

EarlyModernSpring2018

Table Of Contents

Abraham Joshua Heschel	3
Amalia Holst	4
Anna Maria Van Schurman	7
Anne Conway	10
Aristotle	12
Ban Zhao	13
Cai Yan	14
Catharine Macaulay Graham	15
Catharine Trotter Cockburn	16
Confucious	19
Confucius	20
Damaris Marsham	21
David Hume	23
Elisabeth of Bohemia	24
Elizabeth Thomas	26
Frances Hutcheson	27
Francis Mercury Van Helmont	29
Gabrielle Suchon	30
Gottfried Leibniz	31
Hypatia of Alexandria	34
Immanuel Kant	35
Jean-Jacques Rousseau	37
Jerome Lalande	38
Ji Xian	39
John Locke	42
John Norris	44
Judith Drake	46
Louise du Pierry	47
Madeleine de Scudéry	48
Malebranche	52
Margaret Cavendish	54
Mary Astell	56
Mary Wollstonecraft	58
Montesquieu	61
Nicolas de Condorcet	62
Olympe de Gouges	64
René Descartes	67
Samuel Clarke	68
Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz	70
Teresa of Avila	71

Thomas Burnet	73
Tullia d'Aragona	74
Voltaire	77
Wang Duanshu	80
Yun Zhu	84
Zhang Dai	85
Zou Siyi	86

Biography

Born in 1907, Heschel was a Polish Jew who was very active in the Civil rights movement of the '60s. He was born to two families with a long history of rabbinical tradition, a tradition he followed after receiving a yeshiva education. He published a good amount of Yiddish poetry, and was a philosopher and theologian for much of his life, establishing his expertise in aesthetics and ethics.

In late October 1938, when Heschel was living in a rented room in the home of a Jewish family in Frankfurt, he was arrested by the Gestapo and deported to Poland, where he lectured extensively for Jewish institutions as well as other secular institutions.

History

Amalia Holst (1758-1829) was a German author and philosopher. Though little else is known of her upbringing, her father was a successful cameralist (comparable to a modern day economist) who was outspokenly supportive of the education of women, but died when she was just thirteen. She purportedly received a university degree, potentially as a result of her father's good standing. She was married to Ludolf Holst in 1791, with whom she had three children. She opened a number of schools during these years, but they were closed for unknown reasons.

Holst is thought to have published three major works during her lifetime. The first, *Observations on the Errors of our Modern Education by a Practical Teacher*, dealt with the learning of children, and the knowledge of practicum displayed within implies that Holst likely had experience as a teacher. The second, *Letters on Elisa, or Woman as She Ought to Be*, is a criticism of a popular contemporary novel, advocating for the independence of women, especially regarding issues of marriage. Her final and most well-known work, *On the Purpose of Women's Advanced Intellectual Development*, combines her proto-feminist ideology with her knowledge of pedagogy, and she proposed an ungendered education of women, largely rejecting the tendency of her predecessors to place more importance on traditional gender roles.

Philosophy

Holst seems to have engaged in and responded to many of the philosophical debates of her time, but her most influential ideas deal with issues of gender and pedagogy, especially in conjunction. Emulating many who had expressed feminist sentiments before her, she utilized empiricism as a foundation of her argument for a more equitable education system (Sotiropoulos, 2004). As Gleixner and Gray (2009) point out, though she does acknowledge potential physical differences between genders, she is firmly committed to knowledge of "Nature" being gained through "unending exertion." However, she disagrees vehemently with figures such as [Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#), charging that he and others undermined the spirit of the Enlightenment by conflating "Nature" with masculinity. As a result, she felt that women were unnecessarily excluded, as they had been for millennia, not by a lack of mental capacity, but by a conscious barring from education by men.

Though she did employ the tactic (used by [Mary Astell](#) and others) of arguing for the education of women on the grounds that they need to become educators themselves, she also goes further to suggest that women are or should be engaged in a "lifelong pursuit of perfectibility" (Sotiropoulos, 2004). However, Sotiropoulos argues that although Holst strongly to notions of equal, ungendered education, she was forced to filter them to some extent in her work due to the potential for public backlash. Sotiropoulos suggests that in a reactionary period following the aftermath of the French Revolution, suggesting institutional coeducation would have painted Holst as a "scandalous revolutionary," a label she aimed to avoid. As a result, though mindful censorship ostensibly restricts Holst's view of women's education to a thorough, personal education from a maternal figure, this belies her desire for an equal coeducation on the basis of her empiricism. Regarding the advancement of women intellectually, Holst's views were largely influenced by [Mary Wollstonecraft](#). She was even called the German counterpart to Wollstonecraft.

Knowledge and Education

Unlike some of her contemporary female philosophers, Holst does not seem to have argued for equality of education on the basis of women needing education to fulfill their traditional roles as wives and mothers. Instead, her aim is towards the "perfectibility" referenced above, but merely for the sake of improvement rather than as a social benefit. Similar to the opinions held by the English philosopher [Judith Drake](#), Holst proposes that educational opportunities for women will end up bettering both genders. Drake proposes that the benefits will be spread through socialization, while Holst sees them mainly as passing from mother to offspring. She argues that women should be able to obtain knowledge outside of what is necessary to fulfill their societal obligations. Indeed, she asks, if men are both able and encouraged to learn things beyond the scope of their profession, why shouldn't women be allowed the same privilege? However, she does seem to restrict her conception of women's "profession" to motherhood, and explains how this seeking of knowledge is a benefit, both in terms of direct teaching of children and leading by example (Sotiropoulos, 2004). It's unclear whether this was more care on her part not to be interpreted as a revolutionary, or if her views actually placed motherhood as the preeminent role for women in society.

An excellent summary of her position (given by Sotiropoulos) is that women must be considered humans first and women second, in order to accord with the neohumanist ideology. Herein lies her justification for the (proposed) increased access to education, in addition to women being held to the same intellectual standards as men. Interestingly, one of these standards seems to include celibacy for female scholars. Potentially anticipating the argument that women as scholars would detract from population and economic growth, she points to male scholars such as [Kant](#) and [Leibniz](#), arguing that their celibacy had not been a detriment, but rather aided them in creating "immortal works...[that] have enriched the world" (Sotiropoulos, 2004).

Fun Quotes

"Amalia Holst, by contrast, provided one possible explanation for [Kant's](#) shortsightedness: [Kant](#), she pointed out, simply did not have a wife." (Evans, 2001)

Selected Works

Holst, A. (1802). Ueber die Bestimmung des Weibes zur höhern Geistesbildung (On the Purpose of Women's Advanced Intellectual Development). Berlin: Frölich.

References

Evans, M. (2001). *Feminism and the enlightenment*. London ; New York: Routledge.

Gleixner, U., & Gray, M. W. (2009). *Gender in transition: discourse and practice in German-speaking Europe, 1750-1830*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Sotiropoulos, C. (2004). Scandal Writ Large in the Wake of the French Revolution: The Case of Amalia Holst. *Women in German Yearbook*, 20, 98-121.

Anna Maria Van Schurman

Anna Maria Van Schurman (1607-1678) was a Dutch painter, poet, and scholar. She is preeminently known for being the first woman in the Netherlands to attend university. She was the daughter of wealthy parents; her father gave her a classical education. Anna Maria Van Schurman was considered a child prodigy. She was able to read by the age of four and was learned in both Latin and Greek by the age of seven. She went on to be fluent in fourteen languages. She earned her degree in law from the University of Utrecht. She is regarded as the most educated woman of the seventeenth century. Not only was she well versed in fourteen languages, she also had extensible knowledge in theology, philosophy, medicine, humanities, science, and art. She earned the nickname "Star of Utrecht." As an adult, she pushed for the female's right to education in all subjects. She argued a woman's brain is equally competent as a man's. Her book, *Opuscula Hebraea Graeca Latina et Gallica, prosaica et metrica* includes her defense of women's right to education. Her extreme view and defense of equal education for women made her arguments unique from other arguments of her time. ---- ----

=Correspondence with Other Women= Anna Maria van Schurman corresponded with many other learned women including: [Marie de Gournay](#), [Elisabeth of Bohemia](#), [Anne de Rohan](#), [Madeline de Scudery](#), Dorothy Moor and [Maria du Moulin](#). Her letters between all of these women show van Schurman's dedication in championing a woman's right to education. She wrote to Dorothy Moore whom was a language scholar in England, "I do not doubt in such union of minds, and studies we could better encourage one another to virtue. Anna Maria van Schurman encouraged Princess [Elisabeth of Bohemia](#) to study physics, astrology, and history. She gave the princess a list of literature to read including, J Lipsius Jerome Cardan, Johann Wecker, Auguste de Thou, and Guicciardini. Anna Maria van Schurman's encouragement of other women in studying shows that she was a true advocate of women in education. It was van Schurman who influenced [Maria du Moulin](#) to take up Hebrew and philosophy. Van Schurman said to du Moulin, "Go and study and sharpen your intellect, for this will be the source of joy." Not only did these two women use letters in exchanging views on their love of learning, but also used them to sharpen their language skills by writing each other in multiple languages. [Maria du Moulin](#) started off uneducated, after van Schurman's push for her education, du Moulin went on to write books on education. These books included inspiration from Anna Maria van Schurman. Van Schurman was a fan of [Marie de Gournay](#), she even wrote a paean to Gournay praising her on her courageous contribution in defending the rights of women in education. Van Schurman refers to Gournay as a woman warrior and is inspired by Gournay's arguments. Although Van Schurman had a deep admiration for Gournay, she did not agree with her on everything. Van Schurman stressed on the idea that reading works in their original language was an absolute must, which is why she learned many languages. Gournay however, had written to van Schurman expressing that languages "occupy too much" and that with such a brilliant mind, she could do much more with her time and achieve "better things." Other women found her so impressive that they went out on a limb and reached out to her. One of her admirers was Princess [Anne de Rohan](#) in which she gave a letter to a mutual friend who passed the letter to van Schurman. This letter expressed her admiration for van Schurman. Anna Maria van Schurman was impressed by the princess's "knowledge of the grandeur of this world" and her "Christian wisdom." [Madeline de Scudery](#) also reached out to van Schurman. De Scudery was impressed by van Schurman and even referred to her as a wonderful girl with excellent qualities. Madeline de Scudery suggested that they should exchange ideas. ---- ---- **=Whether the Study of Letters is Fitting for a Christian Woman=** One of Anna Maria van Schurman's most popular pieces of writings is *Whether the Study of Letters is Fitting for a Christian Woman*. It has been translated

into many languages, its original being Latin. Her writing style was inspired by [Aristotle](#) using his deductive logic technique: syllogism. This piece contains a plethora of her arguments and refutations written in a syllogistic style as to why Christian women should be able to receive an education, especially those of the aristocratic class. Although she believes all women should be able to have an education she specifically addresses her argument to the wealthy for the reasons that they have more leisure time due to servants; and they have the resources for books, tutors, etcetera. She believes in education for Christian women because many of the subjects and languages can help them better understand the Sacred Scriptures and become closer to God (van Schurman 2014). "Whoever by nature has a desire for sciences and arts is suited to study sciences and arts. But women by nature have a desire for arts and sciences. . . . what belongs to the whole species belongs to single individuals (van Schurman 27-28)." This passage along with a number of others is what directs the arguments for all women. Her goal was to prove that she was not the only woman who was capable of intellect; all women possessed the ability to learn. She recognized the ingenuity of women and even encouraged other women who likewise sought for an education. Van Schurman holds that whatever helps the mind and makes one feel more satisfied should be able to have an education. Van Schurman's first few arguments call attention to the fact that women are human beings, not animals, thus they have the capability of understanding rhetoric and sciences. Her next set of arguments mention that women (especially of the upper class) have more free time so they need an education to avoid nothingness: "By doing nothing, human beings learn to do ill (van Schurman 29)." The last few arguments contain reasons of Christianity. Education leads to moral virtue and Christians are to study the Bible. ---- =**Eukleria**= In 1670 Anna Maria van Schurman left her normal life behind for a radical religious group founded by Jean de Labadie. She received much ridicule for it, leading her to publish her last book, *Eukleria* in 1673. It is her autobiography written in Latin. This book explains her reasoning for leaving her scholarly life behind. She rid herself of all her possessions and traveled with the group in order to "possess the most precious pearl of the gospel more securely and purely (van Schurman 77)." In 1666 Jean de Labadie was called to a church in Middelburg and stayed with van Schurman in her home. He was later excommunicated by the church and formed his own religious sect. In 1667, Labadie dedicated a volume of French poems to van Schurman. A few years later she decided to devote her life to the Labadists, by selling her home and other possessions. This religious society was a communal group. They sent their men off to work in nearby towns and the women raised the children. They ate their meals together and shared everything. Not only did van Schurman abandon her scholarly life, but in her *Eukleria*, she completely rejects her own ideas. She no longer recognized her writings as her own and uses words like "godlessness," "shameful," and "vain" to describe them. She no longer believed that an education was necessary for anybody. Van Schurman described most of the sciences as "vain and superfluous," only few sciences were useful. Books were not necessary, only three particular books were plentiful; those books being: the book of Scripture, the book of Nature, and the book of inward grace. In 1678 Anna Maria van Schurman passed, she spent the last eight years of her life as a part of the Labadists. ---- **Selected Works** Schurman, Anna Maria van. *Eukleria: Seu, Melioris Partis Electio: Tractatus Brevem Vitae Ejus Delineationem Exhibens*: Luc. 10: 41,42: Unum Necessarium: Maria Optimam Partem Elegit. C. Van Der Meulen, 1673. Schurman, Anna Maria van. *Opuscula Hebraea, Graeca, Latina, Gallica: Prosaica Et Metrica*. Elsevir, 1650. Schurman, Anna Maria van, et al. *Whether a Christian Woman Should Be Educated and Other Writings from Her Intellectual Circle*. University of Chicago Press, 1999.

References "About Anna Maria Van Schurman." Anna Maria Van Schurman, PASSIONED GROUP, www.annamariavanschurman.org/about-anna-maria-van-schurman/. "Anna Van Schurman." Brooklyn Museum: Anna Van Schurman, Brooklyn Museum, www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/place_settings/anna_van_schurman. Dijk, Suzan van. *"I Have Heard about You": Foreign Women's Writing Crossing the Dutch Border: from Sappho to Selma Lagerlöf*. Uitg. Verloren, 2004. "National Museum of Women in the Arts." Anna Maria Van Schurman | National Museum of Women in the Arts, National Museum of Women in the Arts, nmwa.org/explore/artist-profiles/anna-maria-van-schurman. Pal, Carol. Republic of Women : Rethinking the Republic of Letters in the Seventeenth Century, Cambridge University Press, 2012. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/utah/detail.action?docID=944681>. van, Schurman, Anna Maria. Whether a Christian Woman Should Be Educated and Other Writings from Her Intellectual Circle, University of Chicago Press, 2014. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/utah/detail.action?docID=408629>. The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jean De Labadie." Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2 Aug. 2010, www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-de-Labadie#ref289552.

Lady Anne Conway (née Finch) was a seventeenth-century philosopher born in 1631. Though little is known of her early education, she read Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Conway's first introduction to formal philosophy came when she met [Henry More](#), a noted Platonist, through her brother who was his pupil at Christ's College in the University of Cambridge. More instructed Lady Conway in philosophy through letters since her gender barred her from attending university. The philosophical education she received from More was deeply rooted in Cartesianism. Their correspondence continued for the rest of Conway's life, which gave her a permanent connection to the intellectual world. Anne Finch married Edward Conway in 1651, who by all known accounts encouraged her intellectual pursuits. Their family had one of the finest private libraries of the time. Although Conway was a Cartesian and Christian in her philosophical upbringing, later in her life she broke with Cartesian thought and became more Platonistic. This was primarily due to the influence of the Flemish physician and philosopher [Francis Mercury Van Helmont](#), who lived in Conway's household for a number of years. While living with Van Helmont, Conway studied the Jewish kabbalah and eventually converted to Quakerism. The radical conversion away from her Cartesian roots was the basis for Conway's posthumously published treatise. In *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, she develops her Platonistic metaphysical philosophy. Her metaphysics rely on a vitalism that contrasts Cartesian dualism with a monistic unity of matter and spirit. Conway was the first author to coin the term "monad" which became very influential as the basis for [Gottfried Leibniz](#)'s book *The Monadology*. For Conway, all substance is made of monads, indivisible simple units of matter that are capable of motion and perception. Conway's proposed monadic solution to the mind-body problem is to deny the corporeality of the body. All things are made of spirit like matter, body and soul are therefore of the same substance and nature. The issue of causation was solved not by direct occasionalism ala [Nicolas Malebranche](#), but through a principle of pre-established harmony. God set the harmony in motion and created the eternal substance of the monads. Conway presented her system as a response to the dominant philosophies of her time. Conway suffered chronic migraines and intermittent bouts of illness for her whole life. Physicians never found the cause of her infirmity, and she died at age forty-seven in 1679.

The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy

Conway is best known for a treatise written at the end of her life called *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*. This treatise is a work of Platonic metaphysics. It is derived entirely from a fundamental acceptance of God's existence and builds a theory based on the characteristics of this God. Conway introduces an ontological hierarchy of beings with God at the top of because he is infinite and perfect. The mediator between Godlike perfection and the creatures of Earth, in Conway's theory, is Christ, who represents a middle-man in the ontological hierarchy. The bottom, then, is mankind and creatures, who are inherently good because they were created by God. These creations are made of soul matter, like God, but are constructed out of particles called monads. Monads are comparable to the atom, however, they do not join together to create substances. Instead, monads are complete and indivisible substances in themselves, which hold all of the potential matter and echoes of all of the past matter of the substance. The eternity and mutability of the monads were they key to Conway's vitalist philosophy. They were later popularized by Gottfried Leibniz as a response to early theories of atoms. Leibniz took the idea of monads from Conway's work but is widely accredited with concocting the theory of monads on his own. Anne disagrees with the idea that matter is fundamentally corporeal. She believes that everything is made of spirit that goes beyond the body, which she derives from her argument that all matter is sentient and capable of perception. Anne poses a relationship between the perfection of all matter and the

perfection of God but avoids the charge of being a pantheist by arguing that created substance is still very separate from the divine. She also believes that hell cannot be eternal, because the punishment is a response to a finite sin and should also be finite, with the end goal of spiritual and moral perfection. For this reason, Conway's treatise is not only an ontology but also is a theodicy.

Selected Works

- Conway, Anne. *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, trans. Taylor Corse and Allison Coudert. Cambridge, 1996.
- Conway, Anne. *The Conway Letters: the Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More and their Friends, 1642-1684*, ed. Marjorie Nicolson and Sarah Hutton. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992.

References

- Hutton, Sarah. "Lady Anne Conway." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford University, 13 Feb. 2003, plato.stanford.edu/entries/conway/#1.
- "Philosophers: Lady Anne Finch Conway." users.ox.ac.uk/~worc0337/authors/anne.conway.html
- Merchant, Carolynne. "The Vitalism of Anne Conway: Its Impact on Leibniz's Concept of the Monad" *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Volume 17, Number 3, July 1979, pp. 255-269.

Aristotle

Aristotle is one of the most well-known and influential philosophers of the Greek Era, even of all of philosophical history. He was born in 384 BC in Stagira, Greece.

