

# Masha Raskolnikov

English Department  
250 Goldwin Smith Hall  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, NY 14853

## Current Position

Associate Professor, Department of English, Cornell University

## Education

Ph.D., Rhetoric Department, University of California, Berkeley, 2002

Dissertation: *Subject to Debate: Gender, Self and Allegory in the Middle English Poetry of Disputation*

Dissertation Committee: Judith Butler (co-director) Anne Middleton (co-director)  
Steven Justice, Ralph Hexter, Carol Clover

MA, Rhetoric Department, University of California, Berkeley, 1996

BA with High Honors, College of Letters, Wesleyan University, 1995

## Teaching and Research Interests

Middle English literature, allegory, medieval literary theory and rhetoric, contemporary critical theory, feminist and queer studies.

## Book

*Body Against Soul: Gender and Sowlehele in Middle English Allegory*, in the series *Interventions: New Studies in Medieval Culture* edited by Ethan Knapp (Ohio State University Press, 2009).

Through a reading of *Piers Plowman*, the Katherine Group's "Sawles Warde," and the popular but little-studied thirteenth-century debates between the Body and the Soul, I argue that Middle English allegory participates in the construction of a quotidian psychological discourse about the workings of the self. This discourse is often intimately concerned with whether the allegorized aspects of the anatomized self are to be gendered "male" or "female" and with how gender impacts relationships between aspects of the self, fraught as they are with the erotics and struggles of establishing the kind of hierarchies that lead to a well-balanced life. This study crosses the artificially-constructed boundary between an academic history of psychology as a discipline, and the cultural studies of the history of "the self" to examine a category that moderns might call "self-help" and that medieval thinkers and manuscript-compilers tended to call *sowlehele*.

## Fellowships and Honors

Member, Faculty Seminar in Teaching Writing, Summer 2016.

Stephen and Margery Russell Distinguished Teaching Award, 2015.

Class Council Outstanding Teacher Award, Cornell University Class of 2015

Organizer and member, Brett de Bary Mellon Interdisciplinary Writing Group, "Queer Temporality and Risk" 2012-2013

Appel Fellowship, Cornell University, 2009.

President's Council of Cornell Women Affinito/Stewart Grant, 2004-2005.

American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Fellowship 2003-2004.

Invited Participant, Mellon Humanities Seminar on Gender and Sexuality, Cornell University, 2003-2004

Fellow, The Society for the Humanities, "Secular and Sacred," Cornell University, 2003-2004

University of Pennsylvania Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship (declined), 2002

Woodrow Wilson Postdoctoral Fellowship, Selected Finalist (declined) 2002

Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities, Una's Fellowship, 2001-2002

Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award, UC Berkeley, 2001

University of California, Berkeley Regents Fellowship, 1995-2000

**Published Articles:**

"Sexualities" in Blackwell *A New Companion to Chaucer* (ed. Peter Brown). Accepted for publication.

"Desputisouns between the Body and the Soul and "Sawles Warde," in *The Encyclopedia of British Medieval Literature*, Wiley-Blackwell Publishing. Accepted for publication.

"Transgendering Pride" in *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies* Vol. I Issue 1/2 (2010).

"Promising the Female, Delivering the Male: Transformations of Gender in *Piers Plowman*" *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 19, 2005.

"Confessional Literature, Vernacular Psychology, and the History of the Self in Middle English" *Literature Compass* Volume 2 (2005) ME 128, 1-20.

"Between Men, Mourning: Time, Love and the Gift in the *Roman de la Rose*" in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 10.1 (Winter 2004), pp. 47-75

"Pninian Performatives" in *Nabokov at the Limits: Redrawing Critical Boundaries* ed. Lisa Zunshine (New York: Garland Academic Publishers, 1999): 127-161

## Book Reviews

Elizabeth Scala, *Desire in the Canterbury Tales* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2015) in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* (forthcoming)

Patricia Clare Ingham, *The Medieval New: Ambivalence in an Age of Innovation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015, in *Modern Philology*. (forthcoming)

Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Jill Ross, eds. *The Ends of the Body: Identity and Community in Medieval Culture* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013, in *JEGP: Journal of English and Germanic Philology*. (accepted for publication)

Carolyn Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now: Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time* Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* (2014) 20(3): 379-381.

