

From the Editor

Readers of the journal's paper edition will be quick to see the reason for its late arrival in their mailboxes. With joy, pride, and some trepidation, I am happy to present *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* with a new spring cover, masthead, and modified page layout. There is also a new fall cover, which you will see with the next issue. This new look is the result of many months of discussion and contemplation of potential designs. Pixel Pros Media merits our profuse thanks for coming up with the beautiful imagery and for working with us so closely on the details of the new cover. I am particularly grateful for the work that Sarah Theobald-Hall, our managing editor, took upon herself in communicating with designers and printers, and I would like to thank the editorial board for their useful responses to early versions of the new cover.

The cover is not a change that Sarah and I have approached lightly, as we regard the original cover with great affection and have been reluctant to meddle with a design that has held up so well for so long. Since I began reading the journal many years ago I have been partial to the simplicity and beauty of its look, with the alternating light and dark red for spring and fall, the embossed saxifrage and rectangular frame on matte cardstock, and the listing of articles in white ink. These basic elements have graced thirty-four covers, with only two minor variations: the Fall 1987 "Woman and Nation" issue, guest edited by Nina Auerbach, which was blue with white ink, and the Spring 2007 Silver Jubilee Issue, "What We Have Done and Where We Are Going," which was white with red ink and no embossing. The stylistic consistency maintained between the first and most recent issue is an aspect of the journal that always has appealed to me, as it suggested a visual reinforcement of the journal's mission to advance feminist scholarship through an on-going engagement with the origins and histories—often yet undiscovered—of women's writing.

With this new cover we have tried to present a visually bold design that retains thematic elements of the original cover. We continue to feature a red background, white ink, the saxifrage flower, and the accompanying quotation from the third volume of William Turner's *Herbal* (1568): "The white saxifrage with the indented leafe is moste commended for the breakinge of the Stone." This quotation, previously placed inside the front cover, now is featured on the back of the cover. As before, there are different covers for fall and spring, now focused on a variation of the saxifrage. We hope that this new look establishes continuity with the old one even as it conveys renewal of and advancement in the feminist study

of women's literature. The interior contains a more expansive masthead to accommodate our growing editorial board, as well as some changes to the font and layout of the contents pages.

Our decision to alter the journal's appearance is largely a response to the practical realities of contemporary publishing. Embossing is an increasingly expensive and slow process performed by ever fewer printers, so a new cover will have the advantage of expediting our production time and slowing escalations in our print costs. Most journal-reading these days also occurs online, and the new design is meant to translate more easily into online media, as will be seen soon on our website: www.utulsa.edu/tswl. Some of the journal's new features, such as a footer on every other page with the journal's title, volume, and issue, and the inclusion of abstracts, respond to the fact that the majority of our readers now encounter our articles not within the binding of an issue but as the result of an online search and hence in isolation from the journal itself.

The web has altered the experience of reading profoundly, for better and for worse, with scholarly research and reading perhaps the form most dramatically changed. I believe that at least a generation will pass before we are able fully to comprehend how subscription databases such as JSTOR and Project MUSE, as well as other online venues, have altered the scholarly endeavor and the reading of literature. This process is well underway, though, as is commentary on it, and I am hardly ahead of the curve in finding myself approaching the editorial and publishing processes through the lens of the web. But while the new cover is a response to this awareness of our growing online audience, it should also convey our deep commitment to the continued production of a printed journal. Electronic journals offer a vibrant new outlet for scholarship, and they are sure to have a central, permanent place in the world of academic publishing. Old-fashioned paper retains its advantages, however, including its accessibility and affordability for lay readers and for academics whose institutions do not subscribe to the relevant databases. As a feminist journal, *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* is committed to spanning the growing digital divide in our world, and we owe thanks to the University of Tulsa and its provost Roger Blais for making this commitment financially possible. We also are dedicated to the old-fashioned intellectual and tactile pleasures of holding books, marking them, sitting back from the computer to read them—in short, inhabiting them. We hope our readers share those pleasures. To that end, please consider subscribing to the journal if you have not done so already.

