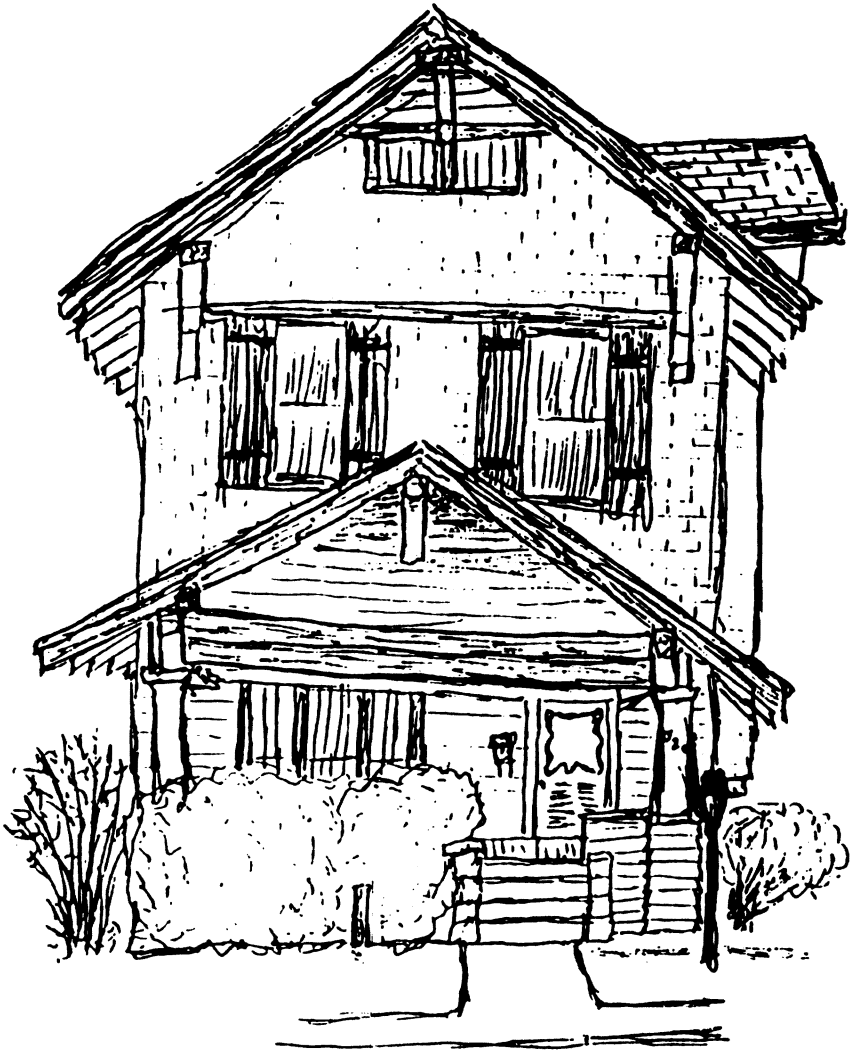


From the Editor

The old Red House—home to *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* and the *James Joyce Quarterly* for the last fourteen years—is gone. Three trees and a dirt lot are all that remain now. The house will eventually be replaced (as a great woman song writer once wrote) by a parking lot. At the farewell party, those of us still in the area who had lived and worked there played Joni Mitchell's song and wept. We scraped off some of Germaine Greer's wallpaper to remember the house by, and James Kelley (a doctoral student, editorial intern, and longtime friend of the house) memorialized it in a drawing that captures its attractive casualness, its faintly sagging shoulders, and the appealing openness of its porched facade. We print his drawing here as a tribute not just to the house, but to Greer's vision of a center for study of women's literature thriving alongside canonical Anglo-Irish modernism. Before we moved into what we call "the new Red House," which is a not yet repainted, two-story building two blocks away, some carousing students painted its door a sloppy rose that stands out like a wound against its shabby white exterior. Yet indoors the house has already become a new home—our books, desks, boxes (and new wall-to-wall carpeting) fit it surprisingly well. And no matter what we look like, inside or out, visitors remain very welcome: if you are ever in the area, be sure to look us up and drop by. Our mailing address is unchanged. We are also relieved to discover that, though we initially misplaced a few things in the move, nothing was lost. I personally want to thank everyone who helped in this move, by finding the house for us, finding means to prepare the interior and to move us, and then moving us. Thanks especially to Carol Kealiher and Linda Frazier (managing editors of the two journals) and to the students, who organized, packed, unpacked, and reorganized everything.

