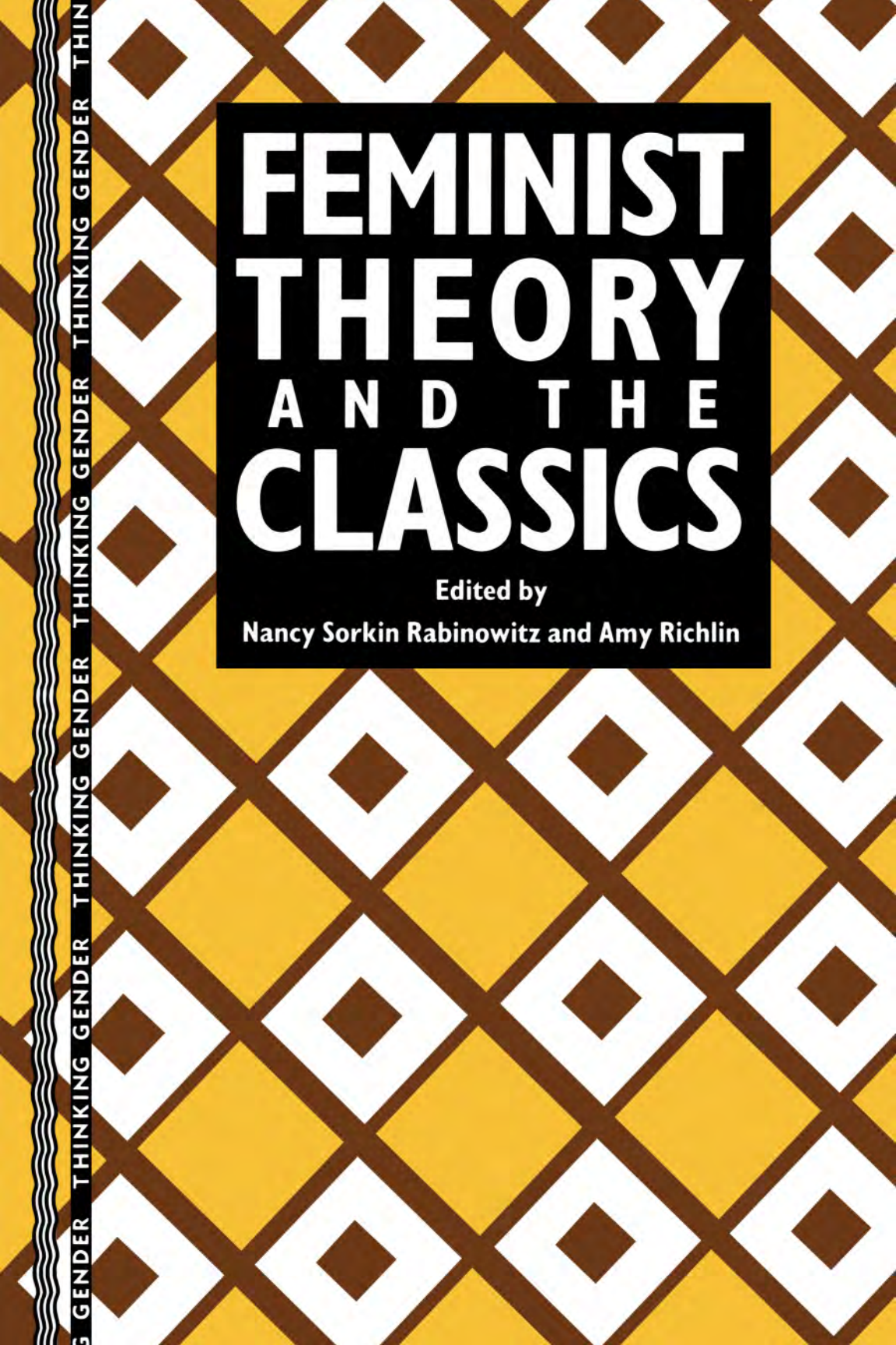
FEMINIST
THEORY
AND THE
CLASSICS
Edited by
Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and Amy Richlin
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FEMINIST THEORY AND THE CLASSICS

Thinking Gender
Edited by Linda Nicholson

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ROUTLEDGE

NEW YORK LONDON

Published in 1993 by

Routledge
270 Madison Ave,
New York NY 10016

Published in Great Britain by

Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park,
Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Transferred to Digital Printing 2010

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Feminist theory and the classics / edited by Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and Amy Richlin.
p. cm.—(Thinking gender)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-415-90645-8. — ISBN 0-415-90646-6 (pbk.)
1. Classical literature—History and criticism—Theory, etc.
2. Feminism and literature—Greece. 3. Feminism and literature—Rome. 4. Women and literature—Greece. 5. Women and literature—Rome. 6. Sex roles in literature. I. Rabinowitz, Nancy Sorkin.
II. Richlin, Amy, 1951- . III. Series.
PA35.F46 1993
880'.09—dc20 92-40745
CIP

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data also available.

Publisher's Note
The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original may be apparent.

For all our sisters

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Contents

Acknowledgments

The co-editors want first to thank each other for many happy hours of co-editing, from the first phone call when we hatched the idea for the original panel to the last spasms of copy-editing and proofreading. To the contributors go our heartfelt thanks for the enthusiasm with which they wrote and rewrote; they have challenged our notions and inspired us to think through the issues posed by the volume in new and creative ways. This volume grows out of long years of struggle in sisterhood and friendship, as well as from thinking, writing, and talking about feminism and classics. In very real ways, our writing has been made possible by this context of activism and by the work of many others in our double field; the chapter bibliographies and appendix show our debt to the rich work on women in antiquity and in feminist thought. We hope our readers will go further.

Institutional backing is always essential in such an undertaking. Hamilton College and the University of Southern California have provided moral and financial support; our work was made possible by the invaluable assistance of our administrative staff, as well as by the availability of copy machines, phones, and express mail (where would we have been without it?). Special thanks to Sandra Westover for her eagle eye.