Our office has been busier than ever amidst our efforts to move forward with a new cover design, and I maintain my deep admiration for the sheer

competence and professionalism of our graduate student interns. Seung-a Ji has continued to master the great quantities of paperwork, both virtual and actual, that accompany her activities as subscriptions manager. Michael Griffin, to my sadness, is concluding his three-semester tenure as advertising manager and de facto web guru, while also moving on from master's-level work at the University of Tulsa to pursue doctoral studies at Louisiana State University. I wish him well and thank him again for his excellent improvements to our web site.

It also is time to say farewell to Karen Dutoi, who is completing her final semester as book review editor. Working first as our subscriptions manager, Karen stepped into the demanding position of book review editor very suddenly when the previous editor, Lisa Riggs, had to undergo surgery. She managed this transition with admirable coolness and grace, assembling thoughtful, intellectually diverse review sections of several issues while also managing subscriptions and the traffic between authors and anonymous readers. It will be a great consolation to continue working with her on the completion of her dissertation, but I will miss her daily presence in the *Tulsa Studies* office. The book reviews remain in excellent hands, however, and I am very pleased to welcome our new editor of this section, Jennifer Napodano Krisuk. Jen, who has been sharing the book review editor position with Karen over the past semester, already has proven herself to be the epitome of calm efficiency and fine judgment. The rapidity with which she has acquired expertise in this work adds to my ongoing wonder at the abilities of our graduate students. I look forward to working with her for the next two years.

Since I began the process, two years ago, of instituting a new editorial board with staggered three-year terms, one of my greatest pleasures in writing each issue's preface has been introducing new board members to our readers. With this issue I am excited to continue this new tradition. Julia Abramson is Associate Professor of French at the University of Oklahoma. A specialist in the literature and cultural history of the Enlightenment and Classical eras, as well as in the burgeoning field of food studies, she is the author of *Learning from Lying: Paradoxes of the Literary Mystification* (2005) and *Food Culture in France* (2007). She also has published in venues including the *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, *EMF: Studies in Early Modern France*, *Paroles gelées*, and various essay collections. A recipient of grants from the Oklahoma Humanities Council, the Schlesinger Library of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD), she is currently writing a

book with the title "Novel Professions: Fictions of Work and Identity in Eighteenth-Century France."

Kate Adams is Associate Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of South Carolina, where she specializes in nineteenth-century American literature, African American literature, feminist theory, and American culture studies. She is the author of *Owning Up: Privacy, Property and Belonging in U.S. Women's Life Writing, 1840-1890*, which has been published this year by Oxford University Press, as well as several articles in journals and books including *Hypatia*, the *National Women's Studies Association Journal*, and the *Blackwell Companion to American Fiction, 1780-1865*. A recipient of grants from the American Council of Learned Societies and the Oklahoma Humanities Council, she is at work on a book titled "Racial Locations: Geography, Culture, and Place in Black American Writing." Adams has been connected with the journal for some time now as a reader and as a much-missed former member of the English department at the University of Tulsa, and so I am especially gratified to welcome her to the editorial board. This fall she will be guest-editing a special issue of *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* on the topic of "U.S. Women Writing Race."

Ellen B. Rosenman is Professor of English at the University of Kentucky and the author of several books and articles devoted to Victorian and Modernist British literature. These publications include *Unauthorized Pleasures: Accounts of Victorian Erotic Experience* (2003), *The Invisible Presence: Virginia Woolf and the Mother-Daughter Relationship* (1986), and articles in *Studies in the Novel*, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, *Victorian Studies*, and *Signs: A Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. She also has coedited, with Claudia Klaver, *Other Mothers: Beyond the Victorian Maternal Ideal* (2008). Rosenman has been awarded grants from the American Philosophical Society/British Academy and the American Council of Learned Societies, and at the moment she is engaged in a book-length study of Victorian working-class fiction.

With gratitude and joy I welcome these three new members of our editorial board and look forward to working with them.

