus almost exclusively on national history during their course of study, though at São Paolo they are required to take a two-semester course in European history.7 Specialization begins much earlier there, and continues, of course, much longer, particularly in countries such as Germany and Denmark that have maintained the second dissertation, which is usually guaranteed to be so long and so narrow that no one but one’s advisor and one’s mother—if she lives so long—will read it.

This means that Europeans are late-comers to global history, and, judging by a conference I was at in Leipzig in September 2005, they have far to go. This was billed as the first conference on world or global history ever held in Europe, which I think is true, but the continued Eurocentrism, exclusionary language, and old-boy chumminess took me back twenty years. One of the opening talks, by Patrick O’Brien, a prominent economic historian of the University of London, compared the traditions of history writing in Europe and China, managing to name about thirty European historians from Herodotus to Mommsen (often with annoying comments about “as we all know from reading Gibbon” or something similar) and mentioning not a single Chinese writer by name. Though there were women on the organizing committee—thus doing the work of the conference—no woman spoke at either the opening or closing plenary sessions (at which there were ten speakers), nor were the words “women” or “gender” mentioned by any plenary speaker. O’Brien certainly did not include Catherine Macauley or Lydia Maria Child or any other woman who wrote world history in his survey of Western traditions. The opening plenary led one young Dutch woman to denounce the “half-dead white men” who had spoken, and her words were affirmed by nods at the one session at the conference that focused on gender.
Despite these limitations, however, the trend toward a more global curriculum and more global approaches is certainly continuing, as is the trend toward interdisciplinarity. A quarter century ago, there were some programs in American studies and medieval studies, and “area studies” centers that were funded as part of anti-Soviet moves in the Cold War. But now there are also programs in women’s studies, modern studies, Renaissance studies, cultural studies, liberal studies, Celtic studies, gay and lesbian studies, and on and on.

Cross-disciplinary work has totally altered the way we look at certain things. To cite just one example, look at women’s monasticism in the period of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations. Art historians have explored how convents acted as patrons of the visual arts, ordering paintings and sculpture with specific subjects and particular styles for their own buildings and those of the male religious institutions they supported, thus shaping the religious images seen by men as well as women; music historians have shown how women sang, composed, and played musical instruments, with their sounds sometimes reaching far beyond convent walls; religious historians have examined the ways in which women circumvented, subverted, opposed, and occasionally followed the wishes of church authorities; social historians have explored the ways in which women behind convents walls shaped family dynamics and thus political life.8 More importantly, scholars in all these fields have thought about the ways their stories intersect; as art and music both shape devotional practices and are shaped by them; as family chapels and tombs—often built by women—represent and reinforce power hierarchies; as artistic, literary, political, and intellectual patronage relationships influence and are influenced by doctrinal and institutional changes in the church.9 This scholarship has changed our narrative of the Catholic Reformation, changed the way we compare Protestants and Catholics, and changed how we talk about women’s history.

This interdisciplinarity is not only a matter of scholarship and research interests, but also of teaching. Twenty years ago historians thought themselves daring if they included a novel among their required readings in a history course, but now many regularly include all sorts of literary evidence, visual materials, songs, popular culture, and material objects. Along with discussing their content, they also try to provide much
wider contexts for the more traditional types of materials that they use, noting, for example, the ways in which letters follow literary conventions or woodcuts use iconography.

As scholars and teachers we thus continue to enter new intellectual territories, but as we cross disciplinary and geographic boundaries, we often perceive ourselves as frauds or interlopers. In our 1997 workshop, Deirdre and I described ourselves as “Renaissance women adrift in the world,” and that nautical metaphor seems more applicable than ever, for we often feel as if we are floating around in a huge ocean of material without a compass. Every single question we asked then is still open, and the best answers are those that are being developed communally, through listserves, web resources, and actual face-to-face (F2F) talking. This is exactly what has happened in the cross-disciplinary work on women’s convents, which can provide guidance to those in other research areas seeking to enter new disciplinary territories in their own work. Sailing into new geographic areas can be similarly rewarding, for we will bring to global scholarship our deep understanding of women and gender, and return home to what we know best with exciting new goods. Here are just a few examples of what can happen when, as scholars of early modern women, gender, and sexuality, we set ourselves adrift in the world, instead of staying moored in Europe.

