

Note how specific she is about her research interests

"Research is the adult way of wondering." This is how the professor in the first Research Methods seminar I took for the M.A. in Communicative Disorders described what we were preparing to do, not only then, but throughout our careers. This idea stays with me. Research is a vital part of whatever work I do. Because of this attitude toward research, my work as a public health nurse and speech-language pathologist has led me toward thinking about narrative in Medieval Literature, and pursuing a doctorate.

It started when I volunteered to work in "purgatory." At least that's what my assigned area of east L.A. was called at the nursing agency where I worked. I often began at 6:30 a.m. by trudging around old warehouses, carrying the 30 lb. "portable" baby scales to examine and provide care for sick children and adults, fearful of deportation by immigration services, living in places not meant for human habitation. By examining trash bins and remnants of junk mail in the street for hints, I put together the information fragments that helped me to locate the families who did not want to be found, and protected themselves by giving incorrect addresses (usually from the area in which they were living) on the hospital intake. For these patients, I functioned as a "signifier" to them and for them, vis-à-vis the faceless official Others at the end of a phone line who made decisions about their health care. These reports became more than mere communiqués that related bare bones information. They were "stories" that portrayed a particular image of the client and their situation, one that determined what care a child or family member received. Thinking about the way narratives are created and understood, I began frequenting local university bookstores where I found some of the anthropological, cultural, and linguistic applications of what I now know to be) structuralist theories, and some of the first books on poststructuralist theories, to help me make sense of the problems I encountered then.

After five years as a registered nurse, I was more interested in teaching "difficult" patients how to represent themselves, so I earned my first M.A. in Communicative Disorders (speech/language pathology). I was fascinated by how formalist linguistic approaches, such as those of Saussure and Chomsky, along with the subsequent narrative theories, have been used to design therapy regimens for aphasic and communicatively-handicapped children. The Southern California school district where I worked agreed to support field research with a small group of Latino children in using linguistically-based therapeutic approaches for implementing the regular curriculum. To do this, I studied Spanish language and linguistics at a summer intensive in Costa Rica, and in local district classes. In doing so, I once more became a link between two groups, communicatively-handicapped children--particularly Latino children--and the educational establishment of teachers, psychologists, and administrators who were often frustrated with these children because language disorders made them seem to be "uncooperative" or to have "behavioral problems."

Although the field research in communicative disorders was promising work, as was teaching colleagues how to apply these approaches, I was increasingly intrigued by the new direction of my ongoing reading (to support this field work) in the area of post-structuralist literary theories. I kept my full-time job and research schedule, but returned to California State University, Fullerton to study English literature on a full time basis as well, because the social implications around the writing and reading of narratives seemed like something I could do more thoroughly through a study of literature. I am maintaining this full-time work and study schedule at San Francisco State University. Here I have had a greater opportunity to study in a program that strongly emphasizes literary theory while I expand my bilingual skills in the Nurse Consultant's position with California Children's Services. This combination of work and study leads me to consider daily the myriad ways economic status, gender, and access to certain institutions (including levels and types of language usage) interact to engender narratives about individuals that, in turn, affect how various groups are narrated, and subsequently treated, medically, socially, and legally.

Medieval narratives resonate for me as remarkable records of similar discourses. I am interested in how narratives of the Middle Ages reflect the relations between groups, and the struggles over representation, especially through control of the ecclesiastical texts of auctoritas. Poststructural, feminist, cultural, and new historical approaches are those I believe would be the most useful for the intertextual investigations I want to make of the various ways that male and female authors appropriate authoritative texts to suit their particular narratives. I submitted one such paper, "Heloise Redressed," to a session of the 1996 International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo. Although that session had closed early on, its organizer, Professor Bonnie Wheeler of Southern Methodist University has expressed interest in considering this paper for inclusion in a collection of essays that she is editing on Heloise. I have also acquired the reading skills in Latin to begin graduate level research that draws on medieval legal documents like the Corpus iuris canonici, and this has been invaluable as a background for the primary text research I have done on the correspondence of Abelard and Heloise. In this paper on Heloise, I look at the relationship between Heloise's enigmatic second response to Abelard (letter V in Muckle's text, in which Heloise requests that Abelard create a Rule

for women) and her use of the Rule of Saint Benedict. Heloise invokes the Rite of Profession in the Rule of Saint Benedict to present a paradigm for applying the ethics of intentio--explicated in Abelard's Sic et Non--to the nature of spiritual commitments (including marriage) and subsequently to the manner in which a woman's Rule should be constructed based on her reading.