This issue begins with an Innovations article that we feel especially privileged to publish. Alison Booth's "Recovery 2.0: Beginning the Collective Biographies of Women Project" is an expanded version of a keynote address she gave at the Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers Association (BWWA) conference in Iowa City this spring. In this essay Booth describes the origins, development, and current shape of *Collective Biographies of Women: An Annotated Bibliography* (CBW), a

digital project that began from research done in connection with her book, *How to Make it as a Woman: Collective Biographical History from Victoria to the Present* (2004). As the home page for this web site, which is hosted by the University of Virginia Library, notes, “This is an exhaustive annotated bibliography of the more than 930 books published in English (in Britain, the United States, and elsewhere in the Anglophone world) between 1830 and 1940 that collect three or more women’s biographies.”¹ As she delineates the many practical tasks and difficulties that have attended this project, Booth considers the significance of this kind of project to scholarship on women’s writing. A digital archive of prosopographies—that is, collections of biographies—serves a markedly different and perhaps subtler function in such scholarship than do straightforward reference tools or collections of primary texts. Rather than providing enhanced access to the authors’ work, projects such as CBW enlarge our knowledge of reception histories and patterns of interpretation. As Booth notes, “It is not enough to recover knowledge of as many women of the past as possible; we should reexamine the texts in which their narratives and images circulate for different constituencies and interests and claims.” The kind of work CBW can facilitate is clear through a summary of the metabiographical study Booth has undertaken of “Sister Dora or Dorothy Wyndlow Pattison (1832-1878), the once-celebrated nurse and hospital administrator in the British midlands.” In addition to contemplating the ever-growing role of digital databases in literary scholarship, then, the essay considers the significance of an overlooked nineteenth-century genre, the prosopography, to women’s literary history in particular.

Nicole Fluhr’s “The Letter and the Law, or How Caroline Norton (Re)Wrote Female Subjectivity” shares with Booth’s project an analysis of women not only as authors but also as objects of interpretation. Fluhr argues that the novels, essays, and letters of nineteenth-century British author Caroline Norton have in common an abiding concern with the struggles of women to correct others’ misreadings of them and their writings. At the same time, through a strategic acceptance of the commonplace “longstanding association between women and letters,” her texts set out to teach her readers to be better interpreters of women. Focusing on two of Norton’s less well-known novels, *The Wife* and *Old Sir Douglas*, Fluhr traces plotlines in which a woman’s public reputation hinges on the interpretation of letters she has authored, and in which a woman must preserve herself from public ruin by acquiring sophisticated methods of both literal and metaphorical reading. Her article thus demonstrates how “Norton’s fiction consistently foregrounds the rhetorical strategies on which the essays rely and which they far more unobtrusively deploy,” even as it enhances our awareness of the interpretative complexity that must attend the study of epistolary.

The interpretation of women writers—this time, by women writers—also is a central concern in “Placing the Margins: Literary Reviews, Pedagogical

Practices, and the Canon of Victorian Women's Writing." Cheryl A. Wilson asks how nineteenth-century women's reviews, author profiles, critical surveys, and commentaries on women's writing participated in the activity of canon formation not only by praising or criticizing individual authors, but also by articulating what women's writing should be and do. Surveying reviews by George Eliot, Margaret Oliphant, Anne Thackeray Ritchie, Helen C. Black, and M. A. Stodart, Wilson shows how these figures collectively dictated some of the central categories, questions, and concerns that would guide appraisals of women writers for many succeeding decades. Wilson frames her approach by considering the pedagogical potential of these reviews, especially in developing new approaches to a critical appraisal of canonicity. As Wilson writes, "In beginning to answer the questions of why and how we teach nineteenth-century women writers, it is important to include not only contemporary theoretical and critical perspectives but to historicize the question as well."

At the center of "'So Many Useful Women': The Pseudonymous Poetry of Marjorie Allen Seiffert, 1916-1938" is the question of authorial identity and its place in the self-protection and self-presentation of a woman writer. Audrey Russek shows how pseudonyms helped Marjorie Allen Seiffert compartmentalize the several roles she sought to maintain: "a respectable mother and wife; a civic-minded, benevolent socialite; and an independent poet." This approach was so successful that her role in the *Spectra* hoax of 1916 often has been overlooked, as has the quality and variety of the poetry she wrote under various names. Russek argues that although Seiffert's life and poetry do not fit within standard definitions of modernism, her particular use of pseudonyms emerges from a distinctively modern understanding of identity as multifaceted and largely self-made. Just as her writings compel an expansion of the modernist canon, her multiple authorial identities add an important chapter to what we already know about the refuge and opportunities many women writers have found in anonymity and pseudonymity.