Ban Zhao

Overview and Early Life

Ban Zhao was born in 45 AD in Fufeng, Anling (Chinese province). She is known as the first female Chinese historian. She received her education primarily from her mother, and was born into a family of scholars. She was married at a young age, but her husband died and she then moved in with her brother in the capital. Ban Zhao's father had been called by the emperor to author the Book of Han, a history of China from the fall of the former Han dynasty to the Wang Mang Dynasty in 23 AD. However, he died before the book was completed to Ban Zhao's brother, Ban Gu, took over completion of the Book. Shortly after this Ban Gu was executed, and thus the responsibility for finishing the book of Han fell to Ban Zhao. History remembers Ban Gu as the primary author of the book, but evidence suggests that Ban Zhao played a very significant role in its penning

She is known for several other works, primarily the short instructional book, "Lessons for Women." Many women in China owned the book, which outlined proper behavior for a woman, usually contextualizing the merit of behaviors by how they supported men's pursuits. She outlines correct womanly action:

“There are four edifying behavioural characteristics for women: the first is womanly virtue (fude), the second is womanly speech (fuyan), the third is womanly manner (fuyong), and the fourth is womanly merit (fugong). What is womanly virtue? She does not distinguish herself in talent and intelligence. What is womanly speech? She does not sharpen her language and speech. What is womanly manner? She does not seek to be outwardly beautiful or ornamented. What is womanly merit? She

does not outperform others in her skills and cleverness.”⁽¹⁾

Sources:

1) Thomas H.C. Lee, Education in Traditional China, A History (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 470.

2) http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Ban_Zhao

Life

Cai Yan was a scholar and musician, born in Qi County, Henan to the renowned Chinese thinker, Cai Yong. She was married to a young Chinese man by the name of Wei Zhongdao in 192 but her husband died shortly after their marriage and they did not have any children. After that, Cai married again, this time to Dong Si, a local government official from her hometown. She was a well known musician and poet and was known to incorporate sorrowful themes into her works.

Born Catharine Sawbridge outside of Kent in England, Catharine Macaulay (1731-1791) was a historian, philosopher, and political writer. Mainly self-educated by the texts in her father's library, young Catharine grew up delighting in the ideals of liberty extolled in Roman and Greek histories. Macaulay wrote her first volume of *A History of England from the Accession of James I to that of the Brunswick Line* in 1763 and followed with seven more in subsequent years. In 1767 she turned her scholarship toward political pamphlets and treatises, refuting the monarchism of [Thomas Hobbes](#) in a work titled *Loose remarks on certain positions to be found in Mr. Hobbes's Philosophical Rudiments of Government and Society* and attacking the political conservatism of [Edmund Burke](#) in *Observations on a Pamphlet entitled "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents"*. Both subtly in her histories and directly in her political work, Macaulay was a staunch advocate of the principles of individual human rights and freedoms.

When she moved to Bath, she attracted many admirers. From there, she fought for popular sovereignty and more equal distribution of land. Her marriage to William Graham disgraced her in some social circles, since he was the forgotten brother of a bad physician. She was a defender of the French Revolution, and she and her husband were often guests at Washington's house at Mount Vernon. In her work, "Address to the people of England, Scotland, and Ireland", she attacks the Quebec Act and British colonial taxation.

Her greatest philosophical work, *A Treatise on the Immutability of Moral Truth* was published in 1783. In it, Macaulay developed the doctrine of the will that she called "moral necessity". The existence of natural moral truths and the rationality of mankind entail an imperative of moral action which she presents as an alternative to the idea of arbitrary free will. Her ideals of freedom and justice made her very popular in the newly formed United States where she toured extensively with her husband. The main points of her *Moral Truth* were partly reproduced in a new work called *Letters on Education*(1790), which she finished shortly before her death in June of 1791. In it, she advocates early childhood education, equal instruction for boys and girls, and a lack of characteristic differences in the sexes. This work in particular profoundly influenced the philosopher [Mary Wollstonecraft](#).

Macaulay Graham, Catharine. *Letters on education. With observations on religious and metaphysical subjects*. Dublin, 1790.

Green, Karen. "Catharine Macaulay", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = .

Catharine Trotter Cockburn

Catharine Trotter Cockburn (1679 – 1749) was dramatist, novelist, and philosopher born in London, England, to Scottish parents. Her work in the philosophical field covered a wide range of topics including: necessity, substance, space, and (most predominantly) moral issues. Concerning her work around moral issues, she published her first major work in 1702 titled *The Defense of Mr. Lock's Essay of Human Understanding* which countered the criticisms of [John Locke](#) by [Thomas Burnet](#). Catharine Cockburn mainly concerned herself with moral issues theory, and through her work she cultivated her own position being comprised of three different positions: moral rationalism, moral fitness theory and moral sense theory.

Regarding Cockburn's early life and upbringing, it is certain that she was a motivated individual who spent significant time educating herself. When Catharine was 14 years old, she had her first novel, *The Adventures of a Young Lady*, anonymously published. Cockburn was seen as a strong female figure in the late 17th century, which led her to be ridiculed and even mocked in the play *The Female Wits*, where she was portrayed as an almost snooty, educated, and opinionated woman by the name of 'Calista'. She later married in 1708, to Reverend Patrick Cockburn. Seemingly to be coordinated to her marriage, Catharine ceased writing, after 1708, until 1726, before passing on May 11th, 1749.

Criticisms and Moral Sense Theory

Catharine Trotter Cockburn's philosophical works maintained a predominant theme that surrounded the ideas of moral theory and natural law. The majority of her work was influenced by [John Locke](#), [Samuel Clarke](#), and [Frances Hutcheson](#) as she wrote to defend and take influence for her work from these known philosophers. Cockburn's work was often seen as a medium by which Locke and Clarke could direct their work through, this was mostly in part because the majority of her works were "written in predominantly polemical form – ostensibly in defense of Locke and Clarke" (Sheridan 2006: 25-26). Despite the criticism she faced, recent authors who wrote of Cockburn's works maintain that she "is an original and important thinker who is worthy of greater critical attention that she has, up until recent years, received" (Sheridan 2006: 27).

Cockburn's thoughts on moral sense theory are closely tied, in terms of criticism and collaboration, to those of Frances Hutcheson. Moral sense theory being the idea that humans possess a special sensory ability that allows us to determine what is good and what is evil, before the application of reason. Catharine saw Hutcheson's theory to be accurate but underdeveloped. She treated it to the likes of presenting the human faculty of moral reasoning as a puzzle to be solved. Cockburn later introduced the idea of 'moral sense', which linked the work Hutcheson was doing with the idea of a conscience. Patricia Sheridan (2005) ties the works of Cockburn and Hutcheson with the rational that Cockburn "understood Hutcheson to found morality exclusively on the moral sense while her own view sees moral sense as only one component within a largely rationalistic account of human moral understanding". As her work continued, Cockburn began to distance herself even further from the point of view of Hutcheson as she fully developed her ideas surrounding moral sense and moral judgement.

Defense of Samuel Clarke's Fitness Theory

In the later years of Catharine Trotter Cockburn's life, she took up the defense of [Samuel Clarke's](#) fitness theory in her work *Remarks upon some Writers*. Samuel Clarke's fitness theory states that "in relation to the will things possess an objective fitness similar to the mutual consistency of things in the physical universe. This fitness God has given to actions, as he has given laws to Nature; and the fitness is as immutable as the laws" (Frischkäse). Clarke created this theory in the hopes of being able to explain the apparent relation differences among persons. Thus from these relations, there arise a fitness or unfitness of the behavior of a person. A common example given while discussing Fitness Theory is that of the disproportionately infinite relation between humans and God. So, it becomes fit of us, humans, to worship, honor, and imitate the likes of our God. The criticism that Clarke faced was on the grounds of God's will and human interest. Individuals attacked this point by making the claim that "fitness relations are not primitive moral constructs, but actually presupposed more primitive constructs..." (Sheridan 2005). This argument emphasizing the relationship between God and man, and the relationship between reward and punishment regarding the fundamental human desire for happiness and freedom from pain.

Looking into the defense that Cockburn puts forth on behalf of Clarke, her views regarding fitness theory must be acknowledged. She holds to the fact that fitness theory makes the assumption that human nature and God's creative will are fundamental for morality. Cockburn believes that the ideas within natural good and evil must play a role in moral fitness theory, and that all that is encompassed within human nature must create the basis for moral law. Catharine stands true to the idea that in order for humans to understand the correct relations that should subsist within our universe, that we must first have a true understanding of the knowledge surrounding our own and God's natures. As stated by Sheridan (2005), "fitness theory in fact rests upon a more robust conception of the relationship between the will of God and human interest than do the voluntarist accounts offered by Clarke's critics".

Selected Works

Nelson, B. A. (2010). *Teaching British women playwrights of the Restoration and eighteenth century*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

Sheridan, P. 2006. Catharine Trotter Cockburn Philosophical Writings *edited by Patricia Sheridan*. Broadview Editions. 25-27.

Frankena, W. 1955. Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 16(3): 356-375.

Ducharme, H. M. "Personal Identity in Samuel Clarke." *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 24 no. 3, 1986, pp. 359-383. *Project MUSE*, [doi:10.1353/hph.1986.0062](https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.1986.0062)

References

Sheridan, P. (2005, January 08). Catharine Trotter Cockburn. Retrieved February 4, 2018, from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cockburn/>

Gordon-Roth, J. (2015, March 04). Catharine Trotter Cockburn's Defence of Locke | The Monist | Oxford

Academic. Retrieved January 28, 2018, from <https://academic.oup.com/monist/article/98/1/64/1126779>

Frischkäse, C. (2014, March 14). Samuel Clarke. Retrieved February, 2018, from <http://www.nndb.com/people/462/000107141/>

Confucius

Kongzi, often called by his anglicized name Confucius, is one of the most well-known philosophers of all time. It is believed that he was born in 551 BCE, in Qufu, China, and lived until 479 BCE. His philosophy and teachings inspired the Ru school of political and ethical thought commonly referred to as Confucianism. His set of general principles called the 'Dao' or way, was meant to guide rulers and common folk alike into enlightened thought about politics, government, and society as well as love, relationships, and human nature. Dao in the original Chinese means both a road and a way to do something—specifically in the best or proper sense. In Chinese philosophy, it comes to mean the proper or best way to live your life. In presenting their accounts, Chinese philosophers are all claiming that their proposed way of living or governing is the true Dao. Most of what we know about Confucius' philosophy comes from *The Analects*, which were compiled after his death by disciples and students. The most prominent adherents of Confucian thought in China were Mengzi (Mencius) and Xunzi, who taught Confucianism in the fourth and fifth century. Because modern audiences come to know the philosophy of Confucius only through the collected writings of other scholars, we are not able to access his thoughts or teachings from a more authentic firsthand perspective.

Much of Confucius' philosophy was based on the virtues of 'ren' or benevolence, 'yi' devotion to right and proper action, and adherence to ritual. For Confucius, rituals were not merely social behaviors and etiquette, but a way of conducting oneself in every element of daily life. The purpose of ritual was maintaining social order and that figured into both moral and political life. The way of ritual, ren, and yi was important to follow because it was the way of the semi-mythological sage kings of early Chinese history. Confucius taught that adhering to the wisdom of the sage kings was the only way to maintain respect and order and save people from the destruction of chaotic behavior.

Confucius' political philosophy revolved around the principle of self-discipline, bravery, wisdom, and kindness. Leaders were to lead by example in order to maintain the respect of their subjects and teach them the Dao. Since yi preserves the proper order, a leader must embody yi and encourage his subjects to emulate him. Confucius sees ritual as the best way to teach the common people their proper roles and to keep society peaceful and prosperous. By following the teachings of Confucius and the sage kings a ruler can come to know the way, become wise, and use that knowledge to instruct the people.

Sources:

Xunzi. *Xunzi: The Complete Text*. Ed. Hutton, Eric L. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. Print.

<https://www.biography.com/people/confucius-9254926>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Confucius>

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/confucius/>

History

Lady Damaris Marsham was born in 1658 as the daughter of Ralph Cudworth, an English classicist, theologian, and philosopher. Cudworth published his main work, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* in 1678. Damaris grew up surrounded by books and a variety of philosophical ideas, mostly those related to the typical doctrine of the Cambridge Platonists (a group that included her father, Henry More, and [John Norris](#)).

In 1681 Lady Marsham left Cambridge for London, and it was here that she met [John Locke](#), who became one of her primary correspondents. Many scholars have interpreted this relationship as romantic, but there is not definitive proof one way or another. In 1685 Damaris Cudworth married Sir Francis Masham and became Lady Damaris Marsham. Unlike her correspondence with [John Locke](#), which fostered her philosophical writings, she often stated that marriage and wifely duties detracted from her intellectual prospects.

Her main philosophical works were *A Discourse Concerning the Love of God*, published in 1696, and *Occasional Thoughts in Reference to a Virtuous or Christian Life*, published in 1705. Both were published anonymously, as Marsham did not want her identity as a woman to define the reception of her works. Both books center around humans being rational creatures motivated by the desire for happiness. The [Lockean](#) nature of the books often lead to them being attributed to [Locke](#) himself, but were in fact written exclusively by Marsham. Shortly before and after the death of [John Locke](#), Marsham struck up a correspondance with [Gottfried Leibniz](#), another prominent philosopher. This was shortly before her death in 1708.

Brief Overview of Works

A Discourse Concerning the Love of God, published in 1696, was written to defend [Locke's](#) empirical view of experience and gaining knowledge. It was written in response to a collection of writings by [Mary Astell](#) and [John Norris](#) titled *Letters Concerning the Love of God*. Their work discussed loving God from a perspective of [Cartesian](#) Dualism, arguing that we are born with the knowledge and ability to fully love an omnipotent and omni-benevolent God. Masham wrote instead from an empiricist perspective, arguing that all knowledge of God is gained by experience. Her main objection to [Norris'](#) claims was that assuming an innate reverence of God cheapens morality and virtue, as it undermines a chosen morality which Masham claims is more important. Masham likely would have agreed with many [Cartesian](#) ideas, as [Descartes'](#) focus on the rational capacity of humans is a necessary prerequisite for the chosen morality that Masham champions.

Occasional Thoughts in Reference to a Virtuous or Christian life was published in 1705 by Masham. It was written partially in response to [Mary Astell's](#) response to *A Discourse Concerning the Love of God*. The book reiterates that an empiricist view of chosen morality is preferable to solely religious zeal and imagining a separate non-corporeal version of religious observance. Masham's primary point is that actual moral acts are worth more than ceremony, in direct contrast to [Astell's](#) view. She goes on to state that the values of liberty and equality are central to being able to live a virtuous life and exercise moral goodness.

Masham also makes a case for women's equality in *Occasional Thoughts*, arguing that mothers play a key role in determining the potential moral goodness of future generations.

Masham on Virtue

In *A Discourse Concerning the Love of God*, Masham details what she considers to support a good and virtuous life. She states that there is a tendency to value ceremony over practical virtue. In *A Discourse*, she singles out the the Church of Rome saying that the Church is satisfied with, "nothing but idle, superstitious, and pompous shows. (*A Discourse Concerning the Love of God*, pg. 3) Masham takes issue with the 'other-worldliness' of these ceremonies and of this view of religion. She argues for a more practical morality, one bred from sense and reason. Later in *A Discourse* she quotes the Bishop of Worcester in his appeal against religious fanaticism, "If once an Unintelligible Way of Practical Religion becomes the standard of devotion, no men of Sense and Reason will ever set themselves about it, but leave it to be understood by mad men, and practis'd by fools." (*A Discourse*, pg. 6.) Masham clearly does not want a religious based on superstitious ritual, but rather one based on measured decision making and rationality.

Virtue should be definable and defensible, with each proclamation of faith and direction derived from a comprehensible source. Masham then goes into detail about what exactly justifies our virtue and our faith in God. She discusses how desire is both the source of our love and therefore our virtue but also the source of our sin as, "desire is the inexhaustible fountain of Folly, Sin, and Misery." Only practical morality can save our desires from turning to vice instead of piety. We are not made virtuous simply by thinking of God and His higher being, we must analyze why our love of God is practical and necessary for morality. Masham argues that, since all good and happiness in the world is due to the power of God, we must thank God through piety and virtue. She argues that virtue comes not only from our idea of a God but also from the fact that He has made it such that a good and happy world comes about when all act with virtue, therefore virtue is necessary to create a better world, are therefore it is practical.

Selected Works

- A Discourse Concerning the Love of God*
- Occasional Thoughts in Reference to a Virtuous and Christian Life*

Sources

- Project Vox: Lady Damaris Marsham*, <http://projectvox.org/masham-1659-1708/>
- Stanford Encyclopedia, Lady Damaris Marsham*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/lady-masham/>

--"A Discourse Concerning the Love of God." *Google Books*, books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=c_hiAAAAcAAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=damaris%2Bmasham&ots=HZJV5TVRvB&sig=ibS1C24HPK8KCg-jDsoF6aKzgMg#v=onepage&q=damaris%20masham&f=false.

David Hume:

David Hume (1711—1776) was a Scottish philosopher. At the age of two, Hume's father died. He received an education from his mother. When Hume was just eleven years old, he went off to the University of Edinburgh. He grew up in a devout Calvinist family. As a student he followed a popular Calvinist book, *The Whole Duty of a Man*, which contained moral guidelines. After four years, he continued his education privately. It was around this time Hume began to question religion. Old notes of a manuscript written by Hume have been recovered, in which it was found that he questioned the existence of God and where the evidence was. By his twenties, Hume denied organized religion all together. These views were especially unique in his time. His views on religion necessarily impacted his views on morality, stating that rightness of action led in that individual's belief on what was right. This differs greatly from [Aristotle's](#) renowned doctrines on ethics which refer to an ethical mean that determines behavior.

David Hume wrote a plethora of texts on the topic of philosophy of religion. One of his most controversial being, *The Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* and *The Natural History of Religion*. It was so controversial his friends even advised him to not publish it. A portion of it was published in 1757, but the parts considered to be extremely controversial were published three years after Hume's death in 1779. The portions that were unpublished defended the moral rights of a person to commit suicide and chastised the idea of an afterlife.

References:

Fieser, James. "David Hume." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, www.iep.utm.edu/hume/.

Morris, William Edward and Brown, Charlotte R., "David Hume", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2017 Edition),
Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [.](#)

Oppy, Graham, and N. N. Trakakis. *Early Modern Philosophy of Religion : The History of Western Philosophy of Religion*, volume 3, Taylor and Francis, 2014. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/utah/detail.action?docID=1782436>.

Elisabeth of Bohemia, other titles being Elisabeth of the Palatinate and Princess Palatine of Bohemia, was born December 26th, 1618 at Heidelberg Castle, Germany. She was English royalty through her mother, Elisabeth Stuart who was James I of England's only daughter. Her father was Frederick V of the Palatinate, King of Bohemia during the winter of 1619-1620. In 1623, Elisabeth and her family surrendered their assets and were exiled to Netherlands until 1641 where she received an outstanding education in Leiden by royal tutors and then later from professors at the University of Leiden. Apart from being philosophically-inclined, she also excelled in logic, mathematics, and languages.

