

Pendleton (108 [1993]: 153–54), I do not understand why she is scornful of Fleissner's claim to be "in touch with Shakespeare's intentions" when she herself claims to be in touch with *their* intentions: she states at the outset that "each aims at instructing me and amending my essay's 'faults.'" She even claims to be in touch with Goldschmidt's unconscious, for she says his letter is "anxious, even hysterical." I also have trouble understanding why she accuses Goldschmidt of being "antitheoretical" when his crime is that he espouses a theory different from her own. Indeed, to speak of his "foundationalist, antitheoretical position" seems self-contradictory, unless she believes that the theories she disapproves of, like foundationalism, are not really theories.

My main purpose in writing, however, is to object to her reference—or rather to the copyeditor's failure to flag her reference—to her three interlocutors as "these gentlemen." Val Dumond points out, correctly I think, that men's references to women as "ladies" are often condescending or patronizing (*The Elements of Nonsexist Usage*, New York: Prentice, 1990, 47), and I therefore do not use the word. But surely that also applies to a woman's referring to men as "gentlemen," especially when this is meant to be derogatory, as it clearly is in Hodgdon's sentence (note that I too claim to infer writers' intentions from their words, just like any other reader). She is angry at them for presuming to instruct her and amend her "faults," which is her right (although that is the purpose of most letters to the Forum), but it does not give her the right to deploy sexist language against them. It seems to me, therefore, that if the MLA wants to eliminate sexist language from its publications, which I think is a very worthy goal, then she should have been asked to reconsider her use of "these gentlemen."

RICHARD LEVIN
State University of New York, Stony Brook

Reply:

The issues Richard Levin raises have histories that he conveniently elides. On the question of intentionality, he seems to assume not only that all discourse is transparent but that a late-sixteenth-century text is embedded in the same psychosexual and cultural milieu as a late-twentieth-century text. Moreover, he makes no distinction between discerning intentionality as it pertains to "the author" (or her or his unconscious) and as it concerns the discourse the author writes. Although I find a claim for uncovering "Shake-

spere's intentions" difficult to sustain, I do think that one stands on slightly firmer ground when reading a *discourse* that speaks from one's own contemporary cultural space. And although we all tend to espouse particular theoretical positions and so to disavow others (Levin himself is no stranger to such critical moves), foundationalism, as I understand it, is less a theoretical position than a stance that, by celebrating the self-evident and the obvious, aims to erode and disable the tools of theory. I refer Levin to Eve Sedgwick's "Queer and Now," in *Wild Orchids and Trotsky*, edited by Mark Edmundson (New York: Penguin, 1993), especially page 260, where he may find that stance, as well as its politics, described. As for Levin's final point, his account of the usage of "lady" and "gentleman" not only makes a historical error by assuming a linguistic symmetry between the two but thereby misses an issue central to the feminist project: that sexist terms arise from a *lack* of symmetry in the language. It was, I believe, at some point during the eighteenth century that "lady" slipped from class to gender, becoming a term that could be used to contain women; "gentleman," on the other hand, has undergone no such slippage. Could it be that in objecting to my usage of "gentlemen," Levin searches too anxiously for yet another ironic reading to debunk where none was "intended"?

BARBARA HODGDON
Drake University

Face Painting in Early Modern England

To the Editor:

In "Taking the Pencil out of God's Hand: Art, Nature, and the Face-Painting Debate in Early Modern England" (108 [1993]: 224–39), Frances E. Dolan convincingly demonstrates the interdiction of female agency in the cosmetic fashioning of early modern bodies. She provides an interesting array of (primarily) seventeenth-century writings to establish that the hand that mocked and the heart that fed were entirely male. However, the essay would benefit from some commentary on historical or political contingencies, mainly because all the attacks on face painting that Dolan quotes range from 1583 to 1616 whereas all the defenses come from 1660 and 1665. The essay conflates these two periods under the designation "early modern England" without considering how changing cosmologies—both scientific and political—effected changing cosmetologies of the seventeenth century.

How might the restoration in 1660 of Charles II, who had assimilated perceptions and practices from France during the interregnum and who then disseminated his valuation of female beauty and theatricality during his reign, have affected attitudes about cosmetics, for instance?

When Dolan discusses “arguments that license the practice [of face painting] under certain circumstances,” she describes them as “[b]etween the outright attacks . . . and the defenses” (232; emphasis mine)—meaning, it would seem, that these arguments take a middle ground when they endorse cosmetics as remediation for physical defects. But Dolan’s supporting quotations (from 1640 and 1653) also fall *chronologically* between the dates of her other examples. Does her “between” include this historical sense? If so, how might she explain that an era of (increasing) Puritan hegemony seemed more comfortable with cosmetics—according to the examples given—than did the period of Elizabeth and James? Once again, I am not calling into question Dolan’s interesting thesis; I simply see the need for some historicizing in the light of the unacknowledged dating patterns inscribed in her text.

CRYSTAL DOWNING
University of California, Los Angeles

Reply:

I agree that my essay charts a narrative of change that I might have articulated more explicitly; I also agree that it would be fascinating to relate that narrative to other narratives of change regarding the seventeenth century. My project in this essay, however, was to show the surprising *continuities* in the constructions of female agency even across a century characterized by extraordinary social, economic, and political transformation. I find that the periodizations traditionally used by literary critics—“Renaissance” and “Restoration”—obscure patterns of change and continuity in the seventeenth century. Rather than thoughtlessly conflate two periods, I consciously chose the periodization used by historians—“early modern”—as more helpful in enabling me to attend to similarities in gender constructions from the late sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth. In much of my work, I have discovered that the sweeping view permitted by the category “early modern” facilitates study of the groups—such as women, domestic servants, and laboring men—who were not necessarily

included in or influenced by events like the Renaissance and the Restoration. Although my own concerns and commitments led me to focus my essay as I did, I find Crystal Downing’s questions provocative and urge her to pursue them.

FRANCES E. DOLAN
Miami University, Oxford

Whiffs of *Das Parfum*

To the Editor:

I found Richard T. Gray’s article, “The Dialectic of ‘Enscentment’: Patrick Süskind’s *Das Parfum* as Critical History of Enlightenment Culture,” redolent with suggestive details (108 [1993]: 489–505). I would like to make four minor points of criticism, however.

First, it is possible that Süskind’s portrait of Jean-Baptiste Grenouille bears an uncanny resemblance to the comte de Saint-Germain, arguably one of the most “gifted abominations” (491) of the Enlightenment period.

Second, the stench associated with European hygienic squalor is brilliantly conveyed in Smollett’s *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, particularly in Jery Melford’s digression on the Dutch word *stinken* (Penguin ed., 45 ff.) and in Bramble’s London diatribe, “I breathe the steams of endless putrefaction . . .” (151 ff.). Perhaps Gray could have included this reference in his discussion of Grenouille’s “olfactory imagination.”

Third, Gray’s claim that Grenouille “has no essence” (499) is a reminder of Camus’s *La chute*, in which Jean-Baptiste Clamence suffers a collapse from illusory self-aggrandizement into wretched despair.

Last, Gray overlooked the opportunity to develop the rich connotation associated with *parfum*, which also means “flavor” in French.

ROBERT FRAIL
Centenary College

Reply:

I thank Robert Frail for suggesting further possible allusions relevant to Süskind’s *Das Parfum*; they help to confirm the thematic richness and allusive texture of this novel. It was by no means the intent of my