



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

## **Narrative Section of a Successful Application**

The attached document contains the grant narrative of a previously funded grant application, which conforms to a past set of grant guidelines. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the application guidelines for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Research Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title:           New Narratives in Philosophy: Rediscovering Neglected Works  
by Early Modern Women

Institution:             Duke University

Project Director:       Andrew Janiak

Grant Program:         Collaborative Research

## **Title: New narratives in philosophy: rediscovering neglected works by early modern women**

### **1. Statement of significance and impact**

This NEH collaborative research grant would fund a major international conference on the philosophical work of three neglected women from the early modern period. Although a number of women made seminal contributions to European philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, their work has largely been forgotten. The writings of these women are often out of print, unavailable in English, and comparatively ignored. Our NEH funded conference would help to rectify this situation. The conference has two specific goals: first, it will bring together thirty-five leading scholars working on the philosophy of Anne Conway, Margaret Cavendish and Emilie du Châtelet; and second, it will involve an extensive pedagogical workshop to facilitate the development of new narratives in university courses incorporating the contributions of these neglected figures. To have the greatest possible impact on both teaching and research in the history of modern philosophy, we will employ a newly created website maintained at Duke University to disseminate the information generated at the conference. From video clips to sample syllabi, from bibliographies to never before translated texts, the Duke website will provide students and instructors with everything required to alter the teaching of early modern philosophy.

A common assumption about the philosophical writings of early modern women, such as Cavendish or Châtelet, is that their work was unjustly neglected in their own time, a fact that has not been systematically rectified in the intervening years. But our preliminary research in this area has produced a surprising result: this assumption, however reasonable it seems, is inaccurate. Women such as Cavendish, Conway, and Châtelet were not excluded from philosophy during their lifetimes. Instead, they were excluded much later, when canon formation in philosophy occurred. For this reason, our project seeks to uncover an ignored history, which will lead to a better understanding of this crucial period in philosophy.

In addition, focusing more attention on these women may help to connect contemporary discussions in philosophy with discussions in other humanistic fields. There are two reasons to expect this benefit. First, philosophers have tended to discuss three principal kinds of texts: treatises and related works; essays; and, correspondence. Research on women philosophers will encourage philosophers to expand their range of texts and genres to explore in search of philosophical ideas and debates in the early modern period, since women philosophers employed a broader range of genres to explore their ideas. This expansion will help render scholarly work in philosophy continuous with work in various literary and historical fields. Second, in numerous humanistic fields, gender has long been a useful, even central, category of scholarly analysis. By explicitly discussing the ways in which these three figures exclaimed their exclusion from full participation in intellectual life, we will help to move the concept of gender to the fore as a salient category of analysis for scholars working in the history of modern philosophy and shed light on contemporary issues of gender bias and exclusion – a pressing issue in contemporary philosophy. Finally, issues in the history of philosophy often illuminate debates in current philosophy. For example, two issues currently being debated in contemporary philosophy are monism, the view that all reality is one thing, and panpsychism, the view that mind is a fundamental feature of the world. Both Cavendish and Conway argued for different and interesting versions of these doctrines. Understanding their views is relevant to these contemporary debates. In addition, there is an ongoing debate in philosophy of science about the proper relationship between science and metaphysics. Du Châtelet's work, which grounds Newtonian physics with Leibnizian metaphysics, offers an example of how this relationship might be understood.

**Narrative: *New Narratives Initiative in Philosophy***

Project Co-directors: Andrew Janiak & Marcy Lascano

**I. Substance and Context**

We are applying for an NEH collaborative research grant to host a major international conference on three influential early modern women philosophers. The conference will be held at the Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke University, a campus hub that co-sponsors and organizes international conferences in the humanities annually. The conference will focus on the early modern philosophers Margaret Cavendish, Anne Conway, and Emilie Du Châtelet and will explore the various aspects of each figure's primary philosophical works, investigate the relationships between her works and those of her contemporaries, and examine her works in relation to the political, social, ethical, theological, and scientific works of the period. The conference will produce papers on each philosopher that will serve as the basis for further scholarly research, and spur the inclusion of these neglected figures in our teaching. During the conference, one day will be devoted to each philosopher, with a final, fourth day devoted to methodological questions that are important for transforming the teaching of early modern philosophy, ensuring it includes these significant, but ignored, historical figures. The conference will be held at Duke University for two reasons: first, the staff at the Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke ([www.fhi.duke.edu](http://www.fhi.duke.edu)) has substantial expertise in running international conferences; and second, Professor Janiak has spent the past six months leading an eight-person team of students, librarians, software coders and graphic designers in designing a website that provides detailed information about how to include neglected early modern women in philosophy courses. From video clips to sample syllabi, from bibliographies to translated texts, this Duke website provides students and philosophers with everything required to alter the teaching of early modern philosophy. The conference proceedings will be disseminated through the website.