Jody Enders, *Murder by Accident: Medieval Theater, Modern Media, Critical Intentions*, in *Modern Language Quarterly*, 71.4 (December 2010).

Karma Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies* in *SSHMA Newsletter: Society for the Study of Homosexuality in the Middle Ages*, April 2009

Nelly Richard, *Masculine/Feminine: Practices of Difference(s)*, trans. Silvia R. Tandeciarz and Alice A. Nelson, in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 11. 3(2005), 479-481.

Thelma S. Fenster and Clare A. Lees, eds., *Gender in Debate from the Early Middle Ages to the Renaissance* in *The Medieval Review*, Fall 2003.

Michel Foucault, "Il Faut Défendre la Société" in *Critical Sense: a journal of political and cultural theory*, Special Issue, "Formations of Race and Nation." Spring 1998.

## Invited Presentations

"Why study literature? Why study literature at Cornell? Cornell Literary Society, October 2015

"What is Feminism?" The F-Word, Fall 2015

"The Art of Apology and the Birth of Literature" English Department, "Books Sandwiched In," October 2015

"The Literature of Apology: Queer, Femme, Chaucer" Telluride House, July 2, 2015

"Forced Feminization: Chaucer's 'The Legend of Good Women' and the Politics of Over-Apologizing," King's College, London, January 19, 2012.

"Forcing Forgiveness: On Chaucer, Derrida and the Politics of Gender," Harvard University, March 31, 2011.

"The Matter of 'Theory' Among Approaches to Medieval Literary Studies" Medieval Studies Proseminar, October 2010.

"The Art of the Apology in Literature and Beyond," Cornell Reunion, June 12, 2010.

"The Soul is the Prison of the Body": Pedagogy and Punishment in Allegorical Debates Between Body and Soul," Temple University, February 18, 2010.

"Pninian Jokes," Washington & Lee University, March 23, 2009.

"On 'In the Middle,'" Medieval Studies Proseminar, February 2007.

"Jesus Christ Superstar: Intersections of Politics, Violence and Sexuality," Telluride House, Cornell University, November 2006.

"Body/Soul Debate and Transgender Autobiography," *Resisting Medicine, Re/modeling Gender*, English Department Colloquium, Cornell University, October 2006.

"How Soul Joined With Body: Allegorical Goddesses and the Question of Embodiment" University of Pennsylvania Medieval/Renaissance Colloquium, February 2005.

"Translating Susannah in the Garden, Faithful and Faithless," *Making the Text*, Cornell University, October 2003.

"The Soul is the Prison of the Body," Telluride House, Cornell University, February, 2003.

### **Conferences and Presentations**

"Silence and the Power of being Not-Male in the Middle Ages" at the Transforming Bodies Conference, Cornell University, April 21-22, 2017.

"Chaucer's Clerk's Tale on the Borders of the Queer" at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Sewanee Medieval Colloquium, Sewanee, TN\ March 10-11, 2017.

"Personifying the Apologetic Self in *Piers Plowman*" at the International Piers Plowman Society Conference, Seattle, WA August 2015.

Invited Panel Organizer and Presenter *Trans Reading, Transforming Medieval Studies*, for The New Chaucer Society, meeting in Portland, OR, July 2012. Talk entitled "Body/Soul Debate and Trans Reading"

"Freak Ontology: Body/Soul Dualism in Descartes, Butler and Tod Browning's *Freaks*" at "Resoundingly Queer" Cornell University, March 2012

"No Homo': Questions of Pedagogy in the Queer Middle Ages" 46<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2011.