We came to Routledge having heard of the miracles wrought by our editor, Maureen MacGrogan, and we are now true believers. She has urged us forward at each stage of the process, but was patient when patience was required. We thank her and Linda Nicholson for their boundless confidence in the project.

This last paragraph is the traditional place for rewarding families for having to put up with the foibles of writers. A paragraph seems hardly enough under the circumstances; this one stands for a lot. Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz thanks Peter for reading (and editing) every word she writes, Michael and Rachel for graciously allowing her to tie up the phone and the computer, and Sophie Sorkin for being such a tough act to follow. Amy Richlin wants to say here how proud she will

always be of the shining example of her father, Samuel Richlin, women's studies major and A student; and thanks her mother, Sylvia Richlin, for making sure she keeps doing her homework. We love you all; this book is one result of all your years of help, understanding, and love.

Although we have made every effort to avoid special usages, this book may contain some abbreviations standard in the field of classics but unfamiliar to those outside it; lists of such abbreviations may be found at the beginning of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. The Loeb Classical Library series provides a convenient set of translations of most Greek and Latin texts.

1

Introduction

Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz

Feminist Theory and the Classics: in many ways our title is not surprising, growing out of a decade of feminist examinations of the traditional disciplines, such as *Feminism and Anthropology* (1988) or *Feminism and Philosophy* (1985), or attempts to make connections to other theoretical perspectives, as in "the unhappy marriage of Marxism and feminism," or *Feminism and Foucault*.

Yet the pairing of feminist theory and the classics is also different from these others. The fact is that classics has, with few exceptions, been anti-theory in general and anti-feminist in particular. In the Modern Language Association, feminism may be under attack as not radical enough,[1] but in the American Philological Association, it is still very radical indeed (Richlin 1991).

The "and" in our title attempts, à la Tarzan, to throw a line over a ravine that has blocked many of us who work in both fields. There are discursive differences that have made writing this introduction deeply troublesome for me. For instance, academic feminists tend increasingly to ask who is speaking and for whom, while in classics such questions are taken to be irrelevant (more on this later). Should I speak in the disembodied voice of "the volume," trying to represent the multiple positions of the individual authors, or in my own voice? The former evenhanded approach might seem ideal, but heightened feminist sensitivity to difference among women has made any form of generalization problematic; thus, to say "classicists do x" may ignore many of my good friends who are classicists and who are trying *not* to do x. Simultaneously, other controversies within feminism have raised consciousness about the partiality of subjectivity: If I decide just to "speak for myself," which of my many voices would I adopt? I come up against the multiplicity of my subject positions: I am a white, bourgeois, Jewish woman, who is "married with children," as well as a Hellenist, a member of a Comparative Literature department teaching feminist literary criticism, and an activist feminist. Much of what I say in the rest of the introduction is then partial, based on my

own perspective as a double outsider to classics, but I have also tried to describe and represent the points of view of the other contributors.

These differences between the discourses of classics and feminist theory make conversation (let alone "marriage") between them highly problematic (Passman and Brown this volume).[2] Nonetheless, we intend to speak to three audiences at once: classicists unfamiliar with feminist theory, feminists unfamiliar with classical scholarship, and students of both. Using contemporary theory, we hope to press the classics community to question itself; reviewing ancient material from new perspectives, we hope to enter the ongoing dialogue in feminist theory. As feminists working in classics, however, we have often felt doubly marginalized; on the one hand, our work is largely unrecognized as part of the mainstream of the field, and, on the other hand, our affiliation as classicists renders us virtually invisible to feminists in the theoretical avant-garde. Feminist classicists have published extensively, and special issues about women in antiquity have become common; nonetheless, nonclassicists do not tend to read even those progressive classics journals (such as *Helios*, *Ramus*, or *Arethusa*) that carry our work.[3] While recognition of the need for theory is not new (see Skinner 1986, for instance), in this collection we have explicitly foregrounded it in an attempt to break out of our earlier isolation. Building on the work done before, while adopting critical perspectives that enable us to look at antiquity afresh, we have tried to make our work public in a way that will make feminist theory and classics mutually accessible to one another.

It is easier to see what I mean by the conflict between the discourses if we first sketch in some definitions. Feminist theory is, of course, made up of two words, each of which is itself complex. The adjective "feminist" is derived from "feminism," but what is feminism? By now it is more accurate and more fashionable to speak of feminisms; but while there are many different varieties (for instance, third world, radical, bourgeois, Black, lesbian, Native American), we could perhaps agree that all are avowedly political, and that contemporary feminism is a political movement akin to other liberation movements of this century (Evans 1980). Robyn Warhol and Diane Price Herndl put it well in the introduction to their anthology of feminist literary criticism, *Feminisms:* "But even when they focus on such comparatively abstract matters as discourse, aesthetics, or the constitution of subjectivity, feminists are always engaged in an explicitly political enterprise, always working to change existing power structures both inside and outside academia. Its overtly political nature is perhaps the single most distinguishing feature of feminist scholarly work."[4] Feminist *theory* is no more monolithic than feminism, nor is it separable from other bodies of theory; feminist theory has availed itself of burgeoning discourses around race and class as well as Marxist, psychoanalytic, poststructural, and postcolonial theory, to name a few (see individual essays for bibliography). To complicate matters further, feminist theory has close ties to the development of women's studies in the

curriculum but is not interchangeable with the academic study of women. It is obviously possible to count women, describe them, even explain women's behavior without taking a feminist perspective (Blok and Mason 1987) or a theoretical one.

