

From the Editor

Discussions of women's accomplishments in the public discourse of the United States have been dominated over the past year by responses to Hillary Rodham Clinton's presidential candidacy. Debates about the role of gender in her campaign, her public reception, and her policies—particularly the question of how much sexism damaged her candidacy—continue as I complete this preface, weeks after her campaign has ended and Barack Obama has become the presumptive nominee of the Democratic Party. Entries in this debate have ranged from empirical to visceral, from thoughtful to unthinking, some of the last sort containing unfortunate echoes of the infamous rupture between Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Frederick Douglass,¹ others exhibiting a shockingly casual sort of misogyny (witness the widely televised images of Hillary Clinton nutcrackers) reminiscent of earlier times.

Preoccupied as the United States has been with presidential politics, the awarding of the Nobel Prize for literature last October to Doris Lessing—the eleventh woman to be so honored since the Prize was first awarded in 1901—occurred with relatively little comment in this country. As the editor of a journal devoted to the study of women's writing I take particular pleasure in hearing of this award, and yet I express this satisfaction with the knowledge that Lessing herself would likely be ambivalent, at best, at being held up as an icon of women's literary achievement. Lessing, whose early novels, especially *The Golden Notebook*, were embraced by many in the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s, has acquired some notoriety since the 1980s for the discomfort she has expressed with feminism, especially with her being labeled as a feminist writer.

Still, I would like to argue that Lessing fills an important role in contemporary feminist study for her very discomfort with this term. Her discontentment with "feminism" is not a postfeminist complacency that the problems of sexism are behind us. Indeed, some of the criticism she has directed at feminists focuses on the narrow applicability of feminist complaints, achievements, and goals to "privileged women in the advanced Western countries."² Far from conveying that concerns, for example, about women's treatment, the opportunities afforded them, or their textual depiction are irrelevant, her comments suggest a profound frustration with the oversimplification that follows from an outlook content with labels and accusations. "Oversimplified" was, in fact, one word she used in 1982 while repudiating feminists' efforts to claim her as their writer: "Do they really want people to make oversimplified statements about men and women?"

In fact, they do. I've come with great regret to this conclusion.”³ Such frustrations sharpened more recently into anger at a feminism focused on vilifying men. “Doris Lessing Attacks Feminists,” reported a BBC headline in 2001, for a speech in which Lessing criticized “the unthinking and automatic rubbishing of men” so pervasive in contemporary culture.⁴ The headline notwithstanding, I see in these comments not an attack on feminist agendas and critiques, but rather a spurning of feminism as caricature of itself, as marketing strategy, as put-down, as tribal slogan. Her comments push us to undertake a richer, more careful articulation of what feminism is, can, and should be, especially in global context. For this reason alone, those who would call themselves feminists should recognize and thank her while we congratulate her for this most prestigious of awards.

To turn to matters more material but increasingly less concrete, I am gratified to report that over the past semester the staff of *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* has continued efforts to computerize most of our operations. I have witnessed these labors with the bewildered pleasure of one who maintains something of a magical relationship to most technology, and so it would be hard for me to understate my admiration for this work. The most visible accomplishment to this end in the past few months has been the revision of our web site, completed by our advertising manager Michael Griffin with input from Courtney Spohn-Larkins. We invite you to view the results at <http://www.utulsa.edu/tswl/>. Broc Randall and Michael Irion, from the University of Tulsa's Administrative Computing Information Services, provided indispensable assistance in this process. The staff and I would like to thank them for the time they devoted to this project. Several other people should be recognized for their efforts to update the office's operations over the past few months. Jeni McKellar, an alumna intern, has continued to consult with Karen Dutoi and Sarah Theobald-Hall as they polish the still-new database that is now used to track our submissions. I thank her for her kindness in sharing with us her technological expertise, and I am grateful to Karen and Sarah for the great patience they have shown with the office's many technological transitions.

I am also very happy to announce that, starting this fall, we will be accepting submissions, on an experimental basis, in electronic as well as paper form. These submissions may be emailed in the form of a Microsoft Word attachment to the journal email account: tswl@utulsa.edu. We ask that two additional attachments include a cover letter and a brief abstract. More details will follow on our web site in the next few months. These submissions will be sent out for anonymous review, and so, as with paper

submissions, all evidence of authorship should be removed from the text, abstract, and notes. My hope is that this change will expedite our evaluation process and assist our efforts at communicating with authors and readers outside the United States.

