Substance and Context

The Brown University Women Writers Project (WWP) seeks funding for a collaborative research effort aimed at uncovering and analyzing the reception of women's writing in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in the transatlantic literary culture of Britain and America. The collaborators on this project will gather detailed primary source evidence of the reception history of a broad cross-section of women's writing from this period, and produce a set of articles exploring in detail how reading and reception—both public and private—shape the climate and cultural geography of literary culture. These articles, and the primary source reception data, will be published on an open-access model as part of Women Writers Online (http://www.wwp.brown.edu).

The WWP began with the mission of correcting a fundamental blind spot in literary scholarship: the existence, scope, and nature of women's writing before the Victorian period. That blind spot has now been to a significant extent corrected, both through the efforts of projects like the WWP (and similar digital projects such as the Victorian Women Writers Project, the Emory Women Writers Resource Project, Project Orlando, and many others[1]) and most significantly through the teaching and scholarship of the last two decades that draws on these source materials. Women's writing is now much more widely taught and studied: women's texts are a visible presence in the classroom[2] and in the discourse of modern scholarship. However, the landscape of women's writing as represented in syllabi, conference papers, and publications is not by any means an accurate or cross-sectional picture of the landscape for contemporary readers. By their nature, scholarship and teaching work selectively and focus on the notable, on what responds to modern scholarly interests and pedagogical themes. The laudable effort to illustrate the high quality of women's writing and place it in dialogue with the works of the male canon has tended to single out female authors whose work lends itself to comparison: Cary with Shakespeare, Cavendish with the Restoration playwrights, Haywood with Defoe, Smith with Wordsworth and Scott. To some extent the logic of academic publishing has worked along the same lines to reinforce an emphasis on authors who already hold a secure place in the post-canonical canon.

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[1] For information on the Victorian Women Writers Project, see http://www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp/. For information on the Emory Women Writers Resource Project, see http://womenwriters.library.emory.edu/. For information on Project Orlando, see http://www.ualberta.ca/ORLANDO/.
[2] To be more precise: women's texts are now readily available to all teachers who wish to incorporate these materials into their courses.

Through this focus on notable, namable authors modern scholarship has reclaimed a history of women's writing, while writing that history as a sequence of worthies.[3] This emphasis has also reinforced the uncomfortable or scandalous question of quality: the grounds on which recovery proceeds are understood to be the literary value of women's writing. Even though to a significant extent the critical ground has shifted to emphasize the influence of women's writing (and of writing more generally) on the discursive field,[4] the effect of this focus on selected authors is nonetheless to foreground questions of quality and to refer them to modern taste. The examination of history is thus directed implicitly towards an end of canon-building, even if the avowed intention is a broader reclamation. This history obscures—or at least does not yet reveal—several important dimensions of knowledge that our proposed research would explore.

The first obscuration affects our view of class, where this can also be understood as markers of literary value; although scholarship on women's writing has been careful to attend to issues of class, it nonetheless has focused on genres that are marked by their authors and by publication context as high (whether authentically or by some exertion that does not go unmarked). When Phillis Wheatley's poems are published, it is under cover of an introductory statement that remarks on the achievement as being, in effect, beyond her station and requiring external authentication. Yet a significant portion of women's writing—*literate*, as opposed to *literary*, cultural production—is in less socially ambitious modes: commonplace books, spiritual autobiography, occasional verse, letters, and other forms that circulated more informally (and yet no less prolifically and significantly) than the more familiar and widely taught and studied texts. Little attention has been paid to what Karen Weyler recently observed as the "complex negotiations by which by which persons of less privilege…participated in publishing".[5]

A second blind spot concerns an understanding of literary history (or cultural history) from the perspective of its accumulation as the lived experience of the literary past that informs a current literary moment. We understand and experience literary history now as the total accumulation of authors and their relations that strikes us as we look back over time, but we don't have good ways of seeing, for instance, the late 18th century from

3 On the model, for instance, of a series like Masters of British Literature (Pearson Longman, 2008) in which Aemilia Lanyer, Mary Wroth, Isabella Whitney, Katherine Philips, Margaret Cavendish, and other authors join seamlessly the more familiar history of "classic works".
4 See for instance Jane Tomkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (Oxford, 1985).
5 Karen Weyler, "A Different Feminist Scholarship: Research Challenges in Eighteenth-Century America", *Early American Literature* 44:2 (2009), 420.

the perspective of the early 19th century, and this is particularly true for women's writing: we have very little information on how the reading public viewed the female authors of previous generations, or to what extent women's writing tended to endure culturally at all over time.

A third area of neglect is an understanding of the locatedness of women's writing, not simply as a function of the author's own location in physical and cultural space, but also as a set of vectors connecting her, her writings, her readers, and the cultural spaces in which they circulate. Our reading of the political or historical interventions made by individual texts—in order to really illuminate that politics or history—needs to read these vectors and interstitial spaces as well as the texts themselves (what they can tell us as literary artifacts or as biographical or historical or political narratives).

This research study seeks to produce an analysis in which these missing dimensions are methodologically central. Centering its emphasis on a period when the thematics of space and cultural identity are particularly vivid—the period from roughly 1770-1830 which saw the establishment of the American republic, the formation of a nascent British imperial identity, and the emergence of a transatlantic literary scene—we will explore a way of reading the publication and reception of women's writing that foregrounds the cultural and discursive space in which this writing circulated, with the goal of producing a more nuanced and more deeply contextualized understanding of both individual works and authors and of the role they played in the public discourse.

