

Canonized Women and Women Canonizers: Gender Dynamics in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature's* Eight Editions

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Abstract This article addresses the gender dynamics of the included canonized literature of each edition of the *Norton Anthology of English Literature* as related to the gender dynamics of the editorial staff, the publication date of each of the eight editions, and the feminist criticism prominent at the time of publication. The project combines quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the construction of the literary canon. The project finds that there is a direct correspondence between the number of women editors and the percent of the total pages of each edition occupied by works by women writers. The project also finds a correlation between the gender makeup of the editorial staff and a leap in included women writers in the fifth edition and the emergence of gynocriticism in the 1980s. The project recognizes the establishment of a separate canon for women's literature that corresponds with this shift. The research indicates that as time passes, the inclusion of women writers in the literary canon and the editorial staff of the *Anthology* generally increase.

Keywords Canonicity · Feminist literary theory · *Norton anthology of English literature*

Introduction

The GRE Literature Subject Test is a requirement for all students seeking to obtain a Ph.D. in English literature at most academic institutions. The GRE Literature Subject Test examines a student's knowledge of literary history, the literary canon, and the schools of literary theory and criticism. According to The Princeton Review's *Cracking the GRE Literature Subject Test*, "*The Norton Anthology* is your best friend on the GRE Literature in English Subject Test. The ETS [Educational

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Testing Service] writers consider everything in volumes I and II of *The Norton Anthology* fair game” [24]. This paper examines the eight separate editions of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature (NAEL)* in regards to the gender makeup of the included authors as related to the gender makeup of the editorship.

This paper explores the gender dynamics of the included works that compose the literary canon as related to the publication date and gender dynamics of the editorial staff by coding each page of each edition of the anthology. After coding, the percentage of total pages occupied by works by women writers was calculated. For each edition, the percentage of the editorial staff that is female and male was calculated, as well. In addition to this quantitative analysis, the project qualitatively examines the women included in the *NAEL*, both as women canonizers (the editors) and canonized women (women authors whose work is published in the anthology) through an extensive review of literary criticism and an examination of woman’s role in literary history. In order to comprehensively understand this quantitative data, the paper contextualizes this data with a historical sociological discussion of feminist criticism and literary theory in America at the various publication dates of the editions of the *NAEL*. The first edition of the anthology was published in 1962 by W.W. Norton, and the eighth edition, the most recent edition, appeared in 2006.

The project anticipated that the fewest women canonizers and canonized women would appear in the first edition, while the eighth edition would have the largest percentage of women editors and pages occupied by women authors. The project also hypothesized that, as time progressed, more women would serve on the editorial staff and the number of women included in the *NAEL* would increase accordingly. Based on the quantitative analysis, this proved to be mostly true. However, the data analysis component of this paper focuses on the distinct shift between the fourth and fifth editions, published in 1979 and 1986, respectively, and this shift’s reflection of the changes in feminist criticism. The project found that the first edition of 1962 does not have any women on the editorial staff and 1.164% of the pages of the anthology feature works by women writers. The editorial staff of the eighth edition, published in 2006, is 33.33% female, and 14.657% of the anthology’s pages contain pieces written by women writers. The project also addresses the development of a separate canon for women’s literature, as opposed to its inclusion in the greater canon as demonstrated by the editorial choices of the *NAEL*.

Theoretical Framework

This paper’s research is primarily guided and inspired by Foucault’s theory of author function and discourse and Bourdieu’s theory of taste and classification. By approaching the research question in this manner, combining the two theorists’ ideas, this project seeks to understand the relationship between the gender makeup of the editorial staff, the gender makeup of the canonized literature as demonstrated by the *NAEL* and the changing concept of feminist criticism in America from 1962 to 2006. Both Foucault and Bourdieu offer a valid and useful framework for comprehending the establishment of a literary canon and the function or purpose of

the gender makeup of both the editorship and the canonized works that compose the literary canon across the eight social and historical environments of the various publication dates of each edition of the *NAEL*.

In his presentation of the concept of author function, Foucault emphasizes the significance of time and the cultural context of an author's work and the author him/herself. Foucault articulates that the discourse surrounding the author and his/her work determines authorship. When he employs the term "discourse," Foucault means the historical and social framework for organizing knowledge. Discourse can (and often does) change over time. The *NAEL* represents the discourse surrounding the literary canon as it is understood by this project, and the editorial staff determines which works are significant across the broad context of literary history. The time period at which each edition of the anthology is organized and composed greatly influences the composition of the editorial staff (this paper specifically examines gender, though other factors such as race, age, and nationality may be considered by others) and the canonized works. Across the eight editions, the list of included and excluded works changes in relation to the time period at which the anthology is organized and published.

