

worldly pleasures of Princeton's architecture, libraries, and academic debate. Using released time to attend classes at Princeton enabled me to return to my community college and create a course on women in literature and also to pair Jane Eyre with her rebellious contemporary Frederick Douglass in world literature, interdisciplinary humanities, and even remedial writing courses.

When Elaine Showalter asked me to read my feminist satire on *The Island of Dr. Moreau* to her class on the fin de siècle, she invited me to share in the pleasures of challenging old canons and older gender perceptions that used to separate, stratify, stigmatize. Research universities are like the old literary canon—other genres of colleges need recognition, analysis, and connection. At Princeton I saw her practice what she has preached; now, with her well-deserved prestige, she should lead us all to preach what she has practiced.

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To the Editor:

Thanks to Elaine Showalter for her favorable mention in her Presidential Address of the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities at the University of Chicago (324). For the record it should be added that Lawrence Rothfield has been codirector of this program along with me and has contributed greatly to its success.

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De Quincey and Kant

To the Editor:

I found much food for thought in Paul Youngquist's "De Quincey's Crazy Body" (114 [1999]: 346–58). Unfortunately, Youngquist's primary source of evidence, "The Last Days of Immanuel Kant," is not De Quincey's original composition but a translation of Ehregott Andreas Christoph Wasianski's *Immanuel Kant in seinen letzten Lebensjahren* (1804; *Immanuel Kant, ein Lebensbild*, ed. Alfons Hoffmann [Halle: Peter, 1902]). This fact invalidates much of Youngquist's argument, since nearly every feature of "The Last Days of Immanuel Kant" that Youngquist cites as evidence of De Quincey's attitude toward Kant is taken directly and without substantial alteration from this memoir written by Kant's former student.

Thus, the decision to ignore "the intellectual achievements that made Kant's name famous," as Youngquist puts it, is not De Quincey's but Wasianski's, as is the "audacity" of this "account of Kant's senescence, illness, and death" (347). It is Wasianski, not De Quincey, who "describes the great philosopher's preparations for bed" "[i]n tender detail" (347; Wasianski 301–05), who emphasizes "the severe regularity of Kant's habits," who notes the contribution that "the uniformity of [Kant's] diet" made to "lengthen[ing] his life," who is "especially fascinated by that diet," if anyone is, and who describes in circumstantial detail Kant's popular dinner parties (348–49; Wasianski 293–99).

It is Wasianski, not De Quincey, who, in Youngquist's words, "takes more than a little delight in describing Kant's most striking physiological trait. He did not sweat. Seventy-five degrees Fahrenheit was the customary temperature of his rooms, and he was never known to perspire" (349). "Weder in der Nacht noch bei Tage transpirierte Kant," writes Wasianski. "Auffallend war es aber, dass er in seinem Wohnzimmer eine beträchtliche Wärme ertragen konnte und sich unglücklich fühlte, wenn nur ein Grad daran fehlte. 75 Grad nach Fahrenheit musste der unverrückte Stand seines Thermometers in diesem Zimmer sein, und fehlte dieser im Juli und August, so liess er seine Stube bis zu dem erforderlichen Standpunkte des Thermometers erwärmen" (305). Here is De Quincey's translation: "Kant never perspired, night or day. Yet it was astonishing how much heat he supported habitually in his study, and, in fact, was not easy if it wanted but one degree of this heat. Seventy-five degrees of Fahrenheit was the invariable temperature of this room in which he chiefly lived; and, if it fell below that point, no matter at what season of the year, he had it raised artificially to the usual standard" (*The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. David Masson, vol. 4 [Edinburgh: Black, 1897], 14 vols., 339–40). This sample is characteristic of De Quincey's method throughout: except for rhetorical flourishes, transpositions, and paraphrase, he adheres faithfully to Wasianski's narrative.

The following three passages from De Quincey, quoted by Youngquist on pages 349 and 350, are direct translations from *Immanuel Kant in seinen letzten Lebensjahren*:

De Quincey: "As the winter of 1802–03 approached, he complained more than ever of an affection of the stomach, which no medical man had been able to mitigate, or even to explain" (357).

Wasianski: "Bei herannahendem Winter klagte er mehr als sonst über jenes Übel, das er die Blähung auf dem Magenmunde nannte, und das kein Arzt erklären, vielweniger heilen konnte" (370).