Indeed, one might well ask "is theory feminist?" Such questions continue to surface as feminists wonder what an increasingly specialized and often incomprehensible body of writing has to do with a movement for social change. Barbara Christian uses the term "race for theory" to challenge a certain kind of high academic, jargon-laden theory, at the same time that she claims that African-American women have long been engaged in writing theory. Her piece makes it clear that we cannot simply assume the comfortable coherence of those terms feminism and theory. As a feminist, Christian expresses fear of developments in literary theory, for "when theory is not rooted in practice, it becomes prescriptive, exclusive, elitist" (Christian 1988: 74). She asks pointedly, "For whom are we doing what we are doing when we do literary criticism?" (Christian 1988: 77). As we shall see, that question is even more problematic for feminists who are not only academics and theorists but also classicists.

If feminism is a politics of change, the very word "classics" connotes changelessness (on the name, see Hallett this volume; Richlin 1989). Thus, for instance, classics of clothing don't go out of style (check your Lands' End or Talbots catalogues), and enduring canonical works are called classics (for instance, classics of English literature). Classics is also the name of an academic discipline, a misnomer since there are classical periods in any number of different cultures (Haley 1989: 335), but one that confers status by evoking tradition with all its weight. The *New Yorker* recently carried a story about the classics in Malawi; when the new teacher arrived, she was greeted as "the person who has come here to make us a real university" (Alexander 1991: 58).

But the conservatism of classics is not just in the name. To return to the contradiction between feminist theory and the classics: while the conflict would *appear* to be between feminism, which is avowedly a politics, and classics, which claims to be simply the study of the Greek and Latin languages, as well as Greek and Roman culture in the ancient period, the conflict is in fact between two different and even antithetical forms of politics.

In speaking of the politics of the classics, I do not mean simply that classics focuses on certain texts, although that bias is surely there. The classicist's field of study is generally taken to be texts written by male authors, like Homer, Thucydides, Aeschylus, Vergil, Ovid, Horace. But there is more to the politics of classics than this inherited bias—or, rather, there is more to the bias of the discipline than the biases of the Greeks and Romans themselves. Indeed, classics actually *enacts* a conservative politics in several ways that may be familiar to those in similarly traditional disciplines.

The dominant mode of research in classics is in the grip of an almost total

empiricism and rooted in a form of textual study that purports to be value free, because it is based on a supposedly neutral philology. Thus, the professional organization of classicists is named the American Philological Association. Philological work, literally love of the *logos* or word, is typically linguistic in the narrowest sense (Hallett 1983). Consequently, much work in our prestigious journals is still devoted to the establishment of texts—we delete or transpose lines, decide what is spurious, what is authentic; therefore, philological training remains the *sine qua non* for entry into the discipline (Gutzwiller and Michelini 1991: 66–68). Consider the statement of the editorial board of the eminent *American Journal of Philology* (*AJP*) in 1987, entitled "*AJP* Today." It announced that the journal was

> still "philological" in the sense that it is centered on languages and texts. It still invites articles which add to our knowledge of the languages and dialects, literatures, history, and culture of the Greco-Roman world. While *AJP* will always have an interest in certain kinds of literary and philosophical interpretation, the emphasis is still on rigorous scholarly methods. . . . *AJP* will be as receptive as possible to new approaches, but the use of innovative methods is, in itself, not sufficient reason for publication (*AJP* 1987: vii–viii).

The *AJP* editorial stakes out its territory in terms of rigor, presenting the journal as simply opposed to trendiness, a position that would seem to be apolitical. There is, however, an ideology implicit in the very opposition it asserts between "rigorous methods" and another, nonrigorous, kind of "literary interpretation." If elsewhere in the academy, the race for theory is on, in the American Philological Association, the race is away *from* theory. What is construed as the avoidance of any special interests in reality reflects one special interest group's attempt to maintain its authority and control.[5] More important, the devaluation of theory goes along with a devaluation of issues of power, race, and gender, which theory would "import" to a consideration of "the text pure and simple." Simultaneously, this philological bent is consistent with a lack of interest in attracting women or people of color to the discipline. If point of view is irrelevant, what difference does it make who is doing the editing, translating, or interpreting?

Classics, even viewed as philology, is not merely a pursuit carried on in the privacy of the study, or in the pages of rarefied journals. The classroom is a political arena as well, and the study of the classics has not only shaped texts and constituted canons, it has also engendered generations of students and scholars, instilling the masculine values of antiquity. I say masculine advisedly since not only were the authors of epic, tragedy, and philosophy men, but the citizenry of antiquity (even of supposedly democratic Athens) was also male.

The community of scholars studying the period has also been almost exclusively male. While all university study was male until quite recently, Greek and Latin

were prerequisites for being a "gentleman" and were systematically withheld from women and other outsiders. Furthermore, as Bernal's analysis in *Black Athena* (Bernal 1987) makes clear, classics as a modern discipline developed on the basis of racist paradigms; while the ancient Greeks gave credit to Egypt, in the nineteenth century that interpretation lost out to the view of the Greeks as the originators of civilization. Outsiders, as Shelley Haley's work on African-American women demonstrates, could aspire to become insiders by learning Latin and Greek, but the discipline's self-definition certainly did not include them.

Upper-level classics courses in general continue to be organized by author—although several authors may be treated in a genre course—and the authors continue to be the canonical ones. There is wide variety in the amount of study outside language and literature that classics graduate students undertake, but at the prestigious university programs, philology still predominates over archaeology, art history, papyrology, and other ancillary studies. In this schema, certain questions *tend not to be asked,* for example, questions about social class, gender, ethnicity, the relationship between author and audience, or outside influences on the author, to say nothing of the value and meaning of this material to the reader in the year 2000. To be sure, students or faculty who are reading theory elsewhere can and do raise such issues, but the current organization does not encourage such inquiry.