Our research will explore three important issues. The first of these arises from current scholarly interest in understanding national literature as itself an inherently transnational or extra-national subject. As Heidi Brayman Hackel and Catherine E. Kelly have argued, women's reading practices play a critical role in our understanding of an emerging transatlantic cultural economy: "Precisely because women's reading was so closely connected to the emergence of the modern world, it defied the boundaries of emergent nations, complicating the creation of national cultures on both sides of the Atlantic."[6] Against a literary history (concretized for several generations by firm boundaries between American and British focus within English departments) that emphasizes the separateness of British and American writing traditions and remarks on transnational connections as a kind of special case, more recent scholarship has begun to take a more transnational view of what Leonard Tennenhouse calls the "ongoing yet

[6] Heidi Brayman Hackel and Catherine E. Kelley, *Reading Women: Literacy, Authorship, and Culture in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 5.

changing relation" between the American and British traditions: in his terms, a "diaspora" marked not by any kind of clean break but rather by a continued engagement with questions of identity, language, filiation, and cultural continuity.[7] If part of the question here is how these writing traditions operated and evolved as (to paraphrase Benedict Anderson) "imagined *literary* communities," then reception and particularly reviewing contributes a key dimension, not least because reviews transact a relation not only between text and readership, but also potentially between readerships situated differently with respect to national and cultural context. As Brayman Hackel and Kelly argue, "readers and especially texts moved from center to periphery and back again....Texts and readers moved with the market, circulating through a protean market economy that was explicitly transatlantic, even global" (6). The reprinting of a British review in an American periodical (as was common in the early period with which we are concerned) relocates its critical language and authority, in ways that do not constitute a simple replication of that authority; the same review can mean two very different things when considered as an international phenomenon, and can function as a complex kind of cultural transaction *between* the national contexts rather than being simply constitutive of them.

Within this framework, we seek to understand the distinctive situation of women's writing and its reception, particularly given that women's identity as citizens and the kinds of locatedness that are imputed to them in virtue of their gender may complicate their participation in the cultural transactions suggested above. A case like Phillis Wheatley, whose race figures so substantially in her reception, is only an intensification of this marking; but does coloniality operate for women writers in a similar manner, to identify a specific space for their writing within this transnational context? To what extent do they or can they assume the dominant rhetorical and generic modes and what is the cultural effect (in terms of critical response) when they do so?

These questions suggest a second thread of inquiry, in which we explore more specifically how reception operates and in particular how periodical reviews in this period imagine the relationship between the local space of writing (an author's situatedness within a specific region or nation) and the increasingly national and transnational space of reading? On what stage are women writers presumed to be

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[7] Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Importance of Feeling English: American Literature and the British Diaspora*, 1750-1850 (Princeton, 2007), 1. Other important contributions to this line of inquiry are Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830* (Johns Hopkins, 1998) and Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford, 1992).

performing, and what are the consequences for their reception? Reciprocally, how do reviews work to constitute for women authors a sense of a reading public, and to what extent is that public itself constituted as a located, situated readership or as more broadly construed and geographically vague (or far-flung)? As Michael Warner has observed, the geographical displacement that characterizes colonial spaces is also experienced, crucially, as a temporal displacement and a sense of belatedness,[8] but we can usefully ask how this belatedness registers for readers and for reviewers, and in particular whether there are genres in which its effects are felt more or less acutely.

Our third set of concerns address genre more specifically, asking what reception history can tell us about the role of genre in positioning women's writing within this landscape of literary and cultural change: both by establishing constraints on the forms of writing and the expectations of readers, and by giving us an understanding of how those constraints and expectations might change over time. In addressing these questions we will also be working across modes of circulation, looking at both print and manuscript circulation to see how genre may operate differently in these two arenas. For example, the manuscript Almanacks of Mary Moody Emerson (a text which will receive special attention in this study) as well as evidence from other women's manuscript sources attest to reading and writing practices focused on commonplace books, spiritual autobiography, domestic manuals, sentimental verse, and letters.[9] Reception history focusing on print traditions, however, portrays women as readers and writers in forms like the novel which circulate more widely and may contribute more emphatically to the constitution of a perceived "women's reading culture".

Our overall goal in this collaborative research project is thus to investigate the role that women's literary writing and its reception played in the formation of the Anglophone literary culture in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In particular, we seek to map and interpret changes in the discourse of reception—as expressed in public reviews, literary histories, and private records of readership—in connection with the changing transatlantic literary landscape from 1770 to 1830. To support this research, we will first identify and collect a set of primary source materials including:

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[8] Michael Warner, "What's Colonial About Colonial America?" (in *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Cornell, 2000).
[9] See for instance *Milcah Martha Moore's Book* (ed. Catherine Blecki and Karin Wulf; Penn State UP, 1997), a mid- to late-18C commonplace book compiled by several Philadelphia-area Quaker women that includes writing by Susanna Wright, Hannah Griffits, and Elizabeth Fergusson and other members of their coterie.

- Reviews of women's texts published in a selected set of periodicals during the period 1770-1830. For each review, we will collect detailed metadata (including the review author if known, bibliographic details for the text under review and for the review itself, a set of keywords indicating the tenor of the review, and relevant extracts from the review.

- Extracts from selected literary histories published during the period 1770-1830. From these, we will extract relevant passages on women's texts together with metadata as described above.

- Extracts from the manuscript Almanacks of Mary Moody Emerson, noting her reading of and responses to women's writing from 1804-1855. This document of more than 1000 pages records and contextualizes the reading practices of an educated and fairly cosmopolitan woman.

- Periodical literary criticism by women, including Judith Sargent Murray (whose writing in *The Massachusetts Magazine*, later published as *The Gleaner*, includes critical commentary on the work of Mercy Otis Warren, Hannah Cowley, and others), Charlotte Lennox, and Eliza Haywood.