With this issue we say goodbye to Courtney Spohn-Larkins, who has just completed her three-semester internship with the journal. We will miss her regular presence in the office, but it is a great consolation to know that she will remain in the English department as she completes her doctoral studies. The departure of Andy Trevathan, who has just completed both her three-semester internship and her master's degree, offers less consolation to us, as she will be leaving both Tulsa and the University of Tulsa. It has been a great pleasure to work with Andy over the past two years, and we wish her well in her future endeavors. Both Courtney and Andy have been great assets to the journal, and I would like to thank them for their hard work. I am also pleased to welcome Seung-a Ji, a doctoral student in the English department, as our new subscriptions manager starting next fall.

One final transition should be noted in this preface. When I became editor of *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, in August of 2005, Holly Laird graciously agreed to ease this transition by serving as executive editor for three years. During this time Holly has been an indispensable source of advice to me on all matters pertaining to the journal, from copyediting to conversations with the university administration. I would like to take this moment to thank her once again for entrusting me with the journal's editorship and for participating in this transition with such generosity and grace. I look forward to continuing to draw upon her wealth of experience from her position on the advisory board, which she will join as of this summer.

In keeping with the plan I outlined the Fall 2007 issue, I am most pleased to announce three new appointments, effective July 2008, to the editorial board. Karen Kilcup is Professor of American Literature at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She is the author of many publications on American literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including *Robert Frost and Feminine Literary Tradition* (1998). Professor Kilcup has been at the forefront of efforts to recover lesser-known American writings, especially those by women, with particular attention to underrepresented voices. She has edited several scholarly reprints and anthologies, such as *A Cherokee Woman's America: Memoirs of Narcissa Owen, 1831-1907* (2005), *From Beacon Hill to the Crystal Palace: The 1851 European Travel Diary of a Working-Class Woman* (2002), and *Native*

American Women's Writing, c. 1800-1924: An Anthology (2000). The recipient of the Edna and Jordan Davidson Eminent Scholar Chair for the study of American women writers and an Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship for the study of American women's diaries, she has served the field of American women's literature in many ways, most recently as President of the Society for the Study of American Women Writers. A new monograph, "Fallen Forests: Redeeming Nature in American Women's Writing," will be published in 2010 in the University of Georgia Press's Environmental Studies series.

Phyllis Lassner is Distinguished Senior Lecturer at Northwestern University, where she teaches in the Jewish Studies, Gender Studies, and Writing Studies Programs. A modernist with particular expertise in war writings, Jewish literature, and the literature of empire and its aftermath, she is co-president of *The Space Between Society: Literature and Culture 1914-1945*. She is the author of many books and articles on modernist women writers, including two monographs on the Anglo-Irish writer Elizabeth Bowen, *Battlegrounds of their Own: British Women Writers of World War II* (1998) and *Colonial Strangers: Women Writing the End of the British Empire* (2004). By publishing and introducing the new writing of Ava Kadishson Schieber and reprints of writings by Karin Michaelis and Phyllis Bottome, Prof. Lassner has done much to ensure that publications by women of the early and mid-twentieth century will remain available to future readers. Her new book, "Anglo-Jewish Women Writing the Holocaust," will appear this fall from Palgrave Macmillan

Kathryn Joy McKnight is Associate Professor of Spanish at the University of New Mexico. A specialist in Latin American colonial literature and in the writings of early modern Hispanic nuns, she is the author of *The Mystic of Tunja: The Writings of Madre Castillo, 1671-1742* (1997), which received the Modern Language Association's Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize in 1998. Much of Professor McKnight's recent scholarship has focused on the recovery of Afro-Hispanic documents from colonial archives, some of which feature highly mediated oral testimonies of women. She has authored several articles in connection with this work, such as "Gendered Declarations: Three Enslaved Women Testify before Cartagena Officials (1634)," which was published in the *Colonial Latin American Historical Review*. She currently is coediting, with Leo Garofalo, *Afro-Latino Voices: Documentary Narratives from the Early Modern Iberian World*.