We can use our expertise to re-examine well-known sources about global encounters. For example, in a letter from his first voyage, Columbus describes the men and women of what is now Hispaniola: “These are the men who form unions with certain women, who dwell along in the island Matenin [this is one of the Virgin Islands], which lies next to Española on the side toward India; these latter employ themselves in no labor suitable to their own sex, for they use bows and javelins as I have already described their paramours as doing, and for defensive armor they have plates of brass, of which metal they possess in great abundance.”

Comments such as this have been used as evidence of Columbus’s preconceived ideas of what he would find on his voyages; that is, of the invention of America before its discovery. We would immediately highlight the gendered nature of that invention; Columbus is viewing the Caribbean through a classical lens, and expects to find unruly women living without men in these lands beyond
the borders of civilization. After subsequent voyages, the location of such women shifts, until ultimately Europeans decide they must live somewhere in the South American interior, and thus name the major river of the area after them—the Amazon.

Sources about the intellectual world surrounding the voyages can similarly benefit from our gendered readings. Martin Waldseemüller, a German mapmaker, was the first to use the word “America” on his maps of the new world in the early sixteenth century, naming it after an enterprising Italian who claimed he had played a major role in “discovering” it. The name stuck because of Waldseemüller’s influence, and he justified his decision like this: “I see no reason why, and by what right, this land of Amerigo should not be named after that wise and ingenious man who discovered it, America, since both Europe and Asia had been allotted the names of women.”12 The misnaming of the Americas is noted in every book on the period, but Waldseemüller’s comment is only rarely cited. We can be sure to include it, for in a single sentence it brings together so much that we teach about the Renaissance and early modern periods: the importance of the classical tradition, the tendency to mythologize the past (whether the ancient past of Greek myths or the very recent past of Amerigo Vespucci), the celebration of the individual man with virtù, and the deeply gendered nature of learned culture.

We can use our expertise to transform the story of colonization and global interactions from one of men in ships to one that includes women as subjects and agents. Neglecting the women in this story began in the sixteenth century. Machiavelli, for example, ignores Isabella of Castile in The Prince, though he talks about Ferdinand of Aragon a great deal.13 We can make sure that Isabella and the many other women who sponsored, went along on, profited from, or confronted the European voyages get the credit they are due.

We can also investigate the global implications of many topics concerning early modern women for which there is now a solid body of research on Europe. Isabella is significant not only for her sponsorship of Columbus, but also because she was the first in a long line of female monarchs in early modern Europe, a line that became so long and powerful that subsequent political theorists could not avoid the topic. Dynastic accidents
in many areas led to women serving as advisers to child kings or ruling in their own right—Isabella in Castile, Mary and Elizabeth Tudor in England, Anne in Brittany, Mary Stuart in Scotland, Catherine de Medici and Anne of Austria in France. The debate about female rule that ensued, about which there is a steadily increasing body of scholarship, involved not only somewhat marginal political theorists such as John Knox, the reformer of Scotland and the author of *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. It also involved as central a figure as Jean Bodin, who argued in *The Six Books of the Republic* (1576) that the state was like a household: “So we will leave moral discourse to the philosophers and theologians, and we will take up what is relevant to political life, and speak of the husband’s power over the wife, which is the source and origin of every human society.”

Husbandly authority came from God, for Bodin, and royal power was an extension of this. Resisting either would lead to anarchy, which was worse than the worst tyranny. Bodin’s ideas about royal power are usually included in discussions of the development of political theory, and his ideas about the power of husbands figure in analyses of the debate about female rule. In just this one sentence from *The Six Books of the Republic*, however, we find ample demonstration of the point made by Carole Pateman and Sarah Hanley, among others: that all power is gendered, not simply power in the family or power held by women, and that the ideology and reality of power in the family and power in the state are interwoven. As with the new scholarship on convents, exciting interdisciplinary scholarship on the gendered nature of power in early modern Europe has emerged in the last several years, which is broadening our understanding of the depth and the contradictions of patriarchy.