Working with these sources as well as with texts from the Women Writers Online collection,[10] we will produce a group of scholarly articles addressing the questions and issues identified above. (More detailed descriptions of each article are included in "Scope", below.) These articles will be peer reviewed and published online as part of the Women Writers Project's open-access collection of exhibits and articles on women's writing. These exhibits are critical materials that contextualize and comment on women's writing, published in a flexible format that combines features of the scholarly essay with more interactive functions, such as the ability to call up visualizations, maps, and timelines, or to move between commentary and relevant primary texts. The outcome of the project will thus include three significant components: the published research articles, the source materials, and the initial textual analysis of the source materials. All three will be made publicly available, so that scholars can continue this line of research using the materials we have amassed.

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[10] At the time of writing, the WWO collection includes approximately 100 texts from the target period, representing a cross-section of genres and topics from both sides of the Atlantic.

Value

This work will contribute a crucial dimension to our understanding of how women's writing circulated and participated in the overall ecology of publishing and reading at the turn of the 18th century. Our goal is not simply to understand women's writing in isolation as a discursive field in itself, but also to understand the effect its presence and the discussion of its presence had on what was being said and understood about literature more generally. We anticipate three specific areas of impact in which this work will have particular value. The first of these is the contribution our work makes to scholarship on the reception and reading of early women's writing. Building on work by scholars like Heidi Brayman Hackel on reading and reception, which establishes the importance of women's reading in our understanding of the gendering of culture, our work will examine the ways in which the reading and reception specifically of *women's texts* constitute a powerful lens through which we can trace important developments in transatlantic literary culture and refine our understanding of how women contributed—and were seen as contributing, both at the moment of publication and subsequently—to these cultural shifts. In addition, by tracing not only the immediate reception of women's writing but also the long subsequent history of reception and readership (using Katherine Philips as a case study), we can gain a more detailed understanding of how literary history is constructed and how it maps onto readerly perceptions and interests.

The second area of impact is in the primary source materials we will amass for this research, which will be made available as part of Women Writers Online. These will be tremendously valuable to scholars who wish to extend our research or examine our sources. We also anticipate that other scholars—both those working specifically on reception history and those with expertise on specific authors and works—may be willing to contribute materials. To support this broader contributory effort both during and after the grant period we will provide a web form through which structured data records (like those created by the project team) can be created in a consistent format and (after approval) be seamlessly incorporated into our collection of reception data. Scholars wishing to contribute will (after approval by the WWP) be made part of an ongoing research group and their work will be formally acknowledged at the WWP site. The textual analysis tools we develop and use to facilitate our own research will also be available to other researchers, either through the main WWO interface or (for more experimental tools) in the WWO sandbox.

Finally, the value of this work for teachers and students is also substantial. Information on reception of early women's writing can give student readers a clearer understanding of how such texts were being read by contemporaries, and of how attitudes towards literature generally (and women's texts in particular) were situated in cultural space and time. Such reviews also model reading practices for students and draw their attention to features of the text that might otherwise be invisible or tend to receive less modern critical attention, thereby helping to historicize critical reading practices.

Scope

While this project engages with issues whose potential range is very substantial, we are focusing our work both temporally and conceptually to yield results that are both broad-based and locally revealing. The collaborative team undertaking this project will work together on a central set of questions, while each pursuing specific dimensions of the topic on their own.

The temporal and geographical scope of our central investigation is the period from 1770 to 1830 in North America, Britain, and the British colonial sphere. We choose this critical period as our starting point because it offers opportunities to explore the reception of women's writing along several important lines:

- The period marks a time of crucial transitions for both Britain and the American colonies, during which the colonies undergo the initial stages of nation-formation and Britain begins to articulate its own position as an imperial power in the far East. On both sides of the Atlantic, the question of national identity and the role literature plays in forming and reflecting that identity is acutely at stake.

- This period sees a sharp rise in the production of periodical literature and in particular of reviewing as a feature of the periodical press: reviewing is carried out increasingly as part of public discourse, alongside and often closely intertwined with discussions of political and social questions. The periodical press is an intensely politicized field and the reception of women's writing provides an opportunity to understand in more detail how gender, literature, and national politics are connected in the public discourse.

- This period also sees an important rise in publishing and reviewing in North America, as well as an equally significant rise in transatlantic reading and reviewing; where earlier in the 18th century, the flow of published material was chiefly from Britain to the American colonies, by the end of this period American

works are also being read and reviewed in Britain. In addition, this period sees
some early Anglophone publishing by women in other British colonies, notably
(in the WWO collection) in India.

Within this domain, the entire team will consider questions of how women's writing is
read and reviewed, and how its visibility in the cultural record and public awareness
changes over time: how new works are received and positioned, and how they gain or
lose cultural significance. The analysis of these questions will be framed as an article co-
authored by the group as a whole. The group will also work on identifying additional
sources and methods that can illuminate further dimensions of this research area. In
addition, the team will work in smaller groups to explore specific questions in more
depth, and each group will produce a scholarly article representing the results of their
research, described in further detail below.

**Reception, Reviewing, and the Representation of Space (John Melson and Julia
Flanders)**

In recent years, historians and literary scholars of the Anglophone eighteenth century
have increasingly turned to questions of geography, space, and location in their efforts
to understand the evolution of cultural forms across national boundaries and within the
transatlantic, often global, dimensions of a modernity whose emergence coincided with
various forms of commercial and imperial expansion. For example, Martin Bruckner's
notion of a "geographic revolution" in early America captures this interest in culture's
geographic embeddedness; for Bruckner, "geographical literacy" was central in the
eighteenth century to "the process of identity formation," for both individual subjects
and the social collectives to which they belonged.[11] In the context of scholarship that is
increasingly aware of the powerful cultural dynamics involved in the interplay of local,
provincial, metropolitan, and cosmopolitan modes of literary self-understanding, the
location of texts—figuratively as well as literally—offers valuable new material for
studying the interaction of discrete yet mutually dependent literary and cultural
communities. To put it differently, texts approached in light of the location of their
production and consumption afford new ways to understand their function in
producing distinct cultural communities and facilitating interaction between many such
communities. In this sense, a review of an English novel published in a New York
newspaper and then read, say, in New Jersey, acts as a kind of spatial palimpsest,