Elisabeth is most well-known for her correspondence with [Rene Descartes](#) who she met at The Hague in 1642 and visited in 1643, when after they wrote to one another for seven years until [Descartes'](#) passing in 1650. The content of their correspondences centered on Descartes' mind-body problem and comments on morality and political philosophy. Claude Clerselier published [Descartes'](#) letters addressed to Elisabeth in 1657, however she did not consent to the publication of those which she authored, though they were later recovered and published by Focuher de Careil in 1879.

Elisabeth never married and was appointed coadjutrix of the Protestant Herford Abbey in 1661. She vehemently refused converting to Catholicism in line with the push for secularization in Europe during the 17th century and advocated for religious tolerance. She passed away in 1680.

Selected Works

Considering that Elisabeth of Bohemia was credited with no other philosophical writings apart from her correspondence with Descartes, her letters are the sole measure of her philosophical positions and contributions. In most instances of correspondences between philosophers, points and questions brought up may or may not be the result of exercising the other for the sake of anticipating footfalls in their arguments; however, in the case of the Elisabeth-Descartes correspondence, Elisabeth's remarks were internally consistent leading to the belief that her communications were sincere to her own philosophical beliefs.

Body/Mind Distinction

In a selection of these letters, Elisabeth of Bohemia questions Descartes about the specifics of his body/mind distinction. The selection of letters, some of the correspondence between the two from 1643-1645, display Elisabeth inquiring about how, according to Descartes, if the body and mind were completely separate then how do intentions of the mind impact the physical movement of objects.

Elisabeth asks in the first letter: "Given that the soul of a human being is only a thinking substance, how can it affect the bodily spirits, in order to bring about voluntary actions?" She goes on to state, "Your notion of the soul entirely excludes extension, and it appears to me that an immaterial thing can't possibly touch anything else." (Correspondence, pg. 1643-4). Here Elisabeth is postulating that Descartes body/mind distinction does not explain the relationship between the ideological and the physical and that his current theory in *Meditations* does not properly explain this.

Descartes responds saying that Elisabeth essentially does not understand the nuances of his argument, and that he has gone into enough detail about the body/mind duality. He reiterates his argument, stating, "we have for the body in particular (2) only the notion of extension, from which follow the notions of shape and movement; and for the soul alone (3) only the notion of thought, which includes the notions of the perceptions of the understanding and the inclinations of the will; and finally, for the soul and the body together (4) only the notion of their union, on which depends the notion of the soul's power to move the body and the body's power to act on the soul in causing its sensations and passions." He goes on to explain that the way we perceive weight and how we understand it in our minds vs. its physical effect on objects is characteristic of the body/mind distinction.

Descartes believed restating these distinctions clarifies the connection between the body and the mind but Elisabeth goes on to disagree. And, in what is perhaps a statement full of sarcasm, she states: "I hope that this will excuse my stupid inability to grasp what you want me to grasp." Elisabeth then goes on to further push Descartes on what she believes to be a bad justification for a central theme of his works. From this we gain perspective on the nature of their correspondence.

References

Broad, Jacqueline. Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/descartes1643_1.pdf

Elizabeth Thomas (1675 - 1731)

Elizabeth Thomas was a British poet born in 1675 to Elizabeth Osborne, 16, and Emmanuel Thomas, 60. Her father was a lawyer, but he died shortly after Elizabeth was born. Elizabeth's mother became the sole provider for her. Mother and daughter at times struggled financially. Nonetheless, Elizabeth received an education from her home where she learned both French and Latin. She is said to have been well-read, teaching herself through books she purchased. She became an esteemed poet by her mid-twenties, drawing attention from figures such as [John Dryden](#), who responded to her work with the statement, "Your *Verses* were, I thought, too good to be a Woman's."

Elizabeth's social circle included literary and artistic personages such as [Lady Mary Chudleigh](#), [Mary Astell](#), [Judith Drake](#), [Montagu](#), [John Norris](#), [Henry Cromwell](#), and John Dryden. She was engaged to Richard Gwinnett for sixteen years; the couple was not in a financial situation to marry. Gwinnett died in 1717 before he and Elizabeth could marry. Elizabeth was named in his will, but his family blocked the inheritance.

Elizabeth was well-known in London and Bath for her poetry. Women's issues, and particularly women's right to education, were of interest to her; her passion for women's issues is demonstrated in much of her writing (See [Mary Astell](#) for more discussion pertaining to women's issues in marriage and education in her *Reflections on Marriage and A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*). She published through the 1720s until she was imprisoned in the Fleet prison for three years for not meeting her debts. She died a year after being released.

Selected Works

"To the Memory of the Truly Honoured John Dryden, Esq", *Luctus Britannici* (anon., 1700)

The Honourable Lovers (1732; repr. 1736)

"On Sir J- S- saying in a Sarcastic Manner, My books would make me Mad. An Ode" MS? LION RL (1722)

"To Almystrea [Mary Astell], on Her Divine Works" RL

References

Wikipedia contributors. "Elizabeth Thomas (poet)." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 3 Sep. 2017. Web. 13 Mar. 2018.

Francis Hutcheson was a Scottish philosopher who greatly influenced Scotland and Europe. In fact, he was one of the founding fathers of the Scottish Enlightenment. He was born in Ireland on August 8th, 1694. Hutcheson attended the University of Glasgow and upon returning to Dublin in 1716 was asked to start an academy. He was a popular lecturer for being very lively and the first to give lectures in English instead of Latin. During this time at the academy, he produced his most influential work such as *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) and *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations of the Moral Sense* (1728), which were both published anonymously at first. He is most well known for his moral philosophy of innate benevolence and for his theory of our internal senses and beauty. Hutcheson spent 16 years at the academy and died while on a trip to Dublin in 1745.

Philosophy

Hutcheson believed that humankind had what it needed to make moral decisions as well as inclinations to be moral. He believed every man was born with morality and morality was the most important sense a person possessed. Hutcheson's ideas relating to liberty and necessity in accordance with moral ethic are virtually the same work as produce by [John Locke](#). He argued with philosophers Thomas Hobbes and Samuel Pufendorf who believed that it was human nature to do everything because of self interest and to one's own advantage. Perhaps it was that Hutcheson was a Presbyterian minister but he believed and taught that benevolence is what brings an individual happiness and what motivates virtuous actions. He also believed that we, as humans, can't decide on a virtuous character but we can cultivate it in ourselves and others through writing, teaching, conversations, and social interaction. His entire life he advocated the cultivation of virtue, both communal and in the private life and contributed to that cultivation.

References

- <http://www.iep.utm.edu/hutcheso/>
- <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Francis-Hutcheson>
- Kupperman, Joel J. "Francis Hutcheson: Morality and Nature." *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1985, pp. 195–202. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/27743721.
- Bishop, John D. "Moral Motivation and the Development of Francis Hutcheson's Philosophy." *Journal of the*

History of Ideas, vol. 57, no. 2, 1996, pp. 277–295. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3654099.

Flemish physician and philosopher.

Overview and Early Life

Francis Mercury Van Helmont was born October 20, 1614 to Jan Baptist Van Helmont, the Flemish alchemist, doctor, and chemist. His father, during his life, became notably more famous than Francis himself would. His father Jan Baptist pioneered the study of gases, discovering carbon dioxide and making immeasurable contributions to the field of chemistry. Francis himself often gets forgotten from history except for his role in editing his fathers works, mostly posthumously. Jan Baptist homeschooled the boy, teaching him personally about chemistry, alchemy, and medicine. His father raised him in the style of Renaissance Neo-Platonists, leading Francis to grow up believing in one objective set of truths underlying the cause of belief in all major religions.

While not often remembered, Francis was a noted physician, diplomat, and chemist who was friends with John Locke, Gottfried Leibniz, and chemist Robert Boyle. In his youth, he was remembered for thinking outside of the box, and became known as a revolutionary intellectual of upstanding character. Though he did not gain international renown, he was known in all the major local intellectual groups of the day as an ingenious mind and caring spirit.

However he stirred up discontent in the various religious sects at the time by refusing to choose just one. Francis instead tried to justify that Catholicism and Protestantism both had their merit, thereby alienating both sides. This was all during the time period of the Inquisition by the Catholic Church. Francis Van Helmont incurred the wrath of the Inquisition by publicly endorsing a policy that would elevate simple farmers by teaching them skill-based work. He was imprisoned by the Inquisition and, in between torture sessions, he wrote his primary work about a Utopian society, The Alphabet of Nature, in which he discusses how discord and enmity could be dissolved if everyone spoke the same natural and divinely inspired language.

Source:

<https://publicdomainreview.org/2016/06/01/francis-van-helmont-and-the-alphabet-of-nature/>

Gabrielle Suchon

Gabrielle Suchon (1631–1703) was a Catholic, an early feminist, and a moral philosopher born to a noble family in Burgundy. It is considered remarkable by philosophers that Suchon did not secure a larger impact on the history of philosophy. Her critique of the institution of marriage and of convents were very radical for the age of the counter reformation, during which the church reaffirmed the place of women as being under the control of men. In response to this, Suchon firmly defended the rights of women to receive an education and have personal autonomy. However, little is known of Suchon's education that gave her the ability to write full-fledged philosophical treatises. What is known about Suchon is that her family pushed for her to become a nun, and that she somehow was capable of evading this fate. Her story represents a strong and educated woman who willed the liberation of her gender, in response to which she was denied the place she deserves within the history of philosophy.

A Treatise on Morality and Politics

This book examines the cultural and legal subjugation of women. Suchon analyzes and responds to arguments that have been used over the centuries to justify the subordination of women. She ultimately argues that women must live alone to be free, an idea she explores in later work. This work holds an important place in the history of discourse on the rights of women, especially in the context of early modern Europe. This treatise, along with the one she published right after, were the largest texts on the female condition up to the years they were published.

The Neutral Life

Suchon describes a life of "neutrality" as an alternative lifestyle to the typical norms of what she considers to be a 17th century woman's only options, namely marriage and a life in a cloister. This life focuses on the removal of obstacles to living a life of study, philosophical pursuit, and doing good. In order to achieve this persons must avoid life-long commitments, as these tend to be very time consuming and cannot be disregarded morally; these commitments include marriage, child-rearing, joining a cloister, and any other commitment which usually has a public vow associated with it. She does make concessions for those who are widowed and without children or past raising children as being able to pursue a neutral life since they are no longer involved in a dependent relationship. Such a life and some of the benefits associated with it was also described by Lady Bashful in the early stages of [Cavendish's](#) play *Love Adventures*.

Bibliography

"Gabrielle Suchon: a dangerous philosopher." Dangerous Women Project, 17 Jan. 2017, dangerouswomenproject.org/2017/01/20/4354/

"Gabrielle Suchon." Querelle, querelle.ca/gabrielle-suchon/

Traité de la morale et de la politique (On Morality and Politics), Gabrielle Suchon (1693)

Background

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was born July 1, 1646 (O.S. 21 June) in Leipzig, Electorate of Saxony, Holy Roman Empire. At the age of 70 years he died on November 14, 1716 in Hanover, Electorate of Hanover, Holy Roman Empire. Major events that book-ended Leibniz's life included the end of the Protestant Reformation period, [Descartes'](#) death, the works of [Locke](#) and [de Scudéry](#), and the formation of the Kingdom of Great Britain. During his life he was a prolific inventor, philosopher, writer, and man of science, a true polymath of his day.

Prominent advances in math include his derivation of calculus independent of Sir Isaac Newton, in which his notation, referred to as Leibniz's notation, is prominently used as the standard for calculus notation. He described multiple laws of mathematics, which were later used in the 19th century as ways to interpret hyperreal numbers and were important to the foundation of his formulation of calculus. Several of his inventions were used to create and improve mechanical calculators that would remain in use until 1970. Leibniz also set the standard for counting in binary which is still used today as the basis of computer languages.

Philosophy of Religion built on Mathematical Principles

Leibniz wrote prolifically on religion. One writing shows how both his religious and scientific ideas were intertwined. In his composition entitled *A Vindication of Divine Justice and Human Freedom* he begins "A vindication of divine justice and human freedom, based upon a consideration of the complete idea God has about the creatable thing." He then goes to argue that just as man can be a physicist or geometer without understanding whether or not a line consists of infinitesimally small discrete points or one continuum but can still apply mathematics and obtain reasonable answers, we too can consider that "theological truth" can be satisfied despite not knowing whether or not actions are dependent upon God's will or another objects will.

This idea of the abstraction allows theological students the option of contemplating of divine will and human choice without juxtaposing either idea. Does God will that some men lead awful lives, or does God's will exist independent of those person's choices. Some would argue that if God is everything good and wishes good to come to all men, then he could not exist with such men extant. Instead Leibniz proposes that we can argue that God is real and good, but we do not need to know all particulars of why or how in order to make sense of theological matters so long as we arrive to reasonable conclusions. Good is God's purpose, thus overall he strives to make men's lives pleasant and blesses them, but along that continuum that makes up divine will, some of the infinitesimally small pieces (men's actions) may be out of line with his will. Overall, if we find more good than evil, we can come to the reasonable conclusion that God is real.

Theodicy

Leibniz argues that the existence of evil in the world does not mean that God does not exist, and that arguments that propose an all knowing and benevolent being would not allow the existence of evil are not

substantial and are indeed false.

Quoting some syllogistic attacks on God:

Whoever does not choose the best course is lacking either in power, or knowledge, or goodness.

God did not choose the best course in creating this world.

Therefore God was lacking in power, or knowledge, or goodness.

&

Whoever makes things in which there is evil, and which could have been made without any evil, or need not have been made at all, does not choose the best course.

God made a world wherein there is evil; a world, I say, which could have been made without any evil or which need not have been made at all.

Therefore God did not choose the best course.

In his work *Théodicée* Leibniz counters these arguments, first granting that the world could have been created without evil in it, but then states that God did create the best possible world despite having evil in it because some evil allows for the existence or creation of even greater good. Thus refuting both attacks. This theory of optimism has been refuted by [Voltaire](#), whose novel *Candide* was written under the premise that the evil in this world is too great for this world to be perfect. Leibniz defends himself by making the argument that in the tactics of war, a general may choose to enter a conflict and take some casualties in order to secure a greater victory than to avoid the conflict and avoid victory. He also quotes [Thomas Aquinas](#) and St. Augustine who also argues that the fall allowed for created virtue. Thus God will allow evil and may not prevent it in extraordinary ways since it allows him to fulfill the creation of more divine or good goals. Without the fall, the savior was not needed, has there ever been greater virtue than the Son of God? Leibniz' theory of possible worlds has an important place in a rich history of the philosophical topic. While Leibniz argues that only one reality can exist, thinkers like [Baruch Spinoza](#), who argued in his *Ethics* that all that is truly possible will at some point be expressed within reality, because God is infinite.

Bringing in mathematical concepts again to prove his arguments, Leibniz points out that a evil is really a lesser good, and that a lesser good is a lesser evil in comparison to a greater good. If we place all decisions on a continuum or a scale we can identify this concept, where the maximum and minimum provides definition to the remaining values between. Leibniz then argues that the Supreme Wisdom united with a "goodness, that is no less infinite, cannot have chosen but the best," or that is the maximum on this scale or choices. Therefore, if God had not chosen to create the best of possible worlds then he would not have chosen to create any at all for it would have been an inferior choice and thus not of maximum goodness.

This is in stark contrast to the religion-denying theories of [David Hume](#). Hume's theories state that immorality comes from the secular flaws of man and are righted not by a faith in God but by conscious choices of righteousness.

Selected Works

A Vindication of Divine Justice and Human Freedom

Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil

References

Leibniz, Gottfried W. “*Theodicy*.” Translated by E M Huggard, Project Gutenberg EBook, 24 Nov. 2005, www.gutenberg.org/files/17147/17147-h/17147-h.htm#page377.

Russell, Bertrand (15 April 2013). *History of Western Philosophy: Collectors Edition* (revised ed.). Routledge. p. 469. ISBN 978-1-135-69284-1. Pg 469.

Smith, David Eugene (1929). *A Source Book in Mathematics*. New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.

Strickland, Lloyd. “LEIBNIZ: A VINDICATION OF DIVINE JUSTICE AND HUMAN FREEDOM.” *Leibniz Translations*, 2014, www.leibniz-translations.com/vindication.htm.

Hypatia of Alexandria was the first female mathematician we have on record. She was born roughly around 370 A.D. in Alexandria, to Theon who was the director of the University of Alexandria. Not much is known about her mother but we know that her father raised her as a son. She even continued her father's work in preserving Greek mathematical and astronomical heritage. While most women were taught domestic skills, Hypatia was taught philosophy, mathematics, literature, art, and astronomy. Historians still debate where she received her education, whether in Athens or Alexandria, but one thing is clear: she received a very high education and in pursuing knowledge, she lived a celibate life.

There are three works by Hypatia that we know of, thanks to historian Suidas: a commentary on the Conics of Apollonius of Pergassus, a commentary on the Arithmetica of Diophantus of Alexandria, and another commentary on the Astronomical Canon of Ptolemy. Unfortunately, none of these works are in existence today. Historians refuse to believe these are the only works she accomplished since she was a professor for 30 years and that all her works were destroyed when Christians and Arabs destroyed the University of Alexandria. In fact we have more accounts of Hypatia's death than we do of her life.

Hypatia suffered a very gruesome death in 415 A.D. at the age of 45. While she was walking home from a lecture she had just given, she was brutally attacked by a Christian mob. They stripped her clothes off, beat her to death then burned her. To Christians during that time, Hypatia was a major inconvenience since she was considered a pagan and had Neoplatonist philosophy views. Hypatia was a very charming woman and attracted a lot of students and followers. The Christian Bishop of Alexandria, Cyril, tried heavily to influence the Governor of Alexandria, Orestes but Hypatia stood in the way since she was very close friends to the Governor. The Christian community believed that this friendship prevented reconciliation between the Bishop and the Governor. It isn't quite sure if the Bishop ordered the death of Hypatia but we are to believe that he was involved.

References

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hypatia>
https://www.ancient.eu/Hypatia_of_Alexandria/

Richeson, A. W. "Hypatia of Alexandria." National Mathematics Magazine, vol. 15, no. 2, 1940, pp. 74–82. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3028426.

Knorr, Wilbur R. "A Legendary Thinker." Science, vol. 268, no. 5211, 1995, pp. 744–744. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2886408.

Contributions to the Field of Philosophy.

Immanuel Kant's works on epistemology and ethics are some of the most highly regarded in the field. Between his three Critiques, and his various essays and books that delve into the world of metaphysics, Kant has become the go to in many a philosophy course. This notoriety in the field has earned him a place in the canon of the history of philosophy, alongside titans such as Socrates, [Aristotle](#), and Descartes. Kant's categorical imperative (his assertion that one should only '[a]ct only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law') ran counter to the prevalent utilitarian philosophy of the era. This diversion from the common school of thought was exemplified in the Trolley Problem which juxtaposed a utilitarian individuals willingness to kill one individual to save many through indirect action (pull the lever to direct the trolley to run over a single person), with those same peoples unwillingness to do the same through direct action (push a fat man in front of the trolley to stop it).