The conference we propose reflects an important scholarly shift in philosophy. In the American academy, the history of early modern philosophy—roughly, the period from 1600 to 1800—has been focused on a few great canonical figures. The traditional narrative is as follows: the three great rationalists of the seventeenth century—Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz—were challenged by the three great empiricists of the eighteenth, Locke, Berkeley and Hume. At the end of the early modern period, Kant formed a synthesis between rationalism and empiricism. This NEH collaborative research grant will enable an international network of scholars to work together in expanding our research and teaching beyond the traditional “canon” of early modern philosophers and beyond this traditional, and somewhat stifling, narrative. Although philosophy has been slow to change, in the last twenty years, this traditional narrative has been challenged by two important developments. First, historians of early modern philosophy have recognized that many other “non-canonical” figures—from Henry More and Walter Charleton in England to Pierre Gassendi and Antoine Arnauld on the Continent—played important roles in the development of philosophical ideas. It is now somewhat common to see articles and courses that mix readings from canonical figures with texts from lesser-known figures. Second, more recently, historians have acknowledged that traditional narratives have excluded other significant figures working primarily in the early modern natural sciences, despite the widely accepted fact that “science” and “philosophy” were indistinct in this period. It is therefore not uncommon to see courses and texts that deal with “scientists” such as Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton (Janiak 2008; 2015) taught as part of philosophy curricula. Our proposal concerns the next major scholarly development: the acknowledgement that a number of early modern women have been unjustly ignored in the history of philosophy. From Margaret Cavendish and Anne Conway in England to Emilie Du Châtelet in France, many women played significant roles in the development of early modern philosophy, but until now, their contributions have often gone unnoticed. This grant will help us to transform the way that philosophers study and teach the history of early modern thought.

Our project must reflect a realistic assessment of the present state of our field. Three impediments prevent scholars from including early modern women in the philosophical canon. First and foremost, the unavailability of texts hampers our work. Many of the treatises written by women such as Cavendish, Conway and Châtelet are out of print, available only in seventeenth century editions, or have never been translated or published in a critical edition. The same is true of their correspondence and essays. Several of our collaborators—e.g., Eileen O’Neill on Cavendish and Lisa Shapiro on Princess Elisabeth—have edited and produced editions to help rectify this situation. However, far more needs to be done. One project of our international network of scholars is the creation of a new Oxford University Press series, to be edited by Christia Mercer and O’Neill, called *New Histories of Philosophy*. This series will see the production—for the very first time—of editions of major works by Cavendish, Conway, Châtelet, and others. The series has been approved by Oxford University Press. When the series begins next year, many of our collaborators will sign contracts to produce volumes of hitherto unpublished texts.

Second, the lack of a robust, extensive, long-standing scholarly literature hampers the work of graduate students and faculty members alike. A historian of philosophy who wishes to write about Cavendish’s work in natural philosophy, or Châtelet’s views of Newtonian science, must often strike out on her own, with few books or articles to serve as introductory guides, which normally provide the lay of the land. One of the major goals of our NEH Collaborative Research Grant is to help foment the development of a robust scholarly literature by bringing together scholars from around the world to participate in a major conference. With canonical figures such as Descartes, conferences are an important vehicle for the dissemination of new scholarly approaches and ideas, and serve as a testing ground for such approaches and ideas. Feedback and criticism at conferences are the lifeblood of philosophy. But there is also a vast literature on Descartes, which can guide scholars in numerous directions. In the case of early modern women, in contrast, conferences play a far more significant role: they can produce the

scholarly literature, enabling us to broach new topics and ideas with audiences who have expertise on the figures in question. Hence they are not merely useful, but essential. A secondary goal of the conference is also important: we have invited leading historians of early modern philosophy who have not yet written about early modern women to the Duke conference (see appendix). Our hope is that by participating in our conference and serving as commentators on papers, these historians may be encouraged to begin new research programs involving the work of Cavendish, Conway or Châtelet.

The third and final impediment is this: the vast majority of courses in early modern philosophy—whether undergraduate or graduate—do not yet include the contributions of women from this period. Therefore, as each new class of undergraduate students heads to graduate school, and as each crop of newly minted PhDs takes up their first professional positions, early modern women continue to be ignored. An important goal of our conference, then, is to promote the teaching of texts by the three early modern women on which our grant is focused. But since research is the primary focus of the conference, we have added a fourth day to our schedule, a day focused specifically on using our scholarship for teaching. This will follow the three days of the conference focused on the three philosophers, enabling us to gather together all the lessons that learned about the three early modern women, and then to distill the lessons into useful bits of information for researchers and instructors teaching the history of modern philosophy. Since research is often spurred from questions that arise while teaching, we believe that incorporating teaching materials will lead to further research on these women.

The audience of the first three days of the conference will be philosophers and others interested in the ideas and influence of Cavendish, Conway and Châtelet, but the audience for the final day will be anyone interested in the history of ideas, the history of science, women's studies, the French Enlightenment, etc., who might teach courses in which these women are discussed. The final day of the Duke conference will be closely aligned with an ongoing Mellon-funded website project at Duke University, which is directed by one of us (Janiak).

Beginning in May 2014, a team of eight students, faculty and staff at Duke began creating a new website focused specifically on facilitating a change in how early modern philosophy is taught. We have focused in this first phase of our work on teaching the ideas and texts of the three figures in this grant, along with a fourth figure, Lady Damaris Masham. The website includes the following: a description of half a dozen standard narratives for teaching the history of modern philosophy, with suggestions for how to incorporate the ideas and texts of early modern women into those narratives; a description of half a dozen new narratives that scholarly research on the ideas and texts of early modern women have generated (many of which hail from the work of our collaborators on this grant); a listing of sample syllabi that include these women; an extensive bibliography for each woman; links to texts that are in the public domain; and, an extensive, highly interactive, pictorially rich timeline of the history of philosophy, 1600-1800, that integrates the work of the women with that of canonical figures. One purpose of the conference's last day is to provide further materials for the Duke website, including short video clips, research papers, syllabi, and suggestions for teaching these women in various kinds of college courses.

