

## Megan Cole

Department of English  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
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### EDUCATION

Ph.D. in English Literature, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (defended Nov 2022)  
M.A. in English Literature, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2018  
B.A. in English, Psychology, University of Alabama, 2015

### DISSERTATION

*Celibate Pleasures: Convents, Asexuality, and Women's Agency in British Literature, 1660-1760*

Analyzing the many ways in which eighteenth-century literature locates women's pleasure and agency outside of heteronormative relational modes, this project uncovers the centrality of asexual singleness to early feminist thought. Commonly read through the lens of sapphic desire, convents and other renderings of female separatism are in fact focused on the vibrant, vital potential of female celibacy.

Chair: Hina Nazar

Committee: Anthony Pollock, Robert Markley, Deborah Weiss (Univ. of Alabama)

### PUBLICATIONS

#### Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles and Invited Book Chapter Contributions

"Fantasy and Education in Eliza Haywood's *The Adventures of Eovaai*." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 34:3 (2022), 287-306.

"Re-historicizing Genre: Teaching Haywood's *The Adventures of Eovaai* in a Fantasy Themed Survey Course." *ABO: Interactive Journal for Women in the Arts, 1640-1830* 11:2, Winter 2021.

"The Trauma of Compulsory Heterosexuality: Pregnancy and Asexual Reproduction in Margaret Cavendish's *The Convent of Pleasure*." *Restoration* 45:1 (2021), 83-108.

"Catharine Macaulay." *The Routledge Research Companion to Romantic Women Writers*, edited Ann R. Hawkins, forthcoming 2022.

"'Nothing but a Union with God': Queer Desire and Religion in Mary Astell's *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*." *Christianity and (Proto)Feminism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Women's Lives and Works (1450-1800)*, edited by Holly Faith Nelson and Adrea Johnson. Volume under review with University of Delaware Press for the Early Modern Feminisms series.

“‘A Votress to Nature’: Asexuality and Queer Ecology in Early Modern Literature.” Invited for *Early Modern Asexuality Studies*, edited by Liza Blake, Cat Clifford, and Aley O’Mara. Under editorial review.

“The Fiction of Amatonormativity: Reactions to Queer Platonic Partnerships in Eighteenth-Century Literature.” Under review with *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, revision submitted February 2023.

“Creating an Asexual Public Sphere: Mary Astell and the Legacy of English Medieval Nuns.” Under review with *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, revision requested February 2023.

### **Book Reviews**

“Variable Bodies and The Reconfiguring of Textual and Cultural Landscapes: Review of *Novel Bodies* by Jason Farr.” *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 62:1 (2022), 119-122.

### **Other Publications**

“Working with Sources: Creating a Data Set.” *I Write: A Writing Guide for the Undergraduate Rhetoric Program at the University of Illinois*, edited by Kristi McDuffie. University of Illinois Department of English, 2020.

### **ARTICLES IN PROGRESS**

“From Mary Astell to *Call the Midwife*: Protestant Nunneries and Queer Sexuality.”

“A Model for Feminist Literary Criticism: Mary Astell’s Marginalia.”

“Women Performing Spiritual Authority in the Age of Enlightenment.”

### **AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS**

#### **Awards**

Runner Up, Prize for Research in the Humanities, UIUC Humanities Research Institute, 2022.

Hobart L. and Mary Kay Peer Essay Prize, Department of English, UIUC, Spring 2020. \$1,000.

Ruth Schurman Brookens Graduate Award for Demonstrated Excellence in the Teaching of First-Year Writing, Department of English, UIUC, Spring 2020. \$600.

Undergraduate Literature Teaching Award, Department of English, UIUC, Fall 2019. \$500

Qualifying Exam Passed with Distinction, Fall 2019.

#### **Research Fellowships**

English Department Dissertation Completion Fellowship, UIUC, Fall 2022-Spring 2023. \$22,000.

Summer Research Fellowship, Graduate Program in English, UIUC, Summer 2022. \$3000.

English Department Full Course Release Fellowship, UIUC, Fall 2021-Spring 2022. \$20,000.  
Summer Research Fellowship, Graduate Program in English, UIUC, Summer 2021. \$1000.  
Greg Barr Family Fund Dissertation Fellowship, Graduate Program in English, UIUC, Spring 2021. \$5000.

Summer Research Fellowship, Graduate Program in English, UIUC, Summer 2020. \$1500.  
Summer Research Award, Literatures and Languages Library, UIUC, Summer 2020. \$500.  
RBS-ASECS Scholarship, Rare Book School, Summer 2020. \$1400.

Greg Barr Family Fund Dissertation Fellowship, Graduate Program in English, UIUC, Spring 2020. \$5000.

Summer Research Fellowship, Graduate Program in English, UIUC, Summer 2019. \$3000.  
Summer Research Fellowship, Graduate Program in English, UIUC, Summer 2018. \$3000.  
First Year Fellowship, Graduate Program in English, UIUC, Fall 2016-Spring 2017. \$6500.

### **Travel Grants**

Kirkpatrick Grant for Conference Travel. Department of English, 2021, 2020, 2019. \$250.  
Conference Travel Grant, British Women Writers Association, March 2020. \$350.  
Travel Grant, Newberry Renaissance Consortium, 2022, 2020, 2019, 2018. \$1200.  
President's Research in Diversity Travel Award, UIUC, March 2020. \$650.  
Rusk Excellence Grant for Conference Travel. Department of English, 2020, 2019. \$500.

## **CONFERENCE ACTIVITY**

### **Papers Presented**

“Conceiving the Future: Celibacy and Futurity in the Work of Mary Astell.” International Society for Eighteenth Century Studies: International Congress on the Enlightenment, Rome, Italy, July 2023 (paper accepted).

