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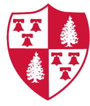

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MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

"You Write Like A Girl": Analyzing the Rhetoric of Gender Bias in the Literary Establishment and Implications for Student Writing Development

by

Julie Robin Dalley

A Master's Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Montclair State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Arts May 2013

College/School

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Department

ENGLISH

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"YOU WRITE LIKE A GIRL": ANALYZING THE RHETORIC OF GENDER BIAS IN THE LITERARY ESTABLISHMENT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENT WRITING DEVELOPMENT

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master's of Arts, English

By

JULIE ROBIN DALLEY

Montclair State University

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"You write like a girl": Analyzing the Rhetoric of Gender Bias in Literary Institutions and Implications for Student Writing Development

by Julie R Dalley

Using Lloyd Bitzer's model of the rhetorical situation, I have parsed current rhetorical statements made by prominent female authors, such as Jodi Picoult, Jennifer Weiner, Margaret Atwood, Toni Morrison, bell hooks, and Francine Prose, to examine their claim that the literary establishment practices gender bias against women's writing. The main speakers argue that literary gatekeepers –such as critical review journals, editors, publishers, awards juries, and academic institutions – marginalize women's writing through systemic patriarchal institutional mechanisms. Joanna Russ, in her 1985 book *How to Suppress Women's Writing*, deconstructs the ways in which women's writing is biased against by literary institutions: "she wrote it, but look at what she wrote" (it falls outside of patriarchal conventions determining what is great writing; may be too feminine in subject matter, title, perspective, i.e. not of "universal" appeal.); "she wrote it, but she only wrote one of it" (women don't produce enough writing to get equal attention in the literary establishment); "she wrote it, but 'it' isn't art" (it doesn't fit a patriarchal model of "great" writing); "she didn't write it" ('it' is attributed to male writers or other masculine influences/authority figures known to the female author, or as mimesis). By blending the models of Bitzer and Russ, I am able to construct the rhetoric as a contemporary and active rhetorical situation, and examine its main arguments, its audience and the constraints that influence rhetorical response, and the movement of the rhetorical situation over time. The final analysis discusses the effect of the rhetorical situation of gender bias on women writers as a psychological effect that provokes new rhetorical speakers, and which may result in diminished confidence and future writing development for emerging female writers. Additional theorists and rhetorical speakers include Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Lillian Robinson, Dale Spender, Roxane Gay,

Monica Dux, Meg Wolitzer, Adrienne Rich, Tillie Olsen, Elaine Showalter, and Sandra Gilbert and Sarah Gubar.

Chapter One:

Framing the Rhetorical Criticism of Gender Bias in Literary Institutions

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On August 16, 2010, Jodi Picoult fired off the following tweet: "NYT raved about Franzen's new book. Is anyone shocked? Would love to see the NYT rave about authors who aren't white male literary darlings." I came upon Picoult's tweet, and subsequent interviews and articles addressing the firestorm, after reading an interview with VS Naipaul on *The Guardian's* web site, where he slighted female writers with the observation, "I read a piece of writing and within a paragraph or two I know whether it is by a woman or not. I think [it is] unequal to me"(qtd. in Fallon 2011). He believed that "sentimentality, the narrow view of the world" was what made women's writing less than that of a man's, adding, "inevitably for a woman, she is not a complete master of a house, so that comes over in her writing too." My curiosity was piqued: do women write worse than men? Do we write differently? Do many people feel the same as Naipaul? Was there a bias that favored "white male literary darlings," as Picoult claimed? As a female writer, I wondered if this affected my own writing. Do I "write like a girl?" Would I have the same experience -- stereotyped by a patriarchal system -- as Joyce Carol Oates, who noted that "the woman who writes is a writer by her own definition, but a woman writer by others' definition" (qtd. in Showalter, "The Female Frontier"). I went in search of more evidence that a bias against women's writing existed, and found a rich but fragmented collection of reflections that included many other female authors such as Meg Wolitzer, Jennifer Weiner, Roxanne Gay, Ruth Franklin, Lionel Shriver, Toni Morrison, bell hooks, and Francine Prose. These women, all successful authors, responded to a gender bias they

perceive to be alive in literary institutions through thoughtful essays examining and claiming a discourse that seeks to effect change. Their rhetoric forms the foundation of a collection of artifacts that creates a contemporary rhetorical situation, based upon a long feminist history of protesting the unfair critical recognition practices all along the literary landscape.

As I collected interviews, essays, and articles that argued that the literary establishment marginalized or through various means subordinated women's writing, I detected a pattern and certain commonalities among the body of criticism. It soon became clear that the collective critique of the literary establishment and the institutions that form its loosely knit structure (reviewers, award juries and agencies, publishing houses, academia) attempts to create a contemporary rhetorical movement that is a catalyst for action. The speakers –women who claim an *ethos* based on experience and their own hard-fought literary success – call for institutions that recognize literary achievement to recognize women's writing through more equitable and more systemic institutional processes. Thinking back to my own response to Naipaul's perception that women write worse than men, I also connect the rhetorical situation to the development of women writers, and how women's writing ambitions may be affected by gender bias.

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The Roots of Gender Bias

It is difficult to pick just one entry point along the historical continuum that has established our modern day context for the rhetorical situation we chart here. There is the still influential Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*, written in 1792. Critical reaction to this manifesto included Horace Walpole who famously and dismissively

called Wollstonecraft a "hyena in petticoats" (qtd. by Prose 62). Feminine stereotypes are still expressed in reaction to women who challenge the patriarchal power system in literary fields, as we will see. We could venture even further back into history, to ancient Greece and the poet Sappho, whose writing was suppressed for centuries as ancient scholars debated her sexuality, her identity, and her right to be placed alongside her distinguished male contemporaries (Hallett 447). Plucking from another key moment in time, I could begin my investigation with the Jacobean pamphlet war of the 17th century, *Hic Mulier (The Man Woman)* and *Haer Vir (The Womanish Man)* which made gender the subject of a public and satiric debate using the power of the written word. Indeed, women writers from the past two centuries –George Eliot, Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, Alice Walker, Mary McCarthy, Toni Morrison, Joyce Carol Oates, Margaret Atwood – have spoken publicly about their experiences as, not just writers, but *women* who write. Each generation has given voice to criticism against literary and cultural processes that marginalizes writing because of *who is writing*, with those in power justifying that marginalization by claiming that critical judgments are made only on *what is being written*. Virginia Woolf internalized this perception of critical judgment against the quality of her writing, observing in her diary in 1929:

> I will here sum up my impressions before publishing *A Room of One's Own*. It is a little ominous that Morgan [E.M. Forster] won't review it. It makes me suspect that there is a shrill feminine tone in it which my intimate friends will dislike. I forecast, then, that I shall get no criticism, except of the evasive, jocular kind....I am afraid that it will not be taken seriously. (3)

The current debate is fed from a rich, insightful, and intelligent collection of commentary from female authors that developed over time and though this is not a

historical study, it is useful to consider the experience of women writers from previous eras with the rhetorical discourse of contemporary women writers, because this history directly influences and enriches the dialectic of gender bias we explore below. Knowing that this investigation could reach around the globe, back through time, or be defined by certain modes of writing and genre –say poetry, or literary non-fiction, or science fiction – by the limiting forces of time and space, I have confined this investigation to authors of the late 20th and early 21st century, and, enforcing a geographical boundary as well, mainly American novelists. What is particularly useful about the roots of gender bias against women's writing to the work I present here is how it forms a tradition of rhetoric that has influenced the inclusion of women writers in the literary canon, and how women novelists continue to express the same perception that their writing has not reached a level of parity with men's writing.

There is ample discussion –and debate – to be had on narrative voice, subject and self and language and style as they mark a woman's or a man's text. While I do not investigate these topics in depth, they are critical to the discourse. These factors arise within the rhetoric, allowing us to examine how they are leveraged by the speakers as proofs of the critical exigencies raised within the rhetorical situation. So below, we will come upon statements about subject matter, language, and style –we have already seen that style and voice are contested within the discourse by the statements of VS Naipaul – and consider the argument that there is a certain criteria among literary gatekeepers that dictates the privileging of a certain type of story, of a certain experience desirable of the writer, and of a certain language and moral authority upheld by literary critics as universal and representative of the human experience.

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The Rhetorical Challenge

In 1983, teacher and award-winning author Joanna Russ published *How to Suppress Women's Writing*, a sharp, satiric, and insightful expose on the history of literary reaction to women's writing. Russ argued that women's writing was marginalized, ignored, or made anomalous by critics, reviewers, journals, editors, educators and other participants that recognize and esteem literary works. Russ noted a consistent five to eight percent representation of women's writing in the canon –i.e., "the anomalousness of the woman writer" – made possible because "quality can be controlled by denial of agency, pollution of agency, and false categorizing" (85). Summarizing the reception and justifications of denying female authors a place in the canon, she created a foundational structure of the current rhetorical situation:

> She didn't write it. She wrote it, but she shouldn't have. She wrote it, but look what she wrote about. She wrote it, but "she" isn't really an artist and "it" isn't really serious, of the right genre --i.e. really art. She wrote it, but she wrote only one of it. She wrote it, but it is only included in the canon for one, limited reason. She wrote it, but there are very few of her. (76)

While society and Western culture have changed considerably since the time of her writing, Russ's work is useful because it condenses the exigent claims of gender bias in critical literary reception that by most measures defines our contemporary rhetorical situation. And, of course, we know that even farther back in history, long before Russ's exposition of the experience of women writers within the literary establishment, authors such as Virginia Woolf shared similar experiences. This establishes our context, and allows for some measurement of what has been changed by the rhetoric over time and what remains.

Using Russ's list of criticisms against the literary establishment as a baseline, and Lloyd Bitzer's model of the rhetorical situation, we can effectively trace a pattern of the contemporary rhetorical criticism lodged against the literary establishment. Bitzer's model allows me to frame the criticism of gender bias rhetorically by defining it using five points that constitute a rhetorical situation: 1) rhetorical discourse is a response to a critical exigence, one that necessitates a rhetorical response; 2) the response is appropriate (true) to the rhetorical situation, is fitting within the context of the situation; 3) likewise, the rhetorical situation prescribes the type of rhetorical response required. It "dictates the purpose, theme, matter, and style of the response"; 4) the rhetorical situation is real, historic, observable, has been and can be experienced, and is made authentic by critical examination; and, 5) the rhetorical situation is either simple or complex, is highly organized or loosely organized, either connected or disconnected, and these factors contribute to the strength or weakness of a rhetorical situation. Bitzer adds:

> [A] complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence. Prior to the creation and presentation of discourse there are three constituents of any rhetorical situation: the first is the *exigence*; the second and third are elements of the complex, namely the *audience* to be constrained in decision and action, and the *constraints* which influence the rhetor and can be brought to bear upon the audience. (6)

The exigence claimed by today's women writers lies in the following observations: novels by women are often categorized as "commercial women's fiction" or "chick

lit" by the media, booksellers, and publishers regardless of subject matter, thus, they are marginalized by genre; book covers of work by women are feminized to appeal to women readers, what Lionel Shriver frames as "ghettoising not only women writers but women readers into this implicitly lesser cultural tier" ("I Write A Nasty Book"); critical review by top publications like the *New York Times Book Review*, *Harper's*, and *the Atlantic* consistently review significantly fewer books written by women –and use fewer women reviewers – than they do men; women's writing is still dismissed as narrow and lacking the "sprawling confidence of a [male] novelist" (Wolitzer "On the Rules"); women's writing is not judged by the same standards as men's, even when the subject matters are similar (family, relationships, and love, or war, trauma, and crime); and, women do not submit or write as much as men. The rhetorical speakers I examine here have claimed that these experiences as "a woman writer" are the norm. These factors, taken collectively, are used as evidence of a gender bias by the literary establishment. Rhetorically, does their argument work? First, let's quickly parse some of the rhetorical compositional devices used to describe the women's experiences.

In 1978, Joyce Carol Oates celebrated the expediency of not being "taken altogether seriously" as a woman writer "because a woman, being so mechanically judged by her appearance, has the advantage of hiding within it –of being absolutely whatever she knows herself to be" (Plimpton 450). While this light-hearted and positively phrased response to the interviewer's question "what are the advantages to being a woman writer?" downplayed any perceivable effect on Oates' art, it also latently acknowledges the substrata that she perceived she occupied in the literary world. Her answer implies that, as a woman, she was being judged by a different, lesser standard, and she chose to use that to freely write as she would. South African author Yvonne Vera and bell hooks echoed this sense of freedom to write whatever

they want to, because they are women and therefore ostensibly without the pressure of appealing to mainstream critics or mass market publishing houses (Burrell 21, 58). More recently, author Jane Smiley, a 1992 Pulitzer Prize winner for "A Thousand Acres," said: "[O]ne of the great things for our generation of women writers is the freedom we've felt to write about whatever subjects we wish to write about. Are we less innovative than the guys? I don't see that. But if men aren't much in the habit of reading women, then it doesn't matter how innovative we are" (qtd. in Wolitzer "On the Rules "). Author Pamela Redmond Satran writes that, "the only difference between the books these guys are writing and the ones we are writing is that in their case, the author has a penis. *Freedom* [by Jonathan Franzen] and *The Marriage Plot* [by Jeffrey Eugenides] are just like any number of books written by any number of female novelists in any recent year...with comparable characters, plot, language, theme, literary merit" ("Jonathan Franzen"). These women reject the effect of bias on their creativity, while celebrating the liberty to compose without a "contract with the reader" or to create "packaged" work or conform to a literary standard that favors a masculine perspective (Burrell 21, 57). They also subtly affirm a gender bias when it comes to standards of writing; they assume their writing is being categorized in a way that will cause it to be labeled "for women, by a woman." Jennifer Weiner, in concert with Jodi Picoult, leads a very vocal criticism against "the establishment," and condemns how critical reviews ignores genre fiction, stating, "'chick lit'...is just a snappier way of saying "commercial women's fiction"... and even "literary" novels written by women... do not get the same attention as a small group of men whose writing is taken very seriously by publications like the Times" (Neary, "All Things Considered"). Returning to Russ's list of means of suppressing women's writing, Weiner, Satran, Oates, hooks, Smiley, and Vera all acknowledged the existence of

these two premises: "She wrote it, but look what she wrote about. She wrote it, but 'she' isn't really an artist and 'it' isn't really serious, of the right genre –i.e., really art." They reinforce the exigence Russ presents in 1983 as real and experienced up to the 21st century.

In 1993, Toni Morrison said that, despite the difficulties she felt in calling herself a writer –due to generational forces she experienced in the early years of her life that proscribed gender roles, class, race and lack of provenance – "it isn't so difficult *anymore*" (Plimpton 350). While Morrison acknowledges the progress made possible by consistent feminist activism, she, like bell hooks, introduces a critical exigent position when speaking of bias within the literary establishment: the ongoing issue of race, a crucial factor, she argues, limiting the ability of achieving critical literary attention for authors of color, and even complicating achieving recognition among other feminist writers and female authors. This issue adds a level of complexity to the criticism that literary review practices provoke; where women as a gender face marginalization or tokenism, imagine the challenges of finding literary recognition when your race *and* your gender situate you as less than equal or able to write from a universal socio-cultural perspective. In this way, Morrison and hooks, joining the voices of Sojourner Truth and Alice Walker, heighten the rhetoric to invoke the *pathos* of racial identity, deepening the emotional and cultural effect they claim as *their* exigence. In the scope of my study here, I cannot delve as deeply into the complex issues of gender intersected with racial identity as it plays out in the literary world, but it is worth mentioning that the rhetorical situation claimed by women writers is manifested and felt in many different ways within the female community of writers, not least of which in ways that are particular to the racial, ethnic, or sexual identity that the author embodies. Additionally, the inclusion of all

marginalized voices empowers the rhetorical situation by showing the systemic bias against most authors who are not straight, white males, and several of Russ's categories of justifying bias could be useful here: "She wrote it, but look what she wrote about. She wrote it, but "she" isn't really an artist and "it" isn't really serious, of the right genre –i.e., really art...She wrote it, but it is only included in the canon for one, limited reason. She wrote it, but there are very few of her" (76). Toni Morrison is the only black woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, in 1993. As we will show when we consider the statistical evidence of gender bias in the literary establishment, writers of color face a serious and extended challenge in achieving recognition for their work, connected but separate from the rhetorical situation we present here.