We envision a three-step process for the interplay of the first three days of the Duke conference, focused on research; the final day of the conference, focused on methodology and teaching; and finally, the Duke website. First, the research days of the conference will generate lively conversations concerning the latest scholarly work on the ideas and influence of Cavendish, Conway, and Châtelet. Second, the teaching day of the conference will cull the most important pieces of information from the earlier days for the purpose of disseminating the research to the largest possible audience of potential instructors interested in teaching the history of modern philosophy in a new way. Third and finally, we will use the Duke website to present the information from the conference to a much wider audience. Here is a concrete example of how this three-step process would actually work. Canonical figures such as John Locke were especially interested in the question of how it is possible for material beings to

think. According to Locke, material beings could not think without a miraculous intervention by God, which he argued in a famous correspondence with Bishop Edward Stillingfleet. It is probably not well known, however, that Châtelet developed important views on this subject in response to Locke in her *Foundations of Physics* (Paris, 1740). Suppose, then, that someone gives a presentation on Châtelet's conception of "thinking matter" to our conference. The ensuing discussion about thinking matter might indicate how one can weave together a conversation about Locke's views with a discussion of Châtelet's response. The Duke website, in turn, would be updated to include a narrative that incorporates Châtelet's lesser known ideas into a more common discussion of Locke's debate with Stillingfleet about thinking matter. The website would also provide a sample syllabus that presents this debate over the course of several classes. It could even provide a short discussion of how scholars interested in the ideas of La Mettrie—the author of the highly controversial text, *L'homme Machine (Machine Man)*—could incorporate his ideas into this larger theme, since La Mettrie wrote an open letter to Châtelet, published in the 1747 edition of his *L'histoire naturelle de l'ame (Natural History of the Soul)*. Since La Mettrie is rarely taught in early modern philosophy courses in English-speaking contexts, this example also nicely illustrates the way in which expanding the canon to include a lesser known figure can create a virtuous circle, since one ignored figure may lead to another.

Why does our grant focus on Cavendish, Conway and Châtelet? There are a number of compelling women philosophers in the early modern period whose work deserves to be more widely recognized by philosophers. We chose these particular figures for three principal reasons. First, we are hopeful that there will be corresponding new editions of their work coming out soon in the Oxford University Press series. Christia Mercer is planning to translate and edit a new edition of Conway's *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*; Andrew Janiak and Karen Detlefsen are planning to translate and edit Emilie Du Châtelet's *Institutions de Physique*; and, Marcy Lascano plans to produce an edition of

Margaret Cavendish's *The Grounds of Natural Philosophy*. In addition, Stewart Duncan is working on a scholarly edition of Cavendish's *Philosophical Letters*.

Second, Oxford University Press plans to publish companion volumes of critical essays to accompany each new scholarly edition of primary works. So, the Duke conference will serve as a means of generating scholarship for these companion volumes. Although we do not plan to produce a specific volume of the conference papers at this time, the conference will ensure that there is a substantial amount of scholarly activity on these three figures that might lead to papers for such volumes.

Third and finally, these three figures have been the subject of some recent scholarship. For instance, due to the existence of a critical edition her work, Cavendish has begun generating significant interest amongst historians of philosophy. In 2013, a session at the American Philosophical Association meeting was dedicated to three papers on Cavendish's philosophy. Emilie Du Châtelet is also generating interest from philosophers, who are benefiting from the fact that she has long been studied in the history of science. This means that there is already a literature, although one that focuses more on her scientific rather than philosophical achievements, for use as an entrée into her more philosophical works. Recently, Detlefsen and Janiak worked on an American Council of Learned Societies funded collaborative research project on Châtelet that will produce the first English monograph on her philosophy. In addition, Christia Mercer is currently working on a scholarly book titled, *Anne Conway's Radical Rationalism*, and Marcy Lascano is currently working on a scholarly book titled *Early Modern Women Philosophers: Cosmology to Human Nature*, which includes chapters on Cavendish, Conway, and Du Châtelet, among others. Given that these projects are currently in the works, a major international conference concerning these figures is a natural starting place for our long-term project. Creating interaction amongst the scholars in our field, and producing high quality secondary sources and teaching materials on these women, will generate substantial momentum for the New Narratives Initiative.

*Value to scholars, students, and general audiences*

Scholars influenced by second wave feminism successfully expanded the canon in various fields—from literature to history to political theory—during the 1970s and 1980s. By the 1990s, many humanistic and social scientific fields had been transformed, in terms of the character of the research that was conducted, the questions that researchers posed, and the way that the field was taught in colleges. In some important respects, philosophy underwent similar changes: new research and courses concerning feminism, race theory, and a host of related topics were created. In the area of early modern philosophy, pioneers such as Margaret Atherton, Sarah Hutton, and Eileen O’Neill began to edit texts by hitherto ignored figures and to publish books and articles about them. Our work builds on these pioneering efforts. It must be admitted, however, that research and teaching in the history of modern philosophy has not been transformed in anything like the way that we find in other fields over the past thirty years. If we look at the primary journals and major academic presses in our field, we find that canonical figures still receive the lion’s share of the attention. Despite an enormous literature, numerous new books and articles on figures such as Descartes or Kant are published every year. Similarly, in many colleges and universities, the history of modern philosophy is still taught with a primary focus on the familiar canonical figures. Even at the leading institutions, it is perfectly common to find no research or teaching on early modern women of any kind. In that sense, philosophy in the early twenty-first century finds itself in a rather different situation than its peer humanistic disciplines. Our NEH Collaborative Research Grant seeks to change this situation by generating a lively international conversation about three important but neglected figures from the early modern period.