Kant's *On Education*

On Education was published in 1803, a year before Kant died. The manuscript is a compilation of loose leaflet notes written by Kant for a course in pedagogy, compiled by his former student, Theodore Rink. It was not meant to provide a comprehensive theory of education, nor was it to be taken as a tightly argued philosophical scheme. Rather, the notes were used by Kant as supplemental to the course text written by Professor Bock. Bock's work is not referenced in the notes and it is assumed that this is because the students would have that text in hand. Kant's work does rely heavily on [Rousseau's](#) work, however, with both explicit and implicit references throughout. Of interest is whether Kant's view of education includes females. What seems clear is that Kant believes girls should receive an 'education' at least through the level of 'discipline' as he states that both boys and girls should learn obedience; this is the only mention of the female sex in relation to receiving an education.

Kant writes that education includes nurture, discipline, instruction, and moral training. These correspond to phases of life. The infant is to be nurtured, the child disciplined, and the scholar (or youth) is to receive further instruction. Education consists of a negative element (discipline) and a positive element (instruction). Kant writes that it is discipline that changes man's 'animal nature into human nature'. (14) Further, education perfects man's nature; perfection comes through instruction.

Although Kant claims that the ultimate aim of education is the formation of character, he does not mean this only for singular man. Instead, he claims that education is the route to a (future) happier human race. He writes that "children ought to be educated, not for the present, but for a possibly improved condition of man in the future; that is, in a manner which is adapted to the idea of humanity and the whole destiny of man." (22) Kant holds that all the good in the world comes out of a good education.

The place at which to begin the experiment includes four categories. In the category of 'discipline' Kant includes physical education. His discussion of this category instructs those caring for infants and young children in the home on how to best care for them, including the appropriate times and ways to feed a child, as well as what to feed the child, the appropriate way to teach a child to walk, and how to not spoil a child, for example. He then moves to instruction of culture where he urges parents to give their children ample opportunities for correct exercise. Once this category of education has been achieved, then one can move on to cultivation of the mind; for Kant, this remains in the physical category as he views cultivation

of the mind to include learning to work. He teaches that the best way to learn is to do, and thus that knowing and doing are intimately linked. Here Kant remains in the category but expands it to include the expansion of mental faculties to include not only the physical, but also the moral. He writes, “We must see that the child does right on account of his own ‘maxims,’ and not merely from habit; and not only that he does right, but that he does it because it is right. For the whole moral value of actions consists in ‘maxims’ concerning the good.” (61) Being taught to think so that he acts in accordance with ‘maxims’ is called ‘moral culture’ by Kant. Within this category, Kant includes instruction on the importance of building good character by method and strict adherence to rules, obedience, duty, friendship, and avoiding vanity. Lastly, Kant discusses ‘practical education’ to include skill, discretion, and morality. Here he advises further on the duties of the boy, as well as on avoiding cravings and vices, the appropriate method for teaching religion, and advises on sex and marriage for the youth.

As education is aimed at the improvement of mankind, Kant holds that the art of education must become a science. He suggests that public educational institutions be used as experiments for the discovery of the best practices, so that at that time (when best practices are discovered) private institutions may arise from the public experiment.

Reference

Kant, I. (2015). *On Education*. (A. Churton, Trans.)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a French-speaking Swiss philosopher who lived from 1712-1788. His writing had a broad impact on the development of modern political thought. Rousseau's work was particularly influential upon the French Revolution, and he is frequently situated as one of the most influential thinkers of the Enlightenment, despite holding ideas that could be interpreted as antagonistic to the progress of such movements. His work spanned the mid to late eighteenth century, and began when, in 1750, he published the *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* and then the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Among Men*. Both were widely read and influential. His works, particularly his later ones such as *The Social Contract*, had a broad influence on many famous philosophers; for example, he influenced Kant's ethics greatly and his political thought influenced early socialist thinkers, including Karl Marx.

Rousseau depended upon the "state of nature" in forming his convictions in a similar manner to his contemporaries. The state of nature was utilized because philosophers of the modern era hoped to strip humans of all convention, of all action that is influenced by societal structures, in order to find underlying universal truths about human moral tendency. He criticized [Hobbes](#)' assertion that humans in their natural state are evil because they know no morals; rather, he argued that the lack of corruption in natural state would be beneficial. Rousseau thus wrote that morality is not a societal construct but rather an innate inclination deriving from humans' disinterest in witnessing suffering. He developed this thought in the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. In this work, Rousseau starts by forwarding that society is an invention. He then posits that the account of the natural man as selfish, lowly, in constant competition with every single person, is incorrect. This theory of man depicts a civilized man stripped of modern structures like law and technology, but leaves the already internalized complex patterns regarding property and seeing other humans as enemies. Rousseau argues that these faculties are not natural, that the natural man would be isolated and peaceful, and would not be concerned with fear of the future. This does not mean that humans do not have a natural tendency toward self-preservation, but Rousseau posits that this tendency works alongside an innate pity towards the suffering of others. Rousseau, however, is not advocating that humans should return to the state of nature. He does not think that this state is morally virtuous and that all civilized people are evil. Rather, he believes that the natural state is amoral, and that once humans leave the state of nature they are capable of enjoying higher moral purity.

Bibliography

- *'The Discourses' and Other Early Political Writings*, trans. Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Jean Jacques Rousseau ." Project Gutenberg, www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/authors/search/?query=Jean-Jacques_Rousseau.
- Delaney, James. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau." Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, www.iep.utm.edu/rousseau
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *The Social Contract and Discourses*. Trans. G.D.H. Cole. London: Everyman, 1993
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1992). *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Co

Jerome Lalande was a French astronomer and Louise du Pierry's mentor and teacher. He became interested in astronomy when he met another famous astronomer at his lodge where he had his observatory. Jerome Lalande's first work was a correction of the tables of Halley's Comet. This work led to a more accurate representation of the path of Halley's Comet, as well as a more refined prediction schedule.

Another noteworthy calculation made and published by Jerome and his colleagues was an international collaboration calculating the transits of Venus. These calculations later became key in accurately calculating and portraying the distance between the Earth and the Sun. His last published work, "French Celestial History", is dedicated to Louise du Pierry, his favorite student and peer. This published volume also made enormous positive leaps in the direction of fine-tuning our knowledge of the skies.

Ji Xian's (1614 - 1683) most impressive existing collection of work is her *Combined Printing of Rain Fountain Shrine* (*Yuquankan heke*; preface dated 1657). *Combined Printing of Rain Fountain Shrine* contains 244 poems of varying genres and styles. Ji became famous for her poetry in her own lifetime and had her poems included in the *Anthology of Eight Famous Women Poets* (*Shiyuan bamingjia ji*, preface 1655) compiled by [Zou Siyi](#), and the *Classic Poetry of Famous Women* (*Mingyuan shiwei*, 1667) organized and edited by [Wang Duanshu](#). Despite Ji's success as a poet, *Combined Printing of Rain Fountain Shrine* is perhaps more notable because of its second half which is a collection of prose writings. Prose was considered part of the man's domain at this time and women were generally discouraged from writing in any format other than poetry. The prose section contains eight essays, seven of which have Buddhist themes. "Record of Past Karma" ("Qianyin ji") is a unique essay from the collection as it is a prose autobiography that focuses on religious experience with significant usage of first person terminology. Most attempts at autobiographical understanding of Chinese women from this period of time is done through the lens of poetry. Ji Xian's "Record of Past Karma" allows a modern reader to engage directly with the voice of Ji without many of the conventional limitations of heavily structured poetry.

When Ji Xian was in her youth, she was traumatized by a Buddhist play about Mulian descending into hell to save his mom. The experience was so overwhelming for her that she concluded that she would become a Buddhist nun. After it became clear that Ji had serious intent to follow through on this, her dad informed her that she was already betrothed. Eventually he was able to persuade her, through filial piety, to fulfill her betrothal and she married Li Chang'ang (Style name Weizhang). A commitment to filial piety is additionally demonstrated by Ji when she undergoes *gegu* (similar to a modern skin graft, one would donate a section of their arm or leg for the purpose of healing a parent) twice for her mother (once to heal her mother, the other to heal a little brother on the mother's behalf).

Ji Xian's father served as a magistrate in several counties during the reign of the Ming Dynasty. In 1644 the Ming dynasty came to an end, overthrown and replaced by the Qing. Two of Ji's brothers went on to serve in high positions for the Qing starting in 1647 and 1649. Ji's existing writings do not make any mention of this change in dynasties or on her family's participation in both bureaucracies. Contrast this with [Wang Duanshu](#)'s loyalist writings.

Prefaces

Ji Xian's poetry was published at least three times prior to the *Combined Printing of Rain Fountain Shrine* (preface dated 1659) in 1648, again in 1648, and in 1653. The 1648 editions were initiated, supported, and prefaced by a brother and a cousin. The 1653 edition and future printings of Ji's poetry were edited and supported by her husband. Although these printings are lost to time, the prefaces are included in the *Combined Printing of Rain Fountain Shrine*. *Combined Printing of Rain Fountain Shrine* contains seven prefaces within the poetry section. Four of them were written for this printing. The other three are reprints of the prefaces from the earlier mentioned printings. Each of these prefaces was written by a male relative, one of them even being a nephew. The prefaces direct attention to her demonstrations of filial piety and feminine virtue. It is from the prefaces that we learn of her practice of *gegu*, she never makes mention of it in her writings.

Men writing the prefaces for women's poetry was a common practice at the time as the prefaces were

written in the primary form of discourse for the public domain: prose. Women who were trained to write were encouraged to learn only poetry. Although poetry can free one to express many ideas and experiences in an information dense format, it can also be incredibly limiting. Expectations that writers learn and follow prescribed conventions that dictate style, rules of implementation, and even theme choice can stymie one's ability to express certain ideas, especially in the intellectual scholarship realm. The few women who did write prose were often considered exceptional in or near their time, but would later be marginalized and little to no efforts were made to preserve their writings.

Ji Xian did not write a preface for any of her poems, but she wrote a preface for her prose. Ji recognized that a women writing prose was breaking gender norms and wrote a self-preface (*zixu*) so as to clearly outline what her prose was about and why it was justifiably written. She begins her self-preface for her prose by identifying two types of writing: Confucian and Buddhist. Confucian writings are famous, far-reaching, intelligent, and they make reputations in the world. Buddhist writings awaken the world. They are intelligent as well, but their goal is more close at hand. Although these subjects are considered to be outside the domain of women, Ji invokes the exemplars [Ban Zhao](#) (ca. 49 – ca. 120) and [Cai Yan](#) (ca 200), who were both famous women scholars from the Han dynasty, to help justify her altruistic desire to assist the purpose of Buddhism. Ji then proceeds to provide a quick summary of her essay topics. Her themes include karma from past unusual events, making and keeping vows, concern for poverty, dealing with death, animal liberation, and explorations of the self as illusory.

Ji Xian ends her preface with a reiteration of her primary justification for her writings: an altruistic motivation to awaken the world. She does not desire fame and fortune from writing, but to help build up the understanding of others.

Record of Past Karma

“Record of Past Karma” (“*Qianyin ji*”) is where we learn of Ji Xian's intense reaction to the performance of Mulian she saw as a child. The presentation leads to her feeling as though “everything in the world was illusory” (P 140). Ji swears to serve the Buddha and never marry. Ji dreams of a visitation from a divine being holding a bell in one hand and a pan in the other. The divine being informs her that either option is available to her, but that she must get to a place of worship to secure a bell. Presumably the bell represents a life in service to Buddha and the pan in service to a man in marriage. Although Ji wanted to devote herself completely to Buddhism, she submits to filial demands and marries.

For years Ji suffers from what appears to be an incurable illness. Medicines seem to do nothing to help. Toward the end of winter in 1654 Ji meets the cause of her illness. An old friend from Ji's previous life informs her that he and she were both scholars and good friends. Ji's previous self betrayed the friend, drowned him in a river, and took all his money. The self recognized the mistake and sought refuge in Buddhism. The murdered scholar was forced to wait until Ji was reborn as a woman in this life to seek justice. The murdered scholar had been draining Ji's energy day by day causing her illness to worsen. Ji had been forced to drink countless medicinal brews as recompense for making the scholar drink the river to his death. Ji's son enlists a local monk to recite the Diamond Sutra, among others, and Ji prays for the

scholar to reenter the Way. Midway through the sutra recitations, Buddha sends down a decree and a body is found for the scholar to be reborn in. The scholar leaves and never returns. Ji stops taking medicine and her illness begins to improve.

Months later the god Lord Guan visits Ji in a dream and Ji has her afflicted heart removed from her chest and impaled upon a saber while a pure heart shaped like a lotus pod replaces it. Once Ji has this change of heart she decides to recommit herself to Buddha. She takes a separate bed from her husband and allows him to bring two different concubines into the home, each of which she eventually dismisses. Ji's husband secures a third mistress named Fan and keeps her secret from Ji for a couple years. Upon finding out about Fan, Ji invites Fan to the house, but her husband refuses. Ji then goes to her husband's relatives to help convince him to allow her to simply take up a second residence separate from his so that she may practice Buddhism as best as she can.

Ji finishes her autobiography by claiming that she achieved transcendence and accepted her husband and his mistress as her friends and a source of what drove her to find Buddha seed. Ji's frankness with how she openly talks about dissatisfactions with their home life is in stark contrast to all of her poetry which only shows their marriage in a positive light. In each printing of her poetry there was an editorial claim by her husband or another male relative along with a preface. Her prose had no such editorial claim or preface suggesting that her husband may have exercised a censorship role with the poetry but not with her prose.

Selected Works

Combined Printing of Rain Fountain Shrine (Yuquankan heke; preface dated 1657)

Classic Poetry of Famous Women (Mingyuan shiwei; Completed 1664, Published 1667)

References

Edited by Susan Mann and Yu-Yin Cheng (2001). *Under Confucian Eyes: Writings on Gender in Chinese History*. 134 - 146

Philosophy

Known as one of the progenitors of empiricism, liberalism, and modern psychology, Locke had a variety of philosophical interests. Prominent among them was his theory of knowledge. Beginning with the famous claim that everyone enters the world as a blank slate (*tabula rasa*) with no inherent knowledge, he concludes that all differences between people (and their knowledge) are due to experience. This has implications for the way he views education as a means of gaining knowledge. As Axtelli (1968) puts it, Locke sees that "education, as a beneficent form of experience, is capable of effecting unlimited reform in those submitted to it." As a result, he proposes an education system in which the "sense organs of children" are exercised, contrary to merely having them memorize words and their meanings apart from experiencing them first-hand (Axtelli, 1968).

Locke also believes in the inherent capacity for rationality in the human mind (and in all human minds, given that they all begin the same). This leads him to champion independent thinking over taking knowledge on authority. Interestingly, this did not seem to present a point of conflict for him in his religious views, despite being a practicing Christian. His ideas did, however, help spark a movement towards deism, along with the writings of [Voltaire](#). One of these ideas was likely his commitment to skepticism, especially regarding science. Saying of "minute particles and bodies," "we must be content to be ignorant of their properties and ways of operation" for both the time being, and possibly forever. This prompted later writings on knowledge from [Hume](#) and [Kant](#), among others (Axtelli, 1968).

Two Treatises of Government

Two Treatises of Government: In the Former, The False Principles, and Foundation of Sir Robert Filmer, and His Followers, Are Detected and Overthrown. The Latter is an Essay Concerning The True Original, Extent, and End of Civil Government, or simply known as the *Two Treatises of Government* is one of Locke's most well known works. It was first published in 1690 in England. It contained many errors including half of the pieces in between the first and second treatise were completely lost. Though Locke was very worried about his work portraying it's purpose, he never did anything to accommodate for the missing pieces.

The *Two Treatises of Government* didn't cause much attention until well into the next century, when it was translated into different languages. In that process of translating even more parts were left out or went missing. The American edition that was printed in 1773 left out the preface, all of the "First Treatise," and the first chapter of the "Second Treatise."

The main focus of the First Treatise is to contradict Sir Robert Filmer's "Patriarcha," which states that civil society is founded on divine Patriarchalism. Locke decided to attack this philosopher because he supposedly was the one to refine this theory of patriarchy.

In the Second Treatise, Locke argues that in Gods eyes, all men are created equal. He also describes that a legitimate government in one that has the consent of it's people and that if a government rules without said consent, it can be overthrown.

Selected Works

Locke, J., & Proast, J. (1690). A second Letter concerning Toleration. (to the author of the Argument of the Letter concerning Toleration, briefly ... answered.). London.

Locke, J. (1870). An essay concerning human understanding. London: W. Tegg.

References

Axtelli, J. L. (1968). The educational writings of John Locke: a critical edition with introduction and notes. London: Cambridge University Press.

Laslett, Peter. "The English Revolution and Locke's 'Two Treatises of Government'." *The Cambridge Historical Journal*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1956, pp. 40-55. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3021052.

Oakeshott, Michael. "The Historical Journal." *The Historical Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1962, pp. 97-100. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3020511.

<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/locke1689a.pdf>

History

John Norris was educated in Oxford, England, and afterwards lived a quiet life as a farmer until his death in 1712. He became one of the earlier opponents of [John Locke](#), and was a strong Platonist and mystic. On top of writing philosophy, he also enjoyed composing poems and his ideas on Christian life and politics.

Philosophy

One of the important goals of Norris' philosophical writing was to complete his arguments against [Malebranche](#). He did not think that [Malebranche](#) proved the existence of the intelligible world. Norris also expanded on [Descartes](#)' real distinction proof to weaken [Locke](#)'s thinking matter hypothesis. Norris regularly engaged in conversation and correspondence with [Elizabeth Thomas](#), [John Locke](#), and [Mary Astell](#), discussing with them the topics of politics, religion, philosophy, science, and how different people may interpret living a christian life. Norris' view of religion and god were simple enough. He saw god as an immaterial and infinite force that surrounds us always.

Correspondence with [Mary Astell](#)

As mentioned above, Norris engaged in a published correspondence with [Mary Astell](#), dealing with, as Norris puts it "laying good Foundations for the Love of GOD." In the preface to their letters, Norris' first words are spent expressing "Wonder" at the fact that a female produced the philosophy contained therein, and affirming that to the best of his knowledge, it was indeed [Astell](#) who wrote the letters. He does genuinely seem to hold [Astell](#) in high esteem, however, vouching for her character and intelligence in the preface, as well as signing his letters "Your very humble Servant" (Astell & Norris, 2012).

Regarding the content of the letters, a major argument is that of justifying the "Love of GOD" that both philosophers are in support of. [Astell](#) begins by accepting that god is the source of all sensation, then asserting that god creating all pleasure is not a reason for love, as god also creates all pain (and that would have to be a reason for love by the same logic). In response, Norris first references [Malebranche's](#) philosophy, arguing that because god is "an infinite Reality or Perfection," people are obligated to esteem god "infinitely," but that love does not necessarily follow. Love, he continues, is derived from the personal experience of good, rather than its entirety. We do love the things that cause us good and pleasure, and we do not love the things that cause us pain (in agreement with [Astell's](#) point). However, the important break is the assertion that what is good comes from god directly, but "Pain comes from him only indirectly and by Accident." [Astell](#) does not seem to be satisfied with this reasoning, and responds (following the traditional dialectic regarding the "problem of evil") that what we perceive as pain and suffering "when GOD inflicts it...[is] a Good" (Astell & Norris, 2012).