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[11] Martin Brückner, *The Geographic Revolution in Early America: Maps, Literacy, and National Identity* (Chapel
Hill, 2006), 3-4.

encoding information about the imagined spaces of English culture (in references to the novel's domestic setting in England), the newly invented metropolitan space of reviewing activity (the specific inflection given the review's content by its publication in a growing urban center that is separate from the novel's place of production), and the more peripheral setting of the New Jersey reader's encounter with the review and, perhaps, the novel being reviewed. Such a multi-layered conception of the space of reception nuances our understanding of how geography might shape reading practices and literary reception; it also begins to suggest how the circulation of literary texts—and writing about those texts—profoundly affects the cultural and social construction of geography itself. To paraphrase Donald Meinig, "geography and *literary* history, by their very nature" have always been "analogous, complementary, and interdependent fields."[12]

John Melson and Julia Flanders will focus on the role of geography and space in the reading and reviewing of women's writing, analyzing the relationship among the distinct cultural and geographic spaces of reception, and investigating how reception during this period itself influenced the formation of local, regional, national, and global literary communities. Building on the work of scholars whose work foregrounds concepts of cultural geography, they will explore a series of questions that bring this relationship to bear on women's writing and national literary histories:

- What are the differences that mark reading and reviewing practices across various regions and localities? To what extent does geography affect patterns of reference to women's writing during this period?
- What is the relationship between genre and geography? Does the place of reviewing affect the specific literary genres deemed worthy of review? Are certain genres reviewed more or less frequently—or more or less favorably—in particular places?
- How do reviews work to consolidate local or regional cultural identities by promoting particular works by women? To what extent are these locally imagined reading communities represented as being separate from or continuous with larger national or transatlantic communities and the literary histories that define them?

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[12] Donald W. Meinig, *The Geographic Revolution in America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History* (New Haven, 1986-2004), 4:xiii.

- How do reviews, anthologies, and other similar sources gender particular spaces or locations of reading? Given the power of reviews to shape the opinions and taste of a community of readers, how might the geography of particular sources (a single newspaper published locally, for instance) vary from place to place when it comes to assessing women's writing? Do such variations contribute to local or regional inflections of literary history that assign different weight to women writers?

- To what extent does the transatlantic circulation of both literary works and references to them present an alternative literary geography of the Atlantic world during this period? Do reviewing patterns simply follow established routes of migration, commerce, and social interaction in the period during and immediately after U.S. independence? Or do they establish a distinct set of cultural pathways that complement, disrupt, or otherwise transform the existing patterns of the book trade?

These questions suggest some of the ways our research on reviewing and reception can contribute to—and expand—the established body of scholarship devoted to the notion that "literary geography is inseparable from the rigorous study of literary history."[13]

The Long Tail of Reception: Katherine Philips (Elizabeth H. Hageman)

Elizabeth Hageman's research for this project will investigate how we can read the long history of reception as it inflects the positioning of a single major author over time. This work contributes an important dimension to the group's work on reception, since it constitutes a kind of case study in how reception operates over longer periods of time, and across modes of readership. In particular this analysis offers opportunities to consider the overlap and intersection of manuscript and print circulation, during a period when both were changing rapidly.

This project is a part of a collaborative work in which Professor Hageman and Jackson Boswell, Scholar in Residence at the Folger Shakespeare Library, are compiling an annotated chronological list of references to Katherine Philips (1632-64) in 17th- and 18th-century texts. The goal of this research is to uncover not only references in print but also references in a wide variety of other forms, such as manuscript letters, diaries (including that of Samuel Pepys), and manuscript books. They have already discovered

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[13] Martin Brückner and Hsuan L. Hsu, eds. *American Literary Geographies: Spatial Practice and Cultural Production, 1500-1900* (Newark, 2007), 22.

many appearances of her books in printers' advertisements and also in catalogs of public and individual libraries (some owned by women readers); evidence of presently unlocated contemporary paintings of Philips; and many allusions, for example, to her printed letters in canonical works such as Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*. While earlier scholars have analyzed Philips as an important model for late 17th and early 18th-century women writers, the allusions that Boswell and Hageman are finding demonstrate that the circulation of Philips's writing and a sense of her place as a "premiere" English writer was even more widespread during her own lifetime and in the century after her death than has been hitherto recognized.

Building on Peter Beal's listing of manuscripts of writing by Philips and her contemporaries in his important *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, Professor Hageman is currently exploring references to Philips in additional manuscript sources held in depositories in America and abroad, finding for instance several seventeenth-century readers whose manuscript annotations in printed editions of her writing derive from hand-copied versions of Philips's poems circulating before, during, and after the years (1662-1664) when she herself was involved (sometimes encouraging, other times attempting to subvert) in print publication of her writing. This research is also unearthing new information on Philips' reception: for instance, references to Philips's two plays (translations of Corneille's *La Mort de Pompee* and his *Horace*) suggest that they were better known to British audience than has been understood.

This work will contribute an important dimension to the larger research goals of this project, particularly on the question of how and in what sense women writers come to be perceived as (to use a modern term) canonical. As one of only a few British women whose work was considered in its own time to be worthy of close attention, Philips was marshalled as evidence that England produced writing as significant as that of Continental contemporaries. However, the more "ordinary" contexts in which Philips is also invoked—for instance in epitaphs engraved on funeral monuments and in lists of precepts to remember—testify to a more complex intermixing of both "literary" and "subliterary" genres in Philips' writing, and a more socially complex landscape of reception as well. Professor Hageman's examination of the nuances of this reception history seeks to de-mystify Philips by placing her writing within broader writing traditions in which twentieth- and twenty-first century ideas of "authorship" are beside the point. Her article for this project will consider what these patterns of reception and shifting prominence reveal not only about Philips herself as a poet, but also about the changing perception of the genres in which she wrote and the political and cultural

associations her work may have had. In addition, it will open up larger questions concerning the construction of literary history and in particular the ways in which women's writing figured as cultural capital in that process.