According to Foucault's articulation of discourse, the canon and its gender makeup as well as the gender composure of the editorial staff is relative to the time and cultural context of the publication of various editions of the *NAEL*. Foucault writes, "In our civilization, it has not always been the same types of texts which have required attribution to an author" [13]. Thus, across the eight editions of the *NAEL*, different types of texts are valued and included because they are significant or pertinent in some way to the time at which that edition of the *NAEL* is published. When Foucault refers to "an author" in this context, he indicates not the writer, that is, the person who actually produces a given work, but, rather, the author function. According to Foucault, author function is characterized by four traits:

The author function is linked to the juridical and institutional system that encompasses, determines, and articulates the universe of discourses; (2) it does not affect all discourses in the same way at all times and in all types of civilization; (3) it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a discourse to its producer, but rather by a series of specific and complex operations; (4) it does not refer purely and simply to a real individual, since it can give rise simultaneously to several selves, to several subjects—positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals. [13].

The editorship of the *NAEL* determines which works are significant and correspondingly, those writers who function as authors. The editorship and the social and historical environment in which these works are selected largely influence the determination of which writers are considered authors. The project anticipated that the determination of which women writers are deemed authors would change and expand or seem to be more flexible as time progressed.

The editors of the *NAEL* determine the discourse of the literary canon and literary history, which in turn determines authorship. The literary history presented by the *NAEL* indicates which authors are considered the "founders of discursivity," or those authors who "have produced something else: the possibilities and the rules for

the formation of other texts” [13]. Through the simple and chronological arrangement of the canonized works, the *NAEL* demonstrates the formation of the discourse of English literature in a greater context. The data collected by this project demonstrates the complex process of the formation of the discourse of literature by English women, both as a separate discourse and as a component of the greater discourse of English literature overall.

Bourdieu’s theory and empirical research examines the constants of society, focusing on the inequalities that are socially constructed and established as social institutions, including the gender inequality in the *NAEL* that this project initially anticipated and ultimately indicates. Bourdieu’s main concern is culture and aesthetic taste as regards cultural knowledge and capital. The literature included in the *NAEL* represents the literature of the greatest cultural value, for, as Howe explains, “traditional literary study embodies and dignifies certain Western and American values, largely those of a particular sex, race, and class” [20]. According to Bourdieu, this ability to determine which works are of value, that is, the ability to target texts of fine taste, is only available to those who are knowledgeable of the context of the various works, composing what he calls “a cultural code” [9]. The *NAEL* provides this cultural code for those seeking literary knowledge, and this paper addresses the changing nature of this code as related to the gender makeup of the canonized works and the editorship.

Literature Review

A project that comprehensively analyzes the gender dynamics of the *NAEL* has not yet been conducted. Some brief histories of the *NAEL* have been published recently, perhaps most notably Sean Shesgreen’s article in the Winter 2009 issue of *Critical Inquiry* [28]. Shesgreen outlines the development of the *NAEL* and the first General Editor, Abrams’s involvement in the process. Shesgreen also focuses on the *NAEL*’s “enemies,” or competitors, including the *Oxford Anthology* and the *Longman*. In addition to Shesgreen’s article, Joyce Jensen and Rachel Donadio published articles in *The New York Times* reporting on the new editions that were published and their relation to the previous editions [10, 21].

In 2003, *PMLA* published an article by Seth Lerer in which Lerer addresses medieval anthologies. Though his article analyzes the controversies surrounding the compiling of anthologies of medieval literature and the effects of these anthologized collections on the discourse of medieval studies specifically, his discussion of the role of the anthology in the broader context of literary studies and western pedagogy are particularly pertinent to this study. Lerer explains, “we have enshrined particular texts in our canons not least because they were anthologized in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Our pedagogy may reflect less the contours of medieval history than the concerns of Romantic readers” [22]. This suggests that the works and authors students and scholars consider to be fundamental components of the literary canon reflect the literary values of scholars, students and publishers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Lerer argues that such an approach is outdated

and problematic for modern literary studies, especially those concerning medieval literature.