These three scholars have been generous enough to serve as readers and advisors for the journal in the past. I very much look forward to working more closely with them for the next few years. I also look forward to announcing new appointments to the board in future issues.

To my surprise and satisfaction, the articles recently finding their way to publication in this journal have included a cluster of essays dealing with British literature of the long eighteenth century. One can hardly make grand conclusions on the basis of the submissions that one journal has received over a short span of time, but I will hazard a tentative proclamation that eighteenth-century British literary study is enjoying a new wave of interest in women authors. Indications of this development range far beyond *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, to include recent special issues of *Eighteenth-Century Studies* and *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* devoted to feminist scholarship, and the recent founding of *Eighteenth-Century Woman*, an annual periodical edited by Linda Troost and published by AMS Press.⁵ They also include a growing number of dissertations devoted to various aspects of feminist criticism and gender study, as well as queer theory, the increase in texts by eighteenth-century British women now available for classroom use (with, alas, some accompanying disappearance of other texts), and what struck me this year as a substantive collection of vibrant panels on British women authors and gender study at the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

I think few scholars of eighteenth-century Britain will disagree that feminism hit this subfield later than it did the study of other eras and sites of European literature, with the possible exception of medieval studies, and it may be that this apparent surge of interest in eighteenth-century women's and gender studies simply evidences the late maturation of feminist scholarship in this era. Other developments, such as the dramatic expansion of interest over the past twenty years in novels, the vast majority of which were authored by women, no doubt also pertain, as does a more recent effort to attend to female authors of genres ranging from history to didactic writings and plays. Whatever the causes, and however widespread this phenomenon is, I am excited to be publishing a trio of essays devoted to the eighteenth century.

In "'Affecting the Shade': Attribution, Authorship, and Anonymity in *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex*," Johanna Devereaux examines the authorship of a prowoman and proto-feminist pamphlet, first published in 1696, which has been attributed since the eighteenth century to Mary Astell and, alternately, to Judith Drake. Tracing the history of these attributions, and mustering evidence pertaining to the author's philosophy and writing style, to the printer, and to the networks of acquaintance referenced in the text, Devereaux delivers a compelling argument that Judith Drake authored the tract with the close involvement of her husband, James Drake, a physician and author. Paralleling glimpses of James Drake's possible contributions to this tract, in the form of a prefatory epistle if not in the actual body of the *Essay*, are clear signs that Judith Drake edited and helped to write some of her husband's publications. The likelihood of

a lifelong collaboration between Judith and James should not, Devereaux asserts, undermine the feminist significance of an early modern prowoman tract that attributes its authorship to “a Lady.” Rather, the existence of this “heterotext,” to use a term she borrows from Peggy Kamuf, reminds us of the richly dialogic and sociable setting in which much Restoration writing was generated. It also compels us to consider the patriarchal underpinnings of a modern scholarly approach that seeks out a single author removed from the frameworks of conversation and collaboration. As Devereaux writes in conclusion, “Bibliographic attribution might be seen by some feminist critics as an antifeminist activity; but my recovery of the literally ‘biographic’ couple behind *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex* provides precisely the challenge to metaphysical single authorship advocated by these very critics.”

One factor convincing Devereaux that Drake authored this tract is its focus on the pleasure of intellectual conversation between men and women as a reason for female education. This assertion is much more in keeping with Drake’s Whig philosophy than with Astell’s more ascetic and religiously oriented outlook. This attentiveness to female speech links *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex* with the otherwise strikingly different texts studied by Manushag N. Powell in “Parroting and the Periodical: Women’s Speech, Haywood’s *Parrot*, and its Antecedents.” The parrot, Powell notes in a lucid survey of the animal’s literary treatment, has a long and multicultural history of usage as a device to comment upon women’s sexual promiscuity as well as their “stupidity, trickery, and thoughtlessness.” Brightly gorgeous, brashly vocal, accidentally witty but bereft of intellect, the parrot was used as stand-in for and critic of women, especially those who voiced or penned their thoughts in any but the most decorous ways. This figure acquired particularly sharp significance in eighteenth-century Britain, especially “in England’s busy periodical culture,” where, “because of the connection between women and gossipy, unthinking speech, the parrot becomes an apt choice for a feminine idolon.” Parrots also, along with other household pets, signified female infidelity, emotional if not sexual, as they neglected their husbands to lavish affection on animals. Powell examines Eliza Haywood’s short-lived periodical *The Parrot* (1746) within this dense landscape of allusion and text, arguing that Haywood rebutted the misogynistic deployment of the parrot by reclaiming, even embracing, female prattle as central to the very notion of a periodical. A case study of the role women played in the production of early periodicals, this article examines how Haywood used satire—so often a weapon of misogyny—to assert the importance of women as audience for, author of, and even inspiration for those apparently ephemeral publications so central to eighteenth-century English literature.