Readership and Reception as Manuscript Practice: Mary Moody Emerson (Sandra Harbert Petrulionis and Noelle Baker)

Sandra Harbert Petrulionis and Noelle Baker will investigate manuscript evidence of reception and reading practices, focusing on the manuscript Almanacks of Mary Moody Emerson. Drawing on materials being prepared for a larger project—a digital scholarly edition of the Almanacks, to be published as part of Women Writers Online—they will identify from within this 1000-page manuscript document the specific segments which record Emerson's reading practices and her responses to women's writing in particular. Her Almanacks reflect Emerson's wide-ranging and eclectic reading habits—from philosophy, theology, and science, to history and literature—from Enlightenment and Romantic figures such as Jane Austen and Mary Wollstonecraft to nineteenth-century Transcendentalists Elizabeth Peabody and Margaret Fuller. Moreover, Emerson engaged in literary culture as a critic, frequently responding directly to periodical reviewers in her Almanack entries. These references will be captured as part of our source records in the third year of the grant.

Their analysis of these materials will focus both on what Emerson's reading practice reveals about her experience of and participation in literary culture, and on how her experience compares and intersects with what we can observe of responses and reception in more public forums, such as periodical reviews from the same period. Since as a young woman Emerson herself published periodical writing as well (a set of epistolary essays written in collaboration with her fellow literary coterie member Mary Wilder Van Schalkwyck and published in *The Monthly Anthology*, a Boston journal edited by Emerson's brother), there may be a useful comparison or intersection between her formally published works and the coterie model of publishing through which the Almanacks were circulated. Indeed, her Almanacks suggest that she identified with European *salonnières* Germaine de Stael and Rahel Levin Varnhagen. Emerson's interest in specific genres—such as spiritual autobiography, "Lives" of women, women's reformist writing, philosophical essays and scientific tracts—to some extent runs counter to expectations about women's reading tastes, as expressed in writing published specifically *for* a female audience, and there may be important insights to be explored concerning her own self-identification as a gendered reader.

History and Duration

This project arises from and builds on work by the Women Writers Project in two areas. The first of these concerns the representation of contextual information—on people, places, and texts that constitute the network of cultural information through which individual texts in the WWP collection can be read and understood—in a structured digital form. Starting with an NEH Digital Humanities Startup Grant (2007-2009) focusing on persons and personal names, the WWP is working systematically on gathering information in these areas, and in developing detailed specifications for modeling it so as to support advanced research on women's writing. The second area concerns digital expressions of humanities scholarship, and in particular ways of producing and publishing scholarship that interacts directly with digital research collections rather than standing apart from them. Our goal is to demonstrate modes of publication that permit scholarly research materials (articles, commentary, and so forth) to interact more directly with one another to create a set of intersecting communicative vectors, rather than isolated interventions that engage with one another only through citation. The WWP is currently developing a publication model for "exhibits" that would be quite tightly coupled to the materials in the WWO collection, in ways that go well beyond the now familiar hypertext links and embedded images that are common in digitally published articles.

The work described in this proposal would advance both of these efforts. The data we gather on reception history would be tied in with our other contextual information and would be structured as a set of records which link information on people (both the authors of the original texts and of the reviews or responses to them), places (locations of publication and of writing), and texts (the original texts, the published reviews, the documents in which other evidence of reading is found), plus additional information on the review or response itself, such as topical keywords and excerpts. This data forms a growing and highly scalable collection that accompanies and comments on the texts in WWO. At the same time, the research we undertake that draws on this information will be published as WWO exhibits and will be deliberately framed so as to test and extend the rhetorical capacities of this new authoring medium.

The project is planned as a three-year effort, with a project meeting held once each year. During the first year we will initiate the background research and establish the framework for collecting and organizing the primary source materials from which we will be working (including provision for contributions by volunteers from outside the project). The encoders and research assistants will begin the first phase of collecting and

encoding materials, focusing on periodical reviews from the first half of our chronological period. A contributory interface will be developed to permit contributions of source materials from volunteers. In the first year's project meeting, we will discuss each of the four research plans (that of the group as a whole and those of the three constitutive groups) in detail, review progress made, and discuss the authoring process and the requirements it may place on the WWP's exhibit publication system. In the second year, we will develop preliminary drafts of all four research articles, which will be shared and reviewed in the second year's project meeting. The encoders and research assistants will conduct the second phase of collection, focusing on periodical reviews from the second half of the chronological period and on materials identified by Elizabeth Hageman in connection with the reception of Katherine Philips. At this point the primary source materials will be made available through WWO. Also in the second year the WWP will host a colloquium focusing on reception history in its annual series "Women in the Archives", with presentations by the project participants on their work in progress. This event will provide an opportunity for broader feedback and discussion of the project's methods and preliminary conclusions. In the third year, we will complete the collection and encoding of primary source materials, focusing on extracts from the manuscript Almanacks of Mary Moody Emerson,[14] as well as any other materials we have identified as critical during the course of our research. At the final project meeting we will review close-to-final drafts of all four research articles and provide feedback to shape the last stage of revision. By the end of the third year final versions of the research articles will be published as WWO exhibits, and all primary source data will be available through WWO. Results of this project will be presented as a poster or paper at the DH2013 conference. A more detailed schedule of work is provided in the Work Plan.