My work on Heloise indicates the direction I would like to take in my doctoral work: investigating the "literature of formation" on proper behavior (e.g., Ancrene Wisse) and the response to this literature. I am intrigued by the contrast between the "literature of formation" by monastics as it is used, for example, by Heloise in reaction to Abelard, and the narratives of "de-formation" of the idealized types as they emerge in the characters of fable and fabliaux representations. This paves the way to explore how the de-formation emerges in fabliaux and fables as a means to methodize and control ideas of gender and power that find their referent in the "literature of formation." Because this methodization and control do not emerge in necessarily similar ways, I am interested in the way the "literature of formation" and fabliaux are reinvented by Spanish (e.g., Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita, Libro de Buen Amor; Gonzalo de Berceo, Milagros de Nuestra Señora, or Don Juan Manuel, El Conde Lucanor), as well as English and French, authors in this regard. By setting satirical and marginalized works against didactic texts, I want to highlight the range of the textual discourse on the Medieval Church's struggle for legal jurisdiction and social influence via the rhetorical and philological strategies used to delimit particular behaviors (e.g., parameters of speech and silence) to certain members of a group (e.g., women monastics vs. men monastics, men monastics vs. peasants, noblemen). This work would provide a means for exploring how the behaviors (including language usage) regarded as offensive or "lesser" in "formation literature" are used in diverse non-clerical works where narratives incorporate ecclesiastically-mediated oppositions between class, gender, and type. Works I am interested in here are those of Marie de France, Margery Kempe, the fabliaux tales in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, and the anonymous fabliaux in B.N. Ms. 837 which comment on clerical influence.

The connection between such disparate works is the struggle for the writing (or rewriting) of clerical authority in the creation of narratives about the social and linguistic behavior of the "Other." This is the way I want to look at non-clerical literature's role in replacing clerical narratives in adjudicating--often through farcical or grotesque permutations of spiritual mysteries--the nature of relations between clerical groups themselves, or the interaction with members of oppositional groups, e.g., women, Jews, or men. The context of reductive group relations thus provides a way for me to examine how these societal boundaries situate individual characters in regards to cooperation with and rebellion against those delimitations. I am particularly interested in how lesser-privileged behaviors and access to language, complicated by such factors as homoerotic or homosocial elements (in the broadest sense of these terms), contribute to the making of individual narratives whose societal commentary underscores the complexities of the poet or narrator as an outsider trying to make a place for him or herself. In this vein, Bruce Rosenberg's ideas and interest in the oral tradition and the construction of a various narratives in everything from folklore and ballads of the middle ages, to western and spy narratives intrigues me. Additionally, Elizabeth Kirk's discussion of Arthurian legend and historiography in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales illustrates the kind of intertextual considerations that I want to include in my own work. Attending Brown would afford me the opportunity to work with these professors.

Further, at Brown I can enrich doctoral study in Medieval English Literature with classes and input from related disciplines in French, as well as continued study of Latin and Spanish, Medieval Studies, and Medieval History. This is particularly important to me because I also want to prepare for a post-doctoral book on Marie de France which I am just beginning to outline. A paper I am currently submitting for consideration for publication in Exemplaria (see writing sample) is one that illustrates the direction I see for this project. I argue that Marie de France's intriguing lai, Equitan, is a fabliau critique of the lai's usual romantic characters placed within extradiagetic expectations for a heroic narrative that never materializes. Instead, the heroic myth degenerates under the pressures of symbiotic, but conflicting, spheres for the two noblemen in which the woman becomes the locus of their incompatible actions. As the failed imago virago (image of a virgin), the instrument the woman chooses for Equitan's murder--the boiling water in the tub--becomes a narrative marker for the tensions the noblemen do not articulate, and inverts the mores of romance and baptism into those of fabliau. I want to expand this by investigating how Marie de France's narration focuses on the noble estate-clerical tensions implicit in the social and property conflicts. Often, I believe, this involves situating the focus of conflict in marginal characters who do not cooperate with the behavioral-linguistic requirements of the narrative framework. I will continue to study French and Provençal during my doctoral work with this Marie de France project in mind.