Nonetheless, there is more to classics than high philology and the study of language. A drop in enrollments in the language courses has undermined the centrality of the study of Latin and Greek in the academy. For those trained as philologists, this trend raises a fundamental problem; what will new Ph.D.s do? One solution has been the development of courses in classical civilization, which typically attract a large number of students, necessary to compensate for the often tiny enrollments in Greek and Latin language courses. Only at the largest and most prestigious graduate schools will classicists teach what they were trained in; but in classics as in other disciplines, women and feminist scholars tend to be in the two-year or four-year colleges, not at the high-status research universities.[6]

The culture courses share some of the elitist politics implicit in the philological model. The language courses no longer serve the dominant order in quite the way they used to, but Bennett, Bloom, D'Souza, et al. (as we can see in the Stanford curriculum debate) would restore the great books curriculum to the position it once held, and translated Greek and Latin classical texts are a major part of that curriculum. Those holding the conservative position on the curriculum argue that Greek literature is "universal," or that it is in some sense the "foundation" of Western culture. When a scholar asserts (Lefkowitz 1986: 9) that what is most enduring is not Greek democracy but Greek mythology, the underlying assumption is that ancient Greece is worth studying for one of those two contributions to Western culture; the only question is whether antiquity is more important as the source of politics or literature.

The discipline of classics has done and continues to do this form of cultural

work; perhaps in consequence of its status, its response to feminism and women's studies has been hostile. For instance, Mary Lefkowitz (1983: 19), who had early on identified herself as a feminist, lambastes "feminist theory" along with feminism's political agenda, for supposedly demanding that "women with qualifications inferior to their male competitors should be hired, and their manuscripts published, just because they were women." And in what claimed to be a balanced review essay, Thomas Fleming (1986: 74; but see Skinner 1987c for a response) praised those who, like Lefkowitz, "have written on women and sex roles in the ancient world" only after having "established their credentials by writing on other subjects." What is tolerable to Fleming is a "mainstream scholar who works from time to time on ancient women."

To a certain extent, recent curricular debates have pitted the allied movements for women's studies and multiculturalism against a traditional curriculum. Allan Bloom (1987: 65) named feminism as one face of the enemy. Indeed, if classics is at the heart of that traditional curriculum, there would seem to be no possible space for feminist classicists. Marilyn Skinner (1989a: 199–201) spoke for many of us when she named the feminist's fear that "she will ultimately be confronted with an excruciating choice between her egalitarian ideals and her disciplinary obligations" (Passman, Brown, Hallett, this volume). As women in classics we must ask ourselves what we are being loyal to; after all, in *Three Guineas* Virginia Woolf calls on feminists to constitute themselves a band of "outsiders," and Adrienne Rich calls on us to be "disloyal to civilization."

How can we wear both hats? One way is to make the classicist hat fit more comfortably. The feminists and theorists scattered through the field need to begin a more consistent reclamation project, replacing the politics of classics with a feminist politics.[7] To return to my (overly) simple definition of classics as a discipline, we can start by acknowledging that classics is *interdisciplinary;* it is not the study of language and literature, but the study of cultures, therefore requiring training and reading in anthropology, archaeology, and art history, to name a few (Richlin 1989; cf. McManus 1990). We can challenge the definition of the field chronologically (Hallett this volume). Looking farther back in time, into prehistory and beyond the Rome traditionally studied to the period under Christianity, might change the picture radically; we would then at least acknowledge the arbitrariness of the "period."

And we can challenge the definition of the field geographically. The adoption of a multicultural lens acknowledges that the ancient world was not just made up of Greece and Rome. We can ask about the Egyptian and Near Eastern influences on Greece, instead of taking Greece as the starting point for "civilization" (Haley this volume). We can consider the Roman empire as a colonialist force, and look at the interrelationships between Romans and "barbarians," in northern and central Europe as well as in the Greek east and in North Africa. We should question the racial makeup of those regions, instead of assuming they were like some

unproblematized "us." By challenging the traditional definitions of the field, certain questions will immediately become relevant, and it will no longer be possible to say, "But there weren't any women or people of color."

By remaining self-conscious about the history of the discipline and the ideology it implies, it is possible to resist each aspect of the political work that classics performs. First, feminist theory obviously challenges the discipline's claim of philological objectivity. As reader-oriented critics have noted, the text is a meeting place of author and reader, or author/editor and reader; this is particularly true in the case of ancient texts that have suffered literal "deconstruction" at the hands of time before coming into the hands of the critics. In order to restore the text, the editor must have some idea of what an author might have meant, an idea in turn grounded in the editor's assumptions as to what makes sense, assumptions that are in turn grounded in cultural norms.

Second, we can intervene in the classroom. Even if students come to the classics department to escape issues of gender, sexuality, and race, we can refuse to let them be complacent, teaching them in what way these issues are relevant to antiquity, language and culture. Linguistics is after all made up both of semantics and pragmatics, so we can take up seriously what Wittig (1986) calls the mark of gender in language, or analyze the power struggles that cause languages to change, or that determine who will speak which languages. By asking how Latin gained acceptance, questioning the relationship between language and empire, describing Latin and Greek as having changed over time, and as only two languages among a host of others, language courses can help destabilize the static image of "dead" languages.

Third, today's dominant order does not own the ancient culture courses. Such courses can in effect serve a democratic function by making knowledge of this highly esteemed period more generally available, helping to bridge the gap between those traditionally given a liberal education and those destined for some form of vocational training (Haley this volume). One way to counteract the charge of elitism is to take the classics away from the elite and contribute to the cultural literacy of the larger population (Hirsch 1987, Hallett 1985, Skinner 1989a).

As Amy Richlin points out in "The Ethnographer's Dilemma," there are various reasons for returning to the past; even if we agree that we are searching for origins, one must still ask "origins of what?" That is, some will continue to look to antiquity for the origins of the glory of Western civilization, while others will look to antiquity as a formative moment of misogyny. In response to the claim that Greece is the foundation or origin of Western culture, feminists will ask precisely what it founded. Classics has been political by defining the epic and tragic genres as presenting great *human* truths. We continue to ask whose experience is validated by these generalizations, and whose is excluded in order to make antiquity that neat whole it appears to be. What would happen if we took the slaves in the plays of Euripides as the center? What about the workings of class privilege in Homer? What about the women in the audience of tragedy?

