From the Editor

It sometimes seems as if, in the *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* offices, we have mourned the loss of yet another feminist member of one of our editorial boards or a feminist author in every issue for the past three years. The grief for us has never been greater than with the suicide of Carolyn Heilbrun, an advisory board member of our staff since our third volume (Shari Benstock's "Feminist Issues in Literary Criticism") in 1984. Please see the memorial that follows this editor's note. This issue is dedicated to her.

The fall 2003 issue opens with two articles that break new ground in textual criticism. We have regularly published small editions of newly discovered poems, letters, fiction, and nonfiction in the past, and these reprintings have occasionally been accompanied by important reconstructions of prior editorial projects and premises—indeed, see, for example, our most recent issues in which Frank Felsenstein reconsiders the editorial principles appropriate to reproducing poems and letters by Ann Yearsley (vol. 21, no. 2; vol. 22, no. 1; see also "Our Patronized Lactilla," by Frank Felsenstein, in the August 8, 2003, issue of the *Times Literary Supplement*, p. 11, for an account of *Tulsa Studies's* special feature of Felsenstein's "Ann Yearsley and the Politics of Patronage," in the fall 2002 and spring 2003 issues). Nonetheless, the opening two articles in the current issue represent the first time that *Tulsa Studies* has published essays entirely devoted to contributing to contemporary debates about textual criticism. That this is a first indicates the validity of one of Alexander Pettit's points (in the second essay published here): that while feminists have long been involved in reissuing texts by neglected women writers and in reconsidering their place in international, national, and regional literary histories, whether male, female, or both in their lineages, feminist scholars have been less energetic in the Bowers-McGann-Gabler editorial theory disputes. Feminist literary critics have crucially contributed to theorizing and retheorization almost from the start of their emergence as literary critics in the 1970s, so why have they been less active in the realm of editorial theory? Although there have in fact been cogent (feminist) reasons to spurn or disregard those theory circles (reasons Pettit also discusses), feminist scholars are superbly positioned to make distinctive contributions to this arena of textual work and thought.

In "‘And Thus Leave Off': Reevaluating Mary Wroth's Folger Manuscript, Va.104," Heather Dubrow demonstrates how much we might learn from returning to an author's manuscripts, no matter how authorita-
tively described by previous critics. Dubrow takes up questions of manu-
script description and evaluation that lead her to new findings about the
textual background specifically of Pamphilia to Amphilanthus and, more
generally, to new proddings of feminists to greater scrupulousness in analy-
sis, yet simultaneously greater willingness to entertain inconclusiveness
about manuscript markings, no matter how terminal these markings might
seem. Thus Wroth’s signature “closural marker,” as Dubrow succinctly puts
it, “in fact is not merely an ending but also an invitation to open or reopen
many questions.” Dubrow builds upon and revises the well-regarded prior
textual work of Josephine A. Roberts by commenting on this feature—a
feature not discussed by Roberts: “one of the most intriguing scribal fea-
tures of V.a.104”—the slashed (or barred) “S” (or French fermesse).

Beginning this essay with a speculative historical account of the prior
usages of the fermesse that might have influenced Wroth, including espe-
cially her aunt’s, Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke’s, use of it in letters
of 1604 and 1607, Dubrow proceeds through analysis of Wroth’s “slashed-
S” to show that the poet revised Pamphilia to Amphilanthus more drastically
“than most Wroth scholars have thought.” Indeed, the “assertion that the
Folger manuscript is esssentially an early version of Pamphilia to
Amphilanthus with subdivisions—rather than a series of more discrete col-
lections or even individual texts—has seldom been challenged.” But
Dubrow challenges that reading here. Moreover, as Dubrow suggests, such
series and such disconnections are important to feminist interpretation of
the ways in which Wroth “trope[s] the entrapments of and in desire.”
Among Dubrow’s own scrupulously shaped and never entirely closed-off,
broader conclusions about this manuscript, she argues,

If the collection was reshaped for the 1621 edition far more radically than
most students of Wroth have assumed, it exemplifies the fluidity of manu-
script culture that has been cogently discussed by Harold Love among others.
In so doing, however, it also reminds us that some commonplaces about the
loss of authorial control in manuscripts should be inflected with frequent
reminders that in certain cases, as in this instance, it was precisely authorial
changes, rather than those of later readers and scribes, that rendered a text
malleable.

The “moment” in Alexander Pettit’s deliberately provocative title—
“Terrible Texts, ‘Marginal’ Works, and the Mandate of the Moment: The
Case of Eliza Haywood”—refers both to the speed with which many of the
popular texts of the past were produced, the planned evanescence of texts
that have retained interest long past their moment, and to the “moment”
of the turn-of-the-twenty-first century, our own occasion, which Pettit
encourages feminists to seize as a time not merely for reprinting old texts,
but for careful rethinking and revisionary applications of editorial princi-
pies. The eighteenth-century author Eliza Haywood's texts are a case in point of works that are "terrible" by Bowersian standards because they possess practically no manuscript history (no background of "multiple states") and were originally produced by publishers more concerned with a hastily earned pound than with getting the English right. If Pettit has his way, however, these texts may produce terror in the hearts of traditional and McGann-like revisionary editors alike since such "terrible texts" subvert the very ground upon which twentieth-century editors walked.