Heterosociability, especially in the form of polite and erudite conversation, also is highlighted as an activity reinforcing eighteenth-century pro-

woman sentiments in “‘Far Other Times Are These’: The Bluestockings in the Time of Ossian.” In this essay JoEllen M. DeLucia addresses a previously understudied trajectory of influence between the Ossian poems of James Macpherson and the first generation of the Bluestockings society, particularly Elizabeth Montague and Catherine Talbot. The Ossian poems, which began to be published in 1760 by James Macpherson as a supposedly ancient Scottish epic cycle he had discovered and translated, at first may seem an unlikely fit with a collection of relatively privileged women known for their advocacy of female education. DeLucia points out that the Ossian poems, the authorship of which the Bluestockings regarded with blissful unconcern, “provided a template for Bluestocking salons, where both sexes debated issues of literary, social, and political interest.” Filled with vignettes in which women conversed with, softened, and civilized tough and heroic men, the poems not only celebrated a society in which valor coexisted with the sentimental virtues, such as compassion and politeness, so prized in the mid- to late eighteenth century. These poems celebrated the importance of women to modern civilization, and of Scots to the growing British empire, even as they produced nostalgia in the face of embryonic industrialization and commercialization and inspired a new, more conjectural approach to an idealized ancient Highlander history. The Ossianic link to the Bluestockings ranged beyond sociability, however, providing a new framework for political critique. DeLucia shows how Catherine Talbot undertook exactly such a critique of her contemporary world, especially a belligerent British empire, in her imitations of Ossian.

Accompanying the eighteenth-century essays are two articles focused on the early to mid-twentieth century. Although dealing with markedly different writers, these two articles share a focus on the role that race, ethnicity, and imperialism play in explorations of a gendered modernism. “‘Little Brown Girl’ in a ‘White, White City’: Una Marson and London” is an attempt at recovery and canonical re-admission through literary biography. In this essay Anna Snaith asserts the importance of Una Marson, a playwright, poet, journalist, and pan-African activist of the early twentieth century who was born in Jamaica and spent many years in London, to any complete understanding of modernist British as well as Caribbean literature. As Snaith writes, “Her almost total erasure from literary and general histories of the period belies her important role in several literary circles and political movements and ignores her complex writings about the experience of being black and female in London.” Indeed, even apart from her literary accomplishments, she is well worth study for her involvement with so many important and apparently divergent organizations, including the League of Coloured Peoples, the International Alliance for Woman’s Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, and the British Broadcasting Corporation. As Snaith demonstrates, Marson’s writings, like her life, reflect evocatively

on “the black colonial presence in the modernist metropolis.” It is to be hoped that this examination of her writings, some of which remain unpublished, will contribute to efforts other scholars have made to restore Una Marson to a central place in the modernist canon. I also expect that as her writings receive more scrutiny they will enhance our knowledge of the “black Atlantic,” particularly the place of African and Caribbean colonials in the literary landscape of London.