There has been some scholarship, most notably by Eileen O’Neill, attempting to address the reasons why women philosophers have fallen from our scholarly view. However, a common assumption about the philosophical work of early modern women, such as Cavendish or

Châtelet, is this: the work of women was unjustly neglected in their own time, and that has not been systematically rectified in the intervening years. However, our preliminary research in this area has produced a surprising result: this assumption, however reasonable it seems, is false. It is true that women such as Châtelet were officially excluded from membership in major European intellectual institutions, such as the Académie Royale des Sciences in eighteenth-century Paris. It is also true that women often had to struggle in order to publish their philosophical ideas. But what our research shows, remarkably, is that women such as Cavendish and Châtelet were actually not excluded from the philosophical conversations of their day. For instance, after Châtelet's magnum opus, *Institutions de Physique (Foundations of Physics)* was first published in Paris in 1740, it was republished in London a year later, and translated into both German and Italian within two years. Her ideas were disseminated and discussed in the major learned journals of her day, including the *Journal des Sçavans* (published in Paris and separately in Amsterdam) and the *Göttingische Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen*. In addition, although Cavendish's works were not given the serious attention that they deserved during her lifetime, she carried on correspondence with several leading philosophers and scientists, such as Joseph Glanvill and Christiaan Huygens, and in 1667 she was the first woman invited to visit the Royal Society of London, where she observed experiments by Robert Boyle and Robert Hooke. Anne Conway was mentored by Cambridge Platonist Henry More and developed a deep friendship with Francis Mercury Van Helmont. After her death, More and van Helmont translated her philosophical writings into Latin, publishing them as *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*. Van Helmont delivered a copy of the book to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who wrote that his own philosophy was similar to Conway's. Our conclusion: women such as Cavendish, Conway, and Châtelet were not excluded from philosophy during their lifetimes. Instead, they were excluded much later, when canon formation in philosophy occurred, in the nineteenth century, as college and university

curricula were solidified and collected editions for many figures were produced—e.g., Descartes, Kant, and Huygens. For this reason, our project seeks to recover an ignored history.

Focusing more attention on women who have been ignored in philosophical scholarship has another benefit: it may help connect contemporary discussions in philosophy with discussions in other humanistic fields. There are two reasons to expect this benefit. First, philosophers focused on canonical figures have tended to discuss three principal kinds of texts in their research: treatises and related works; essays; and, correspondence. Unlike other humanistic disciplines, philosophers have paid comparatively little attention to the various other kinds of texts in the early modern period—from plays to poems to novels—in which philosophical themes are explored. In the early modern period, women faced serious barriers to their participation in philosophical conversation, barriers overcome by our three figures. Women were often relegated to translating the works of famous men, to writing commentaries on the works of male scientists and philosophers, or to exploring other genres, such as plays. It was rare for women to write essays for learned journals or grand philosophical treatises for major publishers. Despite the fact that our three figures overcame these barriers, it should be no surprise that they were also constrained by the prevailing gender norms of their societies. For instance, although Cavendish wrote important philosophical treatises, she also wrote a number of plays and a science fiction novel, precisely the kind of texts typically ignored by contemporary philosophical scholarship. Similarly, although Châtelet's major philosophical treatise was discussed in learned journals in three languages, she also spent a considerable amount of time producing a translation of, and commentary on, Newton's *Principia mathematica*. She was therefore a philosophe, but also served as the handmaiden for the works of a famous man. Hence early modern women both broke through various gender-based barriers to their participation in philosophy, and were simultaneously constrained by gender norms in ways that their male colleagues were not. By focusing attention on these three figures, we hope to encourage philosophers to expand the range of texts and genres they are

willing to explore in search of philosophical ideas and debates in the early modern period. Just as a play might very well contain a nuanced conversation about a philosophical topic, the preface to a major translation might enable a translator to present her own unique perspective on the philosophical text in question. This expansion, in turn, will help to render scholarly work in philosophy continuous with work in various literary and historical fields that have long focused on a much wider range of texts than philosophers.

Second, in numerous humanistic fields, gender has long been a useful, even central, category of scholarly analysis. Although feminist philosophers have analyzed gender, gender relations, and many related topics to great effect, it must be admitted that such scholarly areas have not become central to scholarship in the history of early modern philosophy. Indeed, far from it. The reason to expect that our project might help to alter the *status quo* is not that scholarship on early modern women automatically brings the concept of gender into the contemporary conversation. Rather, what we have found is that the three figures encompassed by our project often brought the concept of gender into their work in various ways. They did so, in part, because they faced barriers, presumptions, biases and exclusions that were not faced by their male contemporaries, friends, and correspondents. For instance, male intellectuals in mid-18th century Paris did not discuss the fact that women were excluded from membership in the all-important Académie Royale des Sciences, but for someone like Emilie Du Châtelet, this exclusion was a fundamental aspect of the barriers to her participation in philosophy in her country. The hope, then, is that by explicitly discussing the ways in which these three figures exclaimed their exclusion from full participation in intellectual life, we will help to bring the concept of gender to the fore as a salient category of analysis for scholars working in the history of modern philosophy and shed light on contemporary issues of gender bias and exclusion, which has become a pressing issue in contemporary philosophy.

Finally, contemporary philosophy often looks to its history for sources of inspiration, insight, and understanding. For example, recent work by Rutgers philosopher Jonathan

Schaffer has brought the issue of monism, the claim that the world consists of only one thing or one type of thing, back into debate. Schaffer's papers look back to Spinoza and other figures in the history of philosophy. However, Cavendish and Conway held two important, and interestingly different, versions of monism, which have so far been ignored in these debates. David Chalmers (ANU and NYU) has recently put forth arguments for the claim that mind or consciousness is a fundamental feature of the world, a view better known as panpsychism. Again, understanding why figures such as Cavendish and Conway argued that minds were a basic feature of nature will provide context and enhance the detail of these current debates. Finally, there is an ongoing debate in philosophy of science about the proper relationship between science and metaphysics. Du Châtelet's work, which grounds Newtonian physics with Leibnizian metaphysics, offers a fine example of how this relationship might be understood.