What about the women listening to Ovid's tales of rape? What about the lives of lesbians outside of Lesbos? What can we know about the lives of those who wrote no literature—peasants and slaves?

These critiques have been raised before (Culham and Edmunds 1989), but classics changes slowly, and we have not yet succeeded in transforming it. The second way of wearing two hats, then, is by continuing to tend our own acreage within that larger field and transforming ourselves. Feminists in classics have so far succeeded in developing the study of women per se, an area overlooked when the masculinity of classics passed as universal. For the last twenty years, roughly since the founding of the Women's Classical Caucus, there has been consistent attention to women in antiquity, and there is by now a substantial body of work in that subfield. This research has in many ways followed the path of the development of women's studies, and the problems facing feminist classicists are to some extent merely an extreme version of those facing other feminist scholars.

They are extreme, however, and the discipline of classics has clearly disciplined the study of women in antiquity; the very title of the subfield seems to accept the predominantly empiricist assumptions of classics in general, suggesting that what is at stake is merely the study of some pre-existent singular entity "women."[8] The study of women in antiquity has on the whole been hampered by the tendency of classics to avoid theory from the other disciplines except for some forms of structuralism. Then, too, as classicists we begin our study first in the language classroom, where questions of grammar prevail (Hallett 1983: 12–15); mastery is definitely a desired object. The consequences, indoctrination in docility and emphasis on philological accuracy, are in conflict with feminist goals of sweeping social change (Passman this volume). Furthermore, instruction through the literary authors leads to continued focus on texts and the literary even in the research in women's studies. Finally, publication in traditional classics journals requires that we follow the discipline's rules of research, including an exhaustive and exhausting review of everything that has been thought or said about one's subject, which means going back to the (male) Germans of the nineteenth century before moving ahead.[9] The patriarchy is very much in evidence as we diligently cite our forefathers.

Our studies have been conditioned not simply by the discipline, however, but by the field. The exigencies of passing time (we simply don't have the documents available to modernists) and a thoroughgoing suppression of women's subjectivity in antiquity itself (Skinner 1986: 1–3) have combined to impose stringent limits on our study. Considering the conservatism of the discipline, the apparent silence of ancient women, and the dearth of information about them, feminists in classics have accomplished an enormous amount. The strong and exciting early collections—*Women in the Ancient World: The Arethusa Papers* (Peradotto and Sullivan 1978), *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (Foley 1981), and *Images of Women in Antiquity* (Cameron and Kuhrt 1983)—give a sense of the possibilities,

combining essays on the nonliterary sources with discussion of male authors, as well as a sprinkling of pieces on Sappho.

Scholars working on both Greek and Roman women have been very concerned with the problem of evidence, as is clear in several special issues of the journal *Helios* that appeared in the late 1980s. If we separate history and literature, or referential women and representational women, we find that we have many male representations of women but not much "hard" data about women, let alone material written by women. Our questions have much in common with those of other feminist scholars working outside the modern period. How can we get at women's subjective experience? Can we separate it out from the male literary record? What can we assume about women writers? Whose language and conventions do they use when they do manage to speak?

There have been various responses to the situation sketched out above. One strategy has been the attempt to find the "actual women" by turning attention away from the "male icons," the great authors. Problematizing the concept of classics as a literary study, this position puts material remains and nonliterary texts in the place of the sacred authors, asking what information they yield about women's lived existence (Culham 1986, 1990; Richlin this volume). Phyllis Culham poses the two ways of proceeding as antagonists, asking why feminists would want to continue to reflect on these male writers:

> If the study of women in antiquity is to contribute substantively to feminist scholarship or women's studies, it will be in the investigation of the origins and propagation of Western culture, and that would require "directing discussion toward history, society, culture," not the single text or author at all. That is undeniably an intimidating task, and I am embarrassed, as a feminist scholar of antiquity, that it has mainly been left to Gerda Lerner, an Americanist. If we are to reappropriate our own field, we will have to begin by refusing to perpetuate the assignment of privilege to male-authored, canonical texts (Culham 1990: 165, citing W. E. Can, *The Crisis in Critical Theory: Literature and Reform in English Studies* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984], p. 263).

Classicists have, then, participated in the project of making women visible, finding the women missing from the history books; we have asked whether women were citizens (Patterson 1986) or whether they could read or write (Cole 1981). Publication and analysis of relevant information, from inscriptions to gynecological writings, have been crucial in this endeavor.

While searching out the historical women via inscriptions and other such sources, we have also been at work recovering and listening to the voices of the women writers of antiquity who did exist, despite the masculinity of the received

tradition. This form of classical gynocritics (Showalter 1985) has been associated with a quest for a women's community. Marilyn Arthur (Katz) early hypothesized a women's world on the basis of her reading of Erinna (Arthur 1980); Marilyn Skinner makes a similar claim on the basis of her work on Sappho and other Greek women poets (Skinner 1991, 1989b, 1987a). As we see in Jane Snyder's book, *The Woman and the Lyre* (1989), part of the problem has been the tendency to emphasize Athens at the expense of other locations, the fifth century at the expense of other eras—for there were times and places more hospitable to women writers.

If the silence is not total, however, the voices are nonetheless muted and fragmentary. To the extent that women's artifacts were not pots but weaving, they were also more perishable (Barber 1991); when women are represented on vases and in sculpture or relief, we see them through male eyes. For the most part, then, classics does come back to cultures dominated by men (French 1990, McManus 1990). As a result, feminism in classics has devoted much attention to decoding the images of women in works by men, a study with its own serious problems (cf. the situation in early modern literature, Fisher and Halley 1989). Particularly with respect to fifth-century Athens, there has been a vigorous debate about how to interpret the different representations of women in poetry and prose documents (Gutzwiller and Michelini 1991: 71; Lefkowitz 1986: 10; Culham 1990: 165, 1986; Skinner 1986: 2; Pomeroy 1975: 58–60). Drama seems to give prominence to female characters, while actual historical women (as represented in the extant speeches of male orators speaking in the Athenian courtroom) seem to have been strictly relegated to the private realm. The critics' points of view may determine what they see: those emphasizing the strong women of drama would fall into Amy Richlin's optimist category, while those emphasizing the sequestered women of rhetoric fall into the pessimist camp (Versnel 1987).