In spite of her receipt of the Nobel prize for literature, her prominent place in high school summer reading lists, and her long-standing popularity, Pearl S. Buck is also, in a sense, a figure meriting some scholarly recovery. As Taryn Okuma points out in “Jews in China and American Discourses of Identity in Pearl S. Buck’s *Peony*,” Buck’s neglect by literary scholars, at least relative to the reception of many of her contemporaries, is surprising but incontrovertible. In this essay Okuma examines one of Buck’s later novels not only as an overlooked contemplation of racial, gender, and national identity, but also as a path to scrutinizing the “engagement of popular fiction with issues of modernity.” *Peony*, published in 1948, describes the tangled vectors of love, both requited and unrequited, that involve the daughter of a wealthy Chinese mercantile family, the son and the daughter of two families in the centuries-old Jewish community of K’aifeng, and a Chinese bondmaid after whom the novel is named. As Okuma argues, the novel operates simultaneously as an ambivalent romance undermined by feminist critique, as a *Bildungsroman*, and as a conflicted meditation upon ethnic identity, race, and cultural assimilation. In the slippage between these narrative forms she locates uncertainty about what does and should properly constitute a national or communal identity driven neither by racism and gendered exploitation nor by a hope for the eradication of all ethnic difference. Drawing upon historical-biographical information and statements by Buck, Okuma sees the plot as responding less to the Holocaust—of which Buck said she learned after most of the novel had been written—than to burgeoning racism and nativism in the early twentieth-century United States. Ultimately, Okuma sees *Peony* as a “case study for an examination of the interplay between Buck’s writing and twentieth-century American social consciousness.”

In the Archives section, “Avoiding ‘Troubles of Every Kind’: Lessons for Archival Research,” Diana Vela delivers both fascinating anecdotes and useful advice as she describes the research she undertook on writings by nuns in the early American West in several private archives. Her comments remind us of the large variety of settings included within the category of “archive,” as well as of the many experiences that can attend research in those settings. One leaves her essay with a vivid sense of the patience, flexibility, and graciousness required for archival work, as well as profound gratitude for the archivists and librarians who guide scholars

through vast quantities of data and text to find the materials they need for their studies.

In the latest contribution to our new Innovations feature, Suzan van Dijk, Anke Gilleir, and Alicia C. Montoya describe the development of NEWW (New approaches to European Women's Writing), an ambitious collaborative research project devoted to the study of women writers in Europe before 1900. What makes this project so distinctive is not only its vast and transnational scope, but also its focus on the relations among women writers and the reception of those writers' work around Europe. The potential of this project for future studies of European women writers is immense, and I am eager to see this work develop further over future years.

Finally, with this issue *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* is launching a new feature, a review essay that will be published simultaneously in the journal and on our web site. These review essays will address a range of topics of broader interest to feminist literary scholars while reviewing a book or collection of books. Jane Marcus, Distinguished Professor of English at the City University of New York and a member of our advisory board, very kindly agreed to launch this feature with an essay on Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's newest book, *Well-Behaved Women Seldom Make History*. My hope is that these essays will call attention to topics, questions, or debates that chart the newest terrain of particular subfields even as they encourage dialogue among feminist literary scholars who often find themselves divided into specialized areas of inquiry.

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NOTES

¹ For an analysis of the relationship between the Stanton-Douglass rupture and the primary race between Clinton and Obama, see Debby Applegate, "Two Can Make History," *The New York Times*, 25 May 2008.

² Jonah Raskin, interview with Doris Lessing. *The Progressive*, June 1999. <http://www.dorislessing.org/theprogressive.html> (accessed 4 June 2008).

³ Lesley Hazelton, "Doris Lessing on Feminist, Communism, and Science Fiction," *The New York Times*, 25 July 1982, <http://www.nytimes.com/books/99/01/10/specials/lessing-space.html> (accessed 4 June 2008).

⁴ "Doris Lessing Attacks Feminists," BBC News, 14 August 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/1491085.stm>. See also, Fiachra Gibbons, "Lay Off Men, Lessing Tells Feminists," 14 August 2001, *The Guardian*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2001/aug/14/edinburghfestival2001.edinburghbookfestival2001> (accessed 4 June 2008).

⁵ Corrine Harol and Kimberly Latta, guest eds., *Special Issue: New Feminist Work in Epistemology and Aesthetics*, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 39, No. 3 (2006); Laura J.

Rosenthal, guest ed., *The Future of Feminist Theory in Eighteenth-Century Studies: An Issue Celebrating the 35th Anniversary of the ASECS Women's Caucus, The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, 50, No. 4 (2009), forthcoming.