*Scope of research, source materials, relationship of research to ongoing work, and major research questions to be addressed*

As mentioned above, there has been some scholarly work on these women philosophers in other fields, such as English literature, French, Religious Studies, and History. This scholarship provides a wonderful basis for philosophers to begin the sorely needed examination of the philosophical work of each of these women. However, philosophers have just recently begun paying serious attention to these women's work. Unlike in the case of the canonical male figures, including people like Descartes and Newton, there is no developed literature that students and professors can rely on in various ways. Specifically, the history of science has always had a huge literature on the major "scientists" that philosophers have been able to use. Indeed, historians of science were already remarking decades ago that what was called the "Newtonian industry" had generated a huge supply of monographs and scholarly articles, covering every major aspect of Newton's prodigious thought. But in the case of Cavendish, Conway, and du Châtelet, there is far less to build upon. This is true even in the case of Du

Châtelet, who was a scientist in her own right as well as a major translator and commentator of Newton. There are plays about Du Châtelet, biographies, various chapters written by feminist historians, French feminists, etc., all of which is important work, but as of now, there has yet to be a single philosophical monograph on her work written in English. There is also a very small philosophical literature. It is far too small for philosophers to do what we normally do with the canonical male figures, which is to explore a topic by reading various scholarly articles, or suggest that students do so when writing papers. On many important and basic philosophical issues, such as Anne Conway's views on freedom of the will, or Margaret Cavendish's views on identity, there are no articles at all!<sup>1</sup>

Given the amount of philosophical work required for generating a robust account of these women's philosophy, it is important that our conference paint a broad picture of their philosophical endeavors. Three main avenues of inquiry will be explored at the Duke conference: (1) What is the substance and import of the philosophical system? (2) What is the relationship between the philosophical works and those of her contemporaries? (3) In what way is her philosophical work influenced by, or influencing, the political, social, ethical, theological, and scientific works of the period?

The goal of the conferences is to provide the scholarly basis for future philosophical research and integration of these women's works into the classroom, and provide the humanities at large with a more accurate understanding of the philosophical aspects of these important women.

## **II. History of the Project**

The New Narratives Initiative began in the fall of 2014. Nine scholars with a mutual interest in changing the way the history of philosophy is conceived and taught met at the

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<sup>1</sup> Please see the attached appendix for a list of primary and secondary source materials on Cavendish, Conway, and Du Châtelet.

University of Pennsylvania for the *Women in the History of Philosophy* workshop. They began work on a multifaceted project designed to bring not only women philosophers but also other marginalized figures into our histories. The group recognized that in order to expand our notions of who counts as a “philosopher” and of what counts as “philosophy,” multiple narratives explaining philosophy’s history were required. In tandem, new narratives should remove philosophy from its traditional isolation from other disciplines. The New Narrative Initiative began.

Although the first conference on women philosophers in the United States occurred nearly 17 years ago, it has taken some time for there to be enough individuals working on women philosophers for there to be a unified effort to change the way our histories are told. That first conference took place in 1997 at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. The two main issues of the conference, according to conference organizer Eileen O’Neill, were as follows. First, “what are the borders of philosophy, what are considered legitimate philosophical issues, and what are considered legitimate forms and methodologies of addressing them?” And second, “say we find a work by a woman that falls within our definition of philosophy. The added problem is that history has gone on responding to, for example, Descartes. We need to find lines of influence stemming from some of the women philosophers.” While this conference was ground breaking, there was little movement in the discipline as a whole with respect to integrating women until recently.

More recently, interest in these issues has increased. In 2009, Barnard College hosted *Women, Philosophy, and History: A Conference in Celebration of Eileen O’Neill*, a two-day event with sessions on women philosophers and special sessions on teaching women philosophers. Last year there were two sessions on women philosophers at American Philosophical Association meetings: the Eastern division meeting in December 2013 held a session on Margaret Cavendish’s philosophy and the Pacific Division held a session on the philosophy of Mary Astell in April 2014. In addition, Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green

organized the *Women in Liberty 1600-1800 conference*, which was an invited symposium at the Monash University Prato Centre, in Prato, Italy, supported by the Australian Research Council, in July 2014. Finally, the *Women in the History of Philosophy* conference at the University of Pennsylvania in September 2014 brought together scholars and graduate students to discuss early modern women philosophers. Thus the New Narratives Initiative is building on a robust set of scholarly activities involving an international network of philosophers.

During this five-year period, our collaborators have met at various events and discussed their individual projects. But until now there was no centralized collaboration between scholars of early modern women philosophers. This year, we decided to meet to discuss and coordinate our individual projects and to initiate a number of long-term projects. The New Narrative Initiative has the following projects underway:

1. A Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Partnership Grant (Canadian) requesting funding for the development of the New Narratives Initiative partnership planning meetings and teaching and mentoring workshops.
2. A new series of edited volumes and translations of the primary works of Early Modern Women Philosophers, *New Histories of Philosophy*, by Oxford University Press. The series is co-edited by Christia Mercer and Eileen O'Neill. The series will also include other marginalized figures in the history of philosophy. Companion volumes of secondary literature will accompany the edited volumes of primary works.
3. A new textbook for early modern philosophy courses that includes the works of Women philosophers and other marginalized figures, published by Broadview Press, co-edited by Lisa Shapiro and Marcy Lascano will appear in 2018.
4. A new open-access website with resources for teaching and research on early modern women philosophers. This website, which has been partly funded by The Mellon Foundation's "Humanities Writ Large" program at Duke University, is hosted at Duke, and will be live on 15 February 2015. This website will include links to primary and

secondary literature, suggested syllabi for teaching, videos clips for teaching, and proceedings from relevant conferences.