Despite these major differences in experience, all the women voice the same call for action on the part of their audience: equal recognition for writing by women, of all races, of all sexual identities, of all *peoples*. We can apply these experiences to our framework of the rhetorical situation because it complicates and expands the effect of gender bias, and fits the mold provided by Russ: "She wrote it, but look what she wrote about. She wrote it, but 'she' isn't really an artist and 'it' isn't really serious, of the right genre –i.e., really art. She wrote it, but it's only interesting/included in the canon for one, limited reason" (76). For hooks, Morrison, and other African American woman writers, their experience of recognition embodies the anomalous, the "it's only interesting/included in the canon for one, limited reason." In the case of race or sexuality, the author is limited by not appealing to the hegemonic patriarchal literary audience of critics and academics, unless it is strictly *because* of their race or sexuality, i.e. tokenism or a sense that their success and ability is an aberration among their racial or gender communities.

Essayist and author Francine Prose asks in "The Scent of a Woman's Ink," "what is the effect of critical neglect on woman writers?" (62). The tone of her essay moderates between recognizing the achievements of women authors and questioning the continuing disparities that prevent women from being truly equal members, in terms of attention and esteem, of the literary world. Prose's piece is powerful because she doesn't ignore the successes of women, she doesn't believe "that accolades or sales should be handed out in strict fifty-fifty split, or that equal opportunity concessions should be made to vile novels by women" and because she doesn't accuse any institution of a deliberate attempt to exclude women's writing from serious consideration (61).

Instead, Prose's piece represents a balanced attempt at querying institutional practices while avoiding polemical rhetoric that condemns or lays blame for continuing disparities in recognizing work authored by men and women. Author of "On the Rules of Literary Fiction," Meg Wolitzer also takes a moderating tone, lamenting the lack of a male audience for female authors, which she ties directly to how the work of women authors are classified and marketed by publishing house and reviewers. Again, genre, or "She wrote it, but look what she wrote about. She wrote it, but 'she' isn't really an artist and 'it' isn't really serious, of the right genre –i.e., really art" becomes a critical evidentiary element supporting the rhetorical movement combating literary gender bias. She notes the feminized book covers often used for books written by women, regardless of subject matter, and the continued practice of genre-fication that parses out women's writing into narrow "Women's fiction" categories. Covers depicting "Certain images, whether they summon a kind of Walker Evans poverty nostalgia or offer a glimpse into quilted domesticity, are geared toward women as strongly as an ad for 'calcium plus D.' These covers might as well have a

hex sign slapped on them, along with the words: 'Stay away, men! Go read Cormac McCarthy instead!'" These covers signify to readers that the book is meant for a certain audience, a female audience. Wolitzer also points to other factors used to separate or make anomalous female writers, such as book length, the literary canon used to model reading and writing for boys versus girls, and the *VIDA* numbers revealing the scant critical review and attention given novels written by women. Like Prose, she doesn't disregard the commercial success of female authors, stating,

> While there may be no such thing as 'male' or 'female' writing, to say that the emphases of male and female writers might sometimes be different doesn't mean that the deepest concerns or preoccupations of women are inferior or any less essential. Literary women novelists can of course do very well without male readers. And some literary male writers have admitted envying women the "femaleness" of the novel-reading (and -buying) community — a community that, from my own experience with book groups and individual readers, I know to be attentive and passionate. ("On the Rules")

Wolitzer substantiates most of the primary exigence claimed by Russ, almost 30 years later, as real, knowable, and experienced. Like Prose, she acknowledges the real successes that women writers have achieved, evidenced by books sales and a vast reading public. Also like Prose, hooks, and Roxane Gay, she knows that despite these successes, novels by women are marginalized because they are written by women, or cover topics assumed to be approached from only a feminine perspective, like family, relationships, and love; hence her title "On the Rules of Literary Fiction." It immediately positions her essay as a challenge to the categories, or "rules," used for women's fiction that ensure that few men, and fewer serious reviewers, will read or appreciate them.

Monica Dux points out in her article for *The Age* (an Australian daily newspaper) that the troubling aspect of the bias against women isn't just that women's writing is valued differently, but that this perception dangerously effects the development and confidence of women writers. She references stereotype threat[1] as a major factor because young women will "formulate lower expectations in regard to their own writing, and this will have an impact not just on their confidence, but also on their ability." So the claims of gender bias in the literary establishment position the issue as social, cultural, *and* psychological: women do not value their writing because our literary culture does not value women's writing. The institutions that act as gatekeepers (academia, critical review publications, and publishing houses that categorize and market women's writing as chick lit) are culturally constructed and empowered, not simply by men, but by the women who work, write, and succeed in these bastions of tradition.

Prolific author, scholar, and feminist writer bell hooks, influenced by her teacher and noted scholar Tillie Olsen, discusses sexism as a dynamic inhibition that has always "interfered with women's creativity, staging disruptions that has not only limited the breadth and range of women's writing but the quantity as well" (Burrell 18). This effect creates a tension in women who want to write but doubt their own ability, lack encouragement because of the obvious privilege accorded male writers, and ultimately must decide to write despite the danger of being ignored, or worse, disdained because of their gender. hooks is not satisfied with the excuse of sexism for

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[1] See the work of Claude Steele, especially his seminal article in *The Atlantic*, titled "Thin Ice: Stereotype Threat and Black College Students" Aug. 1999. Steele developed the theory that stereotypes, even when rejected by a person, latently effect performance and inhibit success when people perceive others are judging them using stereotypes. Steele's recent book, *Whistling Vivaldi*, extends this work and explores 21st century effects of stereotypes on performance. Steele coined the term "stereotype threat" to label this psychological response to stereotypes and their effect on performance.

today's writers, however. She goes on to write that women have made important strides in the publishing world despite the "critical generosity" still accorded male authors; furthermore she believes, there are few material barriers stopping us: "it is simply easier for women writers to write and sell work than ever before" (22). Still, she acknowledges "while feminist intervention altered the nature of contemporary women's writing, it has had little impact on critical evaluations of that work in the mainstream press" (21). Like the commentary of the authors we reviewed above, hooks adopts a balance of acknowledging the progress of women writers and their work while reinforcing the exigence of gender bias in critical acclaim and attention.

In 1978, Tillie Olsen named the vacuum created by literary gender bias as women's "silence," a silence that was evidence of the suppression of women's writing "caused by the social circumstances of being a woman" (Trensky 509). Silence was a byproduct of then contemporaneous, historical, and for Olsen, autobiographical evidence of gender bias against women's literature in college course offerings, anthologies, and critical recognition. Charting the progress of women's freedom and opportunity to write, we need only consider what each of our rhetoricians has expressed in their essays: women out-sell and in some areas, out-write men today. The silence Olsen chronicled has definitely been broken, removing the factor of "she wrote it but there are very few of her" from Russ's list of criteria forming our exigence of gender bias. The accomplishments of women writers in gaining readership, building their *oeuvre's*, and becoming prolific contributors to all forms of writing published today are acknowledged in the essays and interviews of authors hooks, Morrison, Prose, Weiner, Picoult, Wolitzer, Gay, and Showalter. As a rhetorical device, each of these authors leverages the successes as not only evidence of what women can and do accomplish, but also to illustrate the stagnation of their

progress when it comes to equal membership into the top echelons of literary fiction. What comes next after acknowledging the ubiquitous presence of women authors on reading shelves is examining what barriers remain for achieving parity with male authors, namely, the literary canon.

The rhetorical approaches of writers Joyce Carol Oates and Toni Morrison come in part through interviews, in which they are often asked what it means to be a "woman writer." I balance their indirect rhetorical speech alongside the more critically charged rhetoric of authors Pamela Redmond Satran, Roxane Gay, bell hooks, Jodi Picoult, and Jennifer Weiner, who write directly on the topic of gender bias in the literary establishment. Taken collectively, they all acknowledge their experience with bias because they are women who write. Today's critics have moved online with their rhetoric, and perhaps enjoy much more visibility and a wider audience because of their virtual presence. Jodi Picoult and Jennifer Wiener use Twitter to mock the practices of the *New York Times Book Review*. Every interview, article, and essay I read online (and some print) pointed to the statistics of *VIDA*, a grassroots organization that represents women in literary arts, which organizes and publishes statistics on literary review and essays on gender and writing almost exclusively online via their website and blog.

When it comes to occupying the heights reached by their male counterparts – the literary awards, the critical reviews, or academic interest – women have had some success, but never break even with, or surpass, their male colleagues. The statistics bear this up; in 2011, *VIDA* published their most recent statistics on the critical reception of women's writing[2]. In an analysis of fourteen[3] prestigious journals of

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[2] Statistics available at http://www.vidaweb.org/category/the-count. The analysis of percentages and averages these numbers represent are my own. Analytical tables are available in Appendix A of this thesis.

critical review, *VIDA's* numbers indicate that, overall (as reviewed and reviewer), women came in at 30% representation from all fourteen publications. To account for any distortion by unusually high or low counts, I removed the lowest representation (the New Republic, 18%), and the highest (Granta, 53%). The adjusted tally indicates, out of the remaining 12 publications, 29% of women were represented by these publications in 2011. These numbers aggregate two factors: who is doing the reviewing (gender of reviewer) and then the gender of those being reviewed. To focus our analysis of how these numbers bear on our examination of whether the criticism of underrepresentation of women *authors* is authentic –rhetorically, does the criticism represent a true exigence that is observable and historic? – we must consider just the number of authors reviewed. Doing that, we find that women authors were reviewed only 28.5% of the time in all publications *VIDA* surveyed in 2010 and 2011. Adjusting again for distortion by removing the highest and lowest rate of reviews, the average of the remaining ten publications is 26.5% for 2010 and 2011. Thus, the numbers are evidence that women authors are reviewed by the top publications only about a quarter of the time.

VIDA began publishing its count in 2010, an inadequate length of time to statistically determine underrepresentation of women writers by critical reviewers. We can confidently make the assumption that women as a group have never *overachieved* in critical attention, thus allow that the statistics from 2010 and 2011 indicate a high water mark in representing critical acknowledgement of women's work. We can further analyze these numbers, but the essence of what they represent is the same: women are reviewed less. The rhetorical situation, and the speakers who we

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[3] Harper's Magazine, The New Yorker, the Paris Review, The London Review of Books, The New York Times Book Review, The New York Times Literary Supplement, The Nation, The Threepenny Review, Poetry, The New York Review of Books, The New Republic, Granta, Boston Review, the Atlantic.

document here, does present a clear cultural and contemporary problem to be solved, one that demonstrates the underrepresentation of women authors receiving critical review, and the consequent esteem and attention that comes with critical review.

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The Audience Response to the Rhetorical Situation

Gender bias in the literary establishment leads to the marginalization and underrepresentation of women's literature. To enter the literary canon is to be assured certain privilege and authority in the academic and artistic literary culture. Though I have documented the counterargument that novels written by women are commercially successful, the statistics of which works endure and become classic or canonical overwhelmingly points to male authors, a topic we explore more deeply in Chapter Two. This has been attributed to the esteem and critical attention given to literature written by men. There is a connotation of status, achievement, ability and authority given to male authors through media and critical literary attention, endures over time and is denied to most female authors. Historically, canonical literature written by women become anomalies, while books written by men –mostly a hegemony that is defined by gender, sexuality and race, the straight white male – become further entrenched as exemplars of writing excellence.

When we examine the criticism of gender bias, we are asking if this is a rhetorical situation, and, if so, whether or not it is authentic. By definition, a rhetorical situation exists if there is exigence (an issue or situation that calls for rhetorical discourse), *kairos* (it is contemporary and timely), and it moves its audience to response (Bitzer 6). It may move its audience in various ways, as we have seen with the discourse above, using Aristotelian concepts of *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*, and thus we analyze the rhetoric of gender bias by the various institutions and people who

comprise the literary establishment for the form the discourse takes and its observable effect. Thus far, we have shown that a gender bias exists, at least is perceived by many women authors. Each generation re-invents the situation based on the current culture of literary practice and each generation also inherits traditional practices of literary recognition that seem to stand in the way of women achieving real parity with their male counterparts. We will note that the authors I have discussed are successful in their work, and most enjoy public name recognition. Thus, they have an *ethos* by right of the paradoxical situation of having written either commercially or critically successful work and to have been challenged by their effort to have their work critically recognized. Certainly the issue of equality is topical and timely for any generation, and though some respondents to the criticism of gender bias argue that the fight has been fought and the war won, our speakers argue that that isn't really the case. The biggest challenge to establishing the rhetorical situation lies with the target audience –editors, publishers, critics, and literature/writing scholars – who, as the rhetorical audience with the ability and desire to enact change, have been largely unresponsive to the criticism, with some exceptions. A secondary audience, other women authors and readers, have been more vocally responsive and reactive to the claim of bias; though I don't include them here, there are dozens of active blogs, recent articles, media comments and reader commentary that support the rhetorical situation and affirm the existence of a bias.

The response by male authors, book reviewers, and editors has, with a few exceptions, been no response at all or at best a limited and vague statement that acknowledges the disparities while doing nothing to implement any systemic changes to address the situation. What little response there has been makes the suggestion the issue of gender bias is done and over, that progress since the 19th century means there

now a level playing field. Many of the speakers we document here respond directly to claims that deny gender bias. These denials generally suggest that over time there has been more recognition of women's work, that there is a substantial readership for women's writing, and that women writers have achieved a commercial success unlike any generation before them, and that these facts are proof of equality. Mostly the rhetorical audience of editors, publishers, or certain defenders of the literary establishment question the legitimacy of any purposeful exclusion or marginalization of women's writing. Instead, some have stressed that the writing they review or publish is judged by quality alone, with no concern for gender of the author. *Times* book review editor Sam Tanenhaus claims, when responding to the criticism of Jodi Picoult and Jennifer Weiner that the *Times* shows unfair favoritism to male authors such as Franzen, that "there are no criteria used to decide what the *Times* will or will not review — the goal is to find books that will engage [our] readers and interest [our] reviewers. For us as editors, reviewers and critics, what we are really try[ing] to do is ... identify that fiction that really will endure" (Neary "All Things Considered"). This defense doesn't sit well with Jennifer Weiner, who observed for NPR's Linda Neary: "It's just interesting to sort of stack them up against a Lorrie Moore or against a Mona Simpson — who write books about families that are seen as excellent books about families...And then to look at a Jonathan Franzen who writes a book about a family but we are told this is a book about America." We know from the *VIDA* numbers that there are significantly less women reviewed than men. This exigent point made by Weiner reinforces Russ's argument that women's writing is marginalized by the reasoning that "she wrote it, but look what she wrote about," that is, certain topics written about by women lack a finer literary quality that more male authors seem to be able to capture in their writing on the same topics.

What makes women's writing *different* from men's, that is, what perceptions lie behind the judgment of male writers like VS Naipaul, or Norman Mailer, or Jonathan Franzen? Mailer famously wrote of his distaste for reading women's writing, stating:

> At the risk of making a dozen devoted enemies for life, I can only say that the sniffs I get from the ink of the women are always fey, old-hat, Quaintsy Goysy, tiny, too dykily psychotic, crippled, creepish, fashionable, frigid, outer-Baroque, maquillé in mannequin's whimsy, or else bright and stillborn. (Prose 62)

It's interesting to consider the perception versus the reality of what differentiates women's writing from men's; in my own experience, sometimes I make judgments of a piece of writing because of point of view, subject matter, or author's name, for example, a work by Tom Clancy or Gillian Flynn. Other times it is impossible for me to tell the difference, as with the work of Annie Proulx or Christopher Beha. In any case, I would not be surprised if I was wrong and Tom Clancy ended up being a woman, the Alice Bradley Sheldon of military action novels. Likewise, I'd be content to acknowledge my biases upon learning that Gillian Flynn was a man. What the women we profile here claim, though, is that the biases we all – men and women – bring to our reading choices are informed by a long tradition of subjugating women's work as inferior without due consideration of its literary value and its ability to appeal to both genders. Like me (as with Lois Tyson, I am a "recovering patriarchal female" with all the residual and automatic biases that come of being raised and inculcated in a patriarchal culture; see p. 83), Annie Dillard, arguably one of the most respected writers of her generation, has distained reading "American women writers," because, she states in a 2011 interview, "I am an American woman. I know what it's like to be

an American woman" (Melada). This view stereotypes American women writers as being unable to capture an experience in prose other than that of being American, and a woman, and a writer. I think it's important to emphasize that the rhetorical speakers calling attention to gender bias in critical literary recognition are not targeting men as writers; they are targeting the institutions that appear to favor male authors thus referencing the controversial remarks of Annie Dillard made here helps to diffuse any potential misunderstanding of who the rhetorical audience is for this particular situation claiming gender bias.