The editorial process of the construction of a *Norton Anthology* is discussed in the NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) article on “Editing a Norton Anthology.” Five editors of *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* discuss their different thought processes concerning selections for inclusion in a Norton anthology [23]. David Reich’s article for *Boston College Magazine* also offers insight into the editorial process, specifically concerning the marketing of a literary publication and the publishing world’s influence on the *NAEL*. He writes, “As with any product, market research—in this case, periodic surveys of professors who use the anthology—helps guide decision-making. Which works do the professors love? Which ones do they hate? Which do they actually use in the classroom?” [25].

In “Melodramas of Manhood,” Nina Baym discusses the various factors contributing to the decision process concerning the literary canon. Baym explains, “the idea of ‘good’ literature is not only a personal preference, it is also a cultural preference” [8]. Baym advocates that editorial choices regarding anthologized works are influenced both by personal preference and cultural pressure. Similarly, Sandra Gilbert describes a conversation with an anthology editor concerning the inclusion of women authors in response to cultural pressure and trends: “an editor of a very well-known anthology, for instance, told me that, yes, he’d just added some poems by an eighteenth-century literary woman to his book; but when I asked him *which* eighteenth-century literary woman he’d used, he couldn’t remember her name. She was a woman, period: a nameless token of trendiness” [15].

Though a detailed discussion of gender and the *NAEL* does not exist, feminist critics have been examining the role of women’s literature in the literary canon for years. The 1980s represented a significant shift in feminist criticism and feminist theory in general. In literary theory, the focus shifted from androtexs, texts by men, and their presentation of women to gynotexs. This inclination towards women authors resulted in an increased interest in women’s literature and “rediscovering” the lost texts. Laurie Finke explains:

During the 1980s, feminist literary criticism was marked by an often contentious split between those pragmatically committed to the recovery of the woman writer and, with her, something usually called women’s experience, and those concerned to explore the implications for feminism of postmodern theories that question the legitimacy of such constructs as the author and experience. [12].

This gynocritical movement in feminist literary theory helped to validate and institutionalize feminist literary studies in the academy. As Gallop explains, “whereas in the early 80s the project focused on the theoretical debate, by the late 80s it was organized around the institutionalization of feminist literary criticism. By which I mean its acceptance as a legitimate part of literary studies. I locate that ‘event’ around 1981” [14]. During the 1980s, “lost” women-authored texts became a popular area of interest for literary scholars and students.

Though this gynocritical shift in feminist literary studies occurred in the 1980s, women's literature and its role in the canon has remained a source of scholarly interest, particularly within the discourse of feminist theory. In "Treason Our Text" Lillian Robinson explains, "it is an undeniable fact that most feminist criticism focuses on women writers, so that the feminist efforts to humanize the canon have usually meant bringing a woman's point of view to bear by incorporating works by women into the established canon" [26]. Robinson advocates the inclusion of more women writers in the literary canon, especially since those pieces by women that are included, she argues, "conform as closely as possible to the traditional canons of taste and judgement" [26].

While Robinson advocates increased inclusion of women authors in the literary canon, Rita Felski explains the challenges and complications of this argument when she writes, "that works by women have been excluded from the canon is not in itself a good enough reason for putting all of them back in...Feminist critics are on much stronger ground when they offer positive justifications for their literary choices than when they lament the fact of exclusion" [11]. John Schib echoes Felski's caution, stating, "addressing the import of women as half of humanity should involve deeper issues than the appropriate balance of writers" [27]. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar characterize the difficulty of obtaining a gender balance in anthologized literary history: "Western literary history is overwhelmingly male—or, more accurately, patriarchal" [16].

Several literary theorists discuss the establishment of a women's literature canon that is separate from the more general canon. Seth Lerer, considering the various cultural pressures and contexts similar to those described by Baym, describes the trend of the establishment of different canons for different contexts: "a single canon has been displaced by the idea of canonicity" [22]. John Guillory explains that the exclusion of women writers from the greater literary history or canon has resulted in the development of a separate canon specifically for women's writing. He states, "the critique of the canon assumes that the selection of texts for canonicity represents the consensus of some community, either dominant or subordinate, and therefore the anthologies represent 'alternative canons'" [19]. Elaine Showalter locates the development of this separate canon in feminist literary study when she explains, "feminist criticism demanded not just the recognition of women's writing by a radical rethinking of conceptual grounds of literary study, a revision of the accepted theoretical assumptions about reading and writing that have been entirely on male literary experiences" [29]. Gilbert and Gubar describe a distinct female literary history in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, claiming, "women writers participate in a quite different literary subculture from that inhabited by male writers, a subculture which has its own distinctive literary traditions even—though it defines itself *in relation to* the 'main' male-dominated, literary culture—a distinctive history" [16]. In the mid-1980s, Gilbert and Gubar sought to represent this distinct literary history by editing the *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, the first edition of which was published in 1985.