Invited Panel Organizer and Presenter: *Metamorphoses, Intersections of Transgender and Medieval Studies*. BABEL Working Group Conference, Austin, TX, November 4-6, 2010. Talk entitled "Metamorphoses"

"Apologizing and Overapologizing: Derrida and Chaucer in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*" Panel sponsored by *Exemplaria*, 44<sup>th</sup> Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2010.

"Freak Ontology: Body/Soul Dualism in Descartes, Butler and Tod Browning's *Freaks*" at the American Comparative Literature Association Conference, New Orleans, LA, April 1-4, 2010.

"Reconsidering Chaucer's *Legend*: Theorizing Good Women" 45<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2008.

"Queering Authorship in *Piers Plowman*" SEMA Conference, October 2008.

"Transgendering Pride in *Piers Plowman C*," 42<sup>nd</sup> Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2008.

Panelist, discussion of Karma Lochrie's *Heterosyncrasies*, Society for the History of Medieval Homosexuality, 42<sup>nd</sup> Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2008.

"The Four Daughters of God and the Trouble with Gender" 4th International *Piers Plowman* Conference, Philadelphia, PA, May 17-19<sup>th</sup> 2007.

"Cross-Dressing Pride and the Travails of Authorship in *Piers Plowman C*" Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Conference Interdisciplinary Conference, Phoenix, AZ Feb 15-17 2007. Cancelled because of inclement weather.

"The Voice Within Is Always Female: Misogyny, Materiality and the Daughters of God Trope" 40<sup>th</sup> Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI May 2005.

Panel Organizer, "Debate Poetry and the Poetics of Disputation" at the 39<sup>th</sup> Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI May 2004

"The Split Subject of Medieval Body/Soul Debate" at the Medieval Academy Conference, Seattle, April 1-3. 2004

"Body and Soul: Middle English Debate and the History of the Self" at *The New Medievalisms* Conference, London, Ontario, Canada, March 12-14, 2004

"Care of the Self, Care of the Soul: *Sawles Warde* In and Out of Context" at *The Central Ages: Periods and Boundaries*, at the Illinois Medieval Association Conference, February 27-28, 2004

"Translating Susannah in the Garden, Faithful and Faithless" at *Translatio, or the Transmission of Culture*, Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Conference, February 12-14, 2004

"Gender and Genre in Chaucer's *Parliment of Fouls*," 38th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI May 2003.

"*Piers Plowman's* Fictions of Gender" presented at *Gender in the Middle Ages*, Annual Illinois Medieval Association Conference, February 22-23, 2002

"Debating the Self: Pedagogy and Punishment in Middle English Body/Soul Dialogues" Presented at UC Berkeley Medieval Studies Luncheon, Spring 2001

"Translating the Known into the Unknown: Literariness in *A Pistil of Swete Susan*" Sponsored Session on Middle English Alliterative Poetry, International Medieval Academy Conference, Kalamazoo, MI May 2000

"Between Men, Mourning: Time, Love and the Gift in the *Roman de la Rose*" *Queer Encounters II* Conference, UC Santa Cruz, Spring 2000

"Annexing Allegory: The Author-Function in Chaucer's *Boece*" *Medieval Intellectual History: Heretical Versions* Conference, UC Berkeley, Fall 1999

"The Gift/The Woman: Theorizing Subjectivity in Narratives of Butch/Femme Positionality" *Boundaries in Question*, Annual UC Berkeley Women's Studies Conference, Fall 1997

### **Film, Radio and Interviews**

"Masha Raskolnikov," featured on the English Department Undergraduate Literary Society Radio Show, Fall 2015.

"Where Learning And Research Meet": Featured as main subject in cover story by Linda Glaser in *Ezra Cornell Quarterly Magazine*, Fall 2011.

"Queer Childhood" Invited talk at Carl Becker House, Cornell University, April 21, 2010

*Out of Bounds* (radio show), Interviewed by Tish Pearlman, Broadcast on WEOS-FM and WSKG-FM, Featured Interview, February 11, 2010.