Though coincidental, it is nonetheless strangely appropriate that the first issue produced in the new Red House should begin with an article that seeks to move "beyond" where we have been: not to leave it behind, but to sustain what has been most effective in the past and remains most urgent in the present, while still moving forward to face the problems pressing in on feminist critics in the mid-1990s. Susan Stanford Friedman recharts and critiques recent developments in and surrounding feminist literary criticism and theory, in particular the kind of literary criticism and theoriz-



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ing most frequently represented in our pages—"gynocriticism," the study of literature by women, and "gynesis," woman-oriented, poststructuralist theory—in order to propose how and why feminist critics should continue, despite the limitations of past approaches, to move forward. Within the last decade, a number of advances in theories of identity and subjectivity have occurred in a variety of fields, "including feminism itself, multiculturalism, postcolonial studies, poststructuralism, gay and lesbian studies, queer theory, cultural studies, anthropology, political theory, sociology, and geography." Friedman usefully consolidates these advances under a single rubric, calling them a new "geographics of identity," in order "to crystallize momentarily" the "rapidly moving, magnetic field" of interdisciplinary political studies in which feminist critics are most deeply invested. She goes on to outline six specific discourses of identity that have developed, effectively mapping this complex, volatile set of changes by labeling and then describing their principal features: "discourses of multiple oppression; multiple subject positions; contradictory subject positions; relationality; situationality; and hybridity." And she urges feminist critics to think of, and position, themselves not as moving in a linear teleology "beyond" the past, leaving it behind, but as proceeding "palimpsestically"—as, in her mapping of it, the field has already in fact been developing—so that "what has gone before synchronically remains, continuing to influence the new, however much it is itself subject to change." Reminding us of Mary Helen Washington's question, "who benefits from these changes?" she warns us both against ignoring the changes she has mapped and against embracing a "fluidity" of discourse so far-reaching as to become locationless, thus making it still more difficult for "marginalized and oppressed peoples" to be heard.

Friedman argues that the new geographics of identity, "the polyvocal and often contradictory" new discourses of subjectivity that developed in the eighties and continue to evolve in the nineties, "have been influenced especially by postcolonial studies, for which the issues of travel, nomadism, diaspora, and the cultural hybridity produced by movement through space have a material reality and political urgency as well as figurative cogency." Thus it proves useful to read Friedman's essay not only in relation to the ongoing history of feminist literary criticism and theory, but also in conjunction with Part I of "After Empire," a two-part forum of essays focused on writing the postcolonial diaspora. While Friedman suggests how feminist critics and theorists may, and should, continue to position themselves "after" postcolonialism, the postcolonial studies in this forum offer examples of how women writers continue to write about, or how women's writing or their bodies may resist, the oppressive practices of nation-states.

Most, though not all, of the essays in this forum emerged through revi-

sions of papers originally delivered at the ninth annual Comparative Literature Symposium held at the University of Tulsa in spring 1994, "After Empire: Writing and the Choices of Displacement." Codirected by Isabella Matsikidze, Lars Engle, and Hermione de Almeida, this conference brought together scholars working on writers throughout the world, and, though the published forum represents only a small selection of the numerous conference papers, it still reflects something of the conference's geographical dispersion. (We also continue here the practice—inaugurated in our issue on "Redefining Marginality" and reserved for forums and special issues—of including occasional essays on men writers.) In Part I appear papers on the Bengali woman writer Mahasweta Devi's *Bashai Tudu*, the Cuban immigrant Cristina Garcia's *Dreaming in Cuban*, the South African male writer J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, and the Australian writer (who is now based in Canada) Janette Turner Hospital's career; Part II will include an article juxtaposing "historical moments" in Toni Morrison, Frantz Fanon, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Maxine Hong Kingston in addition to papers on the Zimbabwean Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, Argentinian Elvira Orphée's "Las Viejas Fantásticas," and Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*. Concluding the forum, Isabella Matsikidze's afterword imagines a future for postcolonial studies that extends both backward to include earlier historical periods and forward to focus—much as Friedman suggests in this issue—on the new "geographics of identity" within postcolonial texts. Mary Lynn Broe and Chiwengo Ngwarsungu read, evaluated, reread, and reevaluated the conference papers submitted for this forum, and we are very grateful for their services.