Though the inclusion, or rather, exclusion, of works by women writers from the literary canon has been comprehensively examined and discussed extensively by

various scholars and critics, the gender dynamics of both the editorship and the included works have not been examined in the qualitative manner of this paper. Also, the *NAEL* specifically has not been examined in terms of this gendered literary canon and tradition. This project illuminates this area and contributes to the discourse surrounding English literary tradition, gender and the literary canon, and feminist criticism as related to canonization procedures and practices.

Methodology

Concerning quantitative data, the project first codes the pages of each of the eight editions of the *NAEL* in order to calculate the total number of included women writers and the percentage of total pages occupied by work written by female authors. In order to complete these calculations, the project counts any page that contains writing by a woman author as a page including women writers. The project sums these pages and divides by the total number of pages in the *NAEL*. The project does not include any pages that depict anonymous work, such as *Beowulf*. The project also does not count those pages that are authored by the editorial staff, such as the introductory essays to each of the time periods.

The project then calculates the percentage of the editorial staff that is female by coding the Contributors pages of each of the eight editions and dividing the number of female editors by the total number of editors, including the general editors, not just the contributing editors. The project then compares the percentage of the editorial staff that is female to the percentage of the counted pages of the *NAEL* that are occupied by works authored by women authors. The project then examines these quantitative results in relation to the publication date of each of the eight editions. The study examines how the gender composition of both the editorial staff and the included anthologized literature changes or remains the same across the eight editions.

The study considers these changes and constants in relation to the historical and social context of literary theory and gender attitudes as regards academia and woman's role in the literary canon across the publication dates of the eight editions. The project examines this quantitative data in relation to qualitative historical research regarding the prevailing trends in feminist criticism at the time of the publication of each of the eight editions of the *NAEL*. In order to garner a comprehensive understanding of feminist criticism across history, the project consults anthologies of feminist criticism and specific literary criticism texts concerning women's literature and the literary canon and/or tradition. The project also consults the *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* in order to understand the canon of women's literature as related to the *NAEL* as an institution.

Data Analysis: Quantitative Results and the Eight Editions

The first edition of the *NAEL* was published in 1962 and edited by an editorial staff entirely composed of men who "were selected on the basis of their expertness in

their individual areas” [1–6]. Each of the seven men assumed responsibility for a particular time period (the Middle Ages, the Sixteenth Century, the Seventeenth Century, the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century, the Romantic Period, the Victorian Age, and Since 1890). Six women (three poets and three fiction writers) are included as part of the literary canon of the first edition, occupying 1.164% of the total pages. The earliest woman included in this edition is Gothic novelist Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823). In the second edition of the anthology, published in 1968, the number of women editors and included women authors remain constant, though the specific authors included alter slightly. This edition anthologizes four poets and two fiction writers. The editorial responsibilities of the second edition remained constant, as well, with the same seven men maintaining editorial responsibility for their original time-specific category of the anthology. In the second edition of the anthology, women authors occupy 0.506% of the total counted pages. The first woman included is, once again, Ann Radcliffe, and four of the five included women (Elizabeth Barret Browning, Emily Brontë, Christina Rossetti, and Virginia Woolf) remain constant from the first edition. As compared to the first edition, however, the second edition omits Katherine Mansfield’s short story “The Daughters of the Last Colonel” and includes Elizabeth Jennings’ poetry instead.

The third edition, published in 1974, is also compiled by an entirely male editorship of the original seven men determining the anthologized works for each of their seven time periods of literary study. Mansfield is, once again, absent from this edition, but the third edition includes ten women who compose 3.105% of the total pages of the *NAEL*. Five of these women are poets, and five are prose writers. The first woman author who appears in the third edition is Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea (1661–1720). Also among the newly included women writers is George Eliot, who General Editor M. H. Abrams explains, “is represented by coherent selections from *The Mill on the Floss* that show, from within the character’s own mind, Maggie Tulliver in the process of growing up from childhood through adolescence to young womanhood” [3, 1974]. Eliot, accompanied by Dickens, is meant to represent the development of the novel during the Victorian era.

