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Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2006 5:12 PM
To: RomanticGender@listproc.sjsu.edu
Subject: ENGL 232 Discussion questions for 02/16

Hi All,

Here are my 3 suggested discussion questions and annotated bibliography for tomorrow night. Hope to have an interesting discussion tomorrow about the primary text and secondary readings.

-Lisa

1. In our discussions up to this point during the semester, much focus was placed on the style of writing for each of our texts. Given the definitions of feminine and masculine writing, Inchbald's *A Simple Story* can be seen as a feminist writing. The author, much like those writers of Gothic fiction, brought into her narrative an overarching theme of patriarchal tyranny. Yet, our main female character submits her whole being and loses her sense of identity instead of continuing to fight for her identity as a woman. In light of this ending, can we really categorize this novel as being written in a feminine form? What other aspects of the novel may lead a reader to believe it to be written in a masculine form?

2. Susan Ford, in her article "*A name more dear*": *Daughters, Fathers, and Desire in A Simple Story, The False Friend, and Mathilda*, states that these novels "share a concern with the relationship between language and perception that informs a Romantic fiction – an investigation of the problematic nature of articulation" (51). Could Inchbald's novel be read as a critique of the problems that arise for women as a result of the writings supporting women's rights?

3. In what ways might the character of Miss Milner serve to detract women reading during the Romantic period to be silent in their domestic affairs? Fear of imprisonment? Of exile?

Ford, Susan Allen. "'A name more dear': Daughters, Fathers and Desire in A Simple Story, the False Friend and Mathilda. *Re-Visioning Romanticism*. Eds. Carol Shiner Wilson and Joel Haefner. Philadelphia: U Penn P, 1994. 51-71.

In this article, Ford employs three novels, *A Simple Story*, *The False Friend*, and *Mathilda*, to discuss the effects of father-daughter incest upon the domestic sphere. She looks particularly at the forbidden desire, a definition and redefinition of both the characters of the daughter and father, the suppression of speech, and a significantly absent mother. In looking at these topics, Ford points out the power that many of the characters of these novels finds through various modes of speech and even silence in these father-daughter incest relationships. She concludes that the ideal family of the Romantic Period is revealed as dangerous because of the great emphasis placed on love and obedience to the patriarch.