

Final Written Report
Professional Development Grant

“Women of Rhetoric”
22 – 24 March 2007

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B. Restatement of problem researched or creative activity

I made a 20 minute presentation with a panel titled, “Women’s Rhetorical Identities across History” (the K.26 session, page 217 of the convention bulletin). Using electronic projection, I shared visual renderings of rhetoric in my presentation titled, “Who Are These Women Representing Rhetoric?” and also read a paper in my 20-minute block of time.

I shared several images of rhetoric iconography spanning several centuries and hypothesized the personification of rhetoric as female. I suggested that several influences played a part: male patrons of the arts commissioning works; the “schools” of artists that followed forms from classical period; and, finally, the idea of female as being able to reproduce and nurture, specifically as seen in artistic ideas of Mary/the Madonna in the Renaissance.

C. Brief review of the research procedure utilized

The research I did in recovering the specific images was tied to previous dissertation work and the archival work I began in Germany during July 2006. The literary research was completed utilizing several libraries and inter-library loan.

The research was quite time-consuming. Much of the art research was done with art history journals and that required most of my time. Setting up the Powerpoint presentation was somewhat time-consuming, but not overly so.

D. Summary of findings

Actually, there was an audience (albeit small compared to some of the others sessions mine was up against) that paid attention and asked good questions at the end. I did “find” that there was more work for me to do in terms of my set-up for explaining the origins of Lady Rhetoric. Several in the audience had questions about the origins of

the Trivium/Quadrivium that make up the Seven Liberal Arts and I should have mapped out that foundation a bit more than I did.

E. Conclusions and recommendations

The main conclusion I can draw from my participation in this conference is that there is an audience for this type of research. Research that involves the history of rhetoric, particularly where women are concerned, is quite pertinent to the field of rhetorical studies.

My goals for this conference presentation were met. I was able to present my work to peers. I made several contacts with others and have a little input for converting my work to publication. And, this major national/international conference presentation allowed me to apply some of the research I did in July 2006 in Germany.

Thank you for your support.

Copies to: Dr. Carl Brucker, Department Head, English
Dr. Georgena Duncan, Dean, College of Liberal and Fine Arts
Dr. Jack Hamm, Vice-president, Academic Affairs