An entirely male editorial staff edits the fourth edition; the original seven men are joined by Lawrence Lipking, who assists Samuel Holt Monk with the editorial process of the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century section of the anthology. Anne Finch maintains her position as the earliest example of women’s writing included in the *NAEL*, and she is one of eighteen women included in the anthology. Women writers compose 4.716% of the counted pages in the fourth edition. It is important to note that “The Woman Question” is included as a subheading under “Victorian Issues” in this edition, providing samples from Sarah Stickney Ellis, George Eliot, Dinah Maria Mulock, and Florence Nightingale. Selections from Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication on the Rights of Woman* are also included, and “as befits a major writer, the representation of Virginia Woolf has been signally increased” [4, 1979]. Also, Katherine Mansfield, who is absent from both the second and third editions, returns in the fourth edition with the same story that appeared in the first. These additions increased the number of women prose writers

from the previous edition. Eight of the anthologized women are poets, and ten are prose writers.

The fifth edition of the *NAEL* marks a turning point in the editorship of the *NAEL*. This edition, published in 1986, boasts two female editors, Barbara K. Lewalski of Harvard University and Carol T. Christ of University of California at Berkeley, two of the six new members of the editorship of the anthology. Together, these two women represent 14.29% of the editorial staff. The editorial responsibilities of the anthology are still divided into the original seven categories (the “After 1890” section has been renamed “the Twentieth Century”), with the original male editor accompanied by one of the new editors. Lewalski joins Hallett Smith in the editorship of the Sixteenth Century section, while Christ shares the Victorian Age with George H. Ford. Under this new editorship, the fifth edition of the *NAEL* includes 26 women who occupy 5.770% of the total counted pages of this edition. The first of these 23 included women is Margery Kempe (1373–1438), one of thirteen female prose writers included in this edition. The fifth edition’s representation of women’s poetry expands, canonizing a total of ten female poets and featuring poems from Queen Elizabeth I, whose image appears on the book jacket of Volume I. As Abrams explains, “the three major poets of the period, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Brontë, and Christina Rossetti are now fully enough represented to allow them to be studied in depth...and the introductions to all those writers have been newly written so as to do justice to their careers and the range of their work” [5, 1986]. The preface to the fifth edition officially recognizes woman’s role in the literary canon: “the present edition continues to enlarge the representation of neglected writers who were women, as well as of writings that deal prominently with women in western culture” [5, 1986].

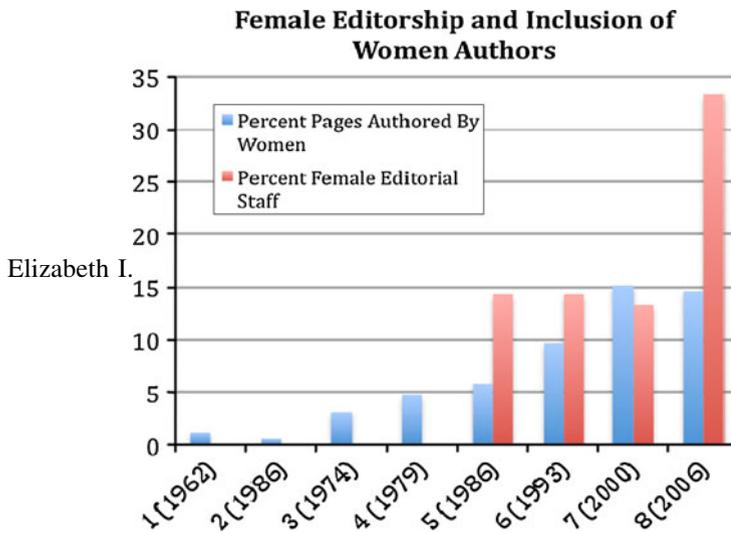
Lewalski and Christ remain the only women editors for the sixth edition of the *NAEL*, published in 1993, representing 14.29% of the editorial staff. The editorship of fourteen individuals maintains its editorial responsibilities and divisions from the fifth edition. This edition presents 39 women authors’ works, the first of which is a selection from “A Book of Showings to the anchoress Julian of Norwich” by Julian of Norwich (1342–1416), one of 22 women prose writers included in this edition. Works by women writers occupy 9.640% of the pages of the sixth edition. In the preface, Abrams announces the release of Norton Anthology Editions of four novels: “Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, and Charles Dickens’ *Hard Times*” [6, 1993]. Interestingly, Charlotte Brontë does not appear in any of the eight editions of the *NAEL*, though her sister, Emily, is one of seventeen included women poets. Austen, too, is absent from this sixth edition and does not appear in the *NAEL* until the eighth edition, which offers 23 pages from her juvenilia.