References

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/john-norris/>

Astell, M., & Norris, J. (2012). Letters concerning the love of God: between the author of The proposal to the ladies and Mr. John Norris.

Judith Drake (1670s - 1723) was an English author and philosopher and a contemporary of [Mary Astell](#). She was married to author, physician, and famous Tory pamphleteer, Dr. James Drake. Judith Drake herself was an unsanctioned medical practitioner and political agitator. She is best known for her only political feminist pamphlet, titled "*An essay in defense of the female sex: in which are inserted the characters of a pedant, a squire, a beau, a vertuoso, a poetaster, a city-critick, etc.*" in a letter to a lady", which was written in the form of a letter to an unnamed female friend. She has no other works credited to her at this time, although it is suspected that she may have written more pamphlets using a pseudonym. Her *Essay in Defense* was not written in her own name but instead listed as authored by

"a lady". Like Astell, Drake enters into conversation with empiricists like [John Locke](#), using his arguments in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* as a counterpoint to her claims of gender equality. These claims focus on Drake's account of women's intellectual capacities. In *An essay in defense of the female sex*, she uses the personages of the country bumpkin (pendant), the squire, and the beau, et. al. to show that character flaws are evenly distributed between the sexes. If there was equal access to education, Drake argues

that socioeconomic class distinctions would be shown to be the true cause of discrepancies in intellectual achievements.

Unlike Mary Astell and the other conservative Tory women of her time, Drake was a Tory who promoted secularized education instead of cloistered Anglican teachings for girls. She drew on the basic premises of Locke's account of human understanding but argued that it needed to be updated and modernized with a greater role for women in the future of English society. Drake agreed with Astell's belief that men were usurping the power that should be shared with women, that marriage in practice was little more than slavery for women, and that there was a "tyranny of custom" that could only be solved by educating and enlightening females as well as men (Drake 3). She believed that the current system of education was unsatisfactory for both genders. In re-educating the populace, England would need to draw on the sociability and politeness of well-educated women to settle the factionalized political climate and re-order society. Socialization between the sexes would be key to mitigating men's bad behaviors and rationalism should be the philosophy on which modern

educations are based.

Works Cited

Drake, Judith. *An essay in defense of the female sex : in which are inserted the characters of a pedant, a squire, a beau, a vertuoso, a poetaster, a city-critick, etc., in a letter to a lady* (London: Printed for A. Roper and E. Wilkinson etc., 1696)

Goldman, Lawrence. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2005-2008*. . 2013.

Smith, Hannah. "English 'Feminist' Writings and Judith Drake's 'An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex' (1696)." *The Historical Journal*, vol. 44, no. 3, 2001, pp. 727-747. JSTOR, JSTOR. www.jstor.org/stable/3133581.

Louise du Pierry was a French astronomer and professor. Born in 1746, she lived through much turmoil that was happening at the time. She was the first female professor at the Sorbonne Academy, and she created an astoundingly popular astronomer's course, but sadly it was only open to other women, despite many people fearing that the course subjects were too rigorous for women. She worked in the field of astronomy (natural philosophy) to predict when eclipses would occur, using historical timetables. She was also able to compute tables for the lengths of each day night as well as assemble refraction tables for the latitude of the city of Paris. She published all of her work in 1799, before her death in 1807.

She also made great leaps in calculating the orbit trajectory of the moon, although she is not usually given credit for her work. Jerome Lalande (another astronomer of the time) was the sole figure who sparked her interest in astronomy, as well as guided her through the ways and teachings of the heavens. Jerome later published work titled "Astronomie des Dames", which he dedicated to her.

Work:

Louise du Pierry was one of the first astronomers to figure out how to use past events and history to predict new and upcoming eclipses and when they would occur. She published this work in 1799. Although there are no copies of this work today, we know this information to be true because her teacher and mentor, astronomer [Jerome Lalande](#), praised her work in his published book, *Histoire Celeste Francais*, claiming that she possessed the "ideal female mind".

Louise used historical data from past eclipses, and successfully predicted numerous future eclipses. Her work helped future astronomers understand the orbit of the moon in a better way. She also passed the knowledge she acquired on to her peers at the Sorbonne University, an academy known widely for its ability to produce amazing astronomers.

Another work that Louise was able to publish during her lifetime was that of calculating the precise time of day and night, as well as work on theories about light refraction and the way it passes through Earth's atmosphere. Both of these works led to more theories and studies down the line, furthering the progress of the scientific community.

She also made progressive change for the rights of women in sciences at the time. Her mentor, Lalande, was so impressed with her knowledge and skill that he would only enlist other women to help him with his work in astronomy. She made several people believe that women had just as much, if not more, mental capability than men.

References:

History

Madeleine de Scudéry (1607-1701) was a famous French writer who was the younger sister to novelist and poet Georges de Scudéry (1606-1667). Much of Madeleine's work was published in a conversational style or letter writing style, focusing on dialogue between characters as a means of rhetoric to pursue the ideals she believed in. With a strong background in ancient history, de Scudéry often used classical or Oriental figures as representatives of her contemporaries who would be used in her works as the speakers in her discourses. A champion of women's education as a means of social mobility, she wrote to demonstrate the ability of women to lead in intellectual conversation and to employ more than beauty as a means of advancement for women.

Born in Le Harve, France 1607, the de Scudéry family was of minor significance. Her father was captain of the port in Le Harve, which ensured only little aristocratic influence. Madeleine and her brother were orphaned by the time she was six and were then sent to live with their uncle who was of an ecclesiastical nature and provided extensive education for the children. Madeleine studied typical occupations of women such as writing, drawing, dancing, and painting among other practical skills. On her own she spent time studying Spanish, Italian, medicine, agriculture, and cooking while at some point in her educational history it is presumed she had training in Greek or Latin due to her strong knowledge of ancient history and culture.

Her brother applied himself to the arts and became a renowned playwright after his success *Le Prince Déguisé*. As an adult Madeleine moved to Paris to live with her brother Georges following the death of her uncle. She also became a writer and would publish her own philosophical writings, sometimes using the name of her already published brother. She became influential and noted among other women of her time, and was admitted to the Hôtel de Rambouillet coterie whose patron was Catherine de Vivonne, Marquise de Rambouillet. Eventually Madeleine would host her own salon, and continued to lead in social circles under the pseudonym of Sapho, despite being deaf for the last four decades of her life.

Writings on Education

Much of de Scudéry's works are still best read in French and proper English translations are slowly becoming available. She was a widely read author whose works were translated into many European and Anatolian languages (Donawerth, 2004). Some of her works, such as *Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus* were of such great length that they are still among some of the largest published works today.

Historians who have had the opportunity to attempt to synthesize Madeleine's works have noted that she does not appear to be a true reformist or champion of all women, despite her being in strong favor of the right of women to be educated and to join intellectual conversation and company. According to Aronson (1978) Scudéry "always encouraged women to develop their intelligence, to learn to read, and to be able to take part in discussions with friends of their choice" and added that in order to achieve true individuality a woman (or it could be argued a human) must first achieving intellectual independence. Unlike later female advocates such as [Mary Astell](#) and [Anna Maria Van Schurman](#), de Scudéry did not use religious education or moral teaching as a foundational reason for educating women. As a woman of high social status, earned by her philosophical musings, patronage of salons, and renowned authorship, she remarked "I am often

shocked to see many women of rank so grossly ignorant that, in my opinion, they dishonor our sex” (Aronson, 1978). It is noted by Madeleine’s choice of words, specifically “women of rank” that she considered women of particular social status to be responsible for their intellectual gains more than common women perhaps.

Nevertheless, in the context of France in the seventeenth century where a frequent subject of debate was whether or not women were born with the same capacity as men to pursue intellectual ideas and therefore profit from a more formal education, her progressive stance on women’s education and the competency displayed by her heroine figures in her works show how forward thinking de Scudéry was for her time period (Donawerth, 2004). Of particular note are “Sappho to Erinna” a heroic speech and one of Scudéry’s early dialogues championing women’s education and independence, and *Clélie* (1654-61) which sets a standard for the progression of women.

Power Behind the Scenes

As noted in the works of [Gabrielle Suchon](#), power is considered a male dominated characteristic (Stanton & Wilkin, 2010), especially as we consider the time frame of Madeleine’s authorship. Women are not likely to hold much political favor outside of the queen and higher courtiers, who even then are dominated by their male counterparts. Also, women would not be promoted or elected to economic, military, or political positions such as port authorities, generals, or parliament for example. Therefore, how does one gain power or get in a position to influence worldly matters. Persuasion through the written word may be one example of how power may be gained outside of formal positions of power. Compare with the importance of education in prose for [Ji Xian](#) in relation to the power structure dividing men from women in China.

The problem remains that with the written word men would be apt to read another man’s work, or be less skeptical of another man’s intellect through the written word than a woman’s. Madeleine recognized this fact as has been mentioned would publish her works under her brother’s name in order to reach a wider audience or lean on his credibility. In her works, especially *Conversations* and *Les Femmes Illustres*, de Scudéry remarks on the power that can be attained by conversation instead of the written word or other means.

She believed that “*appropriate topics of conversation at times include what colors of cloth best suit one’s complexion and how well one’s children are doing, as well as gallantry and science. Although one might argue that shifting the field of rhetoric from public discourse to private conversation is giving up power for women, de Scudéry aims is not conservative: she appropriates rhetoric for women as a means of political power—the right to speak and, so, to influence others. Her society is one in which compliments and graciousness, as well as intelligence and patriotism, move one toward a position of power, in which Georges de Scudéry earned his political post not by military service but through his social skills at Mme. de Rambouillet’s salon. Madeleine de Scudéry’s rhetoric of conversation pragmatically acknowledges the importance of these ‘private’ venues for power.*” (Donawerth, 1992 pg 188)

Private settings, including not only intimate discussions or private gatherings but also letter writing,

provide a space for women to exert their influence and to gain a measure of power in domestic or more formal spheres. Madeleine believed that “private conversation might very well garner more power than speech in public forums” (Donawerth, 1992). It is obvious that first a woman must already be educated in order to have the proper wit and reasoning in order to be an effective communicator especially upon learned subjects, and thus women need an education as de Scudéry would argue. Not only that, but women’s language should be such that it is a form of art, indeed she said that women’s rhetoric should be a “delicacie of art... making believe there is none at all.” Suggesting that “with such a subtle negligence and agreeable carelessness’ that the audience sees only nature, not the art” (Donawerth, 1992). This would allow a woman in conversation with a man use rhetoric and logic and display her knowing in such a way that the man is not concerned with the masculinity of learning, but is deceived into admiring said woman’s intellect and giving ear to her word. She was not the only woman philosopher of the early modern era to voice this idea, notably [Cavendish](#) was among the other thinkers who had similar ideas regarding the power in private speech.

Selected Works

Scudéry, M. de, *Artamène ou le grand Cyrus*. Slatkine, 1972.

Scudéry, M. de, ^{Clélie}, Chez Augustin Courbé, au Palais, en la Galerie des Merciers, à la Palme. 1661.

Scudéry, M. de, *Conversations nouvelles sur divers sujets*, 2 vols., Paris: C. Barbin, 1684.

Scudéry, M. de, *Conversations sur divers sujets*, 2 vols., Paris: C. Barbin, 1680.

Scudéry, M. de, *Les femmes illustres, ou Les harangues héroïques*, 2 vols., Paris: Quiney et de Sercy, 1644.

References

Aronson, N. (1978). "Mademoiselle de Scudéry." Twayne Publishers, Boston.

Conley, John, "Madeleine de Scudéry", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [_](#)

[Donawerth, Jane \(Spring 1992\). "Conversation and the Boundaries of Public Discourse in Rhetorical Theory by Renaissance Women". *Rhetorica*. 16 \(2\): 181–199.](#)

Donawerth, Jane (2004). "Selected letters, orations, and rhetorical dialogues." United States: The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London, p. 3: 185-189

Gabrielle, Suchon (1693). "[Traité de la morale et de la politique.](#)" Included and translated within Stanton and Wilkin (2010)

[Stanton, Domna C., Wilkin, Rebecca M. \(2010\). "A Woman Who Defends All the Persons of Her Sex: Selected Philosophical and Moral Writings." University of Chicago Press](#)

Nicolas Malebranche. A French priest and rationalist philosopher. Developed a philosophy of occasionalism.

Nicolas Malebranche

Nicolas Malebranche (1638 – 1715) was a French priest and a rational philosopher who was the last son born to his father, Nicolas Malebranche, in Paris, France. He was born with a spinal condition that left him with weak lungs and a frail frame; subsequently, Malebranche was tutored privately until he was 16 and able to care for himself. Once Nicolas' time with the private tutor came to an end, he attended the College de la Marche where he studied philosophy, until perusing a theology focus at the College de Sorbonne. Malebranche attended university until 1660, when he decided to leave in order to join the Oratory, a religious congregation. He then studied there and began to focus his work around theology, and in 1664 he was ordained as a priest.

Malebranche began his philosophical work after he happened upon a piece of [Descartes'](#), *Treaties on Man*, and it moved him to such excitement as he had just unearthed a new manner in which to investigate the natural world. Through this inspiration came the first works from Malebranche, *Concerning the Search after Truth. In which is treated the nature of the human mind and the use that must be made of it to avoid error in the sciences*, which addressed the causes of human error and how one would go about avoiding those errors and identifying the truth. Malebranche's works dealt with issues around error stemming from the senses, imagination, and desire. Nicolas' work in the philosophical world would mainly target subjects pertaining to metaphysics and epistemology.

((Dmitri's Contribution:

Early Life And Career

Born to a wealthy courtier in 1638, Malebranche was plagued from a very young age by a deformed spine that forced him to receive his education from a private tutor. At the ripe old age of sixteen he left home (evidently despite the issue of his malformed spine) to pursue a higher level of education at the University of Paris, earning a degree in philosophy at the Collège de la Marche, and theology at the Collège de Sorbonne. Allegedly, this is where Malebranche encountered *A Treatise On Man*, by [Rene Descartes](#), which would heavily influence his philosophy later.

Later Career and Philosophical Contributions

Malebranche would eventually leave the University, and join the clergy as an Orator. His faith heavily influenced his metaphysics, and this not clearer in any works more than his works dealing with the nature of causation, ultimately named Occasionalism, for it's assertion that all instances causation at best "occasions" for divine activity. Bodies and minds act neither on themselves nor on each other; God is the

only force capable of bringing about all the phenomena of nature and the mind.

))

Selected Works

Lennon, T. M. & Olscamp, P. J. (1980) *Nicolas Malebranche: The Search after Truth*. Cambridge University Press

References

Schmaltz, T. (2017, November 28). Nicolas Malebranche. Retrieved February 26, 2018, from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/malebranche/>

Mastin, L. (2008). Nicolas Malebranche. Retrieved February 26, 2018, from http://www.philosophybasics.com/philosophers_malebranche.html

Margaret Cavendish

Value Theory

Cavendish's philosophical treatises are directed more towards metaphysics and natural philosophy than questions of politics or morality, and what she does have to say about normative issues has led some scholars to claim that "there seems little hope—or, probably, point—in attempting to define a consistent core of political values" in her work (Smith 1997: 153). But Deborah Boyle (2006) has argued that there is a consistent political and moral theory in Cavendish, grounded in the importance of fame and obtaining public honor. Cavendish's *Oration*s present few consistent views, but are nearly univocal in foregrounding the importance of peace and political stability. Following [Hobbes](#), Cavendish believes that morality is rooted in self-interest, but she departs from Hobbes in seeing our motivational self-interest as centrally including the desire for recognition, and not merely self-preservation. "Via the desire for fame, self-love can motivate people to pursue virtue, which, for Cavendish, means establishing and maintaining a good government" (Boyle 2006).

Santana (2015) goes further than Boyle by insisting that even where Cavendish appears to contradict herself, she is tackling questions in political and moral philosophy. Apparent tensions in Cavendish's work, especially her philosophical fiction, are, Santana argues, largely intentional on Cavendish's part. "Nature's actions are infinite," Cavendish argues in her *Observations*, as well as "poised and balanced," and this means that philosophical positions in opposition can both have merit. Santana suggests that Cavendish's value theory involves presenting but not resolving tensions between competing values, because for Cavendish these competing values are part of the infinite variety and counterpoise of nature. Peace must be obtained through violence. One cannot have both the joy of marriage and the freedom of the single life. So when Cavendish extols peace (or marriage) in one breath, and warriors (or singlehood) in the next, she is, on this reading, accurately representing the normative facts of a complex world.

The Contemplative Life

In Cavendish's play *Love Adventures* she highlights several ideas about how to live the good life, or contemplative life, and she displays these themes throughout her book by illustrating her ideas through her characters experiences.

One character named Lady Bashful desires to pursue the good life. She is single, wealthy, independent, and has much time and means available to her. She has no commitments as her elderly father has passed away and is not attached to any man or children. As such she desires to remain in this state in order to enjoy her freedom as she chooses and pursue her own interests. This detached lifestyle is jeopardized when a suitor decides to pursue her hand which would lead to her inability to choose a contemplative or as [Suchon](#) would describe it, a neutral life. Such a lifestyle, one with independence and time for pursuits of knowledge and worthwhile acts, is argued to by Lady Bashful to be the best and happiest life that can be found, and one would be a fool to remove oneself from this neutral life.

Another theme found here about living well or morally is that the good life is not found with the mob but in contemplation. Sir Peaceable Studious is a man of words who is always busy at home with his studies. His wife, Lady Ignorance, is not pleased with his personal cloister and wishes that they pursue sociable events wherewith they can entertain themselves. Eventually Sir Peaceable Studious submits to his wife's desires and they pursue parties and gatherings together. Here the corruption of society, especially the company of the ladies of the play, lures Sir Peaceable Studious into morally corrupt behavior, which he claims is acceptable for men and exempts him from the criticism and punishment a lady would deserve if caught pursuing the same means (see [Wollstonecraft](#)). Here we see that an attached life has brought Sir Peaceable Studious away from the good life as he attempts to please those who he is permanently bound to. We also notice the idea proposed by Wollstonecraft that the sexes mutually corrupt each other and that sexual morality is held at a double standard for men and women of the time.

Selected Works

- 1662, Cavendish, Margaret, *Orations of Divers Sorts, Accommodated to Divers Places*, London.
1668, *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*, ed. Eileen O'Neill, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2001).
1662, Cavendish, Margaret, *Love Adventures*, London.

References

- Boyle, D. (2006). Fame, Virtue, and Government: Margaret Cavendish on Ethics and Politics. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 67(2), 251-289.
- Santana, C. (2015). 'Two Opposite Things Placed Near Each Other, are the Better Discerned': Philosophical Readings of Cavendish's Literary Output. *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 23(2), 297-317.
- Smith, H. L. (1997). 'A General War amongst the Men but None amongst the Women': Political Differences between Margaret and William Cavendish. *Politics and the Political Imagination in Later Stuart Britain: Essays Presented to Lois Green Schwoerer*, 143-60.