The "male literary darlings" Jodi Picoult was referring to when she lambasted the *New York Times Book Review* are authors like Franzen and Jeffrey Eugenides, among the most successful and critically acclaimed male authors today. These men have both directly and indirectly responded to an accusation that they enjoy a privileged position as white male authors, and their response seems to bypass a direct acknowledgement that they write from a privileged position. And they've been heartily defended by publishers and editors, as Lorin Stein, formerly of publishing house Farrar, Straus and Giroux and now editor for *The Paris Review,* did, calling the response to Franzen a "mini-backlash...[that] implied that fiction should restrict itself to entertainment or fade into obscurity" and that the criticism represents "fake populism [that] pretends to speak for women" (Stein "Freedom"). Stein's response is dismissive because it ignores the accusation of the favor given to male authors, and instead seems to deliberately distort the rhetoic by suggesting that Weiner and Picoult want the *Times* to focus on genre fiction that favors more entertainment value writing than quality literary works, when in fact they did not ever state that they believed all fiction is qualified to replace, or even be placed alongside, Franzen's. Likewise, editor Peter Stothard, editor of the *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS) resists the idea that

there is any gender bias, saying "without making a fetish of having 50/50 contributors" that their concern is representing "the most important books" and observing that "while women are heavy readers, we know they are heavy readers of the kind of fiction that is not likely to be reviewed in the pages of the TLS" (Page "Research Shows"). Still, he agrees that the gender issue is "not a small matter." Recall the observation by Lionel Shriver in our introduction, that publishers and editors "ghettoise" both women authors and women readers by pretending to know what they write, and what they want to read. Stothard confirms that he believes women readers aren't interested in serious literary fiction, and, by implication, that men aren't interested in reading serious literary fiction written by women.

In February of 2012, Franzen wrote an article for the New Yorker that took a critical view of Edith Wharton's wealth as contradictory to an author's need to relate to their audience. Franzen felt that Wharton's rendering of middle class ambition was inauthentic, since she herself was very privileged and moneyed. Immediately the tone of the article sniffs at the underrepresentation of women in the literary canon: "You may be dismayed by the ongoing underrepresentation of women in the American canon " ("A Rooting Interest"). The language here is specific: *may* be *dismayed*. The implication is that many people *may not* be *dismayed,* which supposes that underrepresentation of women in the canon is a subjective perspective, and that at most they experience a sense of mild *dismay*. Franzen then proceeds to dismantle Wharton's authenticity as a writer, focusing his critique on her physical appearance and financial situation rather than her skill as a writer.

Franzen has received a lot of backlash for this article on Wharton[4]. It's curious to imagine why he would devote a whole article on criticizing Wharton's privileged background, her looks, and her marriage rather than critique her writing for its representative and literary value. What concerns us here is his minimization of the expressed concerns of representation in the literary canon. His critics include Pamela Redmond Satran who terms Franzen, Eugendines, and Tom Perrota "Big Swinging Dick writers" and points out that "It would have been far more interesting to find out what he identified with in Wharton," she remarked. "That's an essay I would have liked to read" (Budhos). Franzen's lukewarm acknowledgement of women's struggle for literary recognition, which, when coupled with his derision of Wharton, leaves a disturbing impression of marginalizing the experience and authorial voice of women writers. Considering the effect of the rhetoric of gender bias on its audience, Franzen and other authors, editors, and publishers, while acknowledging that women's writing is often under-represented or marginalized, at the same time defend and detract from the issue with various counterpoints.

Jeffrey Eugenides also addressed the rhetoric of gender bias against women authors as unwarranted, though in a different way. In response to Jodi Picoult's Twitter post that the literary establishment favors "white male literary darlings," Eugenides responded,

> I didn't really know why Jodi Picoult is complaining. She's a huge bestseller and everyone reads her books, and she doesn't seem starved for attention, in my mind — so I was surprised that she would be the one belly-aching.

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[4] See for instance Marina Budhos essay for The Daily Beast: http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/03/01/why-jonathan-franzen-can-t-appreciate-edith-wharton.html, which takes Franzen to task for his "peevish read on Wharton." For a full rundown of outraged responses to Franzen's article, visit: http://edithwharton.blogspot.com/2012/03/responses-to-jonathan-franzens-new.html.

> There's plenty of extremely worthy novelists who are getting very little attention. I think they have more right to complain. And it usually has nothing to do with their gender, but just the marketplace. (Daley "Jeffrey Eugenides")

Eugenides's response indicates that commercial success is as lofty an achievement as critical success. And he makes an important point. Every writer, regardless of gender, suffers for their craft and is challenged by gaining literary recognition. The rhetoric that women struggle for critical attention is weakened by the fact that we have an audience, a readership, and that most presses today, large and small, publish as many, in some cases more, work by women than by men. So why do women believe they are being underrepresented and their work subordinated when, on paper, we are extraordinarily successful? What remains as the apex of achievement for any author is entrance into the literary canon, and the endurance of critical pieces of literature as representative to the human experience and that leave a forceful impression on readers throughout time. That has, and is, the province of male writers.

What I have done here is shown a collective sentiment among a select group of prominent female authors who believe that there is a gender bias at play in the literary establishment. The bias, they stipulate, marginalizes writing by women by judging it with a set of subordinate standards, based on what is construed as feminine style, voice, subject matter, and appeal. Their rhetorical criticism is aimed at the "literary establishment," a nebulous creature composed of many different institutions that recognize and esteem literary work. This rhetorical situation is not polemical; instead, what the women attempt to create is a paradigm shift that results in a broadening of our literary culture, where the writing of women is equally measured and recognized, and contributes to the discourse on life, love, humanity, in essence, that impresses readers with its ability to reflect human, and thus, universal, realisms.

The reactions I have gathered from male authors and editors of publications that perform critical review of literature are scant. They don't disagree with *VIDA's* statistics, but instead claim they are reviewing novels that they feel their readers are interested in, and that reflect important new work judged solely on its literary value. That they consistently select more work written by men is not explained. The criteria used to connote literary value is unclear. Their function as the rhetorical audience in this study can be said to be reluctant, though by the very existence of a dialogue we can say that the rhetorical situation is real and valid. In the next two chapters, we will look more closely at issues that effect the formation of the literary works that we teach, that we uphold as representative and worthy, and that effect the development or formation of women writers.

Ultimately, these women have fostered a discourse that authenticates a rhetorical situation. On those grounds alone, we can state that their rhetoric is successful. What remains to be seen is what continuing effect their rhetoric is having, especially as it concerns the inclusion of novels by women in the literary canon: what gets taught in schools and colleges, what gets marked as extraordinary by literary critics, and what endures as "canonical" over time. Returning to Bitzer's model, we have framed the rhetorical situation accordingly: that the women speaking are authoritative, speak from experience and are reacting to a *kairotic* moment in literary history, one that is built upon a continuum of feminist activism. They have proven their experiences to be real, their exigent claims are quantifiable and have had an effect upon a responsive and reactive audience, and the situation is both complex and simple, depending on the particular point being raised. However, each speaker has either directly or indirectly alluded to the issue of the endurance of women's writing, its ability to find a place among the largely male literary masters whose work has

passed some vague and nearly indefinable criteria of greatness. Here is where we turn our attention now: to examine particularly the literary canon, the criteria of great writing, and what contemporary rhetoric claims as the canon's current representative state.

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Chapter Two: The Rhetorical Challenge to the Literary Canon

"The principle locus for the debate...is not the face-to-face polemic, however frustrating, enervating, and necessary it may be, but the larger processes of canon formation, critical attention, and curricular reform." (Robinson 39)

The rhetorical situation I've outlined so far is built heavily upon a tradition of feminist activism and is supported by many powerful female writers, who, through the agency they've gained within the literary world, are able to create an active discourse that lends authenticity to the movement. But, beyond raising awareness, what exactly does change look like? In the minds of the rhetoricians I examine, it looks like a substantial shift in how literary institutions consider texts that become canonical, what we teach, what we talk about, what we apotheosize from our past. With this goal as the focus of many of our rhetorical speakers, there are several arguments they make on why the canon is so critical to the rhetorical situation of gender bias as a whole. Here, our investigation leads us beyond the female writers who have emerged as our primary speakers above, to the rhetorical speech of feminist scholars and literary theorists concerning gender bias in the literary field. Unlike our first set of speakers, who have focused on critical recognition and publishing processes, the leading feminist scholars are more likely to concentrate their rhetoric on the literature that endures in our culture, especially the literature that we use to teach and that we use as models of excellent writing for student writing development.

My examination here will consider how the focus on the literary canon effects the overall rhetorical situation, the tone of the discourse, the response by the audience, and the power the audience has– the constraints – to enact specific change.

Lillian Robinson acknowledges, in "Treason Our Text," that nowhere is the literary canon codified as a single body of recognized work that meets consistent and defined criteria (83). Instead, the literary canon is mutable, moving fluidly with trends in literature and cultural shifts that mark the tastes of a generation. What, then, is the impetus that rhetorically inspires these scholars to challenge the literary canon, a canon they themselves call indefinable? The primary points of dialogue for the scholars I review here are that, no matter what period of time, no matter what popular tastes prevail in that time, the canon of work that most defines any given historical period, or generation, is writ by men, occupied by the male perspective, dictated by rules that privilege a masculine language, and judged by academics and critics who perpetuate a patriarchal system of recognition.

Joanna Russ again provides us with our framework of the rhetorical exigence of gender bias against women writers. Russ's work allows us to condense the arguments from the female writers and scholars to a series of inter-related exigencies, that is, the mechanisms in place that our rhetoricians argue are the main reasons women's writing is marginalized: it's the wrong genre, it isn't really art, the subject matter doesn't meet literary standards, there isn't enough work by women to make recognition fairly distributed, or the work is simply ignored and overlooked for no obvious reason other than "she" wrote it (paraphrased from Russ, 76) . Her work overlays Bitzer's model of a rhetorical situation in order to define the issues at stake,

as well as the audience, constraints, and authors who provide both a historical and contemporary vision of gender bias in the literary establishment, and to focus our attention on the critique of the literary canon.

The constraints, defined by Bitzer as the beliefs, attitudes, facts, traditions, interests, et cetera, that the audience will bring to bear on the rhetorical response, reveal a complex dynamic between the orators and those empowered to act to effect change within the literary establishment. Briefly, we acknowledge that the audience is not a homogeneous body, nor do they comprise a hegemony that leads to unified action. No doubt the women speakers have struck a chord within each other and have connected their experiences to create a consciousness of what it means to write as a woman. They have agreed on the importance for a writer to be recognized for their ability for both achieving recognition within the patriarchal standards in place and for the feminine perspective that can be infused in our culture and expand the literary standards beyond any normative criteria. They see this as progress that enables all writers to have the opportunity to dwell in the hallowed canon of literary greatness. In our work so far, the rhetoric has more dubiously affected the audience of critics, editors, publishers, and academics who teach, review, market and publish, and otherwise recognize the contributions of women. For these institutions, the language of the male writer and the perspective of the masculine ideals that have shaped our society and discourse remain the standards with which we are most comfortable. And so women write to please these male standards, as Helene Cixous passionately and seductively charges: "[W]oman has always functioned 'within' the discourse of man....A feminine text cannot fail to be more than subversive. It is volcanic; as it is

written it brings about an upheaval of the old property crust, carrier of masculine investments...there's no room for her if she's not a he" (1532). Adrienne Rich, writing in 1972, articulates this constraint on the woman who writes:

> No male writer has written primarily or even largely for women, or with the sense of women's criticism as a consideration when he chooses his materials, his theme, his language. But to a lesser or greater extent, every woman writer has written for men even when, like Virginia Woolf, she was supposed to be addressing women. If we have come to the point when this balance might begin to change, when women can stop being haunted, not only by "convention and propriety" but by internalized fears of being and saying themselves, then it is an extraordinary moment for the woman writer-and reader. (20)

Like Cixous, Rich argues that women are writing for men and that we have become inured to the conventions of patriarchy that mold our own tentative and anomalous contributions to the literary field. Our culture and society, at least in the realm of literary achievement, is underwritten by a traditionally patriarchal set of standards –ill defined, subconscious, seemingly arbitrary – but, nonetheless, palpable to our feminist scholars and writers as favorable to a masculine sense of what defines great writing. We saw in Chapter One that in recent responses most male critics and editors denied that gender plays any role in the decision to review or critique any given work. Dale Spender is outraged at this dissemblance: "Which is why I laugh (or cry!) when members of the literary profession persist with their claims that their judgment is never clouded by issues of gender. Terrible that so many of them should be so

arrogant, but worse that they should be so assiduously ignorant and disregard the implications of so much relevant research" (17-8). Author Roxane Gay baldly condemns the race to achieve parity with a male-defined standard of excellence, stating:

> When did men become the measure? When did we collectively decide writing was more worthy if men embraced it? I suppose it was the "literary establishment" that made this decision when, for too long, men dominated the canon, and it was men whose work was elevated as worthy, who received the majority of the prestigious literary prizes and critical attention.
>
> Male readership shouldn't be the measure to which we aspire. Excellence should be the measure and if men and *the establishment* can't (or won't) recognize that excellence, we should leave the culpability with them instead of bearing it ourselves. As long as we keep considering male readership the goal, we're not going to get anywhere. We're going to remain trapped in the same terrible place where we measure women's writing against an artificial, historically compromised standard. (Beyond the Measure)

The idea that we are rhetorically challenging a canon whose standards will never embrace a paradigm shift to be more inclusive is a critical concern. Cixous, Rich, Spender, and Gay represent a collective of rhetorical speakers who decry the masculine literary standards –related to subject matter, language, and writing style – that seems to elevate male writing over women's, and further, these speakers represent a time continuum in which the issue of standards has played from the early to mid-1970's to 2010. This suggests that our rhetorical situation has played out and

continues to exist over a long span of time, and that the arguments have seemed to change little over that span. We will revisit these points in a bit, but first let's talk about the rhetorical proposals to subvert the masculine tradition in literary recognition.

What is the cost of trying to achieve recognition that is reluctantly given? Luce Irigaray addressed this issue in her potent essay "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine," written in 1977, to argue that women should not try to achieve entry into traditionally male realms, like literature, but instead carve their own tradition which does not allow the masculine to "define, circumvene, circumscribe, the properties of any thing and everything" (797). In her legendary essay "Laugh of the Medusa," Irigaray's countrywoman Helene Cixous also called for a feminine ideal in the structure of writing and discourse, calling for the boundaries of masculine language, acceptance, and comfort be exploded by feminine sexuality and that celebrates the bisexual normative experience of women's writing; it explores the feminine properties of the body, the self, and the experience of women *and* men as primary and critical to all discourse. As components of this rhetorical situation, Irigaray and Cixous's essays stand out because they first seed the idea that, rather than try to "fit in" with a tradition that does not appreciate the feminine perspective, women (and some men; the "poets," per Cixous, 1527) should build their own language, should question all that has come before and all that will come, and only seek to understand it through the feminine perspective, which is not concerned with gender binaries but with the holistic experience of humanity (cf. Cixous, 1530 and Irigaray, 797). Today, women novelists have built their own tradition, which has

succeeded in some ways, most strikingly with commercial success, but has also led to a new rhetorical issue for our speakers, that of categorizing women's writing as "chick lit." It's interesting to trace the rhetoric as it explores the feminine tradition Irigaray and Cixous called for, and evolves into a more contemporary issue of women's writing being categorized as chick lit, sometimes called women's literature, because it demonstrates the shift the rhetorical situation has taken and leads us to where we are today[1].