Acknowledging important precedents in this "call to arms" in Susan Staves and A. C. Elias, Jr., and some strong recent exemplars of editorial work in the University Press of Kentucky's series Eighteenth-Century Novels by Women (but not Oxford's unreliable Women Writers in English, 1350-1850), Pettit also notes why such work has been late in coming:

By design or not, imprints like Virago and Pandora (specifically Dale Spender's series, Mothers of the Novel) positioned themselves outside the masculinist circle of editorial respectability by declining to "edit" at all. . . . These are "punk-rock" editions: brash, timely, dated, vital, urgent, significant, and utterly irresponsible. Their lack of interest in bibliography was in a sense part of a larger attack on orthodoxy, an antimethod for an anticanon.

Yet "asystematic editing is neither new nor gendered," and Pettit remarks, "by omitting explanatory apparatus," for example, editors "decline to acknowledge" the status of their texts, instead presenting them as "works, inert and mystically 'present' rather than shaped by certain transmissional processes." To a feminist concerned with history (and what feminist scholar or critic today is not?), thoughtless editing has the unfortunate further correlative of producing major omissions in the historical record. Pettit argues ultimately for "practical editions" as (rather than, in the Bowersian view, against) scholarly editions as long as these are indeed "practical," that is, neither too hastily produced nor anachronistically edited.

After this dyad of essays on editing follows another article on an eighteenth-century writer: the renowned classicist of eighteenth-century England, Elizabeth Carter. In "Confined and Exposed: Elizabeth Carter's Classical Translations," Jennifer Wallace argues for a reconsideration of Carter's work as not unproblematic—despite what most prior critics have claimed—nor unambiguous in its translation of the ancients. Because women were generally proscribed from a classical education, on the one hand, and the few rarefied women who managed such an education against the odds were proclaimed marvels, no learned woman could take possession of classical learning for granted. Moreover, the lessons of pagan authors often contradicted Christian teachings, and these variant pedago-
gies proved difficult to reconcile no matter how canny one's choices of ancient authors for translation (as Carter's certainly were). Wallace shows Carter struggling with the resulting tensions both in the course of her career and within individual translations.

Though Carter began, in her translation of the “voluptuary” Anacreon, seeking to situate herself innovatively and “playfully” within the rivalrous male literary marketplace, she soon turned to work on Horace that would “make one of the most pious of Latin poets into an even more moral writer.” Gradually, through translations also of writers like Cicero and Epictetus, Carter “created her own distinct classical heritage, based upon a history of resignation and patient suffering,” but even then not a history without ambivalence. This ambivalence emerged in conflicts between text and notes, text and introduction, and even within the text itself, as her translation shifted “from greater to lesser literalism and from a fidelity to the original to an adaptation of the text to contemporary texts and concerns.” These “tactics” gained for Carter some “rave reviews”; indeed, her translation of Epictetus was still being reprinted by Everyman as recently as 1955. But Carter’s “careful repression” in her later texts, Wallace argues, “of scholarly as opposed to moral interest in the classical resulted in a tradition of female scholarship that strengthened gender boundaries rather than subverting them,” creating a “distinctive female classicism that appeared uncontroversial, unsubversive, and ultimately supportive of the rigid gender status quo.”

Tracing yet another tradition emanating from the eighteenth century—this time of (frequently) popular press revisionary narratives of an English classic, Samuel Johnson's Rasselas—Jessica Richard unravels the dialectic of “imprisonment and escape” evolving from Johnson’s text through women’s redactions, beginning just one year after the original publication of Rasselas (1759) and culminating in Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre (1847). In “‘I Am Equally Weary of Confinement’: Women Writers and Rasselas from Dinarbas to Jane Eyre,” Richard reminds us that Rasselas is the book Helen Burns was reading when Jane Eyre first encountered her at their orphanage school, though it “looked dull” to the young Jane’s “trifling taste.” Yet while numerous other textual influences have been exhaustively studied for this novel, Rasselas—with the “emancipatory potential” of “its thematics of liberty”—surprisingly has not.