The seventh edition, released in 2000, is marked by its addition of Stephen Greenblatt as Associate General Editor. Lewalski and Christ remain the only two female editors, now composing 13.33% of the editorship. The fourteen editors maintain their editorial responsibilities of the previous edition, with the exception of Robert M. Adams, who appears on the editorial page but whose editorial

responsibility of the Sixteenth Century section of the anthology is granted instead to Stephen Greenblatt. Under Greenblatt's associate editorship, 58 women, thirty of whom are prose writers, are included in the *NAEL*, occupying 15.138% of the total counted pages, the greatest percentage of woman-occupied pages of all eight of the editions. The first woman presented in the seventh edition is one of 28 included female poets, Marie de France, a twelfth century poet born in France who moved to England and, in addition to writing poetry, translated some Latin texts and Aesop's Fables. Abrams and Greenblatt explain the new additions of women authors to the literary canon in the seventh edition when they write, "Poets and prose writers whose names were scarcely mentioned even in the specialized literary histories of earlier generations...now appear in the company of their male contemporaries" [7], but this increased inclusion of women writers might have had more to do with marketing than with the editors' personal preferences.

This increase in included women authors corresponds with the publication of the first edition of the *Longman Anthology of British Literature* in 1999, the first major competitor of the *NAEL*. According to Shesgreen, the *Longman* "continues to claim the strategic market innovations where the *NAEL* is vulnerable, as in its coverage of women" [28]. Shesgreen characterizes the construction process of the seventh edition of the anthology as one primarily concerned with the actions involved in the composition of the first edition of the *Longman*. According to Shesgreen, Greenblatt and the Norton Company were "focused on getting their hands on the *Longman* table of contents" [28]. Shesgreen's description of the development of the seventh edition of the *NAEL* suggests that editorial choices of inclusion were inspired by the choices of the new competitor more than on the personal and cultural preferences of Norton staff.

The eighth edition, published in 2006, boasts an editorship that is 33.33% female; Deirdre Lynch (Indiana University), Katharine Maus (University of Virginia), and Catherine Robson (University of California, Davis) join Christ and Lewalski. In addition to these three women, the new editorial staff includes James Noggle, Jahan Ramazani, and James Simpson. Founding editors E. Talbot Donaldson, Hallett Smith, Robert M. Adams, Samuel Holt Monk, George H. Ford, and David Daiches are honored in this edition with the title "Editors Emeriti." Female editors Lynch and Maus share the Early Seventeenth Century section of the anthology. Lynch joins Jack Stillinger in the editorship of the Romantic Period section, and Christ and Robson share the Victorian Age editorial responsibilities. These new editors include 66 women in this edition, 31 poets and 35 prose writers, composing 14.619% of the total considered pages. Stephen Greenblatt, now General Editor, addresses the expansion of the inclusion of women authors when he writes, "the sustained work of scholars in recent years has recovered dozens of significant authors who had been marginalized or neglected by male-dominated literary tradition and has deepened our understanding of those women writers who had managed, against considerable odds, to claim a place in that tradition" [18]. Marie de France maintains her position as the first woman chronologically listed in the table of contents of the eighth edition. The eighth edition also introduces a new "Women in Power" section, including selections from Mary I, Lady Jane Grey, Mary Queen of Scots, and Queen



The above chart illustrates the relationship between the percentage of the editorship that is female (red), the percentage of pages occupied by women authors (blue), and the edition number that corresponds to the publication date.