I would welcome consideration for a research or teaching fellowship. I enjoyed a successful experience

as a T.A. for undergraduate coursework in Marie de France, and have been asked to be a T.A. again for an experimental electronic version of this class to be conducted via the Internet which is currently being evaluated for the early 1996 Summer Session. The possibilities of the electronic environment for teaching and research are an active interest of mine. I would like to use versions of the available electronic texts of Medieval and later authors as a pedagogical adjunct for exploring how Medieval glossolalia works to disseminate and perpetuate the struggle for narrative authority. These texts provide an immediately accessible way to examine the process by which student and scholarly versions of "glossolalia" are propagated in the electronic environment via the emergence of "complementary texts" through increasingly available on-line critical editions with hypermedia links, and through the more informal bulletin boards, chat rooms, and multiuser environments where discussions about these occur. I have been reading the volumes edited by Delany & Landow in this area, Hypermedia and Literary Studies and The Digital Word, have edited some pre-Civil War documents in SGML (Standardized General Mark-up Language) for the University of Virginia's on-line library (and hope to continue to do so for other documents), and am working part-time as a user-support specialist in my administrative nursing job, so that I can begin considering how to incorporate electronic media into research, publishing, and teaching.

I hope that my experience and interests make me a viable candidate for graduate study at Brown University. Thank you for considering my application.

Statement of Purpose

What could galloping up a dusty Moroccan hillside en route from Meknes to Fez possibly have to do with my decision to earn a doctorate in medieval literature? At the precise moment I was negotiating that slope, I could not have answered the question, preoccupied as I was with checking the thundering strides of a half-Arab stallion who knew that dinner lay somewhere on the other side of the hill. Looking back, however, I can see that I chose to embrace the difficulties of the Morocco journey--a two-week trek requiring participants to spend five hours a day in the saddle guiding their mounts over unfamiliar and often rugged terrain--because it would allow me to take one of my talents (riding) and put it to a strenuous test. This same love of challenge, of stretching my natural abilities, has led me to embark not only on that brief journey through North Africa but also, and far more significantly, upon the journey to which I have now committed my life, the journey towards a doctorate and a career devoted to research and teaching.

Tracing the origins of my decision to take this path, I recognize that long before I took on the physical challenge Morocco represented, I was seeking out and finding deep fulfillment in the intellectual challenges school offered. As an undergraduate double-majoring in English and comparative literature, I won election into both Phi Beta Kappa and the foreign language honor society Phi Sigma Iota, but not until later did I realize I wanted a scholarly career. When I uncovered the dizzying array of critical approaches to the Old English elegy "Wulf and Eadwacer" while preparing my first graduate seminar paper, I realized how invigorating research could be. It was then that I resolved to go on for the doctorate, choosing the medieval period as my focus because of my keen interest in the Old English elegies, *Beowulf*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. I would like to examine further Old and Middle French poetry as well, especially the works of Marie de France and Christine de Pizan.

In my doctoral work, I plan to continue studying medieval women writers and depictions of women in medieval literature. Barbara Hanawalt's essay "At the Margin of Women's Space in Medieval Europe" and Margaret Hallissy's *Clean Maids, True Wives, Steadfast Widows: Chaucer's Women and Medieval Codes of Conduct* have fueled my interest in further researching spatial restrictions imposed upon medieval women of all walks of life, from the recluse Christina of Markyate to the Duchess of Brunswick, and examining ways in which the literature of the time dealt with the topic of women and physical space. Intrigued by Joan Ferrante's discussion of learned women in twelfth-century romance, I want to look at how other imaginative medieval works have depicted educated females. I would like, as well, to explore the work and reception of two groups of women scholars: those who lived and studied in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, such as Christine de Pizan and Laura Cereta, and others, such as Elizabeth Elstob, who were among the first of their sex to devote their lives to medieval studies centuries later. Margaret L. King's work on learned women of the early Italian Renaissance and Renate Haas's examination of the scholarship produced by the first female Chaucerians have influenced my interest in these areas.