Given this silence, it is not surprising that in classics we have also followed the general shift from women's studies or feminist critiques of patriarchy to gender studies (Scott 1988, Showalter 1989, Modleski 1991). Gender theory suggests that "information about women is necessarily information about men" (Scott 1988: 32). In its most energetic form such a study focuses attention on the way the categories of gender have been formed and in turn form us (de Lauretis 1987), and would as a result force disciplines to make fundamental adjustments. In classics the move to gender has been facilitated by the success of a modified structuralism (Rose this volume, Katz 1990), a consanguinity that suggests the risks of both. For structuralism (Culham 1986; Gutzwiller and Michelini 1991; Rose this volume) implies a form of functionalism; that is, structural analyses of a culture tend to describe its functioning, trying to account for *all* details without making any judgments.

Both gender studies and structuralism therefore satisfy classics' longing for apparently value-neutral scholarship. Elaine Showalter notes the danger of depoliticization even as she observes the shift to gender theory (Showalter 1991: 184–

85); Scott (1988: 31) says gender may have replaced women because it appears "to denote the scholarly seriousness of a work, for 'gender' has a more neutral and objective sound than does 'women.' " And indeed Pomeroy's (1991: xv) claim ("the objective stance of most of the authors included in this collection is characteristic of scholars of women in antiquity in the late 1980s") seems to do exactly that.

Structuralism similarly appeals to the classical scholar's desire for objectivity. In simply recounting how the culture works without attention to the implicit power imbalance or the significance of the particular ways in which it works, such analysis may accept more than would be consistent with a feminist program. The turn to the study of sexuality in classics (Konstan and Nussbaum 1990; Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin 1990; critiqued by Richlin 1991, and in this volume), if made without attention to gender, feminist theory, and asymmetries of power, can be similarly problematic.

Perhaps more troubling is the fact that studying gender may be more acceptable than studying women because it is safer; by never studying women without men, such studies avoid the specter of lesbianism (de Lauretis 1987: 14–18; 1989: 31–33). At the same time, if such studies isolate gender as a factor from class and race dynamics, they may revert to a stage in feminist theory already challenged by women of color. The point then is to get beyond the heterosexist, racist, and classist paradigms.

As the study of women in antiquity gains respectability, we must ask *which* women are to be studied and make our grasp more comprehensive. Taking the most radical stance of current feminism, we will not only attend to women, we will look for the differences *among* women of different classes, races, ethnicities, and sexualities. We turn to theory in order to make that move forward, for by its deployment we are encouraged to ask new questions of our own material, to see relationships to other fields. Recognizing what was at stake in the ancient world, perhaps we can better understand our own.

Developments growing out of feminism's contact with postmodernism and New Historicism can help us to carry out the critique of male authors with greater sophistication. That work still needs to be done; as Nancy Miller (1986: 42) argues, "the *tradition* of 'great books' has not been systematically reread from a feminist perspective." Some of us, like myself, continue to work on Greek tragedy in new ways: by using reader-response criticism, we can think about the fifth-century Athenian audience and ask how it constructed the meaning of tragedy; or we can think about literary texts as inscribing asymmetrical structures of subjectivity for women and men; or we can employ psychoanalytic theory to help us understand the culturally constructed masculine desire that motivates the texts and their use of female figures (for example, Rabinowitz 1993). Theory can help us out of the seeming impasse presented by the evidence: we need neither accept tragedy's heroines as real women and thus as straightforward evidence of the

importance of Athenian women, nor abandon the hope of using literature as evidence of anything at all. By taking the text's literariness into account—its generic conventions, audience, and period—we can better understand and evaluate the information it might transmit. Yes, we must remain cautious about the referential relationship between these texts and women's lived reality, but we can, nonetheless, take them as indicators of cultural understandings of gender and sexuality (Belsey 1985: 5; cf. Richlin 1984; French 1990; Gamel 1990; McManus 1990).

We hope this volume can help promote a change in classics from the vantage point of feminist theory. It would be a mistake for feminists to throw up their hands and abandon the field of classics to the philologists and the protectors of the culture; the right-wing devotion to antiquity demands that feminist classicists enter the fray. If texts from Greek and Roman antiquity are being used to form our youth into a new citizenry, let those of us in the opposition keep our hold on those texts in an effort to redefine that cultural formation—contesting the definition and use made of the field.

At the same time, it is important that feminists in classics enter a more reciprocal relationship with others outside the discipline. Precisely because of its canonical status, classical material has remained inspiring to feminist writers such as Christa Wolf (*Cassandra*), or Catherine Clément and Hélène Cixous (*The Newly Born Woman*), or Marianne Hirsch (*The Mother-Daughter Plot*). Readers and thinkers not trained as classicists can use our work to undermine the control that classical myth and its ideology exerts over their own disciplines, themselves, and their students. As Amy Richlin argues in her essay, we deploy the past strategically depending on our predispositions; it is neither totally the same nor totally different from the present. Those looking to antiquity to test out a theory, be it of patriarchy or of the existence of women's culture, will find here a working out of some of the evidence. On the other hand, those who resist what Amy calls the move to grand theory and who are trying to take up concrete historically located women instead of "woman" can look here for a rich body of material as well.