Modernism holds an entirely different position in the novels featured in Catherine Bacon's "English Lesbians and Irish Devotion: The Manipulation of Sexual Discourse in Molly Keane's *The Rising Tide*." Bacon argues that Keane's treatment of lesbian characters in her novels must be understood in the context of Irish nationalism, the genre of the Irish Big House novel, and the emerging discourse of sexology. While her earlier novel *Devoted Ladies* (1934) depicts an English lesbian whose sexual aggression is bound up with her identity as English intruder, *The Rising Tide* (1937) appropriates the language of sexology in order to depict an asexual but fulfilling relationship between two women within a Big House setting. As Bacon writes, "Ultimately Keane imagines a domestic, fertile, but not reproductive future that circumvents the hierarchical abuses of power embodied in Big House

families, emphasizing a new place for Anglo-Irish gentry within the New Ireland." The result is a significant revision of genre with nationalist implications, as well as an addition to modernist lesbian literature.

For many feminists, few objects of popular culture hold within them more complexity and emotional charge than a doll. Signifying girlhood more succinctly and powerfully than almost any other possession, a doll conveys in miniature—and thus in remarkably concentrated form—a culture's codes of beauty, desirability, and femininity. That a child's toy can so efficiently become the vehicle for the painful inculcation of ideologies of sex and race has not escaped the notice of twentieth-century authors. In "Oh! You Beautiful Doll!": Icon, Image, and Culture in Works by Alvarez, Cisneros, and Morrison," Trinna S. Frever examines the function of dolls in three works of prose fiction: Julia Alvarez's *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, Sandra Cisneros's "Barbie-Q," and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. Frever shows that in each of these texts the doll provides a site of contestation for identity, conveying dominant cultural, racial, and gender ideals, which are received with ambivalence and occasionally violent discontent by the girls to whom they are given. As Frever writes, "these doll-narratives inscribe a longing of the girl character, woman author, and/or woman reader for an image that is more fully made in her own image, rather than as an outside culture would make her." Literary play with the story of the doll, then, overtakes the narrated play of girls with dolls, and the result is a critique of hegemonic codes of femininity and race.

Over the past two decades trauma theory has become a powerful analytic rubric for literary study. In her essay "Intervening in Trauma: Bodies, Violence, and Interpretive Possibilities in Vyvyan Loh's *Breaking the Tongue*," Sally McWilliams brings together trauma theory, diasporic studies, and feminist analysis to read Loh's novel about torture and postcolonial identity conflicts amidst the fall of Singapore to the Japanese Imperial army in 1941-42. Central to her interpretation is the close connection the novel establishes between two forms of trauma traditionally viewed as separate: event trauma, or distinct traumatic episodes that stand out from everyday life, and insidious or everyday trauma, which can include, as McWilliams writes, "the trauma experienced in daily life activities under colonial (or neo-colonial) rule." Intertwining these two forms of trauma in her writing, especially through nonlinear narrative structure, cross-linguistic testimony, and other techniques, Loh's novel, in McWilliams's words, "acts as a feminist model of interventionist literature, one in which patriarchal, nationalistic discourses and their systems of repression are displaced by collaborative, nonhierarchical, and multivalent discourses and their embodiments of healing." One effect of this narrative approach is an opening of new, open-ended possibilities for the articulation of Chinese

diasporic identity, “refus[ing] to equate the diasporic simplistically with the traumatic.”

Finally, Jessica Lang’s Archives essay, “‘Nothing Remarkable Took Place’: Discovering the Flynt Sisters,” tells the story of a fascination with a collection of women’s letters that grew from a graduate school research assignment. Through her work in a multi-institutional course hosted by Harvard University on biography, autobiography, and oral history, Lang found the correspondence of Mercy and Nancy Flynt, two middle-class nineteenth-century residents of Massachusetts whose letters were housed in the Connecticut Historical Society as part of the papers of Mercy Flynt’s son, a prominent banker and philanthropist. Describing her return to these papers years after her graduate work, Lang contemplates the scholarly significance of the private lives and familial relationships detailed in these letters. A meditation on the importance of apparently ordinary lives, her essay also shows how scholarship tends to emerge from the accrual of countless small discoveries, through many hours of labor, rather than from single dramatic revelations. Like the other Archives essays we have published, it casts a spotlight on the painstaking processes, as well as the products, of archival labor.

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¹ <http://womensbios.lib.virginia.edu/> (accessed 8 October 2009).