4 One hopes that the recent changes instituted in the organization of the association and the politics of *Speculum* will enhance academic equity at all levels.

5 In *Getting Personal: Feminist Occasions and Other Autobiographical Acts* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), x.

6 For this reason, when the women faculty of the Steering Committee for the Commission on Women (which I headed) were considering whether or not to include staff women, or high-ranking staff women, in the composition of the first elected commission, I argued *for*, despite the separateness of our concerns and possible class issues, because discrimination against one woman is discrimination against all women. On the other hand, discrimination *by* a woman *against* a woman is not legitimized by the fact that she is female, an analogous mistake administrators often make when they select a woman for an administrative position and assume that her sex will justify any subsequent gender inequity in hirings or tenure and promotion decisions.

7 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978), 4. Later in the same passage, Foucault notes: "On the subject of sex, silence became the rule.... It would be driven out, denied, and reduced to silence. Not only did it not exist, it had no right to exist and would be made to disappear upon its least manifestation—whether in acts or words."

TACKING AND VEERING THROUGH THREE CAREERS

In the forty-one years since I graduated from college, I have had three careers: in medieval art history, in international relations, and in gender studies. These were not sequential phases, but strands that wove together, with sometimes one, sometimes another in view. Switching between them gave me room to maneuver in cultures that were not always accepting of women. I have to begin the story at the beginning.

At my all-women's college in Cambridge in the late fifties our conversation often turned to the nagging issue; could women have a career and marry? Many of us would have returned from a date to meet the midnight curfew (a few climbed in later, a few slept out, but the sexual revolution had not really reached us yet). We had few role-models for combining marriage with a career—mothers who did not work, supervisors who were almost all single. One idol fell: Elizabeth Zeeman, my supervisor for Chaucer who had lectured while pregnant in my second year and taught us in her home with the baby, was suddenly divorced and remarried, and the dons of Newnham seemed to shun her like a fallen woman. Her reincarnation of course was the Elizabeth Salter so beloved of medievalists at York and then Storrs Connecticut.

At the age of 21 when I graduated, I regarded marriage as legal prostitution. Like many of my "class of '59" I wanted to go into government service—we were the followers of Gandhi, the UNESCO generation. I set my sights on Africa (despite my disappointment with anthropology which I had read in my first year; I was irked by the British school's insistence on an "anthropological present" or status quo rather than a willingness to embrace change in societies), and attended a

meeting for potential members of the overseas civil service. I wanted to be there when the colonies became independent. Two of us women attended the meeting, and we were immediately told we might as well leave because women could not work in places like Africa (how come my anthropology supervisor, Audrey Richards, was known as the great white mother to the Bemba?); the other woman was Sir Edward Leakey's niece who had grown up in Kenya. We left. Meanwhile I had been studying for the English tripos, learning Italian to read Dante, preparing to write two three-hour exams on Chaucer, covering the Leavisite curriculum that included "moralists" from Plato to Nietzsche, and tragedy from the Greeks to Strindberg. We read no women authors.

Tacking against the wind, I answered an ad for the British Council overseas service, once more with fantasies of being posted to Africa. I was offered a job on the lowest rung of the civil service ladder, with a salary that did not afford me lunch as well as London rent (women's salaries were still much lower than men's, we were told, because we had no family to keep). I imagined my time in London would be preliminary to the overseas posting I had sought. It was not until my six-month review meeting with personnel, when I asked when I would get a foreign posting, that I was told I had automatically been put in the domestic channel. Women could not work in Africa. Some of my work had included correspondence with a classmate who had the same degree in English as I did; he was miserable to have been posted to Kenya with a wife and infant. This was one on my first insights into the conundrum that in systems of oppression the oppressor is also oppressed. I left the British Council after a year.

Abandoning social work and the modern world, I got a scholarship to the Sorbonne in order to work with specialists in medieval stained glass on a grand UNESCO project to document and save this fragile medium. My English mentor who launched me in that direction, Francis Wormald, applauded my parents for letting their brainy daughter go to college while a dyslexic son went straight into business. Such remarks always had a permanent effect on my sense of worth. The first paper I wrote in the field was published in a very serious scholarly journal, thanks to Francis. And so I became a medieval art historian, because I felt needed. I was to go back to England and be a pioneer of glass studies (for a year I did work there). And then I veered again.

I married an American medical student whom I had met in Italy in the summer of '59, and moved to Boston. Eventually, I retrieved my career as a medievalist, with a Harvard doctorate and a lucky break in the local job market. At Tufts in 1972, I began teaching a thousand years of art history, Byzantine and western, architecture, painting and the "decorative arts." I was recruited into a department to fill a gap left by two women (in fields other than mine) who had been terminated; they sued the University, helped by student activism and the

OOEC. The chairman resigned, and by 1975 I was the first woman department chair Tufts had ever had, but still untenured. Women students flocked to my courses, and I supervised a number of independent studies, honors and masters theses; many were avid to learn about medieval stained glass, and one seminar class collaborated with me to write the first exhibition catalogue for glass in American collections. We noticed that the half dozen US scholars with a doctorate in the field were women, almost all of them students of a renowned architectural historian at Columbia who gave his men students topics in architecture, and suggested his women students work on stained glass which the canon has dismissed as "decorative." I gradually came to realize that all our efforts to change the canon were now additionally handicapped by a gender issue.