Mary Astell

Mary Astell (1666-1731) was an English philosopher and political and religious writer. She is sometimes held up as an early British feminist (Kinnaird 1979), because she championed the rights of women to receive an education in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, and examined how the institution of marriage could lead to gender inequalities in *Reflections on Marriage*. Despite being mostly self-educated, Astell was very familiar with contemporary philosophy, and ably deployed [Cartesian](#) ideas in her defense of the intellectual capacities of women. She was a notable critic of her contemporary, [John Locke](#) (Springborg 1995), and engaged in a published correspondence with Cambridge Platonist [John Norris](#).

We know relatively little about Astell's personal life. She was born in Newcastle to a family of coal merchants, but was orphaned by the time she was 18, and set out for London at the age of 20. What she, as a single young woman, planned to do in London is unknown, but she quickly found patrons among the wealthy women in London, and also received financial support and aid in publishing from the William Sancroft, the Archbishop of Canterbury. After a two decade literary career, in which she won a great deal of both positive and negative attention, she retired from public life in 1709.

Reflections Upon Marriage

Astell's *Reflections* had the goal of pinpointing the flaws of marriage in her era. The way the institution operated in England revolved entirely around money, and Astell was a witness of the coercion women often experienced in marriage, partially because of the social ridicule they would receive if they abstained from it. If women choose to engage with marriage, they are often financially trapped to someone they have no feelings for and have no escape. This book was written in response to the famous case of the Duke of Mazarine, who was the abusive husband of her friend. The case was widely debated, because the Dutchess had become something of a European celebrity. She was wed to the very wealthy Duke at a young age, and the paranoid and mentally unstable man was well-known as highly abusive in the emotional and physical sense to both her and other women he had power over. The case that compelled Astell to write her book occurred later in her life, when the Duke of Mazarine took legal action attempting to repossess her, as divorce was not allowed in their home country of France and thus they were still legally bound together.

Astell, herself being single her whole life, witnessed the proliferation of slavery-like relationships that wealthy women were openly engaged in during the day; these marriages had a wildly disparate balance of power based on age, financial privilege, and social norms, and there was very little that women could do about it other than abstain from marriage like Astell. Because of this, this book gives a small defense of marriage but is largely a piece of advice to women that they should avoid it.

Astell's conservative tendencies play a key role in this piece. Her writing is largely a response to republican ideals of the idea, particularly those of [John Locke](#), that tended to focus on the rights of citizens and disregarded the rights of women altogether. She also is responding to Puritan writers of the day that promoted an unhealthy and oppressive image of marriage. The context of this work is crucial to its purpose, however it echoes early feminist ideals of equality in a firm voice, written by a figure whose political and religious affiliations aided her in having a reputable and respectable voice among her contemporaries.

Selected Works

Some Reflections Upon Marriage, Occasion'd by the Duke and Dutchess of Mazarine's Case; Which is Also Consider'd.

by Mary Astell, 1668-1731.

Astell, M., *The Christian Religion, As Profess'd by a Daughter of the Church of England. In a Letter to the Right Honourable, T.L. C.I.*, London: R. Wilkin, 1705.

—, Astell: *Political Writings*, P. Springborg (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

—, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies. Parts I and II*, P. Springborg (ed.), Ontario: Broadview Literary Texts, 2002.

—, *The Christian Religion, As Professed by a Daughter of the Church of England*, J. Broad (ed.), Toronto, ON: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies and Iter Publishing, 2013.

Astell, M. and Norris, J., *Letters Concerning the Love of God, Between the Author of the Proposal to the Ladies and Mr. John Norris: Wherein his late Discourse, shewing That it ought to be intire and exclusive of all other Loves, is further cleared and justified*, London: J. Norris, 1695.

References

Kinnaird, J. K. (1979). Mary Astell and the Conservative Contribution to English Feminism. *Journal of British Studies*, 19(1), 53-75.

Springborg, P. (1995). Mary Astell (1666–1731), Critic of Locke. *American Political Science Review*, 89(3), 621-633.

Early Life

Contributions to Philosophy as a Field

Mary Wollstonecraft contributed to early feminist ideals over several publications, the most notable of which was

Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792). In this seminal text, Wollstonecraft argued for education for women based upon their role in society as caretakers and shapers of the youth, as well as their role as companions for their husbands rather than just as ornamental pieces for a family.

She also voices her belief in an education conducted at home, and her insistence that girls and young women be made to acquire ‘inner resources’ so as to make them as psychologically independent as possible. Considered a proto-feminist, this text cemented that role and established a line of thinking that would one day flourish into any number of movements that furthered the rights of Women.

Sexual Politics and Virtue and Gender

Wollstonecraft like many other female philosophers of the Early Modern era, such as [Astell](#) or [Suchon](#), had strong convictions about personal integrity and the necessity of high morals. She wrote very strongly on the subject of virtue and chastity and how that should be not only a public concept, but should be an ideal that is personal and regarded highly in a moral or religious sense.

Wollstonecraft did not approve the current view of morality, and that a woman’s chief concern in life was to be publicly chaste. “If the honour of a woman [chastity], as it is absurdly called, is safe, she may neglect every social duty; nay, ruin her family by gaming and extravagance; yet still present a shameless front — for truly she is an honourable woman!” She would also note in her work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* that men seemed to be apparently exempt from the same criticism of women when it came to publicity of sexual relations. In fact, she makes an argument that men are at fault for all of women’s weaknesses, quote “For I will venture to assert, that all the causes of female weakness, as well as depravity[...] branch out of one grand cause — want of chastity in men.” It is this dichotomous opinion on sexual relations that causes personal depravity in women for thus “The two sexes mutually corrupt and improve each other. This I believe to be an indisputable truth, extending it to every virtue” Wollstonecraft notes (Wollstonecraft, 1995 Ch. 9). (This view of mutual corruption was also demonstrated in [Cavendish](#)’s *Love Adventures* by Lady Ignorant, Sir Peaceable Studious, and the society they involve themselves with.)

“It is reputation not chastity and all its fair train, that they are employed to keep free from spot, not as a virtue, but to preserve their station in the world.” Mary suggests that the true or ideal concept of chastity is not to be considered a means of maintaining reputation but seeking virtue. She even suggests that without proper regard for chastity and virtuous principles that personal health declines in the obsession of seeking wanton lusts and that “the duties of citizens, husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, and directors of families” become merely ties of convenience to be selfishly used and lost are their true purpose (Wollstonecraft,

1995 Ch. 9).

Wollstonecraft argues in *Vindication* that it is the parents duty to raise their children wisely and in virtue while noting that this does not occur in her current time. Issuing an attack on the significant number of women who release familial responsibility to the care of wet-maids or other personnel as detrimental to the proper development of children, or the number of women who are ill equipped to raise children correctly due a lack of their being properly educated, she proposes that women must be able to seek better education and argues for the necessity of the kind of education she describes in *Vindication*. Not only does she think the raising of children is important, she claims that it is the place where personal morality is best shown and brings some of the greatest benefits and displays the grandest beauty. Wollstonecraft would argue “True happiness, I mean all the contentment, and virtuous satisfaction that can be snatched in this imperfect state, must arise from well-regulated affections; and an affection includes a duty.” Following that train of thought “The maternal solicitude of a reasonable affectionate woman is very interesting, and the chastened dignity with which a mother returns the caresses that she and her child receive from a father who has been fulfilling the serious duties of his station, is not only a respectable, but a beautiful sight” (Wollstonecraft, 1995 Ch. 10).

The external influence of Wollstonecraft's early life on her philosophical treatise can be clearly seen. She was raised in a family that lacked virtue at home as her father was abusive and she was left to defend her mother against his attacks, in addition he disposed of her her inheritance and left her without means to bring to a marriage. After leaving home she often found work as a governess, lady's companion, or similar women's work in the houses of well of families. It is here that she is exposed in great detail to the faults of grand ladies (and men) and their rejection of duties at home. As time continued, her sister was also left in distress in her marriage and was convinced by Wollstonecraft to leave her marriage. Even her own romantic relationships and the lack of consistency and depth had significant influence on her philosophy.

Wollstonecraft's views on education were partially shaped by the discourse of her time as an interest in formalizing education was brought to the fore by thinkers such as [Kant](#) and [Rousseau](#), who published discourses on education prior to Wollstonecraft (*On Education* and *Emile* respectively). She takes issue with the misogynist ideas presented in these works; her view on education in *Vindication* is a response to those works, in which she argues for the worth of education not only for men, but for women as well.

Juxtaposing her philosophy on the importance of personal virtue are some of Wollstonecraft's life choices. After deciding to become an author she also spent time with the liberal thinkers of her day. She had numerous romantic relationships with men, one of which she pursued was with a man who was married and therefore she was a cause of his loss of personal virtue. In France she pretended to be married to the sailor Imlay and bore him a child. Imlay would not be tied down though and they never married and he eventually left. More relationships would occur, all the while her adulterous behavior was veiled in such a way that her public character was left more or less in tact and was not questioned until after her death. She seems to lead a life in direct opposition to her beliefs on the importance of virtue and how one maintains some aspect of it in regards to chastity and the disregard that should be shown to reputation. This leads readers to an important question regarding her conceptualization of morality, and if her works are her reflection of past errors and an ideal for a better world rather than the one she has found herself in where "mutually corruption" of the sexes is so prevalent or whether she lacked sincerity to follow her own beliefs.

Selected Works

WOLLSTONECRAFT, M. (2017). VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN. S.I.: ARCTURUS PUBLISHING LTD.

References

Todd, J. (2002). *Mary Wollstonecraft: a revolutionary life*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Tomaselli, S. (2008, April 16). *Mary Wollstonecraft*. Retrieved February 05, 2018, from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wollstonecraft/>

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Men and A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Ed. Sylvana Tomaselli. Cambridge: [Cambridge University Press](#), 1995.

Biography

Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu (1689 – 1755) was a French philosopher and political thinker who greatly embodies the Enlightenment era. He came from a noble background and received schooling starting in 1700. His life is positioned in an important historical era for Europe, during the Glorious Revolution of Britain and through the reign of Louis XIV. Montesquieu's defining work is *The Spirit of Laws*, published in 1731. He was a firm believer in the separation of powers to mitigate despotism, which had a large impact on the future of American politics.

The Spirit of Laws

Montesquieu's goal in this treatise was to explore the reasons for social and legal laws in human society. It was a difficult project because of the complicated and flawed nature of human choice. Montesquieu argues that in order to make sense of laws, one must understand that complicated factors contribute to every law, and that each system of laws should be tailored to the population of people it governs. Montesquieu also believes that a lot of the aspects of every government that seem unreasonable make a lot more sense when one truly understands the factors that make them important. This perspective is not Utopian.

Montesquieu believed that political society had to be based in civil law. He was not a moral theorist, but rather believed there was no universal answer to problems in politics, and that the solutions a country will come to will depend on a variety of cultural factors. He defines the three main types of government as republican, monarchical, and despotic. He believed that specific principles must be present in each type of system in order for them to function correctly.

The Spirit of Laws more or less invented political sociology. It is mostly about how large factors, like geography, impact cultures and thus lead the cultures towards specific political outcomes. This work had a great impact on the American revolution. Montesquieu spent twenty years working on it, and thus it covers a large variety of topics.

Sources

- *The Spirit of the Laws*, Thomas Nugent (trans.), New York: MacMillan, 1949.
- Bok, Hilary, "Baron de Montesquieu, Charles-Louis de Secondat", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = .

Marquis of Condorcet (1743-1794) French philosopher, mathematician and political scientist who had a large role in the French Revolution.

Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet was born September 17, 1743 in Ribemont-sur-Aisne, Picardy. His mother was Marie-Magdeleine Gaudry and his father was the Chevalier Antoine de Condorcet. Condorcet's father died within weeks of his birth in cavalry maneuvers. The family was a noble family from Dauphiné.

Condorcet received a religious education, first under the tutelage of a Jesuit teacher, and later at a Jesuit school, although he eventually criticized religious control of education. Instead, he supported a model of public, cooperative education. Condorcet studied ethics, metaphysics, logic, and mathematics at Collège de Navarre, within the University of Paris, between 1758 and 1760. During this time Condorcet met many esteemed and influential people who furthered his interest and talent in mathematical, scientific, and philosophic ideas.

In 1769 Condorcet received an appointment to the Royal Academy of Sciences, and in 1777 he became secretary of the Academy of Sciences. He received an appointment to the French Academy in 1782.

Condorcet turned to political reform in the 1770s, attempting to direct public administration to the public good, with an eye toward justice. Included in his reform interests were healthcare, education, human rights, and advocacy for women's rights. Condorcet implemented a social science methodology, utilizing a scientific model that he called "social arithmetic", to pursue reformation.

Condorcet married twenty-two year old Sophie de Grouchy in 1786 when he was forty-two years old. Condorcet and Grouchy held similar political and social convictions and met through shared judicial activism. Their relationship was said to be not only intellectual, but also very loving. The couple had a daughter, Louise Alexandrine de Condorcet, in 1790.

Although Condorcet already strived for implementation of minority and women's rights, his love for his wife and daughter deepened his convictions, as evidenced in his writings. "Condorcet's Testament (March 1794)" contains a testament to his daughter in which he praises Grouchy and provides loving advice for his daughter.

Condorcet died March 28, 1794.

Selected Works by Condorcet

- Baker, K. M., 1976, *Condorcet: Selected Writings*, Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill.
- Badinter, E. (ed.), 1988, *Correspondance inédite de Condorcet et Madame Suard, M. Suard et Garat (1771–1791)*, Élisabeth (ed.), Paris: Fayard.
- Condorcet, J.-A.-N., 1790a, "On giving Women the Right of Citizenship (1790)" in

McLean and Hewitt 1994: 335–340.

- —, 1790b, *The Life Of Voltaire: Translated From the French: In Two Volumes*. London: Robinson.
- —, 1955 [orig. 1795], *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*, trans. June Barraclough, intro. Stuart Hampshire. New York: Noonday Press.
- —, 1956, *La mathématique sociale de Marquis de Condorcet*, G. G. Granger (ed.), Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- —, 2012, *Écrits sur les États-Unis*, Guillaume Ansart (ed.), Paris: Classiques Garnier.

Works Cited

Landes, Joan, "The History of Feminism: Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [.](#)

Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793) was neither a radical political activist nor a trained philosopher. She started her life the provincial daughter of a butcher in Montauban, France and worked her way into higher society through, sequentially; marriage, charm, and wit. De Gouges did not begin her literary career until the age of 38, and her first forays were in writing plays for the theater. The French royal theater was unimpressed by her works and refused to perform them again and again (Brown 2001). She finally self-published a collection of her plays, memoirs, and musings in 1788. Though she is often viewed as an early abolitionist because of her play *Zamore et Mirza*, retitled *L'Esclavage des Nègres* in future republications, the sincerity of her dedication to the plight of the slaves has been called into question (Diamond 1994). After her lack of success in the theater, de Gouges began producing political pamphlets. Beginning with *Lettre au Peuple, ou projet d'une caisse patriotique* (Letter to the People, or Patriotic Purse Project) in 1788 and culminating with her best-known work *Rights of Woman* three years later, she wrote about topics from economic policies to women's education. De Gouges pushed for policy changes in a range of areas, however, they were primarily couched in patriotic support of the king. This loyalty to the crown led to her eventual arrest, conviction, and execution in the aftermath of the French Revolution (Cole 2011).

De Gouges most influential work *The Rights of Woman* is philosophically important because it took the universality of the rights declared in the new French constitution at face value and argued that they should naturally be extended to women. She agreed with her contemporary [Nicolas de Condorcet](#) who claimed that biological differences between the sexes were irrelevant to the issue of citizenship (Scott 2009). De Gouges focused on the idea that sentience, morality, and rationality should be the only qualifications needed to entitle people to equal rights and a place at the political table. In her political pamphlets, she argued for women's right to engage in the public sphere and be more than just passive citizens. Her discourse built upon the ideas explored by previous French philosophers like [Gabrielle Suchon](#), who argue for the rights of women to be educated in order to establish more economic independence. De Gouges thoughts also reflect the ideas of writers like [Mary Astell](#) who argued that women should be given consideration when philosophers like [John Locke](#) wrote treatises discussing the rights of man. This development of the concept of female agency and natural rights helped shape the future philosophical discourse on gender, representation, and liberty.

Birth, Sex, and Social Positioning

In her first foray into the political pamphlet- *Lettre au Peuple*, de Gouges encourages the people of France to offer King Louis VI voluntary taxes to shore up the national debt. Her tone is very deferential to the patriarchal society of the day. This shows in both her defense of the "paternal goodness" of the monarch, as well as her simpering characterizations of women as the "weakest part" of the public, and her sex as "justification" for any lack of energy in her arguments, *Lettre* shows de Gouges in the fetal stages of developing any true feminist philosophy. Scholars like Joan Scott (2009) have viewed this early allegiance to the Old Regime as indicative of de Gouges' desire for social and financial stability. Through her plays, de Gouges had raised rumors and speculation that she may have been the illegitimate child of a Marquis and therefore was of more noble blood than common. In arguing for a voluntary tax or a patriotic purse she is hoping to ensure a more stable financial future for the country and also for herself as a supporter of the Old Regime. De Gouges ends her letter to the people with a hint of the maturation of her feminist voice by claiming that her sex, though it is "so often accused of frivolity usually holds, nevertheless, very ingenious ideas," a few of which she presents in *The Rights of Woman*.

As Cole notes (2011) the early works of Olympe de Gouges were very traditional and conservative in keeping with the aristocratic sentiment of 1791. She warned against "the enthusiasts of liberty" and the idea that usurping sovereignty could lead to equality. Although she herself crafted an identity that was independent from any family name or husband's shadow, she still acted in a way that bolstered the political power of the established regime. In *The Rights of Woman*, de Gouges gives up her pre-revolutionary mindset and calls for an acknowledgment of natural rights for women, illegitimate children, and people of color. In so arguing, she calls for a national universal education, equal admission for women in employment positions, political power for all citizens, a redefinition of marriage laws, radical reforms of systems of property ownership and wealth distribution, and new inheritance customs. This philosophy of aggressive equality leads her to recommend that the new constitution be rejected if such liberties are not expressly given, since a "constitution is null, if a majority of the individuals who make up the Nation has not cooperated in drafting it". Her tone is fierce and emphatic when she cries "woman, wake up!" and urges all members of her sex to know their rights and break the fetters that the era of corruption has placed on them. Though the rhetoric is powerful it also is self-serving, and it is difficult to ever truly know the motivations of a philosophical chameleon-like de Gouges.

Any writer presenting themselves as a self-determined voice has to be viewed as a purposeful expression of self. Anachronistically, de Gouges seems to be a militant feminist who is an important voice in the history of feminist philosophy. It is difficult to recognize de Gouges as a distinct feminist figure without imposing upon her a persona that is contrary to who she presented herself as throughout her public writings. The progression of the public face of Olympe de Gouges is indicative of the reflexive nature of the de Gouges perspective. This self-descriptive and self-determining behavior is evident from the first plays de Gouges set forth for publication. From the onset of her engagement with the French National Theatre, de Gouges sought to present herself as a 'femme de lettres' worthy of acclaim and respect. She argued with the theatre, claiming that her piece titled *Zimora et Mizra* (Cole, 2011), a play about east Asian slaves who seek their freedom, was a work worthy of honor. Because the Theatre rejected the play, de Gouges took affront as an aristocratic patron. The play did not turn into an abolitionist piece until later iterations. After social outcries for the abolition of slavery occurred in 1793, Olympe changed the characters in her play to reflect the plight of the African slave. The change in this piece is indicative of de Gouges willingness to modify her persona with the whims of the times.