Skinner (1986: 2) mentions the danger of falling into overspecialization, which she calls "pointillism"; we have tried to avoid that danger by seeking essays that apply or critique a substantial body of feminist theory in relation to some broad aspect of antiquity. Each contributor has thought *both* of how classicists might benefit from her or his approach, *and* how scholars outside the field might benefit from considering the material. We are hardly free of the ways in which the discipline has organized knowledge (the volume shares the literary bias of classics), but we have deliberately avoided the traditional (for classics) organization of Greek/Roman or early/late in order to change those boundaries; we have instead foregrounded critical perspective. The essays take off from the most recent developments in feminist thought, working at the intersections of diverse methods and material: Black feminist thought (Haley), French feminist critique (Gold),

American feminist gynocritics (Skinner), psychoanalytic film criticism (Robin), radical Lesbian feminism (Passman), Native American feminism (Zweig), Marxism (Rose). They draw on different disciplines: history (Hallett), anthropology (Richlin), and archaeology (Brown). Moreover, each author sets the discussion of theory in the context of a major area within classics: Egyptian and African origins (Haley), Greek women writers (Skinner), Greek myth (Passman), Greek women's culture (Zweig), Roman canons/periods (Hallett), Roman elegy (Gold), Roman drama (Robin), Greek and Roman canonical literary authors (Rose), ancient material culture (Brown, Richlin).

The volume begins with two essays that reconceptualize the discipline itself. Shelley Haley's essay, "Black Feminist Thought and Classics: Re-membering, Re-claiming, Re-empowering," uses her placement as a black feminist to push out the geographical borders of antiquity, showing the racism and sexism implicit in the way the field has delimited itself. On the basis of her experience, she challenges others to recognize the blinders we also wear without recognizing them. Were the Egyptians Black? Given the prominence of Egypt in the Greek imaginary, why are the Egyptians not included in courses on antiquity? Why are they not included in courses on women in antiquity? How do we assess what we find if we decide to look at Egypt? As Haley makes clear, teaching is not only a way of doing politics, but also a way of doing theory.

If Haley explodes the definition of classics as an area study, Judith Hallett, in "Feminist Theory, Historical Periods, Literary Canons and the Study of Greco-Roman Antiquity," explodes time. How do we determine a period and what makes it up? Hallett analyzes the term "classics"; eschewing its use for the field as a whole, she confronts its honorific sense. Consideration of the term "classical" in the light of Joan Kelly's essay on the Renaissance leads Hallett to suggest that we read by juxtaposing material from different periods and genres. She embraces a double approach, asking what reading women writers suggests not only about women's experience but also about traditional periodization. Finally, she addresses the question of how to read the constructions of women by male authors and suggests that we broaden our horizons to include noncanonical authors and texts.

The next two essays, Barbara Gold's " 'But Ariadne Was Never There in the First Place': Finding the Female in Roman Poetry" and Diana Robin's "Film Theory and the Gendered Voice in Seneca," utilize two very different critical perspectives from which to examine the representation of women by male authors. Both these essays look backward for ancient examples of modern tropes or theories; in doing so, they demonstrate that these are in some ways very old tricks, indeed.

Gold accepts as a given the overwhelming masculinity of the body of material left us by antiquity (challenged in the next section of the book); she finds the perspective provided by the modernist notion of "gynesis," the putting into play of the feminine, fruitful for analyzing Propertius and other elegists writing in a

time of political disintegration. Drawing parallels between Rome and modernity, Gold sees clearly why classicists need feminist theory; it simultaneously behooves feminists to understand antiquity because of its influence on the present.

Gold takes the task of "salvaging" Propertius for feminism by identifying his subversive potential; Diana Robin takes the opposite tack, seeing instead the repressive potential of Seneca. Using contemporary film theory to analyze the place of the feminine in Seneca, Robin argues with Michel Chion that the female voice is coded not only as the site of anxiety and lack, but also of plenitude. Seneca's troublesome female figures are silenced and watched by male choruses. Robin shows how the textual control of the female speaker replicates contemporary events, especially Nero's killing of his own mother, Agrippina. Like Gold, Robin argues that Seneca has a claim on our attention because of his strong influence on later European drama; she sees his representation of women not as idiosyncratic but as symptomatic, with links to the operation of contemporary film.

These two models of "feminist critique," seeing the subversive and the oppressive elements in male authors, could be and have been applied as well to Greek writers (on Euripides, see for instance Zeitlin 1985, versus Rabinowitz 1986, 1989). Because of the paucity of Roman women authors, however, it is not surprising that the portion of the book which is gynocentric deals primarily with Greek material. The three essays here speak to each other and to the examples of feminist critique in productive ways; they seek evidence of a woman's world.

Marilyn Skinner's essay, "Women and Language in Archaic Greece, or, Why Is Sappho a Woman?" urges us not to ignore the women who have actually spoken and most emphatically not to give up looking to them for evidence about the lives of women. Her essay enters into dialogue with the position adopted by Barbara Gold; she resists the French feminist and particularly Irigarayan mode as anti-feminist and suggests that we not accept the masculinity of antiquity as total. In her work on Sappho and oral culture, Skinner gives us a glimpse into the fabric of women's lives. In Skinner's view, things were not always as they are now; attention to language can reveal a woman's subculture.

While Gold and Skinner engage with poststructuralist methodologies and their problematization of the subject, one embracing and the other rejecting the project, Bella Zweig, in her essay "The Primal Mind: Using Native American Models for the Study of Women in Ancient Greece," invokes the work of contemporary women of color and their challenge to the hegemony of first world feminism. Feminist theory grounded in Native American approaches does not take for granted the Western valorization of everything male. Organizing the world around complementarity rather than hierarchy and looking at the background as well as the foreground, Zweig composes a new picture of Greek antiquity, one in which we can find ways to value positively that which our own culture devalues, such as elements of a separate women's culture. Zweig suggests that women were not totally silenced in ancient Greece, and that those currently interested in feminist

spirituality may find much material in antiquity that has been excluded by the dominant order's reconstruction of the past.