Data Analysis: Qualitative Synthesis

The project's hypothesis that the gender makeup of the editorial staff and the inclusion of works of women authors would increase across the eight editions over time is largely supported by the quantitative data. However, the accompaniment of the data with qualitative research contextualizing the eight editions with feminist criticism demonstrates some interesting shifts and relationships. Perhaps the most notable shift that this quantitative data demonstrates is the addition of a female editorship that develops with the publication of the fifth edition of the *NAEL*. The 1980s marked a shift in the focus of feminist criticism from woman's role in male-authored texts to gynotexts, or works written by women. In the 1980s, feminist critics sought to "rediscover" or canonize "lost" literature by women writers. Also, feminist criticism had existed as an acceptable discourse in literary theory for a significant enough amount of time to require female representation within the editorial staff of the *NAEL*. As Showalter explains, "the focus on women's writing as a specific field of inquiry, moreover, led to a massive recovery and rereading of literature by women from all nations and historical periods. As hundreds of lost women writers were rediscovered...the continuities in women's writing became clear for the first time" [29, 1985]. Abrams demonstrates feminist criticism's impact on the inclusion of women authors in the literary canon as indicated by the selection of the editors when he writes in the preface to the fifth edition, "the present edition continues to enlarge the representation of *neglected* writers who were women as well as of writings that deal prominently with women in western culture" [5, 1986, emphasis added].

Qualitative research also indicates that after the 1980s and its focus on women writers, the question of the development of a separate canon of women's literature is a valid discourse. John Guillory writes, "the critique of the canon assumes that the selection of texts for canonicity represents the consensus of some community [in this case, the editors of the *NAEL*]...and therefore the anthologies [of women's literature] represent 'alternative canons'" [19]. In 1985, Norton published the first edition of *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, an anthology edited by Sandra M. Gilbert (Princeton University) and Susan Gubar (Indiana University) that sought to represent "the exuberant variety yet strong continuity of the literature that English-speaking women have produced between the fourteenth century and the present" [17, 1985]. Gilbert and Gubar had previously addressed the woman writer's relative absence in the greater Western understanding of literary history in their 1979 book *The Madwoman in the Attic*. In the introduction to that volume, they claim, "because a woman is denied the autonomy—the subjectivity—that the pen represents, she is not only excluded from culture (whose emblem might well be the pen) but she also becomes herself an embodiment of just those extremes of mysterious and intransigent Otherness which culture confronts with worship or fear, love or loathing" [16, 1979]. This new anthology was intended to combat these cultural standards of worship or fear and to represent women's literary history as distinct and significant. One year after the publication of the first edition of this volume, the fifth edition of the *NAEL* appeared. The second edition of the *Anthology of Literature by Women* was published in 1996, 3 years after the sixth edition of the *NAEL*, and the third edition, the most recent edition, of Gilbert and Gubar's anthology was published in 2007, a year after the eighth edition of the *NAEL*.

These dates seem to indicate a definite divide between the canon of women's literature and English literature in general. Lillian Robinson argues, "in addition to constituting a *feminist alternative* to the male-dominated tradition, these [women] authors also have a claim to representation in "the" canon" [20, emphasis added]. The distinction between the "alternative" canon of women's literature from "the" canon" is certainly reflected in the publication practices and selections of the Norton Company and its *NAEL*. Considering the western woman's complex history of formal education, or lack thereof, it is not surprising that there are fewer woman authors in the canon than men. Indeed, before a woman can compose a sonnet, she must first know her alphabet. Additionally, the nature of the anthology more generally seems to inhibit the inclusion of novels, a genre that, for much of the nineteenth-century, was deemed the literary domain of women. It is impractical to anthologize entire novels or extensive works, a fact that might have prompted the Norton Company's decision to produce separate "Critical Editions" of several longer works, many authored by women. Perhaps the absence of more women in the anthology reflects the nature of this distinct literary history of woman writers. The short form favored by the anthology is opposed to the extensive works produced by those women specifically addressed and celebrated in Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic*, including novelists Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, George

Eliot, and Mary Shelley, which is potentially the reason for the large number of women poets included in the *NAEL*.

Perhaps the most remarkable and surprising component of the data lies in the differences between the seventh and the eighth editions of the anthology. While the percentage of the editorship that is female is at its highest (33.33% up from 13.33% in the seventh edition), the percentage of pages occupied by women writers actually decreases, despite the addition of eight new female authors' works. This data contradicts the earlier data's correspondence between the number of female editors and the increased inclusion of works by women authors. Such a contradiction, along with the relation to competing anthologies and the developments of feminist literary criticism, suggests that the composition of an anthology as concerns gender dynamics is influenced by several social and scholarly factors, including developments and discoveries of feminist literary studies.