*Connecting With Cornell* (magazine), Issue 22-1.2 Featured Interview, Fall 2009.

*FTF: Female to Femme*, dir. Kami Chisholm and Elizabeth Stark, 2006. Featured interviewee in documentary about lesbian femme identity. *FTF* has screened at over twenty national and international film festivals, including San Francisco *Frameline*; Los Angeles *Outfest*, Vancouver *Out on Screen*; Brisbane, Australia *Queer Film Festival*; London *BFI Queer Film Festival*, Budapest *Pride Festival* and at universities around the country.

## Teaching Experience

### Graduate Courses

- “Not-Male in the Middle Ages” Spring 2016  
“Judith Butler: Gender and Philosophy in the 1990s” Spring 2012  
“Piers Plowman and the Pearl-poet” Fall 2010
- “The Question of Feminist and Queer Criticism in Premodern Studies” Spring 2008  
“Dream Visions and the Question of the Medieval Unconscious” Fall 2006, Spring 2014  
“Death of the Author, Birth of the Author: Literary Theory Medieval and Modern” Fall 2005  
“Latin Allegory and Vernacular Authority in the Middle Ages” co-taught with Winthrop Wetherbee Fall 2004

### Upper Division Seminars

- “Femininity as Masquerade” Spring 2017  
“Not-Male in the Middle Ages” Spring 2012, Spring 2016  
“Pleasure and Danger: The Body as Text” Fall 2010, Fall 2014  
“Transgender and Transsexuality” Fall 2008  
“Medieval and Renaissance Drama” Spring 2006, Spring 2008  
“Chaucer” regular rotation  
“Sin, Confession and the ‘Invention of the Self’” Fall 2003  
“The Suffering Body in the Middle Ages” Spring 2003, Spring 2007

### Survey Courses

- “English 2010: The English Literary Tradition, *Beowulf* Through Milton” regular rotation

### Freshmen Writing Courses

- “Apologizing Well from Socrates to Kushner” Fall 2011, Fall 2013  
“Women in the Middle Ages” Fall 2006, Fall 2007  
“Jesus Christ Superstar” Fall 2004, Spring 2006  
“Love in a Time of War: Rewriting and Remaking the Fall of Troy” Fall ‘02, Spring ‘03  
“Language and Identity” UC Berkeley, Fall 2000

### Summer Courses

- Freshmen Writing Seminar, Summer 2016  
“Pleasure and Danger: Bodies in History, Science, Literature, Philosophy” co-instructor at Telluride Association Summer Program (intensive 6-week course for gifted high school students), Cornell University, Telluride Program, Summer 2004, Summer 2009.

## Editorial Experience

Editorial Board Member and Main Editor, *Critical Sense: A journal of political and cultural theory*, 1997-2001. Organized and wrote editorial notes for special issues on discourses of the body; gender and citizenship; race and nation; and intersections of legal and literary discourse, as well as general issues.

**Reviewer for Journals and Academic Presses:** Ohio State University Press; *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*; *Yearbook of Langland Studies*; *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*.

**Reviewer for Academic Fellowships:** American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Postdoctoral Fellowship Competition, 2013-14, 2014-2015, 2015-2016

### **University Service**

Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of English. Fall 2014 – Present

Judge, Barnes Shakespeare Prize, Spring 2016

Honors Committee, English Department, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017

Search participant, Cornell Arts College Career Services Assistant Dean and Director.

Mentor, Visiting Faculty, English Department, Cornell University  
Cornell Arts College Working Group on Curricular Innovation, Spring 2015-Present

Chair, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Fall 2014- Present

Organizer, “Books Sandwiched In” (monthly event promoting English Department)  
Fall 2014 – Present

English Department Lecture/Event Committee, Fall 2014-Present

LGBT Studies Advisory Board 2009 – Present

CUGALA: LGBT Reunion Speaker, Summer 2014

Judge, Guilford Prize. May 2014.

