

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

---

Social Justice: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Special Collections

---

11-9-1981

## Feminist analyzes women poets

Richard Mulhern  
*University of Maine*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/social\\_justice](https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/social_justice)



Part of the [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

### Repository Citation

Mulhern, Richard, "Feminist analyzes women poets" (1981). *Social Justice: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion*. 553.

[https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/social\\_justice/553](https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/social_justice/553)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Social Justice: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact [um.library.technical.services@maine.edu](mailto:um.library.technical.services@maine.edu).

# Feminist analyzes women poets

by Richard Mulhern  
Staff Writer

The study of the works of 18th century women poets can help lead to an understanding of the type of lives they led, feminist author Germaine Greer told 250 persons in 101 English/Math Friday night.

Greer said these women "have left behind an open-ended art form, which gave a little light onto modes of feeling, ways of interaction and modes of ad-



Germaine Greer, a noted feminist author, spoke Friday at 101 English-Math on women authors of the 18th century. [David Lloyd-Rees photo]

dress." Her lecture was sponsored by the Committee on Women and the Curriculum.

Author of "The Female Eunuch," Greer is a native of Australia and holds a doctorate in literature from Newham College, Cambridge, England. She is currently director of the Tulsa Center for the Study of Women's Literature.

Greer based her lecture on a book published in England in 1755, entitled "Poems by Eminent Ladies."

Saying that women poets have always been regarded as a "peculiarity," she described the motives of the book's authors.

"Two young undergraduates at Cambridge in 1755, who had already begun their careers of hackery and nicknackery, decided that one way they might turn a buck was by putting all these peculiar creatures, these versifying women, into a deluxe edition for the credulous.

"They made it quite clear that what they meant to do was to entertain without being absolutely tasteless. They were going to make the femaleness of the women an object of some sort of titillation, some sort of fantasy."

Running down the table of contents, Greer described the lives of several of the poets and read some short selections.

Referring to the "nothing new under the sun

department," Greer read a poem, by Lady Mary Chudleigh, which equates the role of a wife with that of a servant.

"Lady Mary probably hated being married without being particularly unhappily married," she said. "That's the sort of proposition that only really makes sense to a woman. One can quite like one's husband and hate being married to him.

"One wonders how Lady Mary put up with her husband. He was such a mealy mouthed, mean-minded timid creep, who had the temerity to neglect her. It's all right being neglected by a supermale, but being neglected by a wimp is hard for one to take."

Greer said that despite the Cambridge undergraduates' "crass" aims, they had put together a "fairly respectable volume."

"One of the things we are trying to do at Tulsa," she said, "is to republish this anthology, fully annotated, with all the bibliographical and biographical details we can put together."

She said that even though the size of the book would preclude making any profit from its being republished, she sees the effort as worthwhile.

"What people would buy this for, would be because in amongst the notes to these occasional poems, in amongst our explications of their intimate domestic references, would emerge one of the truest pictures of a certain kind of 18th century life.