



REQUIRED Cover Page

APPLICATION FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

**All applicants please complete this cover page.

Choose one: <input type="checkbox"/> Creative activity <input type="checkbox"/> Research activity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professional Enhancement activity	Date of Last PDG Award (Semester and Year awarded): <u>Summer 2006</u> Date of ATU Faculty Appointment (Semester and Year): _____
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1. Project Title: "And They Went on Their Way Rejoicing": Stella Gibbons' and
Muriel Spark's
2. Name of Principal Investigator/Project Director: Dr. Susan Poznar Comic Female
Artists'
3. School (abbrev): ELFA 4. Department: English
5. Campus Mail Address: 156 Witherspoon 6. PI/PD Campus Phone: 968-0256
7. Amount Requested: \$ 1,709.90 8. Total Cost of Project: \$ 1,709.90
9. Does this project involve: _____ 10. Duration of Project: 3 days

Yes No

- ☐ ☒ human subjects?
☐ ☒ animals/animal care facility?
☐ ☒ radioactive materials?
☐ ☒ hazardous materials?
☐ ☒ biological agents or toxins restricted by the USA Patriot Act?
☐ ☒ copyright or patent potential?
☐ ☒ utilization of space **not** currently available to the PI/PD?
☐ ☒ the purchase of equipment/instrumentation/software currently **available** to the PI/PD?

NOTE: If the answer is "yes" to any of the above questions, the investigator must attach appropriate documentation of approval or justification for use/purchase.

SIGNATURES

Carl Bruchman 3-14-07
Department Head Date
Indumecm 3-14-07
Dean Date

This Section to be completed by the Office of Academic Affairs

PDC Committee Award Recommendation: Yes ☒ No ☐
PDC Committee Proposal Rank: _____ of _____ Total Proposals.
Recommendation of VPAA: Yes ☒ No ☐
Recommendation of President: Yes ☐ No ☐
Award Date: 4/3/07

ABSTRACT

I am requesting funds for presenting a paper at a conference, “Joking Apart: Gender, Literature, and Humour, 1850-Present,” sponsored by the Centre for Modernist Studies, University of Sussex, on June 28-29, 2007. Since the call for papers was late, and I only found out that my paper was accepted in February, it was too late to apply for travel funds from the School of Liberal and Fine Arts (which had all been allocated by then, in any case). I am hoping that a Professional Development Grant can cover my travel and conference expenses. My paper is entitled “‘And They Went on Their Way Rejoicing’: Stella Gibbons’ and Muriel Spark’s Comic Female Artists.”*

This paper represents both a new direction in my research and a return, in a way, to the territory of my dissertation and of several subsequent papers and articles. My doctoral dissertation concerned *kunstlerromane* (artist novels) by male writers. During the 1990’s, I worked on several *kunstlerromane* by female authors: the Canadian Margaret Atwood and English A. S. Byatt (see attached *curriculum vita* for the pertinent articles and papers). I particularly discussed the Gothic tropes governing their treatment of female creative achievement. Recently, teaching several seminars in British Post-World War II and British Twentieth-Century Comic Fiction, I have become interested in Modernist presentations of female artists, by female writers. A great deal has already been written about artist-fiction in canonical writers like Virginia Woolf, but I wish to explore representations of female artists by twentieth-century female writers (in England, Canada, and the United States) who have received less critical attention.

*I planned to present this paper in July 2006 at a Liverpool conference, but that event was cancelled, and so I re-submitted this paper to the “Joking Apart” conference.

This “Rejoicing” paper is the first step in generating new analysis on representations of female artists by twentieth-century female writers.

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES/ SIGNIFICANCE AND NEED

In the case of this project, these categories overlap.

Ultimately, I hope to produce a book on Modernist and Postmodernist female *kunstlerromane*, using and extending my work on Atwood and Byatt, and adding new work on Gibbons, Sparks and other authors. Most of the scholarly literature on the *kunstlerroman* focuses on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century male writers, such as Thomas Mann and James Joyce. While there have been scattered articles on female *kunstlerromane*, and a great deal of work on certain novels (such as Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*) there is no comprehensive study of them, and certainly none that crosses national boundaries. Fictional representations of female creativity present different artistic challenges, model different solutions to those problems, and often critique or boldly ignore the paradigms of creative development that male *kunstlerromane* propose. In addition, to my surprise, I have found that female *kunstlerromane* are often lighter-hearted and adopt a tone of comedy or satire, in opposition to the usually solemn tone and agonistic atmosphere of their masculine counterparts, and this will be a principal theme of my study.

PROCESS FOR ATTAINMENT OF OBJECTIVES/GOALS

I will present the paper “‘And They Went on Their Way Rejoicing’: Stella Gibbons’ and Muriel Spark’s Comic Female Artists” on June 28-29, 2007.

DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

I will present this paper at the "Joking Apart: Gender, Literature, and Humour, 1850-Present," sponsored by the Centre for Modernist Studies, University of Sussex. After that, I plan to extend this twenty-minute paper into a full-length article and submit it to a journal for publication such as *Texas Studies of Language and Literature*.

REPEATED REQUESTS

My situation is peculiar. Last year, I requested funds to present this same paper at another conference in England that was cancelled after funds had been appropriated, and after I had purchased non-refundable airplane tickets. I appealed to Dr. Jack Hamm and the Faculty Development Committee to convert the grant to a research grant covering research in the British Library in London – research that produced an article on late-nineteenth-century English fiction representing mesmerism and hypnotism. So I am again requesting travel funds for this paper, which the earlier grant did not, in fact, support.