Pursuing my fascination with the theme of women and education, I have written a paper exploring Christine de Pizan's position on the topic (see writing sample). In this essay, I contrast her writings with those of Vincent of Beauvais, Geoffroy de la Tour-Landry, and Lionardo Bruni, all of whom stress the moral aspect of women's education. Christine's portraits of learned women in *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames* highlight, instead, the connection between education and the unlocking of women's creativity. As she alters

certain *exempla* of her main source, Boccaccio, Christine not only illustrates the education/creativity connection but also portrays her subjects' learning and achievements in a far more positive light than Boccaccio does. However, she stops far short of encouraging women to devote their lives to scholarship; in some excerpts from the *Cité* and *Le Livre des Trois Vertus*, she takes a conservative stance regarding the roles of both women and women's education. Christine's multi-faceted writings on the latter topic challenge some scholars' previous labelings of her as either a radical feminist or the "Phyllis Schlafly of the Middle Ages." I presented this paper, "The Conservative Radical," at the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association conference in Claremont, California in early November.

As my prior readings have helped me select areas of focus for my doctoral work, so my tutoring experiences and courses in pedagogy have helped prepare me for the teaching I will do as a doctoral candidate and beyond. Spending more than three years as an instructional assistant in both Santa Rosa Junior College's Reading Lab and Napa Valley College's Writing Center, I tutored students of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities, selecting assignments to meet individual needs, creating study guides and writing topics to accompany reading materials, and, at Napa, making classroom presentations to acquaint students with the Writing Center's programs. Building upon these experiences, I have completed eighteen units of coursework in the theory and practice of teaching reading, composition, and literature; through these classes, I have learned to design lesson plans, writing assignments, and course syllabi. I am now drawing on the pedagogical knowledge I've gained to design an introductory course in medieval literature.

Other classes have given me a solid foundation in foreign languages. Supplementing the five years of Spanish I took in high school and college, I have undertaken study of Latin and French. Currently in my third semester of both languages, I have also gained an introduction to the rudiments of Old English as part of Professor John Niles's course on the literature and culture of Anglo-Saxon England at the University of California, Berkeley. During my doctoral studies, I plan to further my knowledge of Old English and study Old and Middle French as well.

No doubt these challenges, like many before them, will bring me back to a realization I had long ago. There is joy in tackling the slope; I found that joy in the midst of my charge up the Moroccan hill, and I have found it, too, in my studies, which daily bring me new opportunities to develop and test my abilities. As I look up the next hillside, I am happy in the knowledge that the scholar's road, unlike the pathway to Fez, need never end. I eagerly embrace the prospect of furthering my knowledge of language and literature, acquiring the skills that will permit me to give something back, through both research and teaching, to the academic community that has so enriched my life.

I have taken a strong interest in the University of Michigan for several reasons. Your department's excellent reputation is important to me, of course, but more specifically I would welcome the opportunity to study with Professor Theresa Tinkle. With her interests in women writers and pedagogy, she would be a wonderful resource for research on medieval women authors and the theme of women and education. I hope my interests and experience make me a viable candidate for doctoral study at Michigan. Thank you for considering my application.

[Note the contrast between the Michigan and Purdue paragraphs!]

I have taken a strong interest in Purdue for several reasons. I value the relative freedom Purdue students have both in selecting courses and in designing their own after

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the first year of teaching; I thrive in atmospheres featuring this kind of autonomy. Purdue also offers resources valuable to a medieval scholar, such as the materials in the Bodleian Slide Collection. Most importantly, I have found several professors at Purdue with whom I would very much like to work. Professor Ann Astell's knowledge of both medieval women's lives and medieval education would be very useful to me in my research; her discussion of clerical misogamy in *Chaucer and the Universe of Learning* reminded me that the theme of women and education can encompass not only depictions of learned women but illustrations of how learned men regarded women as well. I would appreciate, too, the chance to work with Professor Shaun Hughes, whose familiarity with Elizabeth Elstob's work would be quite helpful, and Professor Thomas Ohlgren, whose piece "The World of King Arthur: An Interdisciplinary Course," with its emphasis on giving students opportunities to engage with the Middle Ages via creative projects, has influenced my own medieval course design. I hope my interests and experience make me a viable candidate for doctoral study at Purdue. Thank you for considering my application.