Tillie Olsen wrote "Silences" in 1965. In this critical book, she likened the absence of a representative body of women's writing as a *silencing* of women's voices, a discordant silence wrought by intimidation, lack of confidence, and lack of time/space, and lack of tradition. Few speakers – scholars or women writers – speak about gender bias against women's writing without referencing Olsen's work. Her scholarship, linked within that generation of feminist activism to Cixous, Rich, Betty Friedan, and Irigaray gave birth to our contemporary rhetorical situation by establishing the major issues we seek to identify and prove today; we ask of those issues: "are they still relevant?" and, "are they still true?" And the root of those questions derived from the historical rhetoric is to frame them within the question of the literary canon; in asking what is still relevant and what is still true we are really

[1] There are few scholars today, or even in the last twenty years, who have tackled the issue of gender and writing, and who have specifically challenged the continued male-domination of the literary canon. However, those that do have built upon, as I have, the trailblazers of the 60's, 70's, and 80's when the wave of feminist scholars rhetorically challenged not just how we recognize writing, but who we write for, and what we say, and how we say it. I focus my documentation of the rhetoric with the work of Helene Cixous, Tillie Olsen, Lillian Robinson, Elaine Showalter, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Luce Irigaray, and Joanna Russ. These scholars linger in our consciousness, and their work remains influential and pervasive in current writing and gender discourse, so that we can leverage their discourse as continuing to affect our understanding of what forms the literary canon, and what powers influence the development of what we teach, and what we learn as a result of the kind of books –and who writes them – that are upheld as literary exemplars.

asking, what changes have been wrought in the institutions who influence canon formation as a result of the historical movement for literary recognition for women's writing? Are women still "silent"? Do we still try to satisfy a masculine writing standard in order to achieve recognition? As we have seen in Chapter One, there is a continued perception of critical marginalization, as well as documentation revealing that gender bias in critical literary review is a statistical reality, but that the situation is complicated by factors of genre, publishing and marketing strategies, and a subjective determination of what is worthy of critical review and reward. So we know that many of the rhetorical points raised by our foremothers remain exigent today, and we also know that some have changed, which Bitzer tells us is a recognizable part of rhetorical situations that endure over a long period of time: "many questions go unanswered and many problems remain unsolved..." (6).

Shelley Fisher Fishkin revisits Olsen's impact on the rhetorical situation in 2009, re-examining Olsen's work in a contemporary cultural and academic framework. She writes that "*Silences* changed what we read in the academy, what we write, and what we count; it also gave us some important tools to understand and address many of the literary, social, economic, and political silencings of the present and the potential silencing of the future" (48). Olsen brought to light not just how, who, and why women's writing was silenced, but "what might have been, in the shadows of what never was" (48). Olsen went beyond challenging the canon and the silencing of women's voices and built reading lists of women's writing that should be included and taught alongside the male-authored "classics" traditionally taught in writing and literature courses (49). Fishkin further lauds Olsen's contributions as not

just passively academic but as a rhetorical call for action in that she "handed out road maps on how to do...that in the study of literature" by bringing to light forgotten or ignored female authors[2] (51). Olsen established not just the impact gender bias has had on canon formation in academia, but the what effect, if any, the subconscious effect could be on the development of female writers.

How *does* the perception of a gender bias against women's writing we have shown affect the development of student writers? Lillian Robinson observes,

> For, beyond their availability on bookshelves, it is through the teaching and study-- one might even say the habitual teaching and study-- of certain works that they become institutionalized as canonical literature. Within that broad canon, moreover, those admitted but read only in advanced courses, commented upon only by more or less narrow specialists, are subjected to the further tyranny of "major" versus "minor." (84)

The speakers are arguing here that the male-dominated literary canon heavily influences the idea of not just what writing is canonical and thus worth studying and learning, but who is writing it –writers who represent life and humanity from a much different perspective than we, as women writers, might ourselves be compelled to write about or identify with. Thus, the teaching and studying of a male-centric body of literature influences the confidence and sense of place of female student writers, an effect we investigate more fully in Chapter Three.

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[2] In fact, Olsen directly influenced the Feminist Press to reprint the works of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Margaret Fuller, Mary Wilkins Freeman, Meridel LeSueur, Josephine Herbst, Edith Summers Kelley, Fielding Burke, Tess Slesinger, June Arnold, Mary Austin, Katharine Burdekin, Mona Caird, Helen Hull, Elizabeth Janeway, Jospehine Johnson, Edith Konecky, Paule Marshall, Moa Martinson, Myra Page, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Elizabeth Robins, Jo Sinclair, Helen Smith, Susan Warner, Dorothy West, Sarah Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, and more.

Robinson addresses the strong resistance to what is perceived to be a call for substituting Annie Dillard for Nathaniel Hawthorne, or for replacing Charles Dickens with Willa Cather. A rhetorical response recorded by Robinson claims that a call for more inclusion is an insidious attempt to rid academia of its traditional texts, or, more polemically, men. Of course, this is not true and it supposes that by expanding the body of typical works that populate the canon –Joseph Conrad, T.S. Eliot, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce- we are diminishing the value of literary instruction by adding more women authors. Implicit in this resistance is the idea that women's writing cannot match the foundations and standards of classic literature and the times, history, culture, and social dynamics they represent.

To better explicate how men are represented in the literary canon as opposed to women, I reviewed the reading lists of nine top universities and libraries[3]. I accessed these lists through a simple web search, focusing on publicly available lists posted by universities and well-known libraries or literary clubs (like St. John's University, The Great Books Foundation and The New York Public Library). I used the search terms "greatest novels" and "list of top classical literature." I wanted to get a sense of what an average person or student, looking for recommendations on what "classic" works they should read, would find when they performed a similar search. I analyze the published lists of these institutions and compare them for statistical representation of women versus men authors. These figures are analyzed as a

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[3] Please see Appendix B for the source lists compiled, as well as the source institutions and the representation by each author on each list. As well you will find the complete and merged list of works examined by number of appearances (223 novels). It is not exhaustive (lists could have changed since my access) and only serves as a guideline to novels that appear more than others in academic or literary lists. Of note is that these lists are not for contemporary works, but of literature that is considered by these institutions to be classical or canonical.

collective (number of times a particular novel appears) and then by gender binary (number of men versus women). The top ten novels, appearing on the most number of lists, are *Heart of Darkness* (Conrad), *To the Lighthouse* (Woolf), *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Joyce), *Lolita* (Nabokov), *Native Son* (Wright), *The Great Gatsby* (Fitzgerald), *Ulysses* (Joyce), *1984* (Orwell), *A Clockwork Orange* (Burgess), and *Animal Farm* (Orwell). From here, there are two-hundred and twenty-two books in total on the list; of that, forty-eight works are authored by women; the rest, one hundred and seventy-three, are writ by men. If we remove all redundancies, that is, authors who appear more than once, we are left with twenty-nine women and one hundred and twenty male authors. This analysis suggests that public lists of "great" novels tend to privilege the work of men 80% of the time. This representation is not exact, but they seem to uphold the claims made by Joanna Russ and *VIDA* in its literary critical review count, that, when we calculate how often writing by women appear in reading lists, award finalists, or literary journals, it generally falls within a quarter or less percentage of the total representation of what constitutes "great" or canonical literature.

A primary source for identifying the literary canon as it is taught in introductory literature review courses is the *Norton Anthology of American Literature*.[4]. The seventh edition charts American literature up to the present day, with five volumes. I selected Volume E, representing core American literature since 1945, to examine for representation of female authors. Out of the 100 authors in the Norton Anthology from 1945, there are 38 (38%) women writers and 62 (62%) men.

[4] According to a report issued by The Center for Teaching and Learning of Literature, the Norton Anthology is a primary text used at many universities in North America. The full report is cited in the bibliography.

They represent poets, fiction and non-fiction writers, and playwrights. Compared to the representation of writing by women that is critically reviewed by the top literary review journals that we examined using the VIDA numbers in Chapter One, the Norton Anthology holds up a little better than do the review journals. However, as you move backward through time in the anthology, you begin to see fewer women authors; for example, there are works by eight female authors born between 1900-1925 –Flannery O'Connor, Grace Paley, Gwendolyn Brooks, Elizabeth Bishop, Eudora Welty, Denise Levertov, and Lorine Niedecker- out of twenty-seven men. Each author has a variable number of works, just one for Eudora Welty, two for Flannery O'Connor, and twelve poems by Gwendolyn Brooks. In comparison, Jack Kerouac has seven chapters of *Big Sur*, Robert Lowell has eight poems, and James Merrill four poems. Under a section called Post-Modern Manifestos, there are eight authors, including only one woman: Elizabeth Bishop. The representative numbers remain consistent with the rhetorical argument used by our scholars and female authors.

The rhetoric from both scholars and published women authors overlap to inform an argument that what we read is formative to what we write, and that under-representation or marginalization of women's writing inherently diminishes the confidence of the emerging female writer today. By focusing their attention on the literary canon, i.e. what we teach and fetishize as "great" in American culture, critics such as Elaine Showalter and Lillian Robinson correlate the canon to the writing confidence of women, as Robinson says in her book, *In the Canon's Mouth*:

> The significance of the limiting case...lies in the conclusions that are automatically drawn from the absence of women in the canon or the syllabus typically based on it. If an undergraduate is required to take one course on the Great Books and they all turn out to have been produced by Great Men, that student will very likely also take it as a given that no woman writer is considered to be suitably Great. Worse, the student will probably not give any thought to the matter. ("Canon's Mouth" 39-40)

Robinson asserts that the student will assume that because there are few women authors studied there are few women writers *worthy* of study. And further, when considering the anomalous women who are regulars on the course syllabus –for example Austen, Eliot, or Virginia Woolf- we are perpetuating the myth that women writers who can be studied alongside canonical male authors –Dickens, Hawthorne, Thoreau, or Miller- are threads in the same spool; they can be studied because they are alike. They are rarely studied because of the female perspective they offer or given a feminist reading that reveals a different mode of history and culture. Robinson claims that this "quota" system of using the same female authors to teach literature and writing is a counter-rhetorical claim: "We are...proposing the addition of new voices 'simply because' of their gender, race or nationality, with no regard for the aesthetic values that hitherto defined and...closed the curriculum" (107). She confronts the underlying perception of women's writing as unequal to that of men's as a systemic marginalization of women's work within academia.

In this chapter, we are examining the current rhetorical situation as it is claimed by feminist scholars, and, in reference to the "anomalousness" argument that

Joanna Russ and others like Tillie Olsen and the women behind the *VIDA* Count make, it is interesting to understand their claims by undertaking a search for myself, as I did with the reading lists and by examining the Norton Anthology. That I felt it necessary to provide some further proof beyond their claims, for myself and for my readers, may indicate a cultural skepticism that is inherent in most of the women's rhetorical audience, a *constraint* per Bitzer (6), and proof of my own entrenchment within the literary world and the privileging of literature written by men. To explore this idea further and understand the contemporary rhetorical situation as it effects canon formation a little more contextually, we must understand how our speakers understand the inclusion of some women authors and not others.

Some scholars have directly confronted the myth that there aren't enough female authors to add to the literary canon, a mythology that Elaine Showalter cracks in her work "A Literature of Their Own," profiling and uncovering the oft times unrecognized or misrepresented women who have been buried in archives for centuries. As we saw, Tillie Olsen's work began in 1962 by addressing these little known authors, building reading lists and libraries to belatedly recognize their experiences and contributions to their historical eras. Showalter and Olsen have pushed beyond rhetorical discourse alone to provide specific actions for their audiences, such as including and reprinting the works of little known or forgotten women writers. This point is also raised by Joanna Russ, as well as Meg Wolitzer and Jennifer Weiner. To place this claim within our contemporary situation, we find that it is related to the current criticism from some rhetorical speakers, like Lionel Shriver and Wolitzer, that women's writing, now widely available, has been "ghettoized"

through categorization, that is, turned into genre fiction and still marginalized. We can thread this argument even further to other rhetorical points by showing the connection between genre fiction and literary canon formation; those works that defy genres such as the "chick lit" categorization are more likely to endure and become canonical. Who has broken through that obstacle and how? Below we first examine those female writers who *do* appear most often on reading lists, and later in Chapter Three we investigate some contemporary works by women that have also seemed to gain the desired recognition our speakers call for.

Alongside Showalter, there are several major works of study on the female literary tradition, especially as it is formed by the women authors of the 19th century and the body of work that they contribute to the literary canon. We know that Jane Austen, the Bronte sisters, and George Eliot are fixtures to in 19th century studies. In *Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar document and analyze the patterns that emerged with a collection of close readings of women writers from that epoch, and "we found what began to seem a distinctly female literary tradition....Images of enclosure and escape, fantasies in which maddened doubles functioned as asocial surrogates for docile selves, metaphors of physical discomfort manifested in frozen landscapes and fiery interiors --such patterns recurred throughout this tradition" (xi). Their work examines woman writers of a generation who have most influenced the literary canon and who collectively broke through a patriarchal tradition of fictional composition. Gilbert and Gubar note that they focused on 19th century women writers because historically their generation "seemed to us to be the first era in which female authorship was no longer in some sense

anomalous" (xi), which at that time was *any* woman being published, *despite* being a woman writer. In comparison to today's rhetorical claims, it isn't enough to merely write, as bell hooks claimed that any writer today can do, but to be recognized on a level playing field. In the 19th century, it was well known that the playing field was not level. However, we bookmark this place in time and in the current rhetorical situation as both critical to the beginnings of a movement, and as a point of reference for most of our speakers, especially as the names Austen, Woolf, and Eliot are invoked as representative of women who wrote despite the social and cultural barriers they encountered.

Showalter went even further and dug through the dusty libraries and archives to uncover the lost women writers who, when joined with the typical canonical female authors, combat the idea that women have not written enough to make a serious impact on the canon, past or present. In fact, Showalter pursued the prolific and diverse writings from the 19th century because "women's literary history has suffered from an extreme form of what John Gross calls "residual Great Traditionalism," which has reduced and condensed the extraordinary range and diversity of English women novelists to a tiny band of the "great," and derived all theories from them" (7). Even though we have a small body of work by women that represents feminine style and perspective in the literary canon, Showalter argues that it does not nearly represent the large body of work by women written in that period.

Though my focus is on contemporary American women novelists, the work of Showalter is important because it demonstrates a rhetorical theme critical to this chapter: the discourse that pokes at how the literary canon is formed, what devices the

speakers believe has been used to restrict or limit the number of writing by women included in the canon, and how the rhetorical speakers position their rhetoric to effect change, i.e. a call for action. Showalter and Gilbert and Gubar 's work is important to this study for several reasons: they trace a historical pattern of women's writing, especially writing that has endured through time as well as been lost or forgotten, and they discuss the same rhetorical exigencies that our women writers express today. Showalter especially confronts the obstacles of establishing a female tradition in light of masculine language, defined subject matters, and distaste of overtly feminine style that dictated the success or inclusion of women into the canon. She writes in 1977, "Feminine, feminist, or female, the women's novel has always had to struggle against the cultural and historical forces that relegated women's experience to the second rank (A Literature 36). At the time of her research, a powerful second wave feminist movement confronted literary tradition and inclusion as part of a larger movement to advance equality and representation for women in all sectors of society and culture. The work of Gilbert and Gubar and Showalter happened at a time that echoes the rhetorical claims of today: that women writers are made anomalous, that the battle for recognition is fought among a tradition and culture that was largely defined by masculine or patriarchal standards, and that women must subvert their identities or style to appeal to the tastes of a patriarchal critical literary reading audience, and that they battled the self-consciousness and lack of confidence that comes from writing against the patriarchal grain.