Tina Passman's essay, "Out of the Closet and into the Field: Matriculture, the Lesbian Perspective, and Feminist Classics," analyzes the radical feminist contemporary quest for origins as it manifests itself in work on matriarchy or matricentric cultures. As Passman points out, the popular feminist discourse on spirituality is in conflict with that of the classics, yet the goddess myth requires classical knowledge for verification. Passman goes back to an early woman classicist, Jane Harrison, to analyze not only the work she did but also what her reception reveals about the institution of classical studies; the example of Jane Harrison has served to prevent many a feminist classicist from making large claims and more generally from writing "like a dyke."

The next three essays address epistemological concerns and the necessity for using material culture. The contribution of Peter Rose, "The Case for Not Ignoring Marx in the Study of Women in Antiquity," most clearly sounds the activist note; seeing feminism as a progressive movement, he looks to it for "allies." Thus, the political situation that grounds Rose's writing relates to the activist roots of feminism while leading to a specific form of theory. Embracing Marxist standpoint theory, Rose is able to critique many of the tendencies in classics, feminist theory, and earlier work on women in antiquity. He explicitly addresses the problem of considering the literary in isolation from social and historical materiality and, using a Marxist hermeneutic, finds evidence to satisfy both the optimist and the pessimist.

Shelby Brown's essay, "Feminist Research in Archaeology: What Does It Mean? Why Is It Taking So Long?" offers a sustained critique of classical archaeology that will resonate with the experience of those of us doing work in the language and literature side of antiquity, as well as with those in other empirically based fields. Brown reveals that the experience of women "*in* the field" is related to the treatment of gender *by* the field. Like others in the collection, Brown too feels intensely the resistance of the discipline and its discourse to feminism. Her analysis of that resistance then forms the basis for understanding the response of archaeology to radical feminism's popular search for the goddess, as articulated by Tina Passman.

Janus-like, Amy Richlin's essay, "The Ethnographer's Dilemma and the Dream of a Lost Golden Age," looks backward over the field and forward to where we need to go; working through the contemporary debates in feminist anthropology and history, she addresses a series of questions that are difficult for classicists and feminists alike. Her essay focuses on the reasons why scholars have looked to other cultures and to the past (the elsewhere and the elsewhen), and on the "dream of a lost golden age" they have found there. Her synthesis of feminist work in anthropology, history, and classics allows her to encompass and illuminate the divisions in the volume and in classics as a whole: Greek/Roman, feminist critique/gynocritics, literature/history, and underlying them all: pessimist/opti-

mist. She argues that feminists can say something meaningful about the present from the past, that intellectual honesty need not paralyze us, and that we can indeed still create responsible "grand theory."

Feminist theory—Native American, African American, lesbian, psychoanalytic, French feminist, gynocentric, historical, anthropological, archaeological, literary—can open up the traditionally hermetic discipline of classics to the outside world. Once it is so transformed, it will be apparent to scholars in other disciplines that there is more to the discipline than the collections of "great myths" and clichés about the traditional values of "Western culture" currently portrayed in the popular press. In the end, then, theory can turn classics from a rarefied study for the leisure class (by means of which others are kept at bay) to a vital arena for multicultural dialogue in the next century.

Notes

This introduction has been difficult to write in part because of the problems I allude to in it; it would not have been possible without the support of Amy Richlin, my co-editor, who has been like an alter ego and co-author. I have benefited by working in a community of scholars and in particular from the generous and acute comments of Linda Nicholson, Patricia Francis Cholakian, Peter J. Rabinowitz, Shelley Haley, and Barbara Gold, all of whom read and commented on early drafts. The essays of the contributors, especially those of Shelley Haley and Tina Passman, have given me the courage to speak at least occasionally in my own voice.

1. The debate in feminist theory over just what we can say in the name of woman or about women has contributed to this sense that feminism (which seemingly must make claims about women) is outmoded (Modleski 1991); for references and attempted solutions, see the contributions of Gold, Skinner, Rose, and Richlin in this volume.
2. The clash in discourses is reminiscent of that between Nietzsche and Wilamowitz that Steve Nimis has analyzed (1984: 110). The scholarly tone is essential in classical philology.
3. See, for instance, *Rescuing Creusa: New Methodological Approaches to Women in Antiquity, Helios* 13.2 (1986), edited by Marilyn Skinner; in 1989 *Helios* published two volumes on Roman women, edited by Eva Stehle and Adele Scafuro (*Helios* 16.1, 2 [1989]), and in 1990 an issue on decentering the text (*Helios* 17.2 [1990]). The latter is organized as a set of responses to Phyllis Culham's position in favor of abandoning the "tribal totems" (Culham 1990: 161); the resulting essays therefore make up a very interesting set of ruminations on the topics that concern us here.
4. Warhol and Herndl 1991: x; for similar working out of the political meanings of feminism, see Addelson and Potter (1991: 259) and Hartman and Messer-Davidow (1991: 1). The connection between activism and theory is not always easy to maintain, however.
5. This problematic can be clearly seen in the brouhaha over the 1991 APA elections; for a convenient collection of the documents, see *Women's Classical Caucus Newsletter* 17 (Spring 1992).

6. On the two-tiered structure of departments, see Culham and Edmunds 1989: xiii–xv. As a further consequence of the structure, women now make up more than 50 percent of the graduate students but are most often not working with women faculty, and they certainly do not take on feminist topics for their dissertations (see the *Women's Classical Caucus Newsletter* 15 [Fall 1990] for an analysis of dissertations completed and in progress 1989–90). Classics graduate students are clearly not trained in feminist theory.
7. I don't share Marilyn Skinner's optimism (1989a); having sketched in the problem, she indicates that she sees change already happening. I think it has yet to take place.
8. As Marilyn Skinner has observed, that study is now somewhat respectable and even enjoys a status as a subfield (Skinner 1987b; but cf. Hallett 1985: 29, on marginality), so long as it does not challenge the field as a whole.
9. See Nimis 1984 on this point; he cites the "Wilamowitz footnote" as "an inevitable concomitant of a discipline which continues to reproduce, without self-reflection and without any clearly defined goals, its own discourse" (Nimis 1984: 117).

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Redefining the Field

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