I did not teach women's studies courses until long after tenure, perhaps through some instinct of self-preservation, perhaps because Tufts was slower than Wellesley (where I also briefly taught) in that area. But I always taught Christian art as an atheist, and told my students so. And I had always taught our required theory course as a Marxist, despite the alarm this caused some of my older colleagues. My first overtly feminist article, in the 1993 Women's Studies issue of *Speculum* edited by Nancy Partner, was much appreciated by students (many heard it in my classes as it evolved), but generated a remarkable amount of irritated criticism from senior medievalists. I had at last done something that had been noticed! Since then, it is a delight each year to add fresh studies by other scholars to my course readings.

Eventually, I also lived some of my dreams for international collaborative projects, succeeding my French mentor, Louis Grodecki, as president of the teams from thirteen countries who contribute to the cataloguing of medieval stained glass (I managed to get Russia on board), and now as president of a federation of forty-five national academies of the humanities and social sciences. I have often been the first woman to go through a door; I have always opened it for others. For many years I was the single female among the 75 delegates to the UAI; there are now eight women who regularly attend (most from Communist or recently Communist countries). Compared to my men friends from Cambridge who were accepted into the foreign service, I am incredibly free to negotiate whatever is intellectually appropriate. A few years ago I compared notes with the British secretary to the UN, who has to receive briefings from London.

So I tell my women students at Tufts, tack and veer. Go round about like Peer Gint: if you want to do art history, learn German; if you want to take part in a non-governmental organization like the International Committee for Philosophy and the Humanities, a UNESCO affiliate, become a first-rate scholar (don't major in poli-sci or international relations!); if you want to chair an academic

department, some real administrative experience outside academe will not hurt. Of course, the scholarship bit took a long time; medievalists serve a long apprenticeship.

How have my students negotiated the real world? Several have gone on to "first rate" doctoral programs (we have only an MA), and have shed their feminism to survive at Brown and Yale, Columbia and Harvard, Princeton and NYU. Their directors always praise their solid preparation in medieval art, their research skills, their dedication. One of the first MA students to work with me, Allyson Sheckler, writes: "I know that you prepared me so well for the Boston University doctoral program that I had no trouble negotiating either the academics or the male art historical world. I think that my Wellesley undergraduate experience and the strong female department at Tufts made me so sure of myself that I never even realized what I, as a female, was up against!!"

A heightened awareness of gender permeates the work of more recent students, though few have developed topics that might be labeled as feminist (Martha Easton at NYU is a notable exception). Their feminism, I suspect, may resurface later, in their teaching. Ellen Shortell, for instance, did a dissertation with a male architectural historian, but now includes courses on women among her offerings at Mass College of Art. She writes of her time at Tufts: "It was important to have a model of a very successful woman to see a place for myself in medieval art history; I think it was as a graduation present that you gave me a copy of *Women of Academe*." Laura Good Morelli, who took a similar path, is raising a child in Italy and looking for the right balance in her career: "Few women of my generation find models of successful career / family jugglers among their mothers, or older relatives and colleagues. You provided this model for me, and empowered me through both professional and personal example." Elizabeth Pastan, whose doctoral dissertation at Brown I advised, and who is now tenured at Emory, writes: "It's not just the feminist content but the methodological subtlety, freshness and fearlessness that lies behind it that is so important. You are also, if I am not mistaken, more theoretical in approach than any of us. Where the 'glass ceiling' might instill caution in some female scholars, you undertake the arduous task of reinventing yourself intellectually with some regularity." (This does seem to me very necessary in women's studies.)

My direct legacy is numerically small (less than a dozen former students in academe), but many of the Master of Fine Arts students also acknowledge a debt. I do not expect a Festschrift on retirement in a few years; a study I began years ago and never completed indicated how few women are honored in that way, and I am thoroughly suspicious of the male students who form coteries around the great master in order to be known as his students. Women do not need genealogies; we know who our mothers and children are. Sometimes I

meet an undergraduate who has been taught by a student and s/he tells me they feel they have had a course with me. That is enough.

And the burning issue of 1959? I am still married to the same man, a dedicated scientist and clinician who taught me how to do without sleep. Our two daughters, born while I was in graduate school, survived a working mom. We now exchange books on women. Both did master's programs in public health. One is a risk-assessment specialist working in environmental clean-up projects in California, the other is a pediatrician doing intensive care and public health research in Texas (although she majored in art at Wellesley, and took the survey course with Elizabeth Pastan). On vacation, we read and work-out and travel together. Between us all (with two sons-in-law) we can manage in Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Russian.

Madeline Caviness
Tufts University

SCANDALOUS ASSUMPTIONS: EDITH RICKERT AND THE CHICAGO CHAUCER PROJECT

Long before Hedda Hopper and Louella Parsons shared the secrets of Hollywood celebrities in their newspaper bylines, gossip appeared as a particularly feminine discourse. Chaucer's Wife of Bath depicts herself, to the outrage of her fifth husband, sitting in the company of her "gossib . . . Alisoun" and telling all the secrets, however embarrassing, he entrusted to her (III.529-30).[1] But if gossip might be understood from at least the Middle Ages forward as a discourse *of* women, a discourse in which they actively engage, it can also function more invidiously (as the Wife herself acknowledges throughout her Prologue) as a discourse *about* women. This connection is particularly evident in the case of the female medievalist whose life and accomplishments I have researched off and on for the past five years, Edith Rickert. The lesser praised partner of the famous "Manly and Rickert" editorial team, she has been the subject of a number of rumors, documented and undocumented, concerning her sexuality. In fact, my interest in Rickert began as a result of just such gossip. I will begin, of course, by sharing it.

This conversation occurred sometime around 1992, while I was in graduate school. With some fellow graduate students and a couple of our learned professors, I happened to be discussing the gendered politics of textual editing during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One of these professors intentionally provoked me by declaring that no woman had ever edited a major Middle English author. I will spare us his random theorizing on this