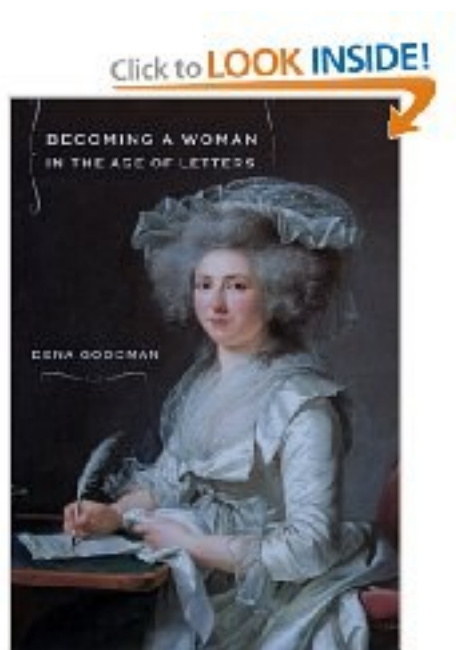


Becoming a Woman in the Age of Letters



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著者:Dena Goodman

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Editorial Reviews

Product Description

Over the course of the eighteenth century in France, increasing numbers of women, from the wives and daughters of artisans and merchants to countesses and queens, became writers-not authors, and not mere signers of names, but writers of letters. Taking as her inspiration a portrait of an unknown woman writing a letter to her children by French painter Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, Dena Goodman challenges the deep-seated association of women with love letters and proposes a counternarrative of young women struggling with the challenges of the modern world through the

mediation of writing. In *Becoming a Woman in the Age of Letters*, Goodman enters the lives and world of these women, drawing on their letters, the cultural history of language and education, and the material culture of letter writing itself: inkstands, desks, and writing paper.

Goodman follows the lives of elite women from childhood through their education in traditional convents and modern private schools and into the shops and interior spaces in which epistolary furnishings and furniture were made for, sold to, and used by women who took pen in hand. Stationers set up fashionable shops, merchants developed lines of small writing desks, and the furnishings and floor plans of homes changed to accommodate women's needs. It was as writers and consumers that women entered not only shops but also the modern world that was taking shape in Paris and other cities.

Although many women, from major novelists, painters, and educators to schoolgirls and their mothers as well as Parisian tourists and other shoppers, come to life in this book, Goodman focuses on four bodies of epistolary work by little-known women: the letters of Genevieve de Malboissière, Manon Phlipon, Catherine de Saint-Pierre, and Sophie Silvestre. These letters allow Goodman to explore how particular girls of different social positions came to womanhood through letter writing. She shows how letter writing expanded women's horizons even as it deepened their ability to reflect on themselves.

The analysis of more than one hundred illustrations—from paintings by major Dutch and French artists to inkstands and writing desks, stationers' trade cards, and manuscript letters on decorated paper—is integral to Goodman's argument. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

From the Back Cover

"Reading Dena Goodman's creative exploration of French culture and gender history is always a treat. In *Becoming a Woman in the Age of Letters* Goodman turns her attention to the iconic Enlightenment practice of letter writing and plunges deep into the intimate material details of how four particular women in eighteenth-century France experienced the culture of reading and writing letters. Interpreting a broad variety of cultural artifacts from portraits of female letter writers to letter-writing manuals, inkwells, stationary, and writing desks, Goodman reveals a detailed picture of how female letter writers participated in both the burgeoning material and consumer culture of eighteenth-century France and the domestic sphere of family and friendship. Engaging an important set of questions in both cultural studies and feminist historiography about subjectivity, empowerment, and writing, Goodman argues that women experienced writing as an activity that both provided an autonomous space for self-reflection and control and a connected space in which they enacted identities as mothers, daughters, and female friends." --Jennifer Jones, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

"This wonderful book is essential reading for anyone interested in women and the Enlightenment. Dena Goodman brings together diverse areas of inquiry to focus on the issue of letter writing and its role in the formation of a woman's sense of self in eighteenth-century France. *Becoming a Woman in the Age of Letters*, which is based on truly impressive original research, is written in an elegant, accessible style." --Mary Sheriff, W. R. Kenan, Jr., Distinguished Professor of Art History, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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