De Gouges' interaction with the royal theatre over the course of the next two years went from bad to worse, with the company eventually calling for her arrest (Brown 2001). However, de Gouges decided to break from traditional redresses to the theatrical declamations and give credit to her sex as a factor in her discrimination. In a new and innovative take on character defamation, de Gouges claimed that she was being discriminated against because she was a woman. Since she credited her gender as the reason she was maltreated by the royal players, de Gouges gained credit as a revolutionary in the feminist vein. After her tiff with the National Theatre was resolved, by Cardinal Richelieu declaring de Gouges in the right, it became far more feasible for de Gouges to enter into the political sphere with her philosophical pamphlets. She began her engagement in the public political space with another obsequious gesture towards the powers that be, by dedicating the preface of the *Rights of Women* to the Queen 'Marie Antionette, the darling of the 'ancien regime'.

De Gouges' self-styling over the course of her career can be read in many different ways. Though she altered her views toward monarchy, feminism, and abolitionism over during her literary life, it may be

deemed cynical to view her as an opportunist. It is valid, however, to see her ideology as mutable and changeable over her lifetime. Whether her feminist and abolitionist inclinations grew with the movement of the socio-political tides or changed because of a personal maturation cannot be known, however, the evolution of de Gouges ideology is very apparent over the course of her life.

Selected Works

De Gouges, O., *Les Droits de la Femme. The Rights of Woman*. 1791.

—, De Gouges. *Lettreau Peuple, ou projet d'une caisse patriotique*. 1788.

References

Brown, G., (2001). The Self-Fashionings of Olympe de Gouges (1784-1789). *French Revolutionary Culture* (Spring). No. 34, 3: 383-401.

Cole, J., (2001). *Between the Queen and the Cabby*. Montreal: MQUP. Print.

Diamond, M., (1994) The Revolutionary Rhetoric of Olympe de Gouges, *Feminist Issues*. No. 14, 1: 3-23.

Scott, J., (2009) *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man*. Boston: Harvard University Press. Print.

Philosophy

Descartes is widely regarded as a seminal thinker in the realm of epistemology, utilizing radical skepticism in an attempt to arrive at a fundamental level from which to build knowledge. The place his doubt led him was the seemingly indisputable (and now well-known) phrase: "I think, therefore I am." His system of deductive logic helped motivate his metaphysics as well, which is centered around a conception of the duality of body and mind. Descartes privileges the mind with the ability to attain knowledge, distinguishing between humans and animals on the basis of the former's capacity for thought and reason, an ability "specially created" by God. This reasoning is furthered in his explanations of knowledge as the result of conscious reasoning (presumably a uniquely human trait), rather than the passive sense perception available to more animals (Cottingham, 2013).

In addition to his influence as a philosopher, Descartes spent much of his time engaged in the natural sciences, especially regarding their theoretical framework. His philosophical methodology was put to good use, as he reduced distinctions between objects to observable differences in their structure or component parts, thus eliminating the need for forms or appeals to immaterial phenomena to explain the physical. The exception was in the case of thought, which he attributed to the design of God and thought to be inextricably linked to the physical mechanisms of human existence (Cottingham, 2013). However, the lack of detail in how the connection between thought and physical parts played out (in both this case and in his philosophy broadly) was a source of contention both during his lifetime and after, a discussion motivated in large by [Elisabeth of Bohemia](#).

The influence of Cartesian philosophy was widespread both spatially and temporally. Among the many philosophers who were influenced by Descartes' thought were [Mary Astell](#), who applied the focus on the rationality of humans to women specifically in her defense of their intellectual capacity, and [John Norris](#), who expanded upon Descartes' conception of the dualism of body and mind.

Selected Works

Descartes, René. "Discourse on method; and, Meditations on first philosophy." (1993).

Descartes, René. The philosophical writings of Descartes: Volume 3, the correspondence. Vol. 3. Cambridge University Press, 1984.

References

Descartes, René & Cottingham, John. René Descartes: Meditations on first philosophy: With selections from the objections and replies. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Samuel Clarke

Samuel Clarke (1675 – 1729), born in Norwich, England in 1675, was an English philosopher who was associated with the Anglican Clergy. Clarke's work mainly concerned itself with three major themes: Newtonianism, anti-naturalism, and rationalism. On scientific grounds, Clarke saw Newtonian natural philosopher to be the most superior ideology. He believes that the only thing with power to move matter was God. Nature is not self-sufficient, it must rely on a divine power to orchestrate its happenings. His belief in Newtonian natural philosopher countered the ideas of naturalists who describe the world as solely the arrangement and matter in motion. This theory, under a Newtonian lens, must give way to a world with an active God. Clarke aligns himself with rationalism because he values ethical truths and he accepts the fundamental rationalist principle, the principle of sufficient reason. However, Clarke was publicly critical of Descartes metaphysics of space and body. Through his association with Newton, he became a de facto spokesperson for Newtonianism in the eighteenth century.

One of Clarke's most often referenced and read works is his correspondence between Leibniz. They discussed a large and wide range of issues, for instance, space as sensorium, which Leibniz ridiculed.

Concerning Samuel Clarke's early life and upbringing, Clarke was born in Norwich, England, on October 11, 1675. He was the first son to his father, Edward Clarke, who was a representative in Parliament. In 1695, Clarke received his B.A. from Cambridge after he defended Newton's views. His work on created a translated version of [Rohault's *Treatise of Physic*](#) led to an expansion in the understanding of Newtonian physics. Throughout Clarke's career he attempted to prove the existence of God and to establish all fundamental moral truths and most religious doctrines. In Clarke's later years, he concerned himself mostly with works of theology, including transitions of a few of the greats. Samuel Clarke fell ill, proposed to be a stroke, and died rather abruptly in 1729.

Ethics

Samuel Clarke did a comparatively minor amount of work on the subject of ethics, but the most substantial amount of work that he did came forward in his second set of Boyle Lectures, *A Discourse Concerning the Unalterable Obligations of Natural Religion*. Clarke begins his disposition by aligning himself with the idea that "there are different relations among persons and that from these relations there arise a 'fitness' or 'unfitness' of behavior among persons." The common example given is that of the relationship between humans and God that is truly of infinite disproportion. Within this relationship, it is fit that we honor, worship, and imitate the Lord. Clarke saw that being rooted in necessary relations and ethical truths as a universal and necessary characteristic within rationality.

The main components of Samuel Clarke's rationalist ethics can be broken up into seven distinct parts. The first is that there for eternal and necessary differences of things, and from these differences arises an agreement of disagreement, or a fitness or unfitness upon the application of one onto another. The second holds that God wills us to act in accordance with eternal reasons. The third point outlines how all rational beings should choose to act according to reason, and that the human mind naturally aligns itself with the eternal Law of Righteousness. The fourth is that eternal law is put into our duty towards God, our duty to other humans, and our duty to ourselves (piety, righteousness, and sobriety). The fifth and sixth state that the eternal law of nature is prior to and independent of human interaction and of the will of God. The final, seventh, point is that the obligation that we humans have to follow this eternal law precedes all

consideration for private and personal reward or punishment.

Selected Works

Vailati, E. (1998). *A Demonstration of the Being and the Attributes of God*. Cambridge University Press (9-22)

References

Yenter, T., & Vailati, E. (2014, February 10). Samuel Clarke. Retrieved March 05, 2018, from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/clarke/#2>

The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. (2017, January 27). Samuel Clarke. Retrieved March 05, 2018, from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Samuel-Clarke>

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

Juana Ramirez de Asbaje, later known as Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, was born out of wedlock at the hacienda of San Miguel Nepantla in 1648. As a young child, she yearned to learn and go to school. Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz was very popular in the viceregal court and often called “the Tenth Muse” or “Phoenix of Mexico.” In 1669 she decided to join the convent of the Barefoot Carmelites then later joined the convent of Santa Paula of the order of San Jeronimo and that’s where she remained until her death. She died in 1695 while servicing her fellow nuns during a plague.

“La Respuesta de la poetisa a la muy ilustre Sor Filotea de la Cruz” is considered her most famous written document. She also wrote many songs, plays and poems. Her poetry was very personal and her most famous poem named “El Sueño” or also known as “Primero Sueño” was a 975 line poem.

“El Sueño” or “First I Dream” is Sor Juana’s longest poem. In this poem Sor Juana takes the reader on a magical ride of the retelling of her own dream. The poem is written in a silva form, which consists of seven or eleven syllable lines. The rhymes aren’t set in a sort of pattern and the lines are in unequal lengths. When reading this poem one can truly witness the intellect and creativity that Sor Juana possessed.

The poem is very personal to Sor Juana and she was able to weave her words and ideas in ways that pleased her. Since she was describing a dream, she was able to be very liberal in her text, seeing that dreams are abstract and have no right or wrong answers. She uses a lot of mythological creatures and stories to compare and contrast her own ideas. Compare to the mythological elements of the dream experienced by [Ji Xian](#) in "Record of Past Karma."

The poem is about a dreamer, Sor Juana, who starts her poem off by mentioning the night and the ambition the mind has to comprehend life. She goes on to talk about how the night affects all living creatures, causing them to fall under the deep spell of sleep. As the body lays to rest the soul takes flight on an ambitious adventure to understand the creation. The soul rises higher and higher until the mind is overwhelmed by the complexity of it all and before the mind can continue on its journey, the sun rises and the dreamer wakes up.

Selected works

- Stavans, Ilan. Introduction. *Poems, Protest, and a Dream*, by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, 1997, Penguin Group, pp. xi-xliii

References

- <https://www.enotes.com/topics/first-dream-sor-juana-ines-de-la-cruz>

History

Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada (1515-1582) was a Spanish nun and author to numerous religious works. Better known as Saint Teresa, she was the first woman to be honored with the title, doctor of the church. In 1535 she entered the Carmelite Convent of the Incarnation at Ávila. Soon after, she became ill and began to pray often. Oddly enough, after recovering her praying ceased. In 1555 Saint Teresa experienced a religious awakening. Her religious awakening inspired her to begin what is known as the Carmelite Reform.

St. Josephs was the first large accomplishment of the Carmelite Reform; St. Josephs was the first convent Saint Teresa opened. John Baptist Rossi, a priest, visited Avila and was moved by the reformation, and requested that she open more convents and to create monasteries. Throughout the rest of her life, she opened and cared for sixteen additional convents.

Saint Teresa of Avila was born into a time when the world was changing around her. She had a tough time deciding between a regular life or a religious one. When she did finally choose a religious life, she had trouble adapting because the convent was not the safe haven she thought it would be. She spent much of her time writing to escape the somewhat unruly behaviors of the convent.

Saint Teresa was a mystic, and most of her writings focused on the ascent of the soul in four stages. Her beliefs and ideas about God attempted to explain how the world around her functioned. Most of the souls ascent stages are categorized by the complete absorption of the love of God. Teresa's most prominent idea was that in order to fulfill your devotion to God, one had to achieve intellectual growth. [Descartes](#)' most influential and prominent works and ideas may have sprung from reading Teresa of Avila's works.

Philosophy

Though the aforementioned connection to [Descartes](#) does not seem to be confirmed, there is a striking similarity between [Descartes](#)' method and the words of Teresa. Kremer (2001) gives one of the sayings of the Saint: "the soul ought to always consider that only it and God are in the world." The sentiment seems to certainly be something [Descartes](#) would have appreciated (and perhaps been influenced by directly), both in his meditations through radical skepticism and his maintaining the primacy of God in his philosophy.

Interestingly, one of the major points brought up by a number of Teresian scholars is her non-conformity to the standards of writing in her day. According to Weber (1996), Teresa's spelling and syntax indicated a "conformity to oral pronunciation rather than the written norms," and she "explicitly disavow[ed]...literary pretensions" due to her "ill health and economic worries" leading her to have little time to "revise or even reread what she had written." While perhaps not an explicit expression of her philosophy, it does seem to imply that she placed greater importance on the ideas themselves over the system under which they were communicated.

Weber takes this focus on writing style in a different direction, focusing instead on how her writing potentially reflects her views on femininity. Weber references the volume of self-deprecatory remarks in

Teresa's work, an unusually large amount "even for the text of a canonized saint." Though it seems unlikely that Teresa actually thought of herself as "the most wretched person on earth," Weber suggests that her use of self-deprecation was not solely a rhetorical device. Rather, this was Teresa's commentary not on the state of women, but on how "she believed women were *perceived* to speak." Perhaps, suggests Weber, this followed in part from her being in a difficult position socially, writing about mysticism as a "woman in Counter-Reformation Spain." In order to lessen the controversy surrounding her work, she may have adopted a more traditionally acceptable perspective, but not without some implicit reflection on the methods she was coerced into adopting.

References

http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=208

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-teresa-of-avila/>

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Saint Teresa of Ávila." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 30 Jan. 2009. www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Teresa-of-Avila.

Kremer, E. J. (2001). *The problem of evil in early modern philosophy*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press.

Weber, A. (1996). *Teresa of Avila and the rhetoric of femininity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Thomas Burnet

Tullia d'Aragona

Tullia d'Aragona (1510-1556) is one of the best known women writers of the Renaissance. She was born in Rome, known then as the "city of women" for its thriving prostitution industry. Tullia's mother, Giulia Campana, was a courtesan. Her alleged father, Roman cardinal Luigi d'Aragona, provided for Tullia's education. Although she was known to be highly intelligent and musically talented, Tullia's station in life was determined by her mother's courtesan status, and Tullia followed in her mother's profession. Her writings suggest that she was dissatisfied with the courtesan lifestyle, but she nonetheless became known as the "courtesan poet" and was admired for her writing by other well-known poets and philosophers.

Tullia provided financial support to her mother and younger sister, Penelope. Because of the age-difference between Tullia and Penelope, approximately 20-25 years, some scholars posit that Penelope was not actually her sister, but instead her daughter. Penelope died at age thirteen.

In 1543, Tullia married Silvestro Guicciardi of Ferrara in Siena. Not much is known about the marriage. Tullia had a son, Celio, but because he was under the care of Pietri Chiocca in 1556, it is not clear that Guicciardi is the father. Tullia's marriage to Guicciardi enabled her to live outside the neighborhood assigned for prostitutes, as well as to discard the designated clothing distinguishing courtesans from noblewomen.

Tullia died in Rome in 1556.

Selected Works

- *Rime della signora Tullia d'Aragona e di diversi a lei* (1547)
- *Dialogo dell'Infinità d'Amore* (1547)
- *Il Meschino, o il Guerino* (1560)

Prelude to *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love* (*Dialogo dell'Infinità d'Amore*)

Dialogue on the Infinity of Love (*Dialogue*) was published in 1547 by the Venetian publishing house of Giolito de' Ferrari.

Tullia's discourse on love is a response to and expansion of other writer's works on love. Among these are the following:

- *Gli Asolani* (1505) by Peitro Bembo
- *The Book of the Courtier* by Baldesar Castiglione
- *Book on the Nature of Love* (1525) by Mario Equicola
- *On Beauty and Love* (1531) by Agostino Nifo
- *Dialogues on Love* (1535) Leone Ebreo
- *Dialogue on Love* (1542) by Sperone Speroni
- *Conversation Whereby Young People are Taught the Fine Art of Loving* (1545) by Francesco

Sansovino

Many of the treaties on love published at the time drew from the conceptual work of Marsilio Ficino on “Platonic love.” Ficino’s theory unified Platonism with Christianity and proposed a humanistic view of love as the harmonizing force. “Love is the universal force binding the world and the divinity together, for God has created the world and governs it through an act of love, and through love the world returns to the godhead. Similarly the human soul follows an itinerary that goes from love of earthly beauty to the ecstatic contemplation of the divine.” (Russell, 1997, p. 26)

These works were a response to a pressing concern, i.e. the great need to satisfactorily bring together both secular and religious values, in relation to private behaviors, to meet the moral doctrines of the church. Various questions, such as *which kinds of love preserve the moral well-being of lovers* (*Gli Asolini*) are considered, typically in dialogue form. (Russell, 1997, p. 28) Transcendence (*The Book of the Courtier*), love of both body and soul (*Book on the Nature of Love*), and sensual desire and beauty guiding the soul through sensation to sexual completion (*On Beauty and Love*) are common themes in the works.

Tullia d’ Aragona’s *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*

Tullia’s *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love* (*Dialogue*) pushes against the predominate Platonic theme found in other works on Love. For the Platonists, knowledge is innate, i.e. it is found within the soul by way of the universal forms. The human body is a dualistic entity: it is composed of both matter and spirit (soul), where gross matter distances the spirit from the pure forms. Bodily sensations arising from touch, smell, and taste (the lower senses) prohibit man’s spiritual progression toward God, whereas sensations arising from hearing, sight, and reason (the higher senses) can bring a man closer to God because these can perceive spiritual things. Human love is predominately of the first, lower sensory type, and thus hinders man from contemplating the purest form, God. Women, in Renaissance Platonism, are essentially different than men, and they represent the enticements of the lower senses that must be abolished as a man grows in his love for God.

Knowledge, on the [Aristotelian](#) account, arises from sense perception and experience. Further, the human is composed of matter and form, where the soul (*de anima*) is a binding force or entity; the human body, then, is a unity as opposed to a dualistic entity. Such an epistemology implies that knowledge of the sacred, or God, will be found through both spiritual and sensual means.