5. Mentoring workshops for graduate students and junior faculty working on early modern women philosophers.

All of our collaborators have individual projects on women philosophers underway. In order to develop the sort of understanding we need of the early modern period, it is important that we develop a more integrated approach to these figures. The New Narratives Initiative Conference will allow scholars from around the world to come together to address central components of the work of three women philosophers and to explore their relation to one another. Moreover, the conference seeks to make clear issues concerning historical methodology and genre, which are two issues largely ignored in the history of philosophy.

Please see the “Statement of History of Grants” for more information on funding and pending funding for this project.

### **III. Project staff**

The co-directors for the New Narratives Initiative Conference are Andrew Janiak and Marcy Lascano. Andrew Janiak is the Creed C. Black Associate Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Bass Society of Fellows at Duke University. Janiak’s work to date has focused on expanding the early modern philosophical canon to include Isaac Newton and Newtonianism more generally. He is the author of *Newton* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015) and of *Newton as Philosopher* (Cambridge University Press 2008), the editor of *Newton: Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 2004; 2014, second edition), and the co-editor, with Eric Schliesser, of *Interpreting Newton: critical essays* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). In 2013-2014, Janiak held an ACLS Collaborative Research Grant with Karen Detlefsen (University of Pennsylvania) to co-write the first English monograph on the philosophy of Emilie Du Châtelet. The project concerns Châtelet’s Newtonian-influenced natural philosophy,

its conceptual relation to the work of Descartes, Leibniz, Locke and Wolff, its historical role in the emergence of modern science, and the gendered context of the sciences during the early Enlightenment. For the conference, Janiak will explore the Newtonian aspects of Châtelet's magnum opus, the *Institutions de Physiques (Foundations of Physics, 1740)*; he and Detlefsen will also discuss the question of how Châtelet's work failed to become canonical.

Marcy Lascano is Associate Professor of philosophy at California State University, Long Beach. Her work has focused on early modern women philosophers, particularly Margaret Cavendish, Mary Astell, Damaris Masham, Anne Conway, and Emilie Du Châtelet, on issues in metaphysics and philosophical theology. She is co-editor, with Eileen O'Neill, of *Feminist History of Philosophy: The Recovery and Evaluation of Women's Philosophical Thought* (forthcoming Springer). Her publications include "Emilie du Châtelet on the Existence and Nature of God: An examination of her arguments in light of their sources" in the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, "Anne Conway: Bodies in the Spiritual World" in *Philosophy Compass*, "Damaris Masham and 'The Law of Reason or Nature'" in *The Modern Schoolman*, and "Mary Astell on the Existence and Nature of God," in *Feminist Interpretations of Mary Astell*, edited by Penelope Weiss and Alice Sowaal. She is currently working on a book project titled, *Early Modern Women Philosophers: Cosmology to Human Nature*, which focuses on the metaphysical and epistemological views of Margaret Cavendish, Anne Conway, Gabrielle Suchon, Damaris Masham, Mary Astell, Marie Huber, and Emilie Du Châtelet. Lascano will be working on the ways in which Cavendish, Conway, and Châtelet use conceptions of God as the ground of regularity, harmony, and morality in their works.

We are requesting funding for a graduate student coordinator at Duke for the Spring 2016 term. The coordinator will help with conference organization and be in charge of updating the Duke website with materials gathered from the conference presentations and additional teaching related materials from the participants (syllabi, primary sources materials, teaching tips, and assessment tools).

In addition to the co-directors, the New Narratives Initiative consists of an international network of seven philosophers who will present papers and serve as commentators for the conference.

(1) Eileen O'Neill is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Her work has focused on metaphysical and methodological issues in Rene Descartes, Margaret Cavendish, Marie de Gournay, and Mary Astell. She is editor of Margaret Cavendish, *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) and co-editor, with Christia Mercer, of *Early Modern Philosophy: Mind, Matter, and Metaphysics* (Oxford University Press, 2005). She is also the author of two seminal papers on the omission of women from the philosophical canon: "Disappearing Ink: Early Modern Women Philosophers and Their Fate in History," in *Philosophy in a Feminist Voice*, ed. Janet Kourany (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) and "Women Philosophers and the History of Philosophy," *Australian Journal of French Studies* XL, 3 (2003): 257-74. O'Neill will be examining the role of God in Cavendish's acceptance of occasional causation and rejection of fuller doctrine of occasionalism. In addition, O'Neill will present on methodological issues in early modern women philosophers.

(2) Christia Mercer is the Gustave M. Berne Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University. She is the author of *Leibniz's Metaphysics: Its Origins and Development* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) and numerous articles on Leibniz and Anne Conway. She is also the editor of the Oxford University Press series, *Oxford Philosophical Concepts*. Mercer has three projects currently underway: *Anne Conway's Radical Rationalism*, a book on the philosophy of the seventeenth-century English philosopher, Anne Conway, whose metaphysical system has not been thoroughly studied; (2) a book-length study of methodologies in the seventeenth century, presently entitled *Non-Rationalist Rationalism: A Reconsideration of Early Modern Methodology*; and (3) *Platonisms in Early Modern Thought*, whose goal is to articulate the diversity of Platonisms that form the background to early

modern thought and identify the range of Platonist assumptions underling early modern philosophy, theology, and art. For the New Narratives Initiative Conference, she will be focusing on Anne Conway's Platonism.

