

Professional Development Grant Report
Conference Presentation
American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies
March 18-21, 2015
Los Angeles, California

Dr. Sarah B. Stein
Assistant Professor of English
Arkansas Tech University

A. Review of the Professional Enhancement Opportunity

I received funding to attend and present a paper at the annual meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) in Los Angeles, California from March 18 to March 21, 2015. My paper "Blackadder: Satirizing the Century of Satire" was a part of the panel "Appropriating the Restoration and Eighteenth Century: Fictionalized Place and Time on Film and Television."

My presentation explored depictions of the eighteenth-century in the British television program *Blackadder*. The eighteenth century is often referred to as the century of satire. Humor lived at the center of political debate and public life. In the age of film and television, Rowan Atkinson, best known as his signature character Mr. Bean, has taken on the mantle of eighteenth-century British satire. He has not only inherited the tradition, but also used satire to turn his wit back on the century that brought the form to such popular heights. This paper looked specifically at the show's satire of Samuel Johnson, the author of the first complete English dictionary, arguing that by returning a sense of humor to a figure who is often thought humorless, the show performs an important intervention in eighteenth-century studies and opens up critical debate and discussion about British history, politics, literature, and education.

B. Brief review of professional enhancement opportunity

While at the conference I had the opportunity to attend many panels, gather new ideas for teaching eighteenth-century material, and network with colleagues in my field of specialization.

Attending the conference and presenting my work will inform both my research and teaching in the future. This was the national conference in my field of specialization for 2015. While there, I was able to participate in professional development that will make me a better mentor to students and allow me to continue developing the material I present in the classroom. Specifically, the ASECS conference included many panels which included advice on how to expand into the Digital Humanities and think about how to bring digital resources into the classroom.

By both attending sessions and presenting my own work to a national audience at the annual meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) in Los Angeles, California from March 18 to March 21, 2015, I was able to grow as a scholar and make important professional connections.

C. Summary of finding, outcomes, and experiences had

The conference was a great success. In addition to successfully presenting my paper and learning about new approaches to teaching, I have been invited to contribute two chapters to forthcoming volumes as a direct result of my networking efforts at the conference.

Specifically, the paper I presented will be developed into a full length chapter and has already been accepted by the editors of the volume for publication. Attached you will find the acceptance letter for the chapter based on the paper I presented. In this way, my participation in the conference has led directly to a publication in my field. I was also invited, while networking at the conference, to contribute a chapter to a volume on the critic John Dennis, which has already been accepted for publication by the Bucknell University Press.

D. Conclusions

Participation in the conference allowed me to present my work to a national audience, keep up on pedagogical and research developments in my field of specialty, and network with colleagues in my field. As a result of the conference, I have new ideas for the classroom and have received offers for two chapter publications in volumes in eighteenth-century studies.