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From the Editors

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FROM THE EDITORS

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This issue of *JEMCS* inaugurates a new editorial board and a new editorial procedure.

As to the former: the journal is now under the collective supervision of four editors, with equal authority and equivalent responsibilities distributed across our respective fields of expertise. The *JEMCS* editorial offices remain centralized in the English Department of Florida State University, and production and distribution have become the province of Indiana University Press; however, the journal's editorial direction has now grown into a collaborative affair, managed by the four of us on a consensual basis.

As to the latter: while retaining its original semiannual format, *JEMCS* will henceforth divide the content of its issues chronologically, with one issue per year devoted to material drawn from the fifteenth, sixteenth, and early seventeenth centuries, and one issue dedicated to work dealing with the late seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. As editors, two of us (Vitkus and Boehrer) will have primary responsibility for the earlier period, and the other two (Looser and DiPiero) will focus on the later.

Lest all this seem too logical and tidy, we begin with an issue devoted to the later period—an expedient dictated by the content of our publishing backlog. The four articles presented here all deal with early modern culture in what we might call its later manifestation, as defined in Europe by Enlightenment

philosophy; revolutions political, social, and industrial; and the heroic phase of colonial expansion.

Raymond Anselment's article "Katherine Austen and the Widow's Might" addresses the revolutionary character of women's social development in seventeenth-century England. Focusing on Austen's manuscript of personal reflections written during her years of widowhood, Anselment sees this work as an index of the legal and economic constraints under which English widows labored during the later 1600s, and he sees within Austen's meditations the emergence of a repertoire of responses, largely faith-based, to those constraints. For Anselment, Austen provides a paradigmatic instance of early modern feminine self-empowerment accomplished at the level of social praxis rather than legal prescription.

Conversely, Melissa Mowry's "Thieves, Bawds, and Counterrevolutionary Fantasies: *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith*" addresses seventeenth-century Englishwomen's potential for signification within the broader context of revolutionary politics. Examining the reputation of Mary Frith as it survives in late-seventeenth-century pamphlet literature, Mowry documents her appropriation both as a figure for the unruliness of the lower social ranks in London and as a crypto-Royalist model of feminine resistance to Parliamentary tyranny. At the very least, this argument suggests the power of Moll Cutpurse's own posthumous celebrity, which leads to her appropriation by different authors writing from very different ideological perspectives.

Moving into the eighteenth century, Richard Albright's "No Time Like the Present: *The Mysteries of Udolpho*" retains the preceding essays' interest in the dynamics of gender and social change. Against the tendency to read Gothic romance in the feminist vein, as a site of claustrophobia and interiorization, Albright reads Radcliffe's greatest novel as an expression of agorophobic anxieties consequent upon eighteenth-century British culture's efforts at chronological self-definition. In Albright's formulation, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* constructs a peculiar temporality that insulates its narrative, and its readers, from the pressures of eighteenth-century Britishness.

Crossing the Channel from England to France, Susan Hiner's "Lust for *Luxe*: Cashmere Fever in Nineteenth-Century France" navigates the space of early modern colonialism and conspicuous consumption. Hiner traces the appearance, in the work of Balzac and Flaubert, of a peculiar cultural fetish: the cashmere shawl. Introduced into France through Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, this item rapidly acquired value as a status marker in Parisian society, and as Hiner traces its circulation in nineteenth-century French fiction,

she illuminates the dynamics of social aspiration and imitation exemplified by the acquisition of such goods.

Rounded out by the usual complement of reviews, these articles offer a diverse body of commentary on the literary and cultural development of Great Britain and France in the late seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Yet in their diversity these pieces also return to certain themes—the position of women in society, the discontents of social inequality, the anxieties and privileges of empire—that help unify their subject-matter, as well as their methodological focus.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge with gratitude the steady and dependable efforts of Helen Burke, *JEMCS*'s founding Book Review Editor. Over the past five years Helen has supervised the book review section of *JEMCS* with care, rigor and consistency, and with this issue she has elected (doubtless with some measure of relief!) to end her term of service. Her contribution to this journal has been essential to its success, and while she can be succeeded, she cannot be replaced.