At this point, I have shown the historical trajectory of the rhetorical situation of gender bias, which leads us to where we are today and to revisit our question of

"are women still silent?" and "are the arguments made then still relevant today?" In a biting article published on Jezebel, an online pop culture news and opinion site geared mainly towards a female audience, writer Doug Barry discusses the "sausage fest" that still defines celebrated authors today. His entry begins with a recent survey of the *Modern Language Association's International Bibliography,* which produced a list of the top 25 American writers, statistically determined by the scholarship published on each. The survey shows that "of 25 lionized, aggrandized, perpetuated American scribblers, only five — or a good tip on a small lunch check — are women" ("The Literary Canon"). Barry further notes that the most "academically investigated" are the same women from year to year since 1987, with very little movement from their place on the list indicating a renewed focus or a waning interest: Toni Morrison (#8), Emily Dickinson (#9), Willa Cather (#13), Edith Wharton (#16), and Flannery O'Connor (#19). Barry's rhetorical position is akin to Showalter and Gilbert and Gubar's studies, showing through scholarship that the canon perpetuates an aggrandizement of male writers, while never reflecting the diversity of women writers who have emerged over the that last several generations. Joanna Russ's contention that women authors are made anomalous, that the same writers emerge as token representatives in any anthology or academic examination, or "she wrote it, but there's only one of her" continues to define the literature that is critically recognized or made important through scholarly interest. What marks Barry's essay is his claim that "women are and have always been the primary audience of the novel." This point is exigent to the rhetorical situation defined by women authors and our query in this study: the rhetorical audience is not just those who pass judgment as a scholarly or

critical literary body, but the readers whose choices are determined by the recognition and establishment of what makes any novel "great." These are the works that persist in our literary traditions, in the academic attention paid to their impact and influence on culture and as reflections of universal truths, and which make up the lists that comprise the nebulous "literary canon" that we return to again and again. We become convinced of an author's greatness, and the importance of her work when we encounter her titles and name in the media, in the scholarship, and in our collective cultural consciousness.

Patriarchy, patriarchal, masculine, male-dominated; these are all terms that crop up repeatedly in the rhetoric, not just the scholarship or academic research, but in the lexicon of feminisms and gender-based rhetorical dialogues on representation. So, our female novelists talk about patriarchy and the patriarchal traditions that define canon formation. The scholars talk about "...the Judgment of Literary Men"-- as Dale Spender refers to the patriarchal criteria-- used to "justify their own work," and consequently, women's writing is diminished because "the writing of women has been evaluated and found wanting--which is why it has so little prominence in the literary heritage" (1). Spender's book is titled *The Writing or the Sex? or why you don't have to read women's writing to know it's no good*, and is meant to disrupt and challenge the tradition of literary recognition through the processes that propel any given work to greatness, or even to wide public attention.

Spender devotes an entire book to the discussion of every step of the literary process, beginning with the field of literary criticism and moving through language, education, publishing, and marketing, all the areas that interest us with this

contemporary study. Her central argument evidences why the assumption of inferiority of women's writing by literary men is wrong: men, she claims, do not even read women writers, and she sets out to analyze why as a scholarly inquiry.

Scholars like Spender add a credible *ethos* to the rhetorical situation by employing a more clinical sense of *logos* than the women writers we quoted in chapter one, although their arguments use the same points. For example, Jodi Picoult may protest the injustice of the *New York Times* focusing on a "white male literary darling" instead of being more inclusive to writers of all stripes, and Spender also documents other movements that organized and motivated women to speak out against gender bias by publicly protesting institutional practices[5]. But Spender approaches this same allegation of a seeming preference for male writers by first observing the long-term failure of public protest in effecting any sustained shift in literary recognition practices. She relates attempts to move audiences as an invocation of emotion, using issues of fairness and moral judgment to condemn the practices of the *New York Times,* as ineffective because "Confronted with the empirical data on their enormous sex bias in favor of men, some literary editors wish to appear balanced...can be sufficiently shamed to want to put their house in order..." but that, "It is a privilege that can be readily withdrawn or fall into disuse once the powerful feel no obligation to bestow it" (83). She instead calls for "women-controlled sources of review" to ensure that women's work is equally represented. Like Tillie Olsen,

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[5] Spender cites a statistical review of "sex bias" in the *New York Times Book Review* conducted in 1984 by a group of "women writers in North America" headed by the well-known author Marilyn French. Spender breaks down the impact of this review as one of momentary spark that fizzled and died without igniting any real "paradigm shift" in critical literary practices. See pages 60-92, Chapter Four, "Reviewing: The Little Women Are Entitled To. In connection to our study of the contemporary rhetorical situation, it would seem that this early effort at making journals accountable did not work at the time, though does contribute to a retrospective that shows the historical trajectory of this movement, and therefore adds to our discourse here.

Spender ultimately equates gender bias as a means of "silencing" women in the literary field:

> With language studies it has now been established that over the centuries women have been enjoined by men to be silent. Sophocles might not have started it, but when he suggested that 'silence gives the proper grace to women', he made a contribution to the image of a good woman as a silent woman in the western tradition. (8)

Importantly, Spender notes that research into the entire literary publication process, and its promotion, review, validation, and inclusion in the classroom and hence, how it becomes part of our literary canon, is "one of the most under-researched and least-taught areas of intellectual endeavors" (16). She speculates that the reason we don't question our processes is because the results would profoundly affect education, and social dynamics in academia and in western culture --all institutions that were formed and rely on a system made dependent on patriarchal tradition (16). Spender's rhetoric is an outright charge of sexism, which, writing in 1989, was the popular term of that epoch. Today, we consider this an issue of gender, with sexuality occupying its own distinct issues of representation and marginalization, though no less critical to writing and canon development. Regardless, her rhetorical position uniquely contributes to the situation we are constructing. She not only affirms the exigence established by Olsen, Cixous, Rich, and Russ in 1965, 1970, 1972, and 1984, but she makes it a scholarly question that moves beyond rhetoric and examines process; it takes on patriarchy and it drills down into why women's writing has a reputation of being lesser than men's writing. Still, even revisiting this issue today to mark "where we

stand" and the experience of a rhetorical situation claimed by female writers, we find that the myth of inferiority, or, generously, mediocrity, of women's writing persists in many of the areas addressed by Spender: literary review, academia, and marketing and publishing.

Let us here summarize the exigent claims of both the theorists we have discussed above, and the authors we met in Chapter One. First, the authors claim a gender bias, which we have seen both statistically and by perception, exists. The evidence of a gender bias in the literary establishment is experienced through the categorization of women's literature in ways that marginalize or subordinates its importance; this, in turn, is connected to a cultural sense that certain topics are feminine and therefore not considered of universal appeal or interest. Additionally, it is felt in the very lack of an increase in critical review of women's literature as determined by the VIDA count and by the statistical analysis of authors such as Francine Prose and Roxane Gay. It is felt by the very absence of women in the literary canon, a primary concern that is most affective because it dictates the longevity and historical impact of women's writing and literary contributions.

Second, the scholars above have traced the impact of women over time on the literary canon, and have made arguments for why we continue to teach and socially, critically, and culturally exalt literature that doesn't represent the writings or even experience of half the population, to say nothing of the subcultures and communities that exist within the binary. They present the situation as molded by patriarchal tradition, and attempt a rhetorical discourse that has several points: diverging from the male canon and the creation of a female tradition, e.g. "a literature of their own",

or continued activism in the mainstream to disrupt and upset the status quo and attain equal status in all literary realms.

What I have shown is that a clear rhetorical situation exists in our time, first by female writer's speaking rhetorically against a gender bias in literary recognition and second by the feminist scholars and writers who have shaped the discourse over time and continue to be the voices of change into the present. According to Bitzer, no rhetorical situation exists without the special relationship between the exigence, the audience, and the constraints that are brought to bear on the situation (audience, speakers, ability for positive change) as a whole (6). The situation we have defined above is definitely modifiable; its speakers --the authors, editors, scholars, and feminist activists -- have an *ethos* provided by their ability to raise consciousness (speaking to the audience), influence the discourse (because they are successful authors or distinguished scholars), and by the subjectivity of their rhetoric (their experience). As well, they address an audience that is diverse and has the power to enact change from multiple fronts: readers, who can choose to select more women authors or who consciously recognize their reading habits and examine them for any bias; critics, who can ensure that the works they read and review are measurably equal, at least at the gender binary level, if not for the diverse representation enabled by recognizing nontraditional writing; and editors, who can actively solicit writing submissions from a more diverse group of authors: women, men, gay/queer, transgender, racial or ethnic minorities, etc., and be open to promoting these works as representative of western culture, not simply a subset of it.

Which leads us to our final analysis. In Chapter Three, we will summarize all the main points of the rhetoric made by our rhetors and pull their discourse together, examine it for weakness or counter-rhetorical movements, and discuss the implications of this movement on the female writer and her experience in gaining entry into the literary establishment. What we read, how we read, who we read, becomes the soil on which our own writing is nurtured and cultivated. We try to emulate or approximate the subject matters, writing styles, writing routines, or even the social affectations and reputations of the writers we most admire. Most of those writers, in an academic environment, are men.

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Chapter Three:

The Effect Of Gender Bias on Literary Practices and Writing Development, or, It's Okay to Write Like a Girl

The rhetorical situation of gender bias against women's writing in the literary establishment, and by extension its effect on literary canon formation and the scholarly attention that any novel could receive matters beyond the philosophical conversation of why we uphold some literary texts over others. It matters to all writers who emerge today –not only female and male writers, but all writers who represent myriad backgrounds and experiences – especially those who have traditionally been marginalized. Latina novelist Jaquira Diaz expresses the importance of "finding ourselves in books" as formative to building confidence through recognizing similar perspectives and experiences through narrative. She writes:

> When you grow up poor, sometimes books are the only connection you have to the world that exists outside your neighborhood. You begin to imagine that the people in those books matter. You imagine that they are important—maybe even immortal—because someone wrote about them. But you? When you fail to find yourself in books—or people like you, who live in neighborhoods like yours, who look like you and love like you—you begin to question your place in the world. You begin to question if those people who make up your neighborhood and your family are worth writing about, if you

> are worth writing about. Maybe no one thinks about them or you. Maybe no one sees you.

As I discuss below, the experience of women writers, and the rhetorical situation I have structured here, is affective to writing development. It affects how and what women write, or even if we write. I frame it within Bitzer's model of a rhetorical situation because it allows us to envision the issue within a structural model that presents the entire scope of speakers, issues, audiences, and responses that show its complexity. Jaquira's essay is moving because she voices a sense of isolation that comes from having no model, of growing up without a sense that you fit where you want to be, a feeling that you are both locating yourself within a position that can free you to express and liberate your experiences (through writing), but at the same time, be dislocated by a lack of identity within that space (through a lack of reading and writing models), and ultimately, the paralyzing fear of rejection, ridicule –or worse, no response at all – that may come from the risk. This sentiment isn't new to the discourse, and I have introduced it throughout my work here, but in this final chapter, I focus on the effect of, first, gender bias against women writers on their writing confidence and performance, and, second, the rhetorical response by those who could enact change, such as editors, publishers, reviewers, and educators, as a marker of the effect of the rhetorical situation as a whole. The two effects are necessarily connected; when our rhetorical speakers get no response to their claim of gender bias against women's writing, it fuels their sense that their writing is still not considered at the same high level of quality as men's writing, which in turn affects their confidence as they attempt to write or even call themselves "writers." This presents us with an

interesting rhetorical dichotomy in that the situation is both rejuvenated throughout time, and provokes new female writers to become aware of gender bias as they begin to experience the process of writing, publishing, and gaining recognition for their work. This results in new speakers rhetorically querying literary recognition practices, and calling attention to disparities in recognizing excellent writing work across a spectrum of perspectives and progressive standards. It also forces us to question the effectiveness of the rhetorical situation over time; largely, traditional institutions have not changed their practices to become more inclusive to women's writing or writing by people of color, gay/queer, or transgendered writers and/or topics. This is where we stand, and why it matters.

So what do we do with this information now that we have shown that perception of bias exists, and there is statistical evidence corroborating the rhetorical situation? At minimum, our speakers are raising consciousness in the form of discourse, which, according to Bitzer, is the natural rhetorical response on the part of the mediating audience (11). Editors, publishers, educators, and readers are empowered to enact change as a condition of the rhetorical response to gender bias, and thus fulfill the stipulation that any rhetorical situation must address an audience that can actually do something about the issue being raised. In this chapter, we raise a critical point of the rhetorical discourse about the effect of gender bias on women writers, beyond the difficulty of getting critical recognition or of one's work enduring in our cultural consciousness, but how the situation affects the confidence and performance of women writers.

In Chapter One, I referenced an essay by Monica Dux, where she equates the effect of gender bias and women's writing to the effect of stereotype threat, a term coined by Claude Steele in 1999 that argues that people who are at risk for being stereotyped by others, despite rejecting the validity of the stereotype, will still evidence an effect on their performance if they believe they are being judged based upon a stereotype[1]. She writes:

> Women's own lack of confidence is also a factor. It takes a tremendous amount of self-belief to write a book and see it through to publication, something that too many smart, talented women still lack.
>
> In an article in the UK magazine Mslexia, neuropsychologist Cordelia Fine pointed to yet another factor; the impact of what psychologists call "stereotype threat.' Simply put, if aspiring women writers see fewer female authors winning prizes and being showered with praise, they will formulate lower expectations in regard to their own writing, and this will have an impact not just on their confidence, but also on their ability.
>
> If this is correct then promoting women's writing is not just about getting more women published. It's about helping them to believe they really can achieve excellence. (Women Written Out)

Dux's essay belongs to the rhetorical situation we examine to illustrate further that the rhetorical discourse isn't confined to just American speakers and audiences – nor to

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[1] Steele's initial research focused on black men at university (see "Thin Ice: Stereotype Threat and Black College Students." *The Atlantic*, Aug. 1999), but has been applied to many different racial, gender, and ethnic groups to measure the effect of subconscious knowledge or suspicion of stereotype. For a deeper reading on this effect on performance and confidence, read his most recent research, *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do* (Issues of Our Time), W.W. Norton, 2011.

the literary field in particular- but has proliferated around the world as a concern of women writers everywhere. Dux picks up the rhetorical torch of Tillie Olsen, who introduced the idea of the silencing of women writers due to the perception that they cannot achieve within any institution that is defined by patriarchal criteria. Dux charges that "Wherever men and women share the page, it is men who dominate," despite the fact that, in the same year that Dux's essay came out, Hilary Mantel won the 2012 Man Booker Prize (for *Bringing Up the Bodies*) and Anna Funder's novel *All that I am* won the prestigious 2012 Miles Franklin Literary Award (an Australian literary award). Is this a contradiction? No, says Dux, because despite well-deserved recognition these wins remain "very small waves breaking against a powerful literary tide; an overwhelmingly male tide" (Women Written). Dux raises the same exigent points made by the other speakers I have represented—she dismisses Naipaul's opinion of women writers, cites VIDA's Count, observes that a woman's writing is "likely to be ghettoised as 'chicklit'; more a patronizing slur than a genuine genre description"—but in particular it is her attention to the effect of gender bias on the confidence and development of female writers that warrants our focus here. Stereotype threat, as Dux positions it, is indeed the same sort of silencing that women writers have experienced throughout time. This is due to patriarchal cultural factors that lead to a lack of recognition for women's work and the privileging of male contemporaries. It reinforces women's silence by inferring a stereotype threat that affects women's writing performance, which may manifest as never picking up a pen, never submitting one's work, or only writing about topics that one believes pleases a masculine aesthetic. Dux's essay is critical for the connection it makes to the

psychological effect of stereotype threat, and as a rhetorical proof that strengthens the rhetorical situation overall. As we will see, other speakers are also concerned with the ways in which cultural or social factors influence the development of women writers and they in turn use a variety of rhetorical strategies to illustrate the importance of the effect of gender bias in the literary world.