(3) Lisa Shapiro is Professor of Philosophy at Simon Fraser University. Her research focuses on how early modern conceptions of human nature impact accounts of human understanding, both of our perceptions of the world and in our ability to have knowledge of it. Of particular interest is the role of affective states, including pleasure, pain, and the passions or emotions, in our understanding (rather than in our motivations to action). To date her work has focused on Descartes, Spinoza and Hume, as well as Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, Marie Thiroux D'Arconville, and Princess Elisabeth. She is the editor and translator of *The Correspondence between Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia and Rene Descartes* in *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe Series* (University of Chicago Press, 2007). For the conference, Shapiro will focus on issues concerning genre in the understanding of early modern women philosophers.

(4) Karen Detlefsen is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Education at the University of Pennsylvania. She is working on a project on the relation between the life sciences and metaphysics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Specifically, she traces the evolution of the concepts of mechanism, teleology, individuation, and laws in the metaphysics of Descartes, Malebranche, Leibniz, Albrecht von Haller, and Caspar Friedrich Wolff as each one tries to explain the generation of new organisms. She is currently involved in two major research projects: (1) an ACLS Collaborative Research Grant with Andrew Janiak to co-write the first English monograph on the philosophy of Emilie Du Châtelet, and (2) an ARC Discovery Project on women and liberty in the early modern and enlightenment periods (the latter with Assoc. Prof. Karen Green and ARC Future Fellow Prof. Jacqueline Broad). She is author of "Du Châtelet and Newton on the Roles of Hypotheses in Natural Philosophy" in *The Oxford Handbook to Isaac Newton*, edited by Eric Schliesser and Christopher Smeenk;

“Reason and Freedom: Margaret Cavendish on the Order and Disorder of Nature” in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*; and, “Custom, freedom and equality: Mary Astell on marriage and women’s education” in *Feminist Interpretations of Mary Astell*. For the conference, she will present “Women and Institutions in the History of Natural Philosophy: Cavendish and Du Châtelet— two case studies.”

(5) Jacqueline Broad is Australian Research Council Future Fellow at Monash University. Her research focuses on early modern philosophy women philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. She is currently engaged in two large Australian Research Council-funded projects: a Future Fellowship project on the seventeenth-century feminist philosopher, Mary Astell (1666-1731), and a Discovery Project on women and liberty in the early modern and enlightenment periods (the latter with Assoc. Prof. Karen Green and Assoc. Prof. Karen Detlefsen). She is author of *The Philosophy of Mary Astell: An Early Modern Theory of Virtue* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming) and *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2002, and co-author with Karen Green of *A History of Women’s Political Thought in Europe, 1400-1700* (Cambridge University Press, 2009). She has also written numerous articles on early modern women, including Margaret Cavendish, Mary Astell, and Damaris Masham. For the conference, Broad will present her research on Margaret Cavendish and Walter Charleton.

(6) Marguerite Deslauriers is Professor of Philosophy at McGill University. Her research focuses on Aristotle (metaphysics, biology, and political and moral philosophy), the history of philosophical conceptions of sexual difference, and Renaissance and Early Modern feminist treatises, especially the work of Lucrezia Marinella and Marie de Gournay. She is currently the Principal Investigator of two projects funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC): *Virtue and political possibility in Renaissance feminism*, Insight Development Grant 2014-16 (with Laura Prelipcean, Concordia University) and *Equality and superiority in Renaissance and Early Modern pro-woman treatises*, (with

Laura Prelipcean, Concordia University and Andrew Piper, McGill University). She also participates in the collaborative research project: *Early Modern Conversions: Religions, Cultures, and Cognitive Ecologies*. She is the author of "Marie de Gournay and Aristotle," forthcoming in *Feminist History of Philosophy: The Recovery and Evaluation of Women's Philosophical Thought*, "One Soul in Two Bodies: Marie de Gournay and Montaigne" in *Angelaki: journal of the theoretical humanities, Special Issue: Recoupling Genre and 'Gender,'* "Two Conceptions of Equality: MacKinnon, Wollstonecraft and Rousseau on Natural Inequality," in the *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, and numerous articles and books on Aristotle. For the conference, she will be examining Epicureanism in Emilie du Châtelet's *Discourse on Happiness*.

(7) Sandrine Berges is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Bilkent University. Her research interests include Ancient Philosophy, Feminist history of philosophy, Feminist virtue ethics, and Moral and Political Philosophy. She is the author of three monographs: *A Feminist Perspective on Virtue Ethics* (forthcoming Palgrave Macmillan), *The Routledge Guidebook to Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Routledge, 2013), and *Plato on Virtue and the Law* (Continuum, 2009). She is also the author of numerous articles, including "Rethinking Twelfth-Century Virtue Ethics: the Contribution of Heloise" in the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, "Why Women Hug their Chains: Wollstonecraft and Adaptive Preferences" in *Utilitas*, and "Is Motherhood Compatible with Political Participation? Sophie de Grouchy's Care-Based Republicanism" in *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*. For the conference, she will be presenting research on Cavendish, Hobbes, and Republicanism.

Finally, in addition to our collaborative research partners, we will be inviting other early modernists who specialize in women philosophers as speakers and commentators. These participants are necessary in order to achieve our goal of presenting as full a picture as possible of these women's philosophical views, their relations to contemporaries, and their connections with various areas outside of philosophy. Additionally, we will be inviting early

modern scholars who do not yet do work on women philosophers to be commentators on papers during the conference (see appendix). This is part of our effort to disseminate the findings of our research into the philosophical early modern community at large.