As we continue to examine the connections between gender and power in Europe, we can also explore their global resonance. Bodin’s opponents were French Protestants, the originators of what has come to be called “resistance theory,” a body of ideas that is increasingly seen as central to the eighteenth century revolutions—French, certainly, but also American and Haitian. But did his opponents, and their intellectual heirs around the world, also oppose Bodin’s ideas about the power of husbands? The radical English Parliamentarian Henry Parker definitely did not, writing:
“The wife is inferior in nature, and was created for the assistance of man, and servants are hired for their Lord’s mere attendance; but it is otherwise in the State between man and man, for that civil difference . . . is for . . . the good of all, not that servility and drudgery may be imposed upon all of the pompe of one.”18 A better-known resistance theorist continued this line of thought, noting: “Were our state a pure democracy . . . there would still be excluded from our deliberations . . . women, who to prevent deprivation of morals and ambiguity of issue, should not mix promiscuously in the public meetings of men.”19 Those are the words of Thomas Jefferson, a man who knew quite well about "ambiguity of issue," as the genetic research on the descendants of Sally Hemings has demonstrated.20 Thus despite their diametrically opposed ideas about the rights of men to rebel against tyrants, defenders of divine-right monarchy such as Bodin and proponents of forceful resistance such as Jefferson agreed on the proper political role for women - none.

To follow another line of Bodin’s thought to the New World, along with writing the Six Books of the Commonwealth, Bodin wrote several books about witchcraft, in which his horror at wives’ revolts against their husbands or subjects’ revolts against earthly monarchs is matched by his horror at the witches’ supposed rebellion against God and the divinely ordained order: “Those too who let the witches escape, or who do not punish them with the utmost rigor, may rest assured that they will be abandoned by God to the mercy of the witches. And the country which shall tolerate this will be scourged with pestilences, famines, and wars; and those which shall take vengeance on the witches will be blessed by him and will make his anger to cease.”21 Such enemies of God were not only to be found in Europe, but also in the Americas, where native women practiced the same kind of witchcraft that women did at home. Bodin makes this comparison several times in his work, and Jean de Léry, a French Calvinist explorer, adds a description of the witches’ sabbat taken directly from Bodin to the third edition of his travelogue about the Tupinambá of Brazil.22 Léry comments: “I have concluded that they have the same master; that is, the Brazilian women and the witches over here were guided by the same spirit of Satan; neither the distance between the places nor the long passage over the sea keeps the father of lies from working both here and there on those
who are handed over to him by the just judgment of God.”

This link was also portrayed visually, and our interdisciplinary efforts have taught us to pay attention to the visual record. An engraving from the 1580s or 1590s by Crispin de Passe after Martin de Vos shows the god Saturn in his chariot pulled by two dragons through the sky, with different groups over which he holds sway depicted below; on the right are Native Americans mining gold and silver and cooking human body parts on a grill, while on the left a magician casts spells before a cauldron and witches dance through the air. Thus the artists connect the extraction of precious metals by natives of the New World with the production of such metals through alchemical cooking by European sorcerers, and links cannibalism with witchcraft. Both Native Americans and witches are under the power of a false god in this image, and neither worships the true Christian god.

Pierre de Lancre, a French magistrate appointed in 1609 by King Henry IV to investigate the activities of witches in the Basque region of France, saw a specific causal connection between the voyages of discovery and the increase in witchcraft in Europe. He asserted that the coming of European missionaries to the New World had resulted in more witches in his day than earlier, because the arrival of missionaries had forced more of Satan’s demons to return to Europe. The demons traveled, in Lancre’s opinion, with Basque fishing ships, remaining with “impudent and undisciplined” Basque women when their husbands left again in search of cod. These women’s only marketable agricultural commodity was apples; they sold the fruit, and also “ate with abandon this fruit of transgression, which caused the trespass against God’s commandment, and they ignored the prohibition made to our first father.” Thus the independent economic activities of Basque women were a sign of their connection to Eve, who was often described as the first witch in European demonology. Their husbands’ fishing brought New World demons right to them; the men’s absence also left them more vulnerable to demonic wiles because they lacked men as protectors and as sexual partners.