Mary Eagleton notes, "The dominant narrative of feminist cultural criticism has concerned women gaining access to the cultural sphere, being seen and heard and establishing some level of cultural authority" (13). In her examination of how women authors depict the place of fictional women writers in their novels, she reveals a paradox of women both struggling for cultural currency and their ambivalence in gaining that currency. Their fiction exposes this tension because, "the fiction has told an interesting counter narrative - a reluctance about authorship because of a combination of indifference to the dominant order of production and circulation and a fear that for women there is little profit and much to lose" (13). She continues, "These [fictional characters] cannot conceive of themselves as 'Authors' in the Barthesian sense, are hesitant about thinking of themselves as 'authors' and, depending on their circumstances, view the cultural field as a place of threat or absurd pretension" (13). Eagleton's work analyzes the writing experiences of female authors by how they portray the struggles of fictional female writers in their work. She closely investigates the ambivalence about authorship that women writers may feel through how their fictional work expresses this concern within the narratives of female characters that write. The characters Eagleton notes often struggle with identifying themselves as writers and with the process of becoming published and gaining literary recognition.

The female characters in all the works she profiles encounter fear of rejection, loss of or weakened authorial voice or other effects or mechanisms that prevent them from being published or to consider themselves "real" writers, including the characters in the writings of Ursula Le Guin, Alice Walker, Maxine Hong Kingston, Margaret Atwood, and Virginia Woolf[2]. Her discussion of the courage to write without a corresponding feeling that one's writing would be appreciated for its literary value is reminiscent of the recent words of Kathy Pollitt, who, when speculating about the recently released 2012 VIDA Count numbers and whether editors are not getting enough work by women to review, remarked, "Perhaps women are saying, 'why would I throw myself at that wall?'" ("Is This Thing On").[3] It's vital to note that women authors never express a belief about their writing being unworthy of recognition; rather, they feel that those who hold power within the literary establishment –either consciously or subconsciously – will be the one's who don't believe in the ability of women writers; thus, their work will never get the recognition it should from the mainstream literary establishment. Eagleton's analysis demonstrates that this perception comes through in the way some women authors fictionally depict female writers in their stories, but it is also tantalizing to wonder if this resistance to submitting work to institutions that are inclined to prefer a male standard connects to a growing preference for women writers to establish a distinct

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[2] Eagleton's analysis probes at the difficulty for Woolf, especially in *A Room of One's Own,* and Maxine Kingston in her memoir *The Woman Warrior*, with using the pronoun "I"; male appropriation of a female's story in Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*; the refusal of Alice Walker's Mama in "Everyday Use" identifying as an author or artist; Ursula Le Guin's women author in "Sur" and Jane Gardem's Annie in "The Sidmouth Letters" wrestling with authorial reluctance. Eagleton frames these conflicts mostly within the work of Michel Foucault's "What is an Author?" and Roland Barthes "Death of the Author."

[3] Spoken at a panel held by VIDA at the recent Association of Writers and Writing Programs conference in Boston. See Works Cited for source article and original quote.

feminine standard. It may be worth studying which publishing houses and journals have openly solicited work by women, and what their submission numbers are in comparison. If this is so, then by not submitting their work to institutions they consider biased, but to literary houses with more fair practices, and also by contributing to the rhetorical discourse, some women writers may be rejecting traditional standards and realizing the rhetorical call by feminists Helene Cixous and Luce Irigaray, who encouraged women to create their own literary tradition. Already we can see that women have gained a solid place in our cultural consciousness because of the strength of their rhetoric against gender bias in all parts of Western society, but also, in literary terms, by the large numbers of published work by women and their collective commercial success.

So far, we have only discussed the rhetorical discourse of high profile female authors –those who have enough name recognition to have achieved a public platform – through widespread recognition of their work and with higher cultural agency as a result. While this gives them an *ethos* of experience with the process, it does not examine the situation from a broader perspective of what it means to achieve critical legitimacy for any writer, and the effect of marginalization from the perspective of race, sexuality, ethnicity, or religious affiliation. *VIDA* has not only documented the number of women who have been critically reviewed over the last three years, but through its website, provides a public forum for rhetorical discourse on behalf of less high profile but equally concerned female writers. *VIDA* provides access to a large number of rhetorical arguments professing experience with gender bias in literary practices by republishing key articles or academic papers, and hosting guest blogs and

original essays. These key texts reflect on the experience of writing as a woman, and within that experience, the many ways in which gender bias can be felt when traversing the literary publishing and review process. For example, Mary Cappello, a multi-award winning author and professor of English at the University of Rhode Island, delivered a paper at the 2011 AWP Conference in Washington, DC, "Some Notes on My Sense of the Interior," republished since on VIDA's website. By republishing Cappello's words to the VIDA audience, the organization allows her insights and rhetorical persuasiveness to move beyond the audience at the AWP for that year. Her words may never have resonated with the everyday women writers outside academia who experience that same struggle with confidence and acceptance, so it's important to the situation as a whole to pay attention to who is speaking, where, and when, and to distribute those words to the ears of women writers who can most benefit from hearing them.

In her speech, Cappello talks about the experience of knowing and feeling, exteriority and interiority (Barthesian interiors, also noted by Eagleton, above), authors and authority, and how these conditions are uniquely felt by women writers and should be addressed rhetorically:

> Women writers are exceptions in a publishing world that remains a boys' club, by and large, though it is possible there are more women editors of books than acknowledged female writers—more women clean up the shit (see Colette Guillaumin, Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology, Routledge, 1995); more men write or are allowed a public presence for their work. Still, to paraphrase Susan Sontag—you can't spend every waking moment of your day

> feeling indignant. What state would be preferable? I don't recommend *ressentiment* as a feminist stance: when defensiveness takes the place of a strategy for change. What's needed instead is the clearing of a space from which to respond otherwise. How does any of us understand the difference between our inner lives, and the writing that we produce? That which is pre-occupying and that which we have not yet occupied, in our thinking, in our life, and in our work? ("Some Notes")

As a rhetorical point, Cappello both affirms the status of women writers within the patriarchal literary world and invites them to let go of the effect this may have on their writing. In re-publishing her speech, VIDA, becomes both a platform for the heard and the unheard, providing new audiences and new opportunities for effecting change. And by no means is this a little thing; *VIDA* gives voice to up-and-coming writers, playwrights, and poets, like poet Tonya Foster, who writes a paean to feminist poet Adrienne Rich and in doing, connects the past to the present and breathes life into the rhetorical situation for modern day women writers:

> 1. Adrienne Rich's work stands as testament to a profoundly engaged refusal to sit quietly; 2. Rich engaged in unremitting dialogues with the words, works, and issues of her predecessors and contemporaries; and 3. Rich's own insistence on being read and understood in a complex of contexts. She suggests and enacts (yes, still) the kinds of conversations and permutations of community that may indeed save our varied asses." ("Adrienne Rich's Work")

By "save our varied asses," Foster gives thanks for the provenance established by feminist writers such as Rich, who encouraged and brokered the rhetorical space that

contemporary women writers now claim. As Bitzer defined the rhetorical situation and the impetus of exigency, it is "something waiting to be done" and relies uniquely on discourse to positively modify it, and, as an organizing principle, it "specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected" (6-7). In an interesting recursive action perpetuated by the historical discourse, the women today who recall the historical speakers against gender bias in literary practice act as both audience to that rhetoric and as new *rhetors* claiming contemporary exigency and need for change. These quieter voices have a powerful impact on the rhetorical situation because they express a continuing struggle to overcome issues of confidence, authorial voice, and with claiming a sense of entitlement to engage with a publishing process that seeks to re-define them in terms of categorical genres and gendered writing roles; that is, they are still "waiting." These feelings continue despite the successes in publishing, readership, and sales that women writers can now achieve, and despite the critical progress that has been wrought since Rich's time. Foster's celebration of Adrienne Rich also reveals another effect of the rhetorical situation over time: those whose work we documented in Chapter Two still serve to inform and inspire our women writers today, and their rhetoric has not lost power over the years, but has been preserved as touchstone moments in time that today's speakers can reach out to for inspiration and historical precedent.

VIDA, like Tillie Olsen and Elaine Showalter, provides a long list of what they term "Under-Acknowledged Authors" (Women of Being). To recount the many ways in which *VIDA* contributes to our modern day rhetorical situation, and keeps the situation alive and relevant, is to acknowledge their importance as rhetorical speakers

and their ability to affect a clear response from their various audiences–the rhetorical response -, which we will examine in more detail a bit later.

One of the most consistently raised points against gender bias in literary recognition is the popularity that female-associated genre fiction, most recently known as "chick lit," enjoys and has enjoyed throughout history. This popularity with readers creates a lucrative opportunity for women writers whose work has been defined by the “chick lit” genre, and in some ways equals recognition through sales. Stephanie Harzewski examines the historical and contemporary status of chick lit, observing the criticisms against it not only by male authors such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, who were perturbed by the strong sales of commercial fiction written by women, but by women authors such as George Eliot, who, in her essay "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" (1856), condemned conventional female-authored romantic plots as "frothy," "prosy," "pedantic," and "pious" (qtd. in Harzewski 1). The danger that Eliot and contemporary authors Dorothy Lessing and Maureen Dowd saw in the popularization of romantic fiction was that all writing by women would become associated with the genre and dismissed as frivolous or "perpetuate negative gender stereotypes" (1).

By extension, we consider the genre of romantic fiction as a whole to be an impediment to emerging female writers as both reductive to their aspirations as serious novelists, and because their perceived place in the literary world will become one that is subordinated by their gender. As Harzewski argues, "chick lit...will be taken as representative of 'women's writing' ...will disqualify aspiring and younger women writers from critical recognition" (2). Though many works of romantic fiction

are serious novels that offer insightful and experiential visions of the inner life of women and men in relationship to each other and society, they are often not distinguished from fan fiction novels such as *Twilight* or *50 Shades of Grey* and their sequels by publishers or critical reviewers, which perpetuates a diminished view of not only the female gender, but also other women writers and women readers, the primary authors and audience of romantic fiction. If we compare these novels to the writings of Nicholas Sparks, a popular and successful romance writer of novels such as *The Reader* and *The Notebook*, we can easily distinguish a distorted perspective of his respectability as an author and the authority given to authors such as Danielle Steel or Nora Roberts. Even Mauve Binchy, a popular novelist whose novels generally depict the coming of age experience of women or the woman-in-relationship narrative, is reduced to a "chick lit" author, despite the sensitivity, depth and artistry of her prose. Harzewski also points to novels such as *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Sex and the City*, the former being compared to the work of Jane Austen and the goal of marriage for the single woman, and the latter to Edith Wharton's depictions of "class-without-money" struggles of upward mobility and the quest for "Mr. Right" by young single women in a metropolis (4). While Austen and Wharton enjoy posthumous reputations as canonical authors, Helen Fielding and Candace Bushnell are not considered authors of serious literature in our time. This is due in part to the retrospective acknowledgement of the skill of Austen's and Wharton's polished and clever style, witty dialogue and situational parody, while modern romantic fiction tends towards "impressionistic, colloquial, and more journalistic narration" that reduces its serious impact on literary canon (5). Harzewski highlights

the work of Henry James and Jane Austen as authors of the "novel of manners" which often features a subject of marriage or an otherwise romantic plotline while also dealing more critically with male/female relationships mixed with issues of class, tragedy, and social alienation of the central character (5), and the ability of these works to endure over time because they represent generalized human emotional landscapes. The perception that most modern romance novels lack this depth contributes to a generalization that all romance novels lack depth, and that women are the ones who are the main authors of these "types" of novels.

The effect of the evolution of the romantic novel from historicism's realistic treatment of life as it is to a "pink menace to both established and debut women authors who perceive it as staging a coup upon literary seriousness and undoing the canonical status of earlier works from *Pride and Prejudice* to *The Bell Jar*" is akin to the central concern of the rhetorical stance taken by the female authors we reviewed in Chapter One (5-6). In their estimation, the reduction of much of women's writing to "chick lit" has been arbitrary and motivated by gender bias, especially since men like Franzen or Eugenides who write novels on the same topics are not given "chick lit" categorization, as Jennifer Weiner points out in her NPR interview. The pervasive perception is "this is what women write and want to read" and the few women who break through that categorization become, as Joanna Russ charges, anomalies among women writers rather than role models for all women writers, especially if they exhibit "the writer's isolation from the female tradition" (85). Furthermore, Russ not only shows that women writers throughout history have been made anomalous, their

presence is representative of "quality being controlled by denial of agency, pollution of agency, and false categorization" (85).

In 1983, Russ urged that we "recognize one's own complicity in an appalling situation" (85). This is the heart of the rhetorical situation that we document: far beyond simply calling on editors, publishers, critics, and academics to change their attitudes towards women's writing, this situation calls for women to become conscious of their own habits and mindsets that also contribute to empowering the institutions that marginalize their work. Again, we find the recursive effect of enjoining the audience to become the speakers that move this rhetorical situation along with the momentum built by its history. Russ, along with Harzewski, Spender, and Showalter, lament the lack of models throughout time along a broad spectrum of women's writing (nonfiction, fiction, literary works, journalism, playwriting, poetry), and charge that the women who do become canonical or receive otherwise laudatory literary recognition are rarely celebrated for a specifically feminine tradition, but instead because they were able to appeal to a masculine sense of what constitutes good writing, either as mimesis or because they upheld female stereotypes. For example, Annie Proulx won the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award in 1993 for *The Shipping News*, a story of an outwardly simple man who struggles with complex inner emotional experiences, and with trying to hold together his family, his place in the world, and find inner strength in the harsh climate of Newfoundland. The novel is distinctly masculine is style, subject matter, and in its treatment of the female characters; Proulx presents the women of the novel as either traditional Newfoundland wives with little to no agency, or as Quoyle's first wife: self-

destructive, promiscuous, and non-maternal. Nearly all of Proulx's writing is written from a masculine perspective, with few female characters emerging as strong, capable, or intelligent. As a prospective model for female writers, it would seem that mimesis does equal recognition, as Proulx's style is reminiscent of Hemingway's for its terse dialogues, local Wyoming or Newfoundland vernacular – or whatever the geographical setting may be – and for its use of spare metaphoric language; they represent a style that upholds a masculine sense of excellent writing. Without disparaging Proulx's massive talent and incredible body of work, one would have to look further to find a female writing mentor who has embodied the feminine most thoroughly in their work, and received recognition for it. I use Proulx as an example here simply to illustrate that this is the standard of writing that often receives the literary and award recognition, and that overwhelmingly these texts favor a male standard of style.

The 2012 winner of the National Book Award, Louise Erdrich for *The Round House*, also employs a male perspective, depicting the life and struggles of an adolescent Native American boy on the Ojibwe reservation. It is a coming-of-age tale set amidst tragic, horrifying, and typical teenage angst: investigating the brutal rape of his mother, his own sexual awakening, and the camaraderie of his male friends in traversing the harshness of the world and growing up as a racial and ethnic minority. Likewise, the history of the Man Booker Prize (a UK based award) reveals a similar trend in both recognition of male authors and what types of writing gets recognized. *The Guardian*, a UK-based news portal, charted all the winners of the prize since its inception in 1969 (16 Oct. 2012). The most recent winner used in their analysis was

Hilary Mantel in 2009 for *Wolf Hall*, another novel that features a male protagonist, this time the fictionalized figure of the real life Thomas Cromwell, set is the historical period of Henry VIII's Tudor court, 1500-1535. *Wolf Hall* is the first in a trilogy of historical novels fictionally documenting the life and royal career of Cromwell, with the first book, *Wolf Hall*, ending with the death of Thomas More. There have been 45 Booker prizewinners up to 2009: 15 women, 30 men. The white, middle-aged man has been the largest demographic among the winners[4]. In 2012, Mantel won the Booker Prize for the second book in the trilogy, *Bringing Up the Bodies*; her novel *Beyond Black*, which offers a more female-centered perspective and was very well reviewed, was long-listed for the Booker but did not receive any major prizes or awards[5].