BUDGET

Airline travel to London (Delta Airlines)	\$1216.50*
Train travel from London to Brighton (Virgin Trains)	\$49.80
Express train from Gatwick airport to London	\$53.60
Parking at Little Rock airport	\$30.00
Hotel expenses for three nights (\$70.00 per night)	\$210.00
Registration for Conference	\$150.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,709.90

*I would note that this is the current cheapest fare I could find. International plane fares during peak season inevitably rise during the spring, however.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I provide no bibliography because this is a work in progress. Instead, I attach the accepted conference proposal, and would be happy to send the committee a copy of the paper when completed.

APPLICATION VITA

This is not a full *curriculum vita*, but a list of my conference papers and publications. It does not include my latest, unfinished article on English nineteenth-century on fiction thematizing mesmerism and hypnotism, which I hope to submit for publication this summer.

"Atwood's Ironic Little (Work)Shop of Horrors: Remembering and Dis-memembering Gothic Bodies in *Cat's Eye*," Northeast Modern Languages Association, Pittsburgh, March 2004.

"Scientific Theory in Gothic Garb: Transfigured Tropes in Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye*" "International Symposium: Margaret Atwood, the Open Eye," Ottawa, April 2004.

John Fowles' *Islands*: The Guidebook Writer as Vagrant, Weaver, Mystagogue and Siren," "Home Tour Conference," July 2002, University of Aberdeen.

"Judith Hawkes' *Julian's House* and the Possibilities of the Postmodern Ghost Story," *Paradoxa* 17, *Horror* Issue, ed. Steffen Handtke, 2002.

"Tradition and Experiment in Byatt's "The Conjugal Angel," *Critique*, 2002.

"Judith Hawkes' *Julian's House* and the Possibilities of the Postmodern Ghost Story," International Gothic Association Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia, August 1999.

"Totemic Images and the 'Bodies' of the Gothic in Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye*" *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 47.

"Uncanny Mediums and Privileged Communications in Margaret Atwood and A. S. Byatt." Twentieth-Century Literature Conference, Louisville, KY, February 25-27, 1999.

"Alias Who? Myth-Making and the Uncanny in the Hypnotic Dialogue," British Comparative Literature Association, Eighth International Conference ("Legenda: Reading and Writing Myth"), University of Lancaster, England, July 15-18, 1998.

“‘Such are my pictures of the dead’: Totemic Images in Margaret Atwood’s Cat’s Eye.” MMLA, Chicago, November 6-8, 1997.

“Uncanny Presences, Uncanny Absences, and the Embodiment of the Gothic Heroine in Margaret Atwood’s Cat’s Eye.” Constructions of the Human: Conflicts in Culture, Identity, Technology, California State University- Stanislaus, October 17-19, 1997.

“New Rooms in the Gothic Mansion: The Exertion, Subversion and Reinterpretation of Gothic Power in The Magus.” Love—Loss—Landscape: A Symposium on the Writings of John Fowles, Lyme Regis, England, July 10-12, 1996.

“Creating through the Cat’s Eye: Margaret Atwood and the **Kunstlerroman**,” The International Narrative Literature Conference, Nashville, TN, Fall 1992.

“Barth’s ‘Compulsion to Repeat: Its Hazards and Possibilities,’” Review of Contemporary Fiction, Summer 1990.

“‘Replenishing’ the Epistolary Novel: Barth Rewrites Clarissa,” The Twentieth-Century Literature Conference, Louisville, Kentucky, January 1990.

“Alice at Eighty and Dreamchild: What Alice Discovered,” The Florida State University Conference on Literature and Film, Tallahassee, Florida, January 1988.

“John Fowles and the Pursuit of ‘Whole Sight,’” The Carolina Symposium on British Studies, Raleigh, North Carolina, September 1987.

CONFERENCE PROPOSAL

“AND THEY WENT ON THEIR WAY REJOICING”: STELLA GIBBONS’ AND MURIEL SPARK’S COMIC FEMALE ARTISTS

Rarely are novels of the development of female artistic identity comedies of self-assured creativity with exuberantly happy endings. Aspiring female artists usually fulfill their promise by the novel’s end only after prolonged struggle, conflict, and loss.

Thus I was startled, in a recent course I taught in British comic fiction, to find not one, but two twentieth-century English heroines whose triumphantly creative careers are remarkable for their lack of angst: Stella Gibbons’ *Cold Comfort Farm* (1932) and Muriel Spark’s *Loitering With Intent* (1981). Confident of their values and priorities, Flora Poste and Fleur Talbot are untroubled by the limitations of their sex in the essentially patriarchal communities they inhabit. Both embark on aesthetic missions, circumventing

all difficulties with their unfailing common sense and sense of humor. Simply by blithely downplaying or ignoring the problems that their femininity might pose, they seem to transcend those problems. But is this merely magical thinking? Is it possible for female artists truly thus to transcend their social limitations? In this paper, I will stress how Gibbons and Spark subsume satire, parody and wit within genial comedies of creative affirmation, transformation, and liberation, wherein both the fictional heroines and their authors use humor both to allay others' misunderstanding of their goals and to enable their achievement.