Conclusion

In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf writes, “for books continue each other, in spite of our habit of judging them separately” [31, 32]. Each edition of the *NAEL* guides the next, just as each of the works by women authors canonized by this *NAEL* allows for the following, forming a continuous discourse of English literature and/or a discourse of women's literature. These choices of former editors help to determine what is included in future editions as well as what is excluded. Though as time progresses, more and more of each edition of the *NAEL* is occupied by women's literature, it is important to note that the *NAEL* does not seek to expand the discourse surrounding women's literature, nor does it explicitly intend to expand its inclusion of women-authored writing in its definition of the literary canon. Throughout the eight editions of the *NAEL*, the editors' purpose remains relatively constant. As Abrams articulates in the preface to the first edition, “*The Norton Anthology* is designed to provide the texts and materials for a course which will combine the values of emphasis and range by presenting major authors in the context of the major literary traditions of their times” [1, 1962]. Abrams later, in the preface to the fifth edition, explains the criteria for inclusion in the *NAEL*, when he writes:

that the works selected make possible a study in depth of the diverse achievements by the major English writers in prose and verse, in the context of the chief literary types and traditions of each age; (2) that these works be so far as feasible complete, and also abundant enough to allow instructors to choose from the total those that each one prefers to teach; (3) that the student be provided the most reliable texts available, edited so as to expedite understanding, in a format that is easy to the hand and inviting to the eye; (4) that introductions, glosses and supplementary materials be adequate to free the student from dependence on a reference library, so that the anthology may be read anywhere—in the student's room, in a coffee lounge, on a bus, or under a tree; (5) that each volume, in size and weight, be comfortably portable,

for if students won't carry the book to class, lectures are lamed and discussions made profitless. [5, 1986].

The purpose of the *NAEL* is not to expand the understanding of women's literature and its role in the literary canon, nor is its purpose explicitly stated as the establishment of the literary canon, though, as modern scholarship, such as that completed by Shesgreen, indicates this is a related result of the publication of the *NAEL* and its cultivated reputation since 1962. Though the literary canon is generally discussed as a constant entity that remains static over time, this study illustrates that its construction is influenced by social factors, such as gender and the critical address of gender dynamics in literature, as well as what the editorship deems valuable. Even this powerful and influential editorial staff is impacted by social attitudes, in this case, those towards gender.

Though each of the editions of the *NAEL* notably omits significant works by women writers, the initial hypothesis of this project is proven correct by the qualitative and quantitative results of this study. As time progresses, more women compose the editorial staff of the *NAEL* and a greater percentage of the *NAEL*'s pages are occupied by works by women writers. Additionally, these shifts, specifically as concerns the gender makeup of the editorship, reflect the emergence and the developments of feminist criticism. Showalter explains: "scholarship generated by the contemporary feminist movement has increased our sensitivity to the problems of sexual bias or projection in literary history, and has also begun to provide us with the information we need to understand the evolution of a female literary tradition" [30, 1977].

The first edition of the *NAEL*, published in 1962, has zero women on the editorial staff, and 1.164% of the pages are written by women writers. The eighth edition, published in 2006, has five women editors, composing 33.33% of the editorship, and 14.619% of its pages are occupied by women writers. While this does not represent the entire literary canon or women's inclusion in the canon, it does reflect a progression towards the inclusion of women writers that echoes the gynocritical movement that emerged in the 1980s. In addition to the expansion of the inclusion of women editors and writers in the *NAEL*, a separate canon for women's literature is established in the mid-1980s with the *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* and the addition of women editors to the *NAEL* with the fifth edition, published in 1986. This discussion of a separate canon for female writers has dominated much of the discourse concerning women's literature in the last 20 years.

In order to more fully contextualize this research, future projects should examine the relation of the gender makeup of the editorship and canonized literature of the *NAEL* to the inclusion of female professors in English departments of academic institutions. Future projects should also consider the developments of feminist criticism more extensively. In addition to a gendered analysis of the *NAEL*, future projects may also consider other master statuses, such as race and class, in regards to the relationship between the *NAEL*'s editorial staff and the canonized works. Future projects may also more fully consider the question of a separate "Female Tradition" and its connection with the greater literary canon.

Seth Lerer claims, “the mark of any culture’s literary sense of self lies in the way in which it makes its anthologies” [22]. This paper examines perhaps the most famous anthology informing our culture’s literary sense of self. Feminist criticism and its developments across the years, from 1962 to 2006, have influenced the gender makeup of the editorial staff and included women writers of the *NAEL*, but not all of the literary “founders of discursivity,” both male and female, are included in the most recent edition. This project seeks to examine the gender composure across time and suggest a more cohesive understanding of women authors’ relation to the greater literary canon as manifested in the representation within the pages of the *NAEL*.

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