Following the conclusion of the project, the contributory interface will remain open, and we will issue regular calls for contributions (with particular emphasis on scholars who wish to make a significant, credited contribution in a specific area). We will also encourage the contribution of further articles on reception, drawing on the research materials we have collected, to be published as WWO exhibits.

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[14] Because Noelle Baker and Sandra Petrulionis already have access to these materials as editors of the Almanack, the timing of the actual encoding of these extracts is less critical than that of the other materials, which is why they are left to the third year. However, we expect that being able to examine them through a digital interface may offer Baker and Petrulionis new insights in the final year of the project.

Staff and Collaborators

Noelle Baker is currently an editorial associate with the NEH-supported series, The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau, a project for which she previously served as Editorial and Production Manager. In these capacities, she managed the production and conducted final editorial reviews for Journals 6, 7, and 8 all published by Princeton University Press. Her scholarly publications have focused on Transcendentalism and women's writing; her dissertation, "Sarah Helen Whitman's Literary Criticism: A Critical Edition," provided a scholarly edition of the pseudonymous and attributed literary criticism of poet and essayist Sarah Helen Whitman (1803-1878). Baker's research focuses on Mary Moody Emerson's participation in 18th-century reading and writing practices, particularly the ways in which coterie writing served as a viable alternative to print publication. With Sandra Petrulionis, she is co-editor of a scholarly digital edition of the Almanacks. She will donate her time to the project, approximately 10% time.

Syd Bauman is the WWP's Senior Programmer/Analyst. He has a BA in Political Science and served as North American Editor of the TEI Guidelines from 2001-2007. He has extensive expertise in TEI schema design and customization as well as TEI encoding. He will spend 10% of his time on this project, leading the design of the data format for source materials and implementing the required TEI customization, and contributing to the development of the interfaces for contribution, review, and publication.

Julia Flanders is the Director of the WWP. She holds BA degrees from Harvard and Cambridge Universities and a PhD in English from Brown University, and has served in positions of leadership in the TEI and digital humanities communities for over ten years: as chair and vice-chair of the TEI Consortium, as vice-president and president of the TEI, and as a member of the steering committee for the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations and also of CenterNet. Her dissertation research, on which she will be building for this project, examined the terms in which debates about the nature of literary study were framed from the late 17th through the early 20th centuries. Portions of this research have been presented at professional conferences and have also been published as articles. Her current research focuses on contemporary scholarly communication in the digital humanities, and on the ways that the formal study of literature—and the construction of the sphere of the "literary"—has historically been framed. She is particularly interested in broader cultural perceptions of a "literary" space and the ways in which such a space is grounded in an understanding of class; the examination of periodical reviews will help reveal the role these played in situating women authors and women's writing in cultural space. For this project, she will

contribute to the WWP's research, working closely with John Melson, as well as providing general project oversight. She will spend 20% of her time on this project (10% contributed by the WWP).

Elizabeth H. Hageman is recently retired Professor Emerita of English at the University of New Hampshire, and has been a member of the WWP's scholarly board from its inception. A distinguished editor of early modern writing by and about women and also editor of the "Recent Studies" series in the premiere journal *English Literary Renaissance*, she was co-general editor of the WWP's book series *Women Writers in English 1350–1850,* published by Oxford UP, and is now general editor of the English-language texts in the series *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe*, headed by Albert Rabil. Professor Hageman's own research focuses on the recovery of women's texts, especially on writings by the seventeenth-century poet Katherine Philips, and also on the recovery of women's literary histories. Her essays on Philips's position within seventeenth-century literary history include reports of newly discovered versions of her writing as well as analyses of 17th-century and 20th and 21st-century views of a poet whom some contemporaries described as "matchless"— as a female phenomenon never to be replicated—and whom recent scholars are beginning to see as as an active participant in social and political debates during England's commonwealth and restoration years. She will donate her time to the project, approximately 10% time.

John Melson is the WWP's Textbase Editor and co-Principal Investigator for this grant. He holds a BA in English from Carleton College and an MA in Humanities from the University of Chicago, and is currently completing a doctoral thesis in English Literature at Brown University (degree anticipated in spring 2010). His research focuses on the representation of place in the literature of the British Atlantic world in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He is particularly interested in how increasingly formalized aesthetic and commercial discourses—including the rhetoric of critical reviewing and descriptions of the transatlantic book trade as a market for intellectual commodities—shaped responses to local literary communities during this period. He is also interested in the geography of literary reviewing and reading, especially the ways in which the local reprinting of literary texts and critical reviews established patterns of transatlantic affiliation that were not directly mediated by influential metropolitan cultural centers. He has presented portions of his work, including papers on transatlantic critical reception in the 1760s and the construction of gender in colonial American manuscript writing, at several professional conferences. In the spring of 2008 he was the J. M. Stuart Fellow at the John Carter Brown Library, where he conducted

research on the publication of English-language dictionaries and manuals of commerce and trade, as well as the transatlantic circulation and reprinting of English antislavery writing. He will lead the WWP's research for this grant on cultural and geographical space, and will also oversee the capture of source materials and the project's interface development. He will spend 30% of his time on this project.

Sandra Harbert Petrulionis is Professor of English and American Studies at Pennsylvania University, Altoona. Her research focuses on the manuscript Almanacks of Mary Moody Emerson, of which she is co-editing a scholarly digital edition (in collaboration with Noelle Baker, below). She has deep familiarity with these exceptionally rich materials, as well as expertise in 19th-century manuscript culture and its patterns of authoring, circulation, and readership. Prior to joining the faculty at Penn State Altoona, Petrulionis worked for three years as a research assistant for The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau, where she assisted with research and writing annotations, and with the review of two Journal volumes. She is the author To Set This World Right: The Antislavery Movement in Thoreau's Concord (Cornell University Press, 2006), a book for which she received both an NEH fellowship and a summer stipend. This examination of Concord's abolitionism was enriched by a variety of archival documents, particularly the unpublished correspondence and journals of the town's activist women. Her current research includes co-editing with Joel Myerson and Laura Dassow Walls the forthcoming Oxford Handbook of Transcendentalism. She will donate her time to the project, approximately 10% time.