On March 4, 2013, *VIDA* released its 2012 Count, which tallied the representation of women in critical review journals for the calendar year 2012. In a narrative accompanying the numbers, *VIDA* editor Amy King highlights the effect of the Count on some journals, like *Tin house*, *The Boston Review*, and *Harvard Review*, which have made concerted efforts to achieve gender parity, against journals such as *Harper's*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *The Nation*, which, she charges, continue "their gross (& indecent) neglect of women's work" (VIDA Count 2012). King further lambasts the editors of the journals who either did not improve their representative numbers or who actually regressed the number of women writer's they

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[4] For the full analysis and demographic breakdown of all Man Booker prize winners, see the full set of statistical analysis charts published by the Guardian at http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/datablog/gallery/2012/oct/16/how-win-booker-prize-charts?utm_source=Publishers+Weekly%27s+PW+Daily&utm_campaign=9582fe287f-UA-15906914-1&utm_medium=email#/?picture=397748599&index=0

[5] See Mantel's biography at http://www.themanbookerprize.com/people/hilary-mantel. For a critical review of Beyond Black, see *The Guardian* UK's web site, 29 April 2005, "Enfield, where the dead go to live."

reviewed: "I fear the attention we've already given them has either motivated their editors to disdain the mirrors we've held up to further neglect or encouraged them to actively turn those mirrors into funhouse parodies at the cost of women writers." The speakers, through *VIDA*, have toughened their rhetoric, stridently calling for readers to boycott journals who subordinate women's writing (as indicated by their review numbers) and calling for editors to actively solicit women's writing and to be more conscious of who gets reviewed in their pages.

As well, *Tin house* received a special commendation for increasing its numbers of women reviewed, and for speaking publicly about their conscious decision to investigate their own practices. *VIDA* documents a measurable effect of their rhetorical mission to achieve gender parity in critical literary review practices, and points to the additional effect of their count being replicated by other authors, such as Roxane Gay at *The Rumpus*, who began to count the representation of writers of color, noting that "If women are underrepresented in certain echelons of publishing, writers of color are likely to face similar issues" (Where Things Stand). Her breakdown of representation in *The New York Times* for 2012 is summarized thus:

> We looked at 742 books reviewed, across all genres. Of those 742, 655 were written by Caucasian authors (1 transgender writer, 437 men, and 217 women). Thirty-one were written by Africans or African Americans (21 men, 10 women), 9 were written by Hispanic authors (8 men, 1 woman), 33 by Asian, Asian-American or South Asian writers (19 men, 14 women), 8 by

> Middle Eastern writers (5 men, 3 women) and 6 were books written by writers whose racial background we were simply unable to identify.

Gay notes that these numbers are not entirely reliable, because they only calculated the numbers of one journal, had to make broad generalizations about race and ethnicity, and were only tabulated in one year (2012). However, her work reveals that white authors penned 90% of the books reviewed by the *New York Times* in 2012. Gay appropriates the rhetoric of gender bias against the literary establishment to broaden the discourse into representation of all writers who aren't straight white males, and calls for "review outlets to be more inclusive in reviewing books – considering race, gender and let us not forget sexuality or other brands of difference-rather than treating diversity as a compartmentalized issue where we only focus on one kind of inequity at a time."

Gay makes another important rhetorical point, which echoes the rhetoric of the women we profiled in Chapter One: this isn't a rant, it's a conversation that is rhetorical because it calls for specific action on the part of its audience, and has shown a clear issue that needs to be addressed on institutional practice, as well as on cultural and social, levels. She writes, "These days, it is difficult for any writer to get a book published. We're all clawing. ...I don't know how to solve this problem or what to do with this information. I'm not riled up. I'm informed.... I like to know where things stand." Like Francine Prose, Meg Wolitzer, and bell hooks, Gay is careful to position her rhetoric as a public dialogue, though she singles out the New York Times as a perpetrator of gender bias in their editing and publishing practices. Her strategy is to enjoin a community of discourse on this topic, to raise awareness of

the disparities that have been shown, and to speculate on what solutions could alleviate the issue, not just for women writers, but also for writers of all stripes. This is indicates a sensitivity to creating an *ethos* for herself as a speaker, but to also infuse her speech with equal parts *logos* and *pathos*, thus moderating her speech to prevent alienating those who are empowered to enact change. As I've noted earlier in this study, most of the women speakers have also been moderate in their public speech, though many scholars, such as Joanna Russ and Dale Spender have pulled no punches and have outright accused male editors, writers, and publishers of deliberately marginalizing women writers. From the perspective of our study, which approach has been more successful? This is a question that should be taken up in any future investigation of gender bias in literary establishments.

As we have now shown, the rhetorical situation includes many different speakers who speak from many different platforms of discourse: our female writers generally talk of the issue of gender bias in critical literary recognition in the form of essays, interviews, and digital medias, like Twitter or blogs; the work of the feminist scholars we have reviewed publish their rhetoric against literary institutional practices, especially academia and the formation of literary canon, in papers and books. The discourse has been directed at an audience that is diverse and has diverse power in enacting change; each body (readers, other woman writers, literary institutions such as journals, schools, or publishing houses) comes with distinct constraints that govern their response. *VIDA* has invited its members and readers to petition the journals it uses in its annual Count, and to boycott journals that do not make positive strides in equal representation. Lillian Robinson, Elaine Showalter, and

Sarah Gilbert and Susan Gubar call specifically for instructors of writing and literary studies to include more women authors in their course syllabi and institutional reading lists. Nearly all the speakers encourage women writers to write more and advocate for their work.

The combined rhetoric of writers and feminist scholars collide in this study to form a body of rhetorical discourse that sets up our rhetorical situation, as it stands currently and as it has been spoken of historically. *VIDA*'s new 2012 count suggests equal parts awakening awareness and action on the part of their audience and continued rhetorical silence from within their audience; editors such as Rob Spillman of *Tin house* are publicly acknowledging they have to be more deliberate in considering work from a deeper pool of submissions, and they claim to be more proactively soliciting submissions from women and diverse writers:

> The numbers were a kick in the pants, in a very good way. I've been editor of Tin House since the beginning, back in 1999, and the numbers spurred us to take a deep look at our submissions, from the slush to solicited manuscripts, who we are asking for work and what they are sending us... .We were also surprised to find that although we solicited equal numbers of men and women, men were more than twice as likely to submit after being solicited. This even applies to writers I've previously published. Another surprise was that in our Lost & Found section, where writers champion out of print or under-appreciated writers, men and women were three times more likely to write about male writers. (Counting)

Spillman goes on to admit, "There is pervasive bias, both conscious and unconscious" and that "passivity" is the main reason journals tend to favor male reviewers and male-authored works, rather than any conscious attempt to exclude others. This admission of passivity reveals a troubling constraint on our rhetorical audience: those empowered to effect change are often acting within a traditional system that they have not questioned, and it doesn't matter if that person is male or female; we all operate within a patriarchy. However, conscious attempts *can* effect change, as MSNBC's Chris Hayes reveals in an interview with Columbia Journalism Review's Ann Friedman:

> ...Media Matters published a chart that showed how his weekend show, *Up with Chris Hayes*, differed from its cable-news competitors: It wasn't all white dudes. Specifically, 57 percent of the show's guests were not white men... .To hear lots of journalists tell it, this is an impossible feat. So I called up Hayes to ask how he and his team created a shining oasis of diversity in a cable-news desert of sameness.
>
> 'We just would look at the board and say, 'We already have too many white men. We can't have more.' 'Really, that was it,' Hayes says. 'Always, constantly just counting. Monitoring the diversity of the guests along gender lines, and along race and ethnicity lines.' Out of four panelists on every show, he and his booking producers ensured that at least two were women. 'A general rule is if there are four people sitting at table, only two of them can be white men," he says. 'Often it would be less than that.' (Quota's Get Results)

This is an example of how paying attention to numbers, as *Tinhouse* editor Spillman and MSNBC's Chris Hayes have done, does matter in the overall diversity of the work a literary (or in Hayes's case, journalistic) institution. In turn, their work is enriched by a broader audience that knows their views and interests are more likely to be represented by these outlets. Drawing attention to the constraints that stand in the way of or otherwise effect the response to the rhetorical situation has resulted in measurable change.

Despite these triumphs, *VIDA* and other writers have pointed out the lack of response by most of the larger journals: ""What I find so staggering about these numbers," said Meg Wolitzer, "is that many publishers seem to be saying: 'Scream your little head off. We don't care.'" ("Is This Thing On?"). Erin Hoover goes on to observe that "VIDA's challenge...has been to provoke a larger media conversation beyond the ho-hum 'more bad news from VIDA' response. Unfortunately, the "conversation" seems to be missing the voices required for a story. For the most part, The Count has been met with a wall of silence from the publishers whose numbers most demand a response." As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, we need to consider the effect of the rhetorical situation both as a whole and as it has been responded to by its very diverse and differently-empowered audience. Some women speakers have acknowledged that they feel frustrated by the lack of response from major critical review journals, and certainly, few men in academia or the media have asked the question of gender bias publicly. On the one hand we are tempted to call this rhetorical situation one that has yet to be resolved; still active and alive, but without a paradigm-shift on practice over time. And yet, the fact that women publish

more, have built their own tradition in writing, publishing, academia, and in literary review, have given voice to their disenchantment with the patriarchal literary establishment, makes us pause before debunking the whole movement. It would seem that this rhetorical situation sits somewhere in between the spaces of potent and impotent, and instead can be said to be effective but with still more work to be done, and in this respect we must consider how the rhetoric might be altered to better achieve a more permanent solution to inequality in literary recognition practices.

My original goal with this study was to discover what it means to "write like a girl" and where the place of women was in the writing landscape: do we write differently, are we judged by different standards, do we change who we are in order to please a patriarchal tradition of literary standards? The latter questions emerged as I sought an answer to my first, and since then many other questions have arisen throughout my discussion above. These questions will hopefully provide an entry into further research on the topic of gender bias in literary recognition. There is, within this text, some answers to my questions, but like most answers we seek, they are not complete, simple or easy, but suggest that the perception of gender bias, as well as biases against other writers who do not fit the literary tradition hegemony, affects women's confidence and their motivation to write. The rhetorical situation I have documented could, per Bitzer, "conceivably...persist indefinitely," as it has both provenance and is fitting for rhetorical discourse at any time, so long as gender bias continues to be experienced as real, observable and immediate by women writers (12). As well, though many members of the rhetorical audience – those empowered to enact change – have voiced no response to the rhetorical situation (or, at least, we

have not shown them here), many have, and it is a valid assumption that all are or will become conscious of it, another condition per Bitzer that completes our situational framework (7-8).

I'd like to close my study with a quote by Helene Cixous, one of the most powerful rhetoricians championing women's writing and the place of women's voice, style, language, and bodies in rhetorical and theoretical discourse. I share her belief that it is not only okay to write like a girl, but that, through the continued questioning of institutional practices that perpetuate biases against any person for any reason, we can eventually effect real, measurable, and sustained, change:

> And why don't you write? Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it. I know why you haven't written...Because writing is at once too high, too great for you, it's reserved for the great –that is, for "great men"; and it's "silly." ...Write, let no one hold you back, let nothing stop you: not man; not the imbecilic capitalist machinery...I write woman: woman must write woman. (1525)

There is a lot of work to be done in analyzing and framing the rhetoric of inequality in Western society as it affects our cultural progress and community development. Though I've focused on women as a gender, all women are different, and within the performed gender of femininity, there are many, many other communities with concerns of their own, beyond just their identity as female. Thus, let this study be the beginning of a long movement to always inquire about practices that effect our pedagogy and the holistic well being of all human beings, no matter what identity any one of us may embrace.

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Appendix A.

The following are statistical charts depicting the VIDA Count numbers from 2010, 2011, and 2012. They can be verified by visiting www.vidaweb.org. The statistical analysis is my own; I constructed the graphs and calculated the percentages based upon VIDA's reported numbers.

Figure I. 2010 Overall Number of Women and Men featured in the top critical review journals as either reviewer or reviewed.

2010 VIDA Count				
Overall	Female	Male	Total	Percent
Atlantic	52	158	210	17%
Harper's	25	94	119	21%
Boston Rev.	93	172	265	35%
Granta	26	49	75	35%
London Rev.	74	343	417	18%
New Republic	49	256	305	16%
NY Review	79	462	541	15%
New Yorker	163	449	612	27%
Poetry	165	246	411	40%
Threepenny	25	61	86	29%
TLS	378	1075	1453	26%
Paris Rev.	32	59	91	35%
**TInHouse	4	18	22	18%
NTY Book	295	438	733	40%
				27%

Figure II. 2010 numbers of just the work reviewed, percentage authored by either a woman or a man.

*2010 VIDA Count				
Authors reviewed Percentage by Gender	Female	Male	Total	Percent
Atlantic	10	33	43	23%
Harper's	21	46	67	31%
Boston Rev.	14	41	55	25%
London Rev.	68	195	263	26%
New Republic	9	55	64	14%
NY Review	59	306	365	16%
New Yorker (Briefly Noted)	85	194	279	30%
Poetry	11	9	20	55%
TLS	330	1036	1366	24%

Paris Rev.	1	7	8	13%
TinHouse	4	18	22	18%
NY Times Book Rev.	283	524	807	35%
The Nation				
Totals	895	2464	3359	**26%**

Figure III. 2010 Number of just the work reviewed, percentage authored by either a woman or a man. Adjusted for distortion, highest and lowest numbers removed.

*2010 VIDA Count Authors reviewed Percentage by Gender	Female	Male	Total	Percent
Atlantic	10	33	43	23%
Harper's	21	46	67	31%
Boston Rev.	14	41	55	25%
London Rev.	68	195	263	26%
New Republic	9	55	64	14%
NY Review	59	306	365	16%
New Yorker (Briefly Noted)	85	194	279	30%
TLS	330	1036	1366	24%
TinHouse	4	18	22	18%
NY Times Book Rev.	283	524	807	35%
Totals	883	2448	3331	**24%**

Figure IV. 2011 Overall Number of Women and Men featured in the top critical review journals as either reviewer or reviewed.

2011 VIDA Count Overall	Female	Male	Total	Percent
Atlantic	91	235	326	28%
Harper's	42	141	183	23%
Boston Rev.	73	195	268	27%
Granta	34	30	64	53%
London Rev.	117	504	621	19%
New Republic	78	344	422	18%
NY Review	143	627	770	19%
New Yorker	242	613	855	28%
Poetry	134	179	313	43%
Threepenny	19	37	56	34%
TLS	832	2285	3117	27%
Paris Rev.	20	46	66	30%
Nation	166	440	606	27%

NYT Book	641	968	1609	40%
				30%

Figure V. 2011 Number of just the work reviewed, percentage authored by either a woman or a man.

*2011 VIDA Count

Authors reviewed Percentage by Gender	Female	Male	Total	Percent
Atlantic	12	24	36	33%
Harper's	19	53	72	26%
Boston Rev.	9	5	14	64%
London Rev.	58	163	221	26%
New Republic	17	75	92	18%
NY Review	71	293	364	20%
New Yorker (Briefly Noted)	77	154	231	33%
Poetry	134	179	313	43%
TLS	332	982	1314	25%
Paris Rev.	4	9	13	31%
Nation	20	88	108	19%
NY Times Book Rev.	273	520	793	34%
Totals	1026	2545	3571	**31%**

Figure VI. 2011 Number of just the work reviewed, percentage authored by either a woman or a man. Adjusted for distortion, highest and lowest numbers removed.

*2011 VIDA Count. Adjusted.