“Queer Platonic Relationships and Toxic Family Systems in *Clarissa*.” American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, St. Louis, Missouri, March 2023.

“The Right to Pleasure: Women Writers on Bodily Autonomy.” American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, St. Louis, Missouri, March 2023.

“Queer Ecology and Asexuality in *The Convent of Pleasure*.” International Margaret Cavendish Society, Virtual, June 2022.

“Producing Feminism: Asexuality and Futurity in the Work of Mary Astell.” American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, Baltimore, Maryland, April 2022 (paper accepted, did not attend due to COVID-19).

- “‘Miraculously Transported’: Female Autonomy and Colonial Violence in Eliza Haywood’s *The Adventures of Eovaai*.” American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, Virtual, April 2021.
- “‘This Sacred Telescope’: The Politics of Visuality in Haywood’s *The Adventures of Eovaai*.” British Women Writers Association, Fort Worth, Texas, March 2020.
- “Corporeality and Proto-feminist Agency in Enlightenment Women’s Writing.” International Society for Eighteenth Century Studies: International Congress on the Enlightenment, Edinburgh, Scotland, July 2019.
- “Emotional Development in *Love in Excess: An Enlightenment Experiment*.” Eliza Haywood: 300 Years of *Love in Excess*, Indianapolis, Indiana, April 2019.
- “The Politics of Visuality in Enlightenment Women’s Writing.” American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Denver, Colorado, March 2019.
- “Envisioning Female Subjecthood: Cavendish, Astell, and the Mind/Body Divide.” Newberry Library Multidisciplinary Graduate Student Conference, Chicago, Illinois, January 2019.
- “‘A View Beyond Pleasure’: Reckoning with Appetite in Sarah Scott’s *Millennium Hall*.” Craft, Critique, Culture Conference, Iowa City, Iowa, April 2018.

### **Panels Chaired**

- “Performing Identity in the Long Eighteenth Century.” American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Virtual, April 2021.

### **TEACHING AND RESEARCH INTERESTS**

Early modern British literature; eighteenth-century British literature; the novel; history of religion; feminist and gender studies, Anglophone literature of the British empire; transatlantic eighteenth-century, queer ecology, digital humanities, public humanities

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

#### **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

##### Instructor of Record

- English 206: Enlightenment Literature and Culture (two sections) \*
- English 119: Introduction to British Literature (one section) \*
- English 109: Introduction to Fiction (one section) \*
- Rhetoric 105: First-Year Writing and Research (six sections) \*

##### Teaching Assistant

- English 209: Early British Literature and Culture (two semesters, 4 sections) \*

\*Students ranked at least one section of the course high enough to appear on university-wide list of Teachers Ranked as Excellent.

### Guest Lectures

Special topics lecturer on “Identity, Disguise, and Masquerade in Eliza Haywood’s *Fantomina*.”  
In English 209: Early British Literature and Culture. December 2021.

Special topics lecturer on “Gender and Sexuality in Margaret Cavendish’s *The Convent of Pleasure*.” In English 209: Early British Literature and Culture. November 2020.

Special topics lecturer on “Mapping Margaret Cavendish.” In English 109: Introduction to British Literature. February 2020.

### **OTHER ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT**

Co-Investigator, “University of Illinois Rhetoric Program Assessment,” Principal Investigator Prof. Dana Kinzy, Fall 2022-present.

Research Assistant, Prof. Andrea Stevens, *Blackface at the Court of Queen Henrietta Maria*, Summer 2020-present.

Assistant Director and Peer Mentor, UIUC Program for First Year Writing, Fall 2021-Summer 2022.

Graduate Assistant, UIUC Campus Honors Program “Immersive London” Study Abroad Program, Summer 2022.

English Language and Literature Exam Reader. Advanced Placement Exam, College Board. June 2020 (virtual).

Graduate Research Assistant, University of Illinois Literatures and Languages Library, Summer-Fall 2019.

Co-Investigator, “Studying the research activities and support needs of students in the Department of English at the University of Illinois”, funded by University of Illinois Libraries, Principal Investigator Matthew Roberts, Ph.D. Summer-Fall 2019.

Assistant Editor, *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, Fall 2017-Summer 2019.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

“Teaching the Early Modern Book,” Newberry Library, Chicago, February 2022\*

“Digital Humanities and Premodern Studies: An Introduction,” Newberry Library, Chicago, Spring 2020 (10-week seminar, virtual) \*

Dissertation Seminar for Scholars of Religion and Politics, Newberry Library, Chicago, AY 2019-2020. \*

"The Enlightenment Creation of World Religion" Working Group, Newberry Library, Chicago, March 2018. \*

\**competitive program*

## **UNIVERSITY/PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

Member, University of Illinois Students Advising Graduate Education (SAGE), 2021-present.

Member, University of Illinois Libraries Student Advisory Council (ULSAC), 2021-2022.

Chair, American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Graduate Student Caucus, 2020-2021.

Guest lecturer on “Teaching Argument” in UIUC Rhetoric Department New Instructor Orientation, 2020.

Co-chair, American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Graduate Student Caucus, 2019-2020.

Graduate Representative, UIUC English Department Library Committee, 2018-2019.

Co-Convener, Early Modern Workshop, 2018-present.

Co-Founder and Co-Convener, Premodern Globe Consortium, 2018-present.

Member, English Graduate Student Organization, 2016-present

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies

Eliza Haywood Society

International Margaret Cavendish Society

Bibliographic Society of America

Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing

## **LANGUAGES**

Italian (reading proficiency)