Methods

The relevant methods and practical considerations for this project fall into three main areas: the identification and collection of source materials, the conduct of the collaborative research process, and the publication of the research articles and other products of the grant work.

In identifying and collecting source materials, we are guided by both long-term and short-term motivations. For our work on this project, we need to identify and gather a specific set of materials that will figure substantively in our research. We will draw these materials from several major sources:

- Periodical reviews published in Britain and North America between 1770 and 1830

- Literary biographies, literary histories, and other critical materials from the same period

- Private documents such as letters, diaries, and annotated copies of books

- Basic publication data, from sources such as ESTC

Over the long term, we are interested in identifying as broad a set as possible of relevant materials, so that we (and other researchers) can return to them for future phases of this research.[15] We will collect a general bibliography of sources of reception and readership information, which will be published at the WWP site; we expect that the process of gathering this information will be ongoing during the course of the grant.[16] However, we have already identified a set of periodicals which are likely to be of particular relevance (a bibliography is included in the Appendix)—which we know published significant numbers of reviews of women's writing—and from these at the start of the grant we will select a target set for focused attention. This target set will be composed with attention to balancing a number of factors:

- Geographical scope, including roughly equal numbers of sources from Britain and America; we will also seek to include a substantial number of periodicals which were read on both sides of the Atlantic

- Political diversity, reflecting the range of contemporary political and critical viewpoints

- Audience, including periodicals aimed at a range of readership with respect to class, gender, and geographical location (including both provincial and metropolitan audiences)

Within these sources we will also seek to balance (or at least give some weight to) the gender of the reviewer, so that if possible this can play a role in our analysis. Another, more difficult factor to take into account is the longevity of the periodical, which may affect how reviews are read; we will include some very well-established journals and some that are of briefer tenure. Other things being equal, we will give priority to materials that are readily available to us in digital form.

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[15] Although some of this material has been documented by other projects—notably Project Orlando, but also critical editions of individual authors—it has not been systematically collected and made accessible as a resource in its own right, rather than as individual notes on individual texts. We will draw as much as possible on existing research to identify relevant review materials, but we anticipate that in all cases we will need to capture the actual text of the review and most relevant metadata ourselves.

[16] In addition to the major sources listed above, these might include sources such as advertisements for books, which are common on colonial-era newspapers and magazines, or records from circulating libraries.

From the target set of periodicals, we will identify all reviews of and references to works by women. We will draw where possible on existing sources (for instance, William Ward's multi-volume bibliography, *Literary Reviews in British Periodicals*, and the research reflected in sources like the *Feminist Companion to Literature in English*) but will also rely on careful and systematic review of the periodicals themselves to reveal materials that have been omitted in prior research; the Ward bibliography for instance covers only reviews of literary works. We will record all substantive references to works by women, even those not currently included in the WWP collection, since we will need to return to these as the WWP collection expands in the future. Review evidence may also be useful in guiding future development directions for the collection.

For each review of or reference to a text by a current WWP author, our student researchers will create a detailed digital record. The digital format of this record may vary as the information moves through the work flow, depending on what tools are best suited to working with the information at each stage. For initial capture of metadata and a basic transcription, a simple database may suffice since we do not anticipate capturing any detailed structural information concerning the body of the review. This data could readily be exported to XML (for instance, TEI or RDF) for display and manipulation during the subsequent research process. Alternatively, the data could be captured directly as XML, either through a web form or using a template to ensure consistency, and in this case we would probably use TEI as the initial capture format. Although the TEI Guidelines do not directly address how to model this kind of data, they provide a good general starting point on which we can build using the TEI customization mechanism if necessary. Whatever format is chosen, this record will contain the essential information needed to study this review both on its own and in the context of other reception data. At a minimum we will record the following: the name of the reviewer and facts of publication about the review; the author and facts of publication of the original work; a transcription of the review (or relevant extracts from it); simple keywords identifying the general tenor of the review. In the first year of the project, we may also identify further data that should be captured during this process. In addition, we will develop records on the periodicals in which the reviews appear, and also on the reviewers themselves (if their identities are known). This basic information will be gathered and digitized by the student encoders and research assistants working on the project. We will also develop a web-based contributor interface so that we can also accept data from collaborators and volunteers.

Our target for this capture of source reception data is to identify and capture approximately 400 records of individual reviews and reception items in each year of the grant, for a total of approximately 1200 items in hand by the end of the grant period, plus associated information on reviewers and the periodicals in which the reviews were published. In addition, we will vet and where necessary expand references contributed directly by volunteers.

All of the reception and readership data will be reviewed by the project research team (starting in January 2011, or as soon as the student researchers have collected an initial set of materials) as part of a process of digestion and annotation through which the team will read through the review entries, looking at them both singly and also in various aggregations (by periodical, by work, by year, etc.). During this process, the team will add further information to the records, including notes on interconnections between reviews (for instance, common themes and topics), political inflections, evidence of significant geographical and cultural positioning, discussions of genre, and similar observations. To the greatest extent possible, these notes will be expressed not only in human-readable prose but also in formal terms that will permit these notes to be understood and considered in the aggregate: for instance, by creating controlled sets of keywords. The substantial amount of material being studied, taken together with the size of the research group, means that we need to be able to rely where possible on systems for sharing and visualizing information. This annotation process will also constitute the first stage of our research, during which we gain a bottom-up view of the source material and what it can reveal about the topics we are investigating. The drafting of the articles will arise out of this research process, and we anticipate that there may be opportunities to explore the ways scholars move between research materials and their own note-taking and drafting: although this is not a direct focus of the grant, the WWP may take this opportunity to experiment with an interface for use by participants that permits notes and draft materials to link to these research materials, or to aggregated information from them.