One can go on and on with quotations from leading European intellectuals about the connections between witchcraft, women, and indigenous American beliefs, just as one can go on and on with quotations about women’s rule in the state or household. The *Malleus Maleficarum*, the
guide to demonology and the interrogation of witches that shaped the witch-trials in much of continental Europe, was published only five years before Columbus’s first voyage, a voyage sponsored by one of those “monstrous” ruling queens.26

And speaking again of that queen—what an opportunity she provides for seeing how family and sexuality operate in world history! Along with backing Columbus, Isabella made astute marriages for her children. Her son John died before she could find him a spouse, but the marriages of her daughters linked Spain with every country that could assist them against their most powerful neighbor, France: her oldest daughter Isabella married King Manoel of Portugal; Catherine married Arthur and then Henry, the sons of Henry VII of England; and Joanna married Archduke Philip of Habsburg, who was heir to the Burgundian Netherlands through his mother and to vast holdings of the Habsburg family in central Europe through his father, and eventually elected Holy Roman Emperor. These marriages are mentioned in the most traditional of political histories (the kind that we and our students are so often bored by), but we need to make sure we (and our students) understand that these are marriages. That is, they are heterosexual unions designed to create children and pass down inheritance, including the right to rule countries. To paraphrase James II, “No children, no king.” Those traditional histories tried to ignore the fact that politics was really all about sex and families, but Isabella (and the American presidency) shows you can not really separate them.

The connections between family, sex, and politics were just as clear in the first European colonies as they were in European dynastic linkages. Christian officials—Portuguese, Spanish, and later French and English—tried to impose European gender patterns of monogamous marriage, male-headed households, and limited (or no) divorce. Where these conflicted with existing patterns, however, they were often modified, and what emerged was a blend of indigenous and imported practices.27 In some areas, such as the Andes of South America and the Philippines, women had been important leaders in indigenous religions, and they were stronger opponents of conversion than were men; this pattern was enhanced by male missionaries’ focus on boys and young men in their initial conversion efforts.28 In other areas, women became fervent Christians, confessing and
doing penance for their sins so intensively that they harmed their health, and using priests and church courts to oppose their husbands or other male family members.29

Religious and secular officials also established and maintained racial hierarchies, regulating marriage and other types of sexual activities so as to maintain boundaries between population groups. Like Thomas Jefferson, they worried about “ambiguity of issue,” and the encounters they were most concerned about were sexual.30

There were some deviations from this advocacy of maintaining sharp boundaries, however. An early nineteenth-century Colombian liberal, Pedro Fermin de Vargas, begins a discussion of the “problem” of indigenous people with standard racist assertions: “To expand our agriculture it would be necessary to hispanicize our Indians. Their idleness, stupidity and indifference towards endeavors causes one to think that they come from a degenerate race which deteriorates in proportion to the distance from its origins . . . it would be very desirable that the Indian be extinguished.” His proposal for how to accomplish this extinguishing was not extermination or isolation on reservations, however, but “miscegenation with the whites, declaring them free of tribute and other charges, and giving them private property in land.”31 Vargas’s ideas were fairly common in Latin America in the early to mid-nineteenth century, and would become even more commonplace in many places by the early twentieth century, particularly in Mexico and Brazil. About ten years ago, Eve Sedgwick commented: “Making heterosexuality historically visible is difficult because under its institutional pseudonyms such as Inheritance, Marriage, Dynasty, Domesticity, and Population, heterosexuality has been permitted to masquerade so fully as History itself.”32 Statements like Vargas’s provide a chance to strip off the mask, to ask questions about and to historicize heterosexuality in a global context, in the same way that whiteness is currently being historicized.33

My examples have wandered through time and space, but that is what happens when you drift off into unfamiliar territories—you see new things, and the resulting insights allow you, no, force you, to see very familiar things in a new way. This is what “attending to women” has done—it is hard to read Machiavelli the same way once you pay attention to the
sentence about beating fortune like a woman, or read More’s *Utopia* the
same way once you notice the scene where wives bow down before their
husbands “to confess all sins of commission and omission, and ask to be
forgiven,” or read Rousseau the same way once you learn that he spent
much of his adult life with an illiterate seamstress, by whom he had five
children, all of whom he sent to orphanages.34 It is hard to read “all men are
created equal” in anything but a gender specific way once you understand
what the author of those words thought about women.