Writing 2100: participation in workshops mentoring undergraduate student research, Fall 2014

Tenure Reporter, Department of English (2X).

Interim Director of Undergraduate Studies, English Department, Fall 2011.

Interim Director, Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program, Cornell University,  
Spring 2010.

Director, Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies Program, Cornell University 2007-2009.

Member, Graduate Field and Core Faculty, Medieval Studies and Feminist, Gender,  
and Sexuality Studies, Cornell University.

Member, Graduate Field: Comparative Literature, Cornell University



Medieval Latin Search Committee Member, 2010-2011.

Chair, *Ad Hoc* Tenure Committee, College of Arts and Sciences, Spring 2011, Spring 2012.

Freshmen Reading Project Book Selection Committee, Winter 2010.

Elected Representative, Agenda Committee, Arts and Sciences Faculty Senate, Cornell University, 2007-2009.

Faculty Sponsor: Cornell University Queer Colloquium; Gender and Sexuality Reading Group 2005-2012.

Target of Opportunity Appointment Committee, English Department, Cornell University, 2007-2008.

Member: Cornell Feminist Gender and Sexuality Studies Chair Search Committee, Winter 2006-07

Cornell English Department Placement Officer, 2006-2007, 2007-2008. Visiting Fellows Committee, 2008-2009, 2010-2011.

Cornell English Department Admissions Committee, 2005-2006; Medieval Studies Admissions Committee, annual since 2002.

Cornell English Department Academic Review Committee, 2005-2006

Cornell English Department/Medieval Studies Joint Search Committee (two lines; Early English, Medieval Latin), 2004-2005

### **Advising**

Doctoral Committee Chair: Patricia Har (Phd 2011), Adin Lears (co-chair; Phd 2014), Will Youngman (co-chair, Phd 2014), Marybeth Matlack (Phd expected 2017), Anna Waymack,

Dissertation Committee Member: John Sebastian (Ph.D. 2004); Jacqueline Stuhmiller (Ph.D. 2005), Misty Urban (Ph.D. 2007), Angela Furry, Jamie Friedman (Phd 2010), Corey Wronski-Mayersak (Phd 2011). Melissa Winders, Dafna Hornike (Ph.D. 2012), Matthew McConnell (Phd 2016), Hannah Byland, Eugenia Lily Yu, Stephen Kim, Seth Koproski.

Q-Exam Committee: Violet Hays, Jacob Brogan, Stephen Kim, Seth Koproski.

Senior Honors Thesis Director: James Lee, Cornell '04, summa cum laude, Elana Dahlager, Cornell '11, Pierre Chwang, Cornell '12, Nathaniel Rosen, Cornell '13, Olivia Wittels '14, Lucas Strombeck '14, Gabriela Leon, '15, Lauren Stuzin '16, Melissa Romanovich '17.

Course Leading, Cornell University, 2003 - present.

*Course design, teacher training and supervision, including class visits and grading review.*  
English Department: English 141: "The Creation of History: Heroes, Gods and Legends" (course re-design) Fall 2004, Fall 2005; miscellaneous others, Spring 2005-present.

Course Leading in Medieval Studies: every year since arriving at Cornell

### **Conferences Organized**

"Queer Temporality / Queer Amateurism" one-day symposium associated with Gottschalk Lecture, November 2011

"Family Ties: Rethinking Queer Kinship" Cornell University, October 2010

"TransRhetorics" Cornell University, March 2009.

"What is a First Book?" Cornell University, Fall 2003.

"Conversations in Feminist Theory" Cornell University, Spring 2003.

"Alike in Dignity: Historical and Literary Approaches to Medieval Texts"  
University of California, Berkeley Graduate Student Conference, Spring 2000.

"Medieval Intellectual History: Heretical Versions"  
University of California, Berkeley Graduate Student Conference, Fall 1999.

### **Languages**

English (native speaker), Russian (native speaker), French (fluent)

Reading Knowledge: Middle English, Old French, Latin