Because the work of research, drafting, and writing will be conducted collaboratively over some distance, there are some challenges in designing a process that will encourage regular communication and the sharing of work in progress. We plan several regular activities to structure our work. First, we include funding for three face-to-face project meetings, one each year, which will probably be timed to coincide with the WWP's annual conference, "Women in the Archives". These meetings will be 2-3 days long and will provide us with an opportunity not only to review and discuss each other's work

carefully, but also to build the kind of trustful collaborative relationships that encourage open and shared habits of scholarship. As one participant put it, this is in effect an experiment in research transparency, in which we will be sharing not only drafts but potentially research notes and early-stage ideas as well; it will be important to reinforce the group's sense of collective mission.

In addition to these annual meetings, we plan a more frequent exchange of ideas either via a conference call (perhaps bimonthly) or an agreed monthly "office hours" time during which we can exchange email quickly and responsively, as a way of sharing comments on drafts, research notes, ideas about sources, and so forth. Drafts will be shared via a wiki space to facilitate the logistics of document sharing, but our experience with collaborative writing and research suggests that using the wiki model to motivate commenting and revision is often unsuccessful (particularly in a group where participants have other concurrent responsibilities) because it relies too much on a "pull" model where participants have to visit the wiki to receive and process input. We will include some more active form of discussion forum (probably an email list or similar) to ensure that the discussion stays active and to prompt participants for updates, drafts, and comments.

Final Product and Dissemination

In publishing the completed articles and primary source materials, we seek to balance several considerations, including public usefulness, research functionality, and academic reward for participants. All materials will be published in digital form under a Creative Commons license. The articles will be published as publicly accessible exhibits in the Women Writers Online collection,[17] a forum which carries the imprimatur of the WWP. Although exhibits are not currently subject to a formal peer review process, we are considering a variety of methods for providing the kinds of scholarly accreditation and review that would enable these publications to serve as academic contributions towards tenure and promotion. The articles arising from this project may also be published (perhaps in revised form) in scholarly journals if the authors choose. The primary source review and reception materials will be published as a publicly accessible research archive accompanying WWO, with an interface that permits searching and exploration

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[17] The WWO exhibits are electronically published scholarly articles and essays which engage in various ways with the content of Women Writers Online. The essays from Renaissance Women Online are now being republished as exhibits and we are developing a new exhibit publication program to expand this research library. All materials are reviewed carefully by the WWP editors.

of these materials. In addition, these materials will be incorporated more directly into WWO, so that WWO readers can access reception materials for a given text or passage or conduct more advanced analysis.

In addition to these modes of dissemination, in the second year of the grant the WWP will host its regular annual "Women in the Archives" colloquium with the theme of reception and readership, and participants in this project will present their work in progress as part of the colloquium for response and discussion. The feedback and ideas we receive at that point will help shape the second half of the project.

Work Plan

July –December 2010

- Identify exact set of periodicals and other sources for capture in the first year.

- Hire and train student encoders and research assistants.

- Develop initial digital model in TEI for capture of reception records, and create training documentation.

- Develop contributory web interface for volunteer contributions, and post CFP.

- Begin capture of source materials, focusing on periodicals from the first half of the chronological period covered (roughly 1770-1800).

January–June 2011

- First project meeting: discuss research plans, review digital model and initial set of source records, and identify additional information that needs to be included.

- Develop interface for editing, annotation, and review of captured materials by participants.

- Begin process of editing, annotation, and review of captured materials; this process will be ongoing throughout the grant, as new materials are captured.

- Continue capture of source materials.

July –December 2011

- Begin drafting articles, with goal of having rough drafts to share by the second project meeting.

- Issue call for contributions from volunteer scholars.

- Continue capture of source materials, focusing on periodicals from the second half of the chronological period covered (roughly 1800-1830).

- Continue process of editing, annotation, and review of captured materials.

- Develop prototype ("sandbox") version of the public interface for working with source materials and seek beta testers

January–June 2012

- Identify additional source materials for capture.

- Second project meeting (held in conjunction with Women in the Archives colloquium): share and discuss draft materials, review feedback and new ideas received at WIA event, plan the process for completing the articles and material collection.

- Continue process of editing, annotation, and review of captured materials.

- Review public interface to source materials and initial feedback; plan further features.

July –December 2012

- Presentation of results as a paper at DH2012 (or 2013, depending on the conference timing)

- Continue capture of source materials, focusing on reception materials for Katherine Philips and extracts from Mary Moody Emerson manuscripts, plus any further source materials identified.

- Refinement of public interface to source materials, based on feedback from readers and project participants, and move from "sandbox" to main WWO publication

January–June 2013

- Third project meeting: share and discuss completed draft articles; plan the details of publication with particular focus on the presentation of these materials in the exhibit format.

- Final revisions to articles (completed final drafts due by April 2013)

- Publication of articles as WWO exhibits

Budget Notes

The budget for this proposal covers salary and benefits for the three WWP staff members who will be overseeing the project, leading the WWP's research effort, and managing the capture of the primary source materials and the design of their digital representation. The budget also provides funding for graduate student encoders and research assistants (1000 hours per year) who will perform the basic discovery and capture of the primary source materials. Benefits on this time are paid (8%) during the summer, which constitutes half of the total hours worked. We also include funding for three face-to-face project meetings, covering travel and subsistence for the three off-site project collaborators. The Women Writers Project will contribute 10% of Julia Flanders' time, a portion of the student wages, and the expenses of presenting this work at the DH2013 conference. In addition, the three off-site participants will donate their time to the project.