Richard shows that this potential is “evident” not only in the writings of women authors “who were exhilarated” by it, but also “in the work of women who worried about the threat that such a desire,” particularly in the wake of the French revolutionary movements, “posed to social order.” Richard attends in particular to the anxiety produced in women writers—even in Brontë—by this text’s “dangerously inconclusive ending,” its
“unresolved choice-of-life inquiry.” From the work of “Harriet Airy” (pseudonym of Mary Whateley), Ellis Cornelia Knight, and Elizabeth Pope Whately to that of Mary Wollstonecraft and Brontë, Richard pursues the complex answer to this one example of the question, “How does a culture appropriate and refashion its canonical texts through the upheavals of history?” She replies that writers like Whateley, Wollstonecraft, and Brontë “found . . . that it authorized the representation of women’s suffering and desire for liberty,” while others—Knight and Pope Whately—rewrote Johnson’s text “in terms that emphasized duty, resignation, and reward in the next world.” This latter group “had to” rewrite it, however, “in order to teach these values,” values that Rasselas by itself works to “undermine.” Along with Boswell, then, women writers helped “make” Johnson into a “caricature of conservatism” despite the “weariness of confinement” a text like Rasselas “licenses.”

“Granny” was the nickname May Sarton earned from one of the older women with whom she fell in love at the young age of seventeen. In “Granny at Seventeen: May Sarton’s Early Encounters with the Land of Old Age,” Sylvia Henneberg moves from a well-known fact about Sarton, her great interest in aging expressed in the popular journals of her middle and old age, to show this concern with old age far “less commonly acknowledged” in her earlier work. While beginning with Sarton’s work in the 1930s (with Sarton in her mid-twenties), Henneberg focuses on writing from 1948 to 1958 (when Sarton was in her mid-forties), to show that “fidelity to the old makes Sarton one of the most radical voices of the twentieth century, a voice addressing a marker of difference that, unlike gender, race, sexuality, religion, and ethnicity, remains a conspicuous absence in our critical consciousness and discourse.” In an age when youth does seem one of the most tenacious and intractable, though weirdly elusive, of “essences”—thanks less, however, to the obliviousness we are inclined to attribute to youth than to massive modern cultural fetishizing of the young—Sarton’s perspective jars the status quo. Against so distorting a norm, Henneberg also cites Heilbrun (and Simone de Beauvoir) reminding us that “aging, particularly in the later decades, is a drawing-in. . . . There is peace, a sense of the present . . . rather than the past or the future.” The present, “growth,” and “growing” all belong to the aging and the aged as much, and more, as to the young.

Whereas, when I first joined the Tulsa Studies editorial staff fifteen years ago, submissions on Atwood’s important work (ground-breaking though feminists already acknowledged it to be) were few and far between, today we often receive articles on new novels within a year of publication. Since the publication of Alias Grace in 1996, we have received continual critical readings, and we are proud to present the first of these to have received
enthusiastic recommendation by its readers: “The Eroticism of Class and the Enigma of Margaret Atwood’s Alias Grace,” by Sandra Kumamoto Stanley. Stanley demonstrates in this essay several ways in which Atwood’s novel implicitly revises a recent theory presented by Peter Stallybrass and Allon White of “the bourgeois male’s erotic fascination with hired servants cast in various postures of social debasement, epitomized in the figure of the kneeling maid scrubbing dirty floors.” Basing their theorization on departure from Sigmund Freud’s case studies of the Rat Man and Wolf Man, Stallybrass and White point out that it is specifically the maid, not the mother, who arouses desire in the men, so that her “posture” and position thus produce a curious side effect of destabilizing class boundaries.

In Atwood’s much-researched depiction of Grace Marks, a maid-of-all-work who was accused along with the hired-man James McDermott of murdering her employer and his housekeeper/mistress in 1843, the scenario of the “dirty maid” becomes something even more than a destabilizing erotic scene. It becomes a series of contradictory, excessive performances by Grace of “constructed aliases”: “as prisoner, as amnesia victim, as madwoman, as released convict, and as socially accepted married woman.” These performances function to withhold the “eroticized knowledge” sought by men obsessed with her. Stanley quotes Atwood, saying that Grace “is a storyteller, with strong motives to narrate but also strong motives to withhold; the only power left to her as a convicted and imprisoned criminal comes from a blend of these two motives.” Moreover, Grace becomes “more than labor or sexual capital being voyeuristically consumed,” for “in the end, Grace survives, while both men are consumed: Thomas [Grace’s employer] is murdered, and Simon [Grace’s psychologist] suffers a bout of mental illness. . . . she does so by an erotic strategy of deferral, refusing to be trapped by social and discursive categories.”

Between 1997 and 1998, Novian Whitsitt took advantage of a Fulbright grant to interview over two hundred readers and writers of popular romances: “a burgeoning corpus of contemporary Hausa popular literature [that] has captured the attention of the entire Hausa community” in northern Nigeria, a literature “dubbed Kano market” novels. Including interviews with more than sixty Hausa writers in the cities of Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, and Zaria, Whitsitt rapidly learned that these romances, or Littattafan Soyayya, have created “an exploratory forum for the socially and culturally loaded issues of polygamy, marriages of coercion, purdah (the Islamic tradition of seclusion), and accessibility of education for females.” While the writers themselves insist that their “ultimate intention” is to exemplify “proper moral behavior,” as Whitsitt shows, other socially reformatory “didactic intentions” are “unmistakable” in these books, and readers he interviewed