After beginning with “all men are created equal,” later in the same doc-
ument Jefferson writes: “Governments are instituted among Men, deriving
their just powers from the consent of the governed.” If you are looking for
a way to introduce the idea that power is gendered in the early modern
period, you can place this sentence alongside the one I quoted above from
Jefferson. In fact, it would be better to place this sentence alongside the
entire paragraph from which I took the earlier quotation:

Were our State a pure democracy, in which all its inhabitants should
meet together to transact all their business, there would yet be
excluded from their deliberations, 1. Infants, until arrived at years
of discretion. 2. Women, who, to prevent depravation of morals and
ambiguity of issue, could not mix promiscuously in the public meet-
ings of men. 3. Slaves, from whom the unfortunate state of things
with us takes away the rights of will and of property. Those then
who have no will could be permitted to exercise none in the popular
assembly; and of course, could delegate none to an agent in a repre-
sentative assembly. The business, in the first case, would be done by
qualified citizens only.35

We often begin our discussion of early modern patriarchy and ideas
about women with Aristotle, but here is a thinker with whom our students
are much more familiar, exactly replicating Aristotelian categories about those
who lack free will and are thus excluded from the body politic. Incorporating
examples drawn from beyond Europe provides strong evidence for our argu-
ments about the longevity and depth of hierarchical notions of gender, and
sometimes, as in this example, allows our students to see ways in which early
modern ideas continue to shape their own world.
Developing a global perspective can parallel the process of first noticing that women’s experience differed from men’s. I certainly do not teach the Renaissance or the Reformation in the same way that I did when I thought of them as European events—or even more narrowly, as Italian or German events. I certainly do not think about my beloved German working women (when I get the chance to think about them at all, which I still try to) without thinking about where the linen cloth they were weaving was going, what the guns they helped to make were doing, and where the diseases they were treating might have come from. This does not mean that I no longer have doubts, or am no longer struck by the hubris of the enterprise—who can pretend to know the history or the literature or the art of the whole world?—but I can not imagine being stuck on the shore.

Sailing in unfamiliar waters is not only exciting; it is also essential. My recent experience in Leipzig shook me out of an ill-founded complacency about how much all of our work has transformed the scholarly enterprise. History, art history, literature, music, philosophy, and every other field are constantly going off in new directions, but we can not assume these new routes will be any more welcoming than were the long-established ones when we first tiptoed along them. If we do not make sure that we travel along those routes—traveling as scholars asking questions about women and about gender, and many of us traveling as women—we will be like the wives in Utopia, watching men and their scholarship sailing away while we women kneel before them, our scholarship stranded on the beach.

Notes

1. The summary of this workshop may be found in Jane Donawerth and Adele F. Seeff, eds., Crossing Boundaries: Attending to Early Modern Women (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2001), 280–82. The discussion at Attending to Women was so interesting and helpful that we took our show on the road, and presented various expansions and variations at the 1998 Wisconsin Women’s Studies conference, 1999 Berkshire Women’s History Conference (a session sponsored by EMW, and in which we were joined by Sheila ffolliott and Martha Craig), and the 2000 New York State Association of European Historians conference.

2. The book became Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice (London: Routledge, 2000). The project with Southeast Asian historians led first to a conference, and then to a collected volume of