Tullia’s *Dialogue* opens with the question “Is it possible to love within limits?” (p. 58) The dialogue takes place between the characters Benedetto Varchi, Signor Lattanzio Benucci, Tullia, and another unidentified gentleman. Varchi begins his response by defining the terms *limit* and *end*, and *love* and *to love*. His Aristotelian argumentative method leads to discussion of matter and form, accident and substance, causation and infinity- concluding with the idea that love is infinite. Tullia, however, is unpersuaded by Benucci’s deductive methods and argues that, by way of Aristotelian principle, *love* cannot be infinite because there is not such thing as *infinity*. The dialogue turns to *actuality* and *potentiality*, wherein love is potentially infinite, but not actually infinite. Continued discussion includes premises involving *time* and *motion*, as well as the Philosopher’s (i.e. Aristotle) concept of the Prime Mover. Tullia uses a contradiction- that love is both infinite and not infinite- to claim that,

“Love is infinite potentially—not in actuality—for it is impossible to love with an end in sight. In other words,

the desires of people in love are infinite, and they can never settle down after achieving something. This is because after obtaining it, they long for something else, and something else again, and something more after that. They can never be satisfied [...].” (p. 84)

Finally, Tullia tells Varchi that his mistake was in assuming that love is a singular thing, that there can be no distinctions in kind. Of this distinction, she claims that,

“[...] love is of two types. We shall call the first ‘vulgar’ or ‘dishonest’ love, the other ‘honest,’ that is to say, virtuous. Dishonest love—which is found only in vulgar and low-minded individuals, that is, in those whose souls are low and vile, who lack virtue or refinement, whether they come from noble or insignificant stock—is generated by a desire to enjoy the object that is loved, and its goal is none other than that of common animals. They simply want to obtain pleasure and to procreate something that resembles themselves, without any further thought or concern.”... (p. 89 – 90)

as opposed to honest love, which she says is,

“[...] characteristic of noble people, people who have a refined and virtuous disposition, whether they be rich or poor, is not generated by desire, like the other, but by reason. It has as its main goal the transformation of oneself into the object of one’s love, with the desire that the loved one be converted into oneself, so that the two may become one or four.” (p. 90)

Tullia states that the “transformation” occurs on a “spiritual plane,” and thus with the spiritual, or higher senses. But because the lover desires a “corporeal union,” as well, “and since this corporeal unity can never be attained, because it is not possible for human bodies to be physically merged into one another, the lover can never achieve this longing of his, and so will never satisfy his desire.” (p. 90) She concludes, therefore, that “he cannot love without a limit.” (p. 90)

References

- Curtis-Wendlandt, L. (2004, Fall). Conversing on Love: Text and Subtext in Tullia d'Aragona's Dialogo della Infinità d'Amore. *Hypatia*, 19(4), 75-94.
- d'Aragona, T. (1997). *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*. (R. R. Merry, Ed., & R. R. Merry, Trans.) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- d'Aragona, T. (2005). *Sweet Fire: Tullia d'Aragona's Poetry of Dialogue and Selected Prose*. (E. A. Pallitto, Ed., & E. A. Pallitto, Trans.) New York, NY: George Braziller, Inc.
- Hairston, J. (n.d.). *Aragona, Tullia 'd*. Retrieved from Italian Women Writers: <https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/IWW/BIOS/A0004.html>

Voltaire (Francois-Marie d'Arouet)

François-Marie d'Arouet, also known as Voltaire, was born in 1694 to a well-to-do Parisian family. His father was a public official, his mother was aristocratic, and due to the family's social standing he was provided prosperity and political favor. Voltaire was classically educated by the Jesuits at the Collège Louis-le-Grand in Paris. Inspired by [Molière](#), Racine, and Corneille, Voltaire wished to be a writer, and particularly a playwright. He took to satirical writing, by which his brilliance led to being banished from Paris multiple times. At age 19, Voltaire went into exile in Holland. In his mid-twenties he spent nearly a year in the Bastille. During this time, Voltaire established himself as an exceptional playwright, dominating the French stage for 50 years.

Voltaire was exiled to England after serving a second imprisonment in the Bastille. English culture provided him with the tools to expand his intellectual domain, wherein he immersed himself in the new science and philosophy as represented by [Newton](#) and [Locke](#). These ideas were influential in his writings, which now included not only plays, but also historical works, novels, biographies, open letters, critical reviews, and pamphlets. Voltaire's works were popularized due to his intelligence and wit.

Much of Continental Europe was undergoing a revolutionary, liberal change of thought due to oppression by Church and State. Many intellectual liberals, including Voltaire, thought that reason, along with individual rights, could be harnessed to overthrow conformism and blind obedience to authority and tradition. He held that violence beyond censorship, imprisonment, and exile was not necessary to attain the desired results. Many of Voltaire's followers disagreed, holding that revolutionary violence was indeed necessary to bring about the values of the Enlightenment. In this way, Voltaire came to be viewed as one of the founders of revolutionary thinking, especially in France.

Voltaire died in Paris in 1778.

Voltaire's Philosophy and Candide

Candide, published in 1759, was a work of fictional satire that heavily explored Voltaire's philosophical leanings. Voltaire published Candide in response to [Leibniz'](#) "Monadology", additionally influenced by several historical tragedies that disillusioned Voltaire. The reason he felt an urge to respond to Leibniz was due to Leibniz' theory of Optimism, which essentially argues that all occurrences are for the best because god is benevolent. To Leibniz, the existence of evil implies that god is either not all good or not all powerful, so the world must be perfect as it is. Voltaire also critiques abstract philosophical thinking that can often be detached from true facts of life. This leads him to simplify common contemporary philosophies and critique them. Ultimately, the novel argues that the world is unjust, and that shallow optimism leads to inaction in the face of injustice.

Voltaire's proposed alternative to Optimism is left unclear. He certainly values a more pragmatic outlook,

however, whether he ultimately is sympathetic towards pessimism is unclear. The alternative to this interpretation is that Voltaire believes in Meliorism, and advocates for attempts to improve the world through slow progress rather than turning away from the inevitable misery of society.

Selected Works

Theater

- The Works of Voltaire: A Contemporary Version, William F. Fleming (ed. and tr.), New York: E.R. Du Mont, 1901. [Complete edition available at the [Online Library of Liberty](#)]
- Seven Plays (Mérope (1737), Olympia (1761), Alzire (1734), Orestes (1749), Oedipus (1718), Zaire, Caesar), William Fleming (tr.), New York: Howard Fertig, 1988.

History

- The Age of Louis XIV (1733) and other Selected Writings, J.H. Brumfitt (ed.), New York: Twayne, 1963.
- History of Charles XII, King of Sweden (1727), Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 2002.
- The Philosophy of History (1764), New York: The Philosophical Library, 1965.

Essays, Letters, and Stories

- The Complete Tales of Voltaire, William Walton (tr.), 3 vols., New York: Howard Fertig, 1990.
- The English Essays of 1727, David Williams and Richard Walker (eds.), Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1996.
- Epistle of M. Voltaire to the King of Prussia (1738), Glasgow, 1967.
- The History of the Travels of Scarmentado (1756), Glasgow: The College Press, 1969.
- Micromégas and other Short Fictions (1738), Theo Cuffe and Haydn Mason (eds.), London and New York: Penguin Books, 2002.
- The Princess of Babylon (1768), London: Signet Books, 1969.
- The Virgin of Orleans, or Joan of Arc (1755), Howard Nelson (tr.), Denver: A. Swallow, 1965.
- Voltaire. Essay on Milton (1727), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954.
- Voltaire's Romances, New York: P. Eckler, 1986.
- Zadig, or L'Ingénu (1757), London: Penguin Books, 1984.
- Zadig, or the Book of Fate (1757), New York: Garland, 1974.
- Zadig, or The Book of Fate an Oriental History (1757), Woodbridge, CT: Research Publications, 1982.

Politics

- The Calas Affair: A Treatise on Tolerance (1762), Brian Masters (ed.), London: The Folio Society, 1994.
- The Sermon of the Fifty (1759), J.A.R. Séguin (ed.), Jersey City, NJ: R. Paxton, 1963.
- A Treatise on Toleration and Other Essays, Joseph McCabe (ed.), Amherst, NY: Prometheus

Books, 1994.

- A Treatise on Tolerance and other Writings. Edited by Brian Masters. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994
- Voltaire. Political Writings. Edited by David Williams. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994

Editions of Major Individual Works

- The Elements of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy (1738; 2nd expanded ed. 1745)
- Philosophical Dictionary (1752)
- Philosophical Letters (Letters on the English Nation, Letters on England) (1734)
- Voltaire's Letters on the Quakers (1727), Philadelphia: William H. Allen, 1953.
- Candide, or Optimism (1758).

References

1. Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm von. Essays of Theodicy on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil. Trans. F.M. Huggard. Ed. Austin Farrer. London: Routledge, 1952
2. Jaffee, Valerie, and Selena Ward. Candide, Voltaire. Spark Pub., 2002.
3. Shank, J.B., "Voltaire", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [.](#)
4. [Magee, B., The Story of Philosophy. \(1998\). DK Publishing, New York.](#)

Wang Duanshu (1621 – after 1701) was a Chinese philosopher, poet, painter, anthologist, and ardent Ming loyalist writer. Wang's most notable work began as a project with her husband in 1639 and would finally be published in 1667 as *Mingyuan shiwei* (Classic poetry of famous women). *Mingyuan shiwei* contained roughly fifteen hundred poems written by over one thousand different women. Wang's "Organizing Principles," found within *Mingyuan shiwei*, provides a methodological framework for creating anthologies. *Yinhong ji* (Writings of the fall) is a collection of Wang's prose and poetry published between 1651 and 1655. *Yinhong ji* stood out among the writings of other women of the time due to its focus on Ming loyalism rather than love. Despite being a Ming loyalist, she could be considered one of the most accomplished women of the Qing and was even summoned to be a tutor of women by the Qing court, although she vehemently refused.

Wang's father recognized her brilliance at an early age. Judging her to be a better reader than any of his sons, he sent her to be tutored with her brothers. Wang was quick to master writing, painting, and other scholarly skills, but was substandard at "normal" female accomplishments like embroidery or other domestic skills. When Wang was a child she enjoyed nontraditional activities such as gathering her mother, sisters, and the maids together to drill them in military formations. Wang married Ding Shengzhao, her childhood betrothal. Wang never seems to have borne a child. Instead she sold her own jewelry to pay for the bride price of a concubine. Wang adopted the daughter provided by the concubine. Although Wang was well known during her time for her writings and paintings, most of her work has not survived to today other than the titles. Even worse, everything from the last 30 years of her life has apparently been lost to time.

Organizing Principles

Mingyuan shiwei (1667) was a landmark for anthologies of women's writings. It would not be until 1831, with [Yun Zhu](#)'s *Guochao guixiu zhengshi ji*, that another anthology of similar ambition would be published. Within *Mingyuan shiwei*, Wang Duanshu established a methodological framework for creating anthologies and titled it her "Organizing Principles." This entry will serve to highlight some of the notable parts rather than providing a comprehensive restating of the list.

Wang begins by pointing out that convention has typically seen men gathering and editing the works of women. Wang feels that it would be wrong for a woman to try to critique the works of men. Similarly Wang suggests that a woman would likely be better at highlighting the good in the writing of other women. Wang includes commentary on every entry. She attempts to give details about the life and family of each writer and left blanks when she didn't have information in hopes that it would be filled in later. Wang asserts that "Poems are preserved around people. (Mann and Cheng 2001: 189)" Although anthologies are understood as collections of writings, the true value to Wang seems to be the preservation of the writers. For individuals where she had access to a multitude of work she would select the best from among them. For individuals with work that may only have half a remaining poem, Wang would still include their work for the purpose of preserving whatever she could of that individual writer. Wang's dedication to preserving individual writers goes so far as to see her including their work "even if it is defective. (Mann and Cheng 2001: 190)"

When evaluating the writings to decide which to include, Wang argued that censorship should not occur

for almost any reason including vulgarity, absurdity, high mindedness, and other typical reasons works might be disregarded. Wang toiled to ensure that the edited works remained as close to the original words as possible. However, in instances where the original meaning was at odds with the original words as now understood, staying true to the original meaning takes precedence and warrants an alteration.

Wang asserted that literary talent was widespread amongst women and included a request in *Mingyuan shiwei* for readers to submit writings that she didn't have. Wang felt that women had countless obstacles to overcome in order to get any of their writing beyond the inner chamber where they spent the majority of their existence on domestic tasks. So great was Wang's dedication to the preservation of the writers that she included an entire chapter of omitted poems. This chapter is purely names of famous writers whose works had been lost or were so badly damaged that Wang couldn't even recover a defective partial. Wang felt that the suppression of women's writing was so widespread that simply having the names of women who had been writers would be useful to create a more complete picture of women's contributions and capabilities.

Biographies as a Moral Pedagogy

The fall of the Ming Empire in 1644 was a devastating occurrence for Wang Duanshu. In *The Analects of Confucius*, loyalty is repeatedly stressed as one of the most important principles. Wang's writings, especially in *Yinhong ji*, indicate that she was fiercely loyal to the Ming. This can be easily seen in her poetry and prose, but perhaps a more uncommon and interesting form of expressing loyalty to the previous ruling dynasty came in her writing of biographies. Between 1648 and 1649, Wang wrote six biographies. At the time she and her husband were in financial ruin. Following the collapse of the Ming, Wang found herself living a now reclusive and impoverished life. Writing the biographies was a way for her to escape her depression without attending to typical household duties. [Zhang Dai](#), a member of her husband's poetry society, repeatedly requested copies of the biographies. Wang eventually relented and they were published in Zhang's *Shigui shu* [Stone chest writings](1665).

The Beggar of Nanking was a biography about an unknown beggar in the fourth month of 1644. While out begging, he learns from a scholar that the Chongzhen emperor hanged himself. Clearly distraught, the beggar acquires a bottle of wine via the good graces of a merchant and drinks the whole thing in one swig. He then walks to the nearby river and wails that "The Chongzhen emperor is really dead. (Mann and Cheng 2001: 186)" He beats his chest, kowtows repeatedly, and then steps into the river and dies. Wang ends the biography with the suggestion from an unnamed source that the beggar puts each individual serving two dynasties to shame. So great was Wang's concern for loyalty, that she suggests joining the emperor in suicide is more honorable than serving the Qing. Wang lives out this claim when she refuses to serve the Qing as a court tutor even while in financial ruin.

The biography of *Guan Shaoning* tells the story of two men who both demonstrated excellence early in life. Guan lived a highly influential and impressive life prior to the Qing conquest of the Ming. The Qing instituted an order that all males should cut their hair. Guan refused. Another man who had a similar background surrendered to the Qing, changed his name, and became the official of the Guan's home territory. The official issued a false summons to attract the Ming loyalists for the purpose of public

discussion. When Guan and others arrived they found themselves beset by Qing soldiers and in the presence of dozens of Ming loyalists who had already been shaved. Guan cursed loudly and refused to submit to the Qing. Guan was executed. Tears were shed by people of all types when Guan died and he received posthumous recognition. The other man remains unnamed and serves as Wang's reference point for how one never truly knows another person until that person is dead. The official who turned to serve the Qing turns out to have been a man in her husband's examination class who was highly praised for his integrity. Again Wang uses biography as a way to express approbation of loyalty.

Views on Poetry

Wang Duanshu had an unusually successful career in writing and poetry. She was even characterized as an "honorary man." Duanshu was very passionate about poetry and held high standards as to what qualities make a good poem. A good poem should, "vividly depict scenes and one's feelings" and be "unpretentious yet profound (Yang 14)." The heart of poetry is one of Duanshu's most fundamental beliefs regarding good poetry. A heart is what sets apart a good poem from a bad poem. Flaunting your knowledge or skills and lack of poetic form suppresses the heart. Shallow writers exhaust clichés, a good poem will contain the writer's feelings and encompass concealed meaning outside the literal.

Wang Duanshu preferred the ancient style of poetry. Modern poetry boasted too much of the poet's knowledge. "Later, weak and decadent poems became popular. It is difficult to find a person who could save the corrupted generation of poetry (Duanshu)." This is where her encouragement of female poets came in. To Duanshu, women were more humble and unpretentious, their poetry upheld the grace of ancient poetry. It was their poetry that could save the classics during the crisis. Her belief in female poetry was so strong that she considered it to be the origin of lyric poetry. Women's poetry played a role as substantial as the [Confucian](#) classics. For the reason that women played such an insignificant part in history, Wang Duanshu had a piece of advice for female poets. They should avoid sexual, mournful, and complaints in their lines; ill-intended people could use it against women by disparaging their morals. She did however urge women to rise above their typical gender roles in poetry in order to outshine their mundane existence. She viewed anybody who had the ability to transcend their typical roles as exceptional.

The heart of Wang Duanshu is fully on display in her poem "Lament" from *Yinhong ji*. Wang vividly depicts scenes reflecting the hardships endured by the people when the Qing dynasty came to power in 1644. Much of the content of "Lament" seems to directly reflect Wang's experiences, but some of it may be from a more generalized point of view.

"Lament" begins with Wang reminiscing of the time before 1644. It is a prosperous, calm, unhurried setting. The arrival of the Qing forces Wang and those loyal to the Ming to abandon their riches and their way of life. Many of their leaders fled into exile. Those still loyal to the Ming were forbidden from sleeping in private homes. Wang describes waking by a river with her clothes drenched and being forced to gather her family to march under the direction of the overthrowing military. As the sun would rise, her clothes would remain drenched as they became infused with sweat. Wang and the other loyalists were force marched until their skin began to crack and the heels of their shoes had split open.

As things get to their absolute worse conditions and despair seems inevitable, the loyalists' hearts burn with

thoughts of their parents. This filial loyalty inspires them to face any threat, even death itself, while seeking to return to their parents' homeland. As they ran out of resources and felt overwhelmed by their prospects, Wang points out that each of them secretly revels in their lives having been saved. Lives were greatly changed, but they were still lived by the survivors. For Wang, poems and books are a source of enrichment at times where it feels like the entire world is in pain.

Selected Works

Yinhong ji (1651 – 1655)

Mingyuan shiwei (Completed 1664, Published 1667)

Shigui shu (1665) [Contains the six biographies by Wang Duanshu]

References

Chang, Kang-i Sun, et al. *Women Writers of Traditional China: an Anthology of Poetry and Criticism*. Stanford University Press, 2001.

Edited by Susan Mann and Yu-Yin Cheng (2001). *Under Confucian Eyes: Writings on Gender in Chinese History*. 178 - 194

Yang, Haihong. *Women's Poetry and Poetics in Late Imperial China a Dialogic Engagement*. Lexington Books, 2017.

Wanyan Yun Zhu

Wanyan Yun Zhu (1771-1833) was a literary critic and compiler, practiced painter and poet, and had a mastery of Chinese classics. She was born in Yanghu county in Changzhou prefecture and was brought up in an atmosphere of Confucian and Daoist principles upheld by her family of elite and distinguished literati. She was named by her grandmother –Lady Tang, who dreamt on the occasion of her birth that a woman gifted Yun Zhu a pearl of magnificent brilliance, in light of which, she was named Zhu, meaning "Pearl". Dreams served as a resource for Yun Zhu's work, as she would go on to report and draw on them frequently later in life.

Due to her background and the motivations of her father, Yun Zhu was traditionally and highly educated alongside her brothers. Later in life, she was married to a Manchu aristocrat with whom she shared four children, one being Wanyan Linqing (1791-1846). During her marriage, having been responsible for the upbringing of her children and household management, she was less inclined to write as she had throughout her upbringing. However, after the passing of her husband –she was 49 at the time, she returned to her intellectual roots.

The translated title of her most renowned work is *Women's Poetry: Anthology for a Correct Beginnings*, or sometimes titled *Correct Beginnings: Poems by the Flower of Womanhood of our Dynasty*. In line with mid-Qing dynasty women's writing, Yun Zhu compiled poetry which reflected the moral and intellectual duty of women according to Chinese classical studies, including the *Four Books*, the *Classic of Filial Piety*, the *Book of Odes*, and the *Erya* lexicon. Works were vetted based on both the appropriateness of the content –anything which was sensual or erotic in any sense was discarded, and the chastity of the author. Compare with [Wang Duanshu's](#) "Organizing Principles" where a more liberal approach to anthologies is espoused.

Yun Zhu advocated for the education of women, specifically in poetry. She firmly believed that at the base of poetry was a mastery of its technical elements and a "correct beginning". Her ideology was key to combatting those who claimed women should be barred from practicing poetry concerned that they would pollute the art with artistic woefulness and self-indulgence; her belief was that if they were taught it correctly in the first place, then women would not be suspect of defiling the practice.

Zhang Dai

Zou