

ABSTRACTS

Jeffrey Merrick, *Bourdet vs. Quentin de Villiers: Tribadism and Propriety in French Legal Discourse, 1783–1784*

Louise Sophie Bourdet married Jean Philbert Quentin de Champlost in 1775 and filed a lawsuit for marital separation from him in 1783. She charged him with financial and sexual misconduct, verbal and threatened physical abuse, and defamation. Further, she accused him of accusing her of having sexual relations with women. His lawyer Roch Henri Prévost de Saint-Lucien not only denied this allegation, but also argued that the accusation, like the conduct in question, could not constitute grounds for separation. The Parlement suppressed this section of his judicial *mémoire*, and Prévost de Saint-Lucien made a formal apology to his colleagues in the Parisian Order of Barristers. In the end, Bourdet lost her lawsuit. This case provides a rare example of discussion of same-sex relations between women in legal as opposed to medical and fictional sources in eighteenth-century France and suggests that tribadism did not have the same meaning in all texts and contexts.

Shane Greentree, *The “Equal Eye” of Compassion: Reading Sympathy in Catharine Macaulay’s History of England*

This article reads Catharine Macaulay’s politicized account of sympathy to re-examine the uses of sentiment in eighteenth-century history writing. Macaulay’s *History of England* sharply challenges David Hume’s focus on the sufferings of the great, arguing for a broader recognition of all suffering while highlighting sympathy’s potential to be manipulated. In addition to exploring the emotive argument of her strikingly unsentimental depiction of Charles I’s death, the article examines Macaulay’s 1781 preface and its articulation of the historian’s sympathetic responsibilities. It concludes by tracing continuity between Macaulay’s *History* and her later ethical and political writings, reading their consistently republican argument against sympathetic hierarchy to highlight the thematic importance of sympathy across her multi-generic oeuvre.

Olivia Sabee, *Encyclopedic Definitions: Tracing Ballet from the Encyclopédie to the Gazzetta Urbana Veneta*

In the *Encyclopédie*, Diderot and D’Alembert positioned ballet within a network of ideas that emphasized the categorization of dance as a theater art as well as the influence of the Ancients on contemporary ballet reforms. Panckoucke’s *Encyclopédie méthodique* divided ballet and dance-related articles among five different volumes, effectively dismantling ballet’s interdisciplinary definition as it had been written through the *Encyclopédie*’s cross-references.

Later reprints of these articles in new editorial settings further distanced them from their original context, allowing for the rearrangement of texts in ways that altered their meaning and presented new paradigms for creating knowledge.

Johannes Schmidt, “*Ich begehre keinen freien Willen*” [*I desire no free will*]: G. E. Lessing’s *Peculiar Views on Human Freedom*

G.E. Lessing’s rejection of human freedom is grounded in his understanding that only God can be absolutely free. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that Lessing abandoned any notion of free human will. Good deeds only arise from the realization that truths must be sought and used for human activity, which necessarily has to be unrestricted and free of any interference by others. This article examines the problem of freedom and evil, Lessing’s apparent refusal to take part in the important discussion of this topic during the second half of the eighteenth century, and a juxtaposition of Lessing’s and Kant’s views on the matter.