The forum essays take up contemporary writings responsive to situations that have developed "after" the recession of dominant global empires, but they also make it very clear that no place or person—no country or region, group or individual—is "beyond" (to recall Friedman's term) the reach of imperialist practices. Instead of the theme of a utopian telos, such as seems hinted at by the phrase "after empire," an alternative theme recurs in these papers: disruptions of oppressive state agencies are made possible through exploration of liminal positions "between" social formations—for example, as Alaknanda Bagchi argues, between the "haves" and "have nots" in *Bashai Tudu*; in David Mitchell's paper, between family and nation (and *within* these self-contradictory formations) in *Dreaming in Cuban*; for Jennifer Wenzel, between victimizer and victim in *Waiting for the Barbarians*; and in David Callahan's formulation, between the more fluid processes of personal memory (and identity) and the necessarily more stable activities of public, social forums (which also may be held publically accountable) in Janette Turner Hospital's writings. Writing (and art more generally) can play a lively role in these liminal places, exposing the "im-

possible unity” (Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s phrase) of “nation”; disrupting its fictions; forging connections between history and theory; or negotiating between the representations of memory and of the public.

Completing this issue are three articles on European and American women writers that reevaluate various ways in which women writers have in the past been complicit with, yet subversive of, gendered biases. Pam Perkins shows how the eighteenth-century British writer Elizabeth Gunning manipulated the clichéd figure of the victimized authoress and her own victimization in a pamphlet war (over the scandal of a failed and falsified love affair with the Marquis of Blandford), in order to assert her agency as a woman and her authority as a writer. Although there “undeniably were, throughout the eighteenth century, some women who . . . suffered from shame, fear, and disbelief in their own talents,” Perkins argues that Gunning “does not seem to have been one of them. . . . Gunning’s case suggests [that] the nervous ‘authoress,’ reluctantly intruding on the public stage, is a figure as simultaneously clichéd and complicated as any other heroine of eighteenth-century fiction.”

A very different case may be found in the writings of Gunning’s French contemporary, Jeanne-Marie Philipon Roland, an important figure in the Girondist faction of the French Revolution, who was condemned to death by the more radical Mountain for “anti-revolutionary” ideas. Though enormously influential while alive, primarily through the letters she transcribed (and wrote) for her husband, Madame Roland’s reputation was eventually undermined by posthumously published writings that proved her to be an advocate for women and a critic of men’s abuses of women rather than the advocate exclusively of women’s domesticity and of the Revolution she had previously been believed to be. Her reputation continues to be eclipsed in feminist histories in response to the hypocrisy suggested by such contradictory positions. In her careful reassessment of this historical figure, Brigitte Szymanek rediscovers an ambivalence expressed throughout Madame Roland’s career about the Rousseauian doctrine of female domesticity and traces the difficult but strategic choices Madame Roland made for the sake both of women and of the Revolution.

Marta Caminero-Santangelo argues for a reconsideration not of a particular woman writer’s reputation, but of the figure of the powerful madwoman in some feminist criticism and uses as a counterexample the disempowered women figures in the postwar story “June Recital” by Eudora Welty. Caminero-Santangelo argues that the figure of the madwoman “offers . . . the illusion of power” in her escape from masculinist and rationalist norms, but “in fact provides a symbolic solution the only outcome of which can be greater powerlessness.” By focusing on a story from the period immediately following the Second World War, a period also of “obses-

sive fascination with psychology,” Caminero-Santangelo is able to consider the way in which madness and gender are constructed in the service of reactionary “reconfinement” of women in an “image of domesticity” in popular culture.

I should, finally, also report to *Tulsa Studies* readers my recent appointment to the office of President of the Council of Editors of Learned Journals for a two-year term. This is an international council of editors, which was re-founded in 1980 by Ralph Cohen, editor of *NLH*, and Arthur Kinney, editor of *ELR*, and which primarily, though by no means exclusively, serves editors of academic journals in the humanities. Evelyn Hinz of *Mosaic* was its first woman president; I thus become the second woman president in its fifteen-year history. Among my goals are to give so-called “minority” editors and their concerns greater representation in the Council; this will not necessarily be easy because we tend to make it a policy to rotate our editorships regularly and, in comparison to many journals, relatively rapidly. Nonetheless, I look forward to these new duties and ask you—if you have any interest in editorial practices, particularly if you are editors yourselves or have editorial acquaintances—to inquire into membership in the CELJ (write to me at the *Tulsa Studies* address or at LAIRDHA@CENTUM.UTULSA.EDU). In joining the CELJ, you gain access to its printed Newsletter, directory of members, electronic bulletin board, Web page, annual awards, and mediation services. I hope, too, in the coming year to institute a new service whereby the CELJ will provide reviews of scholarly journals (for example, of recent special issues and of new journals) on our electronic bulletin board.

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