#### **IV. Methods**

The conference will bring together experts on early modern women philosophers to speak on each figure and to speak on the larger issues of methodology and genre. We will have a commentator for each speaker and ample time for discussion after each talk. In addition, we will invite scholars of early modern philosophy who do not currently work on women to serve as commentators in order to bring a broader understanding of these figures amongst those in our discipline. We will send personal invitations to all those currently working in the field and create posters for the event in order to reach the largest possible audience for attendees. Finally, we plan to live stream the conference for those who wish to participate virtually and we will post videos of the conference talks on the Duke website for future viewing and reference.

The plan to expand the early modern philosophical canon to include the neglected voices of women is perfectly suited to disseminating the latest ideas through a conference. In this regard, our project is unlike many scholarly projects in philosophy. Suppose that a graduate student or young faculty member is looking for a topic for a dissertation or a new article. In the case of the canonical figures, there are a host of resources readily available—from undergraduate courses to graduate seminars, from articles to entire monographs—that will introduce someone to new topics. For this very reason, moreover, most advisors working in early modern philosophy will be able to suggest a wide variety of topics to students or junior colleagues. But in the case of early modern women, few such resources are available: few courses incorporate their works, and the scholarly literature, while growing, is still in its infancy. That explains our rationale for holding an international conference with the funds

provided by this NEH grant: we wish to bring together the leading philosophers working on early modern women from around the world in order to facilitate their scholarly interactions. Since the world of philosophers working on these figures is still quite small, we cannot count on finding colleagues at the usual professional venues, and we often cannot count on courses or scholarship to introduce us to new topics. A systematic plan to gather scholars together is therefore an essential aspect of the larger project to expand the early modern philosophy canon.

*\*Please see Appendix for Conference Program*

*Facilities for conferences and housing participants*

1. All meetings during the four-day conference will be held at the Franklin Humanities Institute, Smith Warehouse building, Duke University, Durham, NC (<http://www.fhi.duke.edu/about>). The Institute has its own staff with substantial expertise in organizing and running international conferences with dozens of participants.

2. Housing for participants will be at the King's Daughter's Inn, a locally owned bed and breakfast two blocks from the Franklin Humanities Institute, at 204 North Buchanan Blvd, Durham, NC (<http://www.the kings daughters inn.com/>). The Duke rate is \$130/night.

A. Primary Duke contacts for the conference:

1. Prof. Andrew Janiak, Philosophy Department, Duke University
2. Dr. Christina Chia, Associate Director, Franklin Humanities Institute, Duke University
3. Ms. Beth Monique Perry, Program Coordinator, Franklin Humanities Institute, Duke

B. Primary Duke contacts for the website (to disseminate information from the conference):

1. Dr. Liz Milewicz, Head, Digital Scholarship Services, Duke University Library
2. Will Shaw, Digital Humanities Technology Consultant, Duke University Library

## **V. Work Plan**

Work done prior to grant period

Selection of figures and topics to be discussed, invitations to invited speakers, call for papers

for remaining conference speakers submitted to ModSquad Blog, the Early Modern Philosophy Calendar, PhilEvents, Women Philosopher's Blog, Feminist History of Philosophy blog, Daily Nous, etc.

#### October 2015

Review submissions from call for papers and select papers for conference inclusion

#### November 2015

Finalize conference program

Begin arranging travel for participants

#### December 2015

Finalize conference lunches/dinners and travel

#### January 2016

Graduate Assistant begins putting conference materials – schedule, programs, streaming information, abstracts, etc. on Duke website

Conference poster produced

#### February 2016

Graduate Assistant compiles a “state of the discipline” report on the three philosophers, including research and teaching for participants and Duke website

#### March 2016

Graduate Assistant posts papers and commentaries on Duke website

Conference programs and attendee packets produced

#### April 2016

Conference, April 13-16

Conference proceedings, photos, additional materials on Duke website

#### May 2016

Processing of final paperwork for participants requesting reimbursement due

All conference proceedings on Duke website

## **VI. Final Products and Dissemination**

- Dissemination of research directly to invited conference commentators and participants: By inviting our colleagues at various universities to participate in the conference, we will share our research and enthusiasm directly with the larger early modern community.
- Live streaming of conference proceedings and video of talks and question and answer periods hosted on the Duke website: In order to reach the largest possible audience, we plan to live stream the conference proceedings for those who are unable to attend in person. In addition, we will post the talks and question and answer sessions on the Duke website for future viewing.
- Articles for publication in journals and possible companion book chapters for the Oxford series on Cavendish, Conway, and Du Châtelet: The conference will feature a number of papers on particular women philosophers and on larger issues in methodology and genre in early modern philosophy. During the conference, speakers will receive feedback from leading scholars in their field. After revising their work in light of comments and discussion, participants will have papers suited for publication in scholarly journals. Some papers may be used for companion books in the forthcoming Oxford University series.
- Materials for research and teaching for the Duke website: Conference papers, and collaborative work between participants on related themes and issues will be posted on the Duke website. In addition, collaborators will write up summaries of scholarship for use in teaching women in relevant courses.

We also anticipate communicating the results of our work at other conferences, such as meetings of the American Philosophical Association, meetings of the Early Modern Society, and on blogs such as the *Women in the History of Philosophy* blog, the *ModSquad* blog, and others. Further, this conference will generate and influence research, presentations, and teaching for all of the participants invited to the conference.