3. According to the Harvard History Department’s website, all majors are required to take a two-semester sequence in western history, though they are also required to take one course in non-western history. (http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~history/Ugreq_basic.cgi; accessed 1/15/06). At Columbia, all undergraduate students are required to take the Core Curriculum, which includes two specific courses in Introduction to Contemporary Civilization, two courses in Western literature, one in Western art, and one in Western music. As part of the Core Curriculum, students are required to take two courses on Asia, Africa, or Latin America, a requirement labeled “Major Cultures,” but there are no specific courses taken in common to fulfill this requirement; instead students choose from a long list, as they do with other “distribution” requirements such as science and physical education. (http://www.college.columbia.edu/students/academics/core/: accessed 1/15/06). The Introduction to Contemporary Civilization course was first taught in 1919, and is generally regarded as the ancestor of the Western Civilization curriculum that later spread to most United States colleges and universities. Columbia’s website occasionally labels this course “Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West,” though generally the last three words are omitted. The website describing the “Major Cultures” requirement includes vigorous language about the “permeability” of boundaries between the “West” and the “non-West”; the posted syllabi of Core Curriculum courses do not reflect this, however, and all introductory survey courses in the history department cover Europe or the United States (http://www.college.columbia.edu/bulletin/depts/history.php?tab=courses; accessed 1/15/06).


11. Examining the ways in which Columbus’s cultural assumptions shaped both his own and other Europeans’ responses to the New World, the Mexican historian and philosopher Edmundo O’Gorman coined the phrase the “invention of America.” His pioneering study of European ideas about the New World was published first in Spanish as *La invención de América: de la Cultura del Occidente* (Mexico City: Fondo Cultura Económica, 1958); an expanded and modified version in English appeared as *The Invention of America: An Inquiry into the Historical Nature of the New World and the Meaning of its History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961).


13. The only female figure for whom Machiavelli gives an actual name is the goddess Fortuna, or Fortune, the one force that even the greatest prince with the most virtù cannot conquer, though he might try. Machiavelli describes this attempt in highly gendered terms: “It is better to be impetuous than cautious, for fortune is a woman, and if one wishes to keep her down, it is necessary to beat her and knock her down.” (Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Leo Paul de Alvarez [Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1980], 149. For an excellent analysis of Machiavelli’s ideas about gender, see Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).


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18. [Henry Parker], *Observations upon some of his Majesties Late Answers and Expresses* [1642], 14.


20. The official Monticello website has an excellent list, with links, to many articles on the DNA research. http://www.monticello.org/plantation/hemingscontro/hemings_resource.html (accessed 2/5/06).

21. These include *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (1580) and *Vom ausgeslesnuen wuetigen Teuffelsheer*, trans. Johann Fischart (1591) (Graz: Akademische Verlagsanstalt, 1973). The quotation is from the second, p. 256. My thanks to Gerhild Scholz Williams for alerting me to this work and providing the translation.


27. For a fuller discussion of this process, see my *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (London: Routledge, 2000).


30. See my *Christianity and Sexuality* for an extended discussion of this issue. The concern with racial mixing continued, of course, with the next wave of European colonialism; a British official stationed in Kenya in the early twentieth century, Robert Baden-Powell, worried that contacts between British boys and indigenous people would cause them to “go native” and eventually lead to masturbation, effeminacy, and homosexuality. To counter this, he founded the Boy Scouts, for which he was knighted. Lord Baden-Powell’s ideas were stated clearly in the early literature for scouts: “You have been given a sacred trust for carrying on the race, and if you engage in the solitary vice you are throwing away the seed that has been handed down to you as a trust instead of keeping it and ripening it for bringing a son to you later on.” (*Scouting for Boys*, 1930, quoted in Michael Rosenthal, *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement* [New York: Pantheon Books, 1986], 184). The current Boy Scout manual no longer has that sentence, though it does begin with a section on improper touching and other unacceptable behavior, inserted in a way that parents can tear it out if they wish. Scholarship on gender and sexuality in the context of nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonialism is exploding. Patrick Manning includes a discussion of some recent works in *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 209–210; further references can be found in Temma Kaplan, “Revolution, Nationalism, Anti-colonialism” in *The Companion to Gender History*, ed. Teresa A. Meade and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (London: Blackwell, 2004) and in the chapters on political life and sexuality in my *Gender in History* (London: Blackwell, 2001).


34. Machiavelli comments, “It is better to be impetuous than cautious, for fortune is a woman, and if one wishes to keep her down, it is necessary to beat her and knock her down” (*Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince*, trans. Leo Paul de Alvarez [Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1980], 149). As noted above, Hanna Fenichel Pitkin’s, *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Berkeley: University of