Authors reviewed Percentage by Gender	Female	Male	Total	Percent
Atlantic	12	24	36	33%
Harper's	19	53	72	26%
London Rev.	58	163	221	26%
New Republic	17	75	92	18%
NY Review	71	293	364	20%
New Yorker (Briefly Noted)	77	154	231	33%
Poetry	134	179	313	43%
TLS	332	982	1314	25%
Paris Rev.	4	9	13	31%
NY Times Book Rev.	273	520	793	34%
Totals	997	2452	3449	**29%**

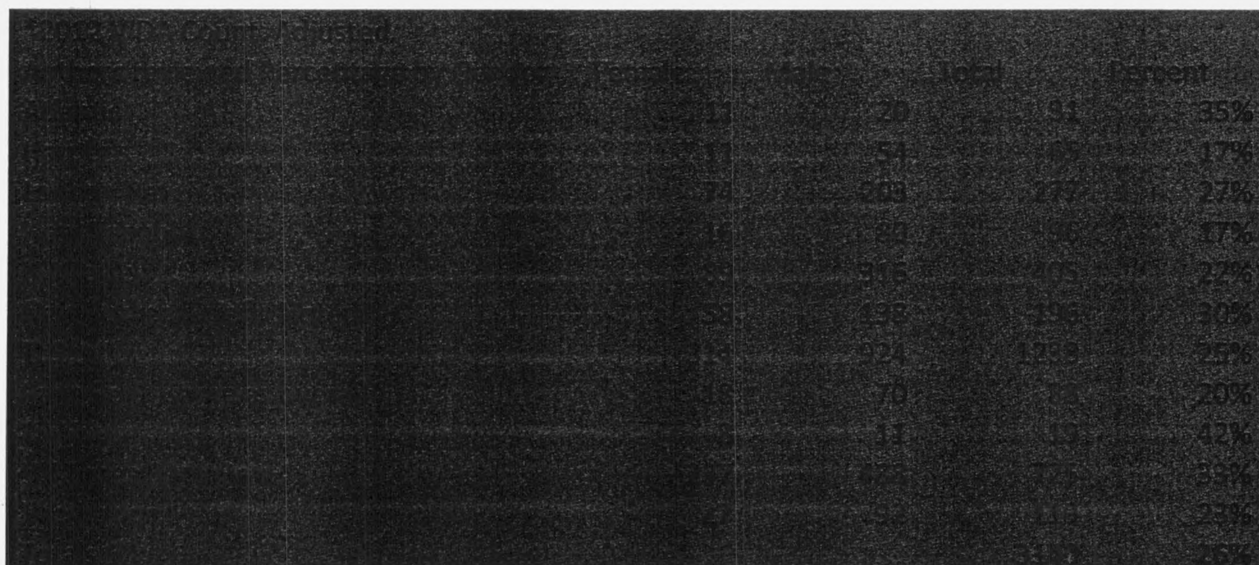
Figure VII. 2012 Overall Number of Women and Men featured in the top critical review journals as either reviewer or reviewed.

2012 VIDA Count	2012 VIDA Count			
Overall	Female	Male	Total	Percent
Atlantic	83	236	319	26%
Harper's	31	158	189	16%
Boston Rev.	99	135	234	42%
Granta	30	41	71	42%
London Rev.	174	574	748	23%
New Republic	77	389	466	17%
NY Review	165	652	817	20%
New Yorker	218	583	801	27%
Poetry	166	207	373	45%
Threepenny	31	54	85	36%
TLS	847	2255	3102	27%
Paris Review	18	70	88	20%
Nation	213	568	781	27%
NYT Book	564	888	1452	39%
Tinhouse	70	67	137	**51%**
				31%

Figure VIII. 2012 Number of just the work reviewed, authored by either a woman or a man.

*2012 VIDA Count				
Authors reviewed Percentage by Gender	Female	Male	Total	Percent
Atlantic	11	20	31	35%
Harper's	11	54	65	17%
Boston Rev.	14	15	29	48%
London Rev.	74	203	277	27%
New Republic	16	80	96	17%
NY Review	89	316	405	22%
New Yorker (Briefly Noted)	58	138	196	30%
Poetry * same as overall	166	207	373	45%
TLS	314	924	1238	25%
Paris Rev.* same as overall	18	70	88	20%
TinHouse	8	11	19	42%
NY Times Book Rev.	237	488	725	33%
The Nation	27	92	119	23%
Totals			**3542**	**29%**

Figure IX. 2012 Number of just the work reviewed, percentage authored by either a woman or a man. Adjusted for distortion, highest and lowest numbers removed.



[illegible]	Female	Male	Total	Percent
[illegible]	[illegible]	20	91	35%
[illegible]	[illegible]	54	[illegible]	17%
[illegible]	[illegible]	203	277	27%
[illegible]	[illegible]	80	[illegible]	17%
[illegible]	[illegible]	316	405	22%
[illegible]	[illegible]	138	196	30%
[illegible]	[illegible]	924	[illegible]	25%
[illegible]	[illegible]	70	[illegible]	20%
[illegible]	[illegible]	11	19	42%
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	33%
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	23%
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	26%

Breakdown by year:

2010*— 26%
2011*— 29%
2012*— 31%
*Representing overall percentage (reviewers and reviewed)

2010*— 24%
2011*— 29%
2012*— 29%
*Represents just the number of work by women authors reviewed.

2010* -29%
2011* -24%
2012* -26%
*Represents an adjusted count of the work by women authors reviewed.

Publications counted:
Harper's Magazine, The New Yorker, the Paris Review, The London Review of Books, The New York Times Book Review, The New York Times Literary Supplement, The Nation, The Threepenny Review, Poetry, The New York Review of Books, The New Republic, Granta, Boston Review, the Atlantic.

Appendix B.

Source and Data Compilation of Number of Times Writing by Women Appear on Certain Institution's Classic Reading Lists.

Please note: this data is not representative of all institutions, but merely used to give a general sense of what literature, and who writes it, most appeals to those who create lists for readers as reference, by either academic institutions or other highly regarded literary recognition bodies. It makes no claims of the expressed beliefs or positions of the institutions themselves, but only what was publicly available as recommended reading lists through an extensive Internet search. The institutions may in fact suggest other reading lists than these both online or through their various physical locations.

Reading Lists	St. John's	Radcliffe	Great Books Foundation (Encyclopedia Britannica)	Modern Library	Boston Public Library	New York Public Library	Baylor University Reading List	Harvard Summer Reading List	Columbia Core Curriculum Reading List	M/F
Heart of Darkness (Conrad)	x	x	x	x	x					m
Mrs. Dalloway (Woolf)	x	x								f
Huckleberry Finn (Twain)	X		x							m
Pride and Prejudice (Austen)	x						x		x	f
Faust (Goethe)	x						x		x	m
Complete stories of Flannery O'Connor	x						x			f
Middlemarch (George Eliot)	x						x			f
The Brothers Karamazov (Dostoyevsky)	x						x			m
War and Peace (Tolstoy)	x						x			m
Collected Poems of John Donne	x									m
Collected Poems of T.S. Eliot	x									m
Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats	x									m
Gulliver's Travels (Swift)	x									m
The Prelude (Wordsworth)	X									m
The Souls of Black Folk (Du Bois)	x									m
Three Tales (Flaubert)	x									m
The Great Gatsby (F. Scott Fitzgerald)		x	x	x	x					m

Light in August (Faulkner)		x		x			x			m
The Sound and the Fury (Faulkner)		x		x			x			m
Death Comes to the Archbishop (Cather)		x		x						f
Howard's End (E.M. Forster)		x		x						f
The Age of Innocence (Wharton)		x		x						f
A Farewell to Arms (Hemingway)		x		x						m
A Passage to India (E.M. Forster)		x		x						m
A Room With a View (E.M. Forster)		x		x						m
All the King's Men (Robert Penn Warren)		x		x						m
An American Tragedy (Theodore Dreiser)		x		x						m
As I Lay Dying (Faulkner)		x		x						m
Bonfire of the Vanities (Tom Wolfe)		x		x						m
Brave New World (Huxley)		x		x						m
Kim (Rudyard Kipling)		x		x						m
Lord Jim (Conrad)		x		x						m
Lord of the Flies (Golding)		x		x						m
Main Street (Sinclair Lewis)		x		x						m
Midnight's Children (Rushdie)		x		x						m
Sophie's Choice (William Styron)		x		x						m
The Call of the Wild (Jack London)		x		x						m
The Maltese Falcon (Dashiell Hammett)		x		x						m
The Naked Dead (Norman Mailer)		x		x						m
Tropic of Cancer (Henry Miller)		x		x						m
Wide Sargasso Sea (Jean Rhys)		x		x						m
Wings of the Dove (Henry James)		x		x						m
Women in Love (Lawrence)		x		x						m
Atlas Shrugged (Ayn Rand)		x			x					f
Babbitt (Sinclair Lewis)		x			x					m
Lady Chatterley's Lover (D.H. Lawrence)		x			x					m
The Jungle (Upton Sinclair)		x			x					m
Beloved (Toni Morrison)		x				x	x			f
The Portrait of a Lady (Henry James		x					x	x		m
Orlando (Woolf)		x					x			f
Their Eyes Were Watching God (Zora Neale Hurston)		x					x			f
A Good Man is Hard to Find (Flannery O'Connor)		x								f
Ethan Frome (Wharton)		x								f
Gone With The Wind (Mitchell)		x								f
Jazz (Toni Morrison)		x								f
My Antonia (Willa Cather)		x								f
O Pioneers! (Willa Cather)		x								f
Rebecca (Daphne du Maurier)		x								f

Song of Solomon (Toni Morrison)		x							
The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas (Gertrude Stein)		x							
The Awakening (Chopin)		x							
The Color Purple (Alice Walker)		x							
The Fountainhead (Ayn Rand)		x							
Things Fall Apart (Chinua Achebe)		x							
To Kill a Mockingbird (Harper Lee)		x							
A Separate Peace (John Knowles)		x							
Absalom! Absalom! (Faulkner)		x							
Cat's Cradle (Vonnegut)		x							
Charlotte's Web (White)		x							
For Whom the Bell Tolls (Hemingway)		x							
Franny and Zooey (Salinger)		x							
In Cold Blood (Capote)		x							
In Our Time (Hemingway)		x							
Look Homeward, Angel (Thomas Wolfe)		x							
Naked Lunch (William Burroughs)		x							
Of Mice and Men (Steinbeck)		x							
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (Ken Kesey)		x							
Rabbit, Run (John Updike)		x							
Satanic Verses (Rushdie)		x							
Schindler's List (Keneally)		x							
Sons and Lovers (D.H. Lawrence)		x							
Tender is the Night (F. Scott Fitzgerald)		x							
The Beautiful and the Damned (Fitzgerald)		x							
The Bostonians (Henry James)		x							
The French Lieutenant's Woman (John Fowles)		x							
The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (Douglas Adams)		x							
The Lord of the Rings (Tolkien)		x							
The Old Man and the Sea (Hemingway)		x							
The Wind in the Willows (Kenneth Grahame)		x							
The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (L. Frank Baum)		x							
The World According to Garp (John Irving)		x							
This Side of Paradise (F. Scott Fitzgerald)		x							
War of the Worlds (H.G. Wells)		x							
Where Angels Fear to Tread (E.M. Forster)		x							
White Noise (Don DeLillo)		x							
Cousin Bette (Honore de Balzac)			x				x		
Death in Venice (Thomas Mann)			x				x		

Emma (Jane Austen)			x				x			m
The Waste Land (T.S. Eliot)			x				x			m
A Lost Lady (Willa Cather)			x							f
A Rose for Emily (Faulkner)			x							m
Little Dorrit (Dickens)			x							m
The Beast in the Jungle (Henry James)			x							m
The Metamorphosis (Franz Kafka)			x							m
The Prussian Officer (D.H. Lawrence)			x							m
Uncle Vanya (Chekhov)			x							m
Darkness at Noon (Koestler)				x	x					m
A House for Mr. Biswas (Naipaul)				x		x				m
A Handful of Dust (Evelyn Waugh)				x			x			f
The Ambassadors (Henry James)				x			x			m
The Heart of the Matter (Graham Greene)				x			x			m
The Moviegoer (Walker Percy)				x			x			m
Scoop (Evelyn Waugh)				x						f
The Death of the Heart (Elizabeth Bowen)				x						f
The House of Mirth (Wharton)				x						f
The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (Muriel Spark)				x						f
Under the Net (Iris Murdoch)				x						f
A Bend in the River (Naipaul)				x						m
A Dance to the Music of Time (Anthony Powell)				x						m
A High Wind in Jamaica (Richard Hughes)				x						m
Appointment in Samarra (John O'Hara)				x						m
Deliverance (James Dickey)				x						m
From Here to Eternity (James Jones)				x						m
Henderson the Rain King (Saul Bellow)				x						m
Ironweed (William Kennedy)				x						m
Loving (Henry Green)				x						m
Nostromo (Conrad)				x						m
Of Human Bondage (W. Somerset Maugham)				x						m
Pale Fire (Nabokov)				x						m
Parade's End (Ford Madox Ford)				x						m
Point Counter Point (Aldous Huxley)				x						m
Portnoy's Complaint (Philip Roth)				x						m
Ragtime (Doctorow)				x						m
Sister Carrie (Theodore Dreiser)				x						m
Studs Lonigan (James T. Farrell)				x						m
Tender is the Night (Fitzgerald)				x						m
The Alexandria Quartet (Lawrence Durrell)				x						m

The Bridge of San Luis Rey (Thornton Wilder)				x						m
The Day of the Locust (Nathanael West)				x						m
The Ginger Man (JP Donleavy)				x						m
The Golden Bowl (Henry James)				x						m
The Good Soldier (Ford Madox Ford)				x						m
The Heart is a Lonely Hunter (Carson McCullers)				x						m
The Magnificent Ambersons (Tarkington)				x						m
The Old Wives' Tale (Bennett)				x						m
The Postman Always Rings Twice (James Cain)				x						m
The Rainbow (D.H. Lawrence)				x						m
The Secret Agent (Conrad)				x						m
The Sheltering Sky (Bowles)				x						m
The Wapshot Chronicle (John Cheever)				x						m
Tobacco Road (Erskine Caldwell)				x						m
U.S.A (John Dos Passos)				x						m
Under the Volcano (Malcolm Lowry)				x						m
Way of All Flesh (Samuel Butler)				x						m
Winesburg, Ohio (Sherwood Anderson)				x						m
Zuleika Dobson (Max Beerbohm)				x						m
One Hundred Years of Solitude (Gabriel Garcia Marcel)					x	x				m
A Room of One's Own (Woolf)					x		x			f
The Magic Mountain (Thomas Mann)					x		x			m
The Stranger (Albert Camus)					x		x			m
Coming of Age in Samoa (Margaret Mead)					x					f
The Golden Notebook (Doris Lessing)					x					f
2001: A Space Odyssey (Clarke)					x					m
All Quiet on the Western Front (Erich M. Remarque)					x					m
Howl and Other Poems (Ginsberg)					x					m
Roots (Alex Haley)					x					m
The Cherry Orchard (Chekhov)					x					m
The Trial (Kafka)					x					m
African Stories (Doris Lessing)						x				f
Pilgrim at Tinker Creek (Annie Dillard)						x				f
Poems: Selected and New (Adrienne Rich)						x				f
The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde						x				f
The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore						x				f
The House of the Spirits (Isabel Allende)						x				f

The Poisonwood Bible (Barbara Kingsolver)						x				f
The Violent Bear It Away (Flannery O'Connor)						x				f
A Death in the Family (James Agee)						x				m
Another Country (James Baldwin)						x				m
For the Union Dead (poem, Robert Lowell)						x				m
The Armies of the Night (Norman Mailer)						x				m
The Cunning Man (Robertson Davies)						x				m
The Fall (Camus)						x				m
The Moors Last Sigh (Rushdie)						x				m
The Plot Against America (Phillip Roth)						x				m
The Remains of the Day (Kazuo Ishiguro)						x				m
The Unbearable Lightness of Being (Milan Kundera)						x				m
Anna Karenina (Tolstoy)							x	x		m
Crime and Punishment (Dostoevsky)							x		x	m
The Mill on the Floss (Eliot)							x			f
Wise Blood (Flannery O'Connor)							x			f
Bleak House (Dickens)							x			m
David Copperfield (Dickens)							x			m
Don Juan (George Gordon - Lord Byron)							x			m
Four Quartets (T.S. Eliot)							x			m
Madame Bovary (Flaubert)							x			m
Moby Dick (Melville)							x			m
Pickwick Papers (Dickens)							x			m
Ralph Waldon Emerson Essays							x			m
The Europeans (Henry James)							x			m
The Seven Storey Mountain (Thomas Merton)							x			m
Turn of the Screw (Henry James)							x			m
Walden (Henry David Thoreau)							x			m
Old School (Tobais Wolff)								x		m
Prep: A Novel (Curtis Sittenfield)								x		m
View With a Grain of Sand (Szmborska)								x		m