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B.A. University of Chicago, Germanic Studies, 2006 (with honors)
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Dissertation project

Conceiving Generation: The Novel and the Nuclear Family around 1800

The dissertation aims investigate the ways in which the two fields or ideas of the title can be seen as mutually constitutive across a fairly wide group of novels published between 1790 and 1830, bridging gaps between Classical and Romantic, canonical and non-canonical, and novels by men and those by women. Through a series of thematic questions about models of generation, institutions as units of social reproduction, and testation as a genealogical figure, the dissertation explores the ways in which the novel serves plays both a passive-receptive and an active-intervening role in the large-scale shifts in the structure of society around 1800. Analysis of literary texts forms the heart of the study, but it also discusses these texts in relation to contemporaneous documents on biology, anthropology, sociology, aesthetics, and the law. Bringing these different discourses into contact with each other highlights the ways in which the novel as a genre is embedded in a particular historical moment and social setting, but also the ways in which it transcends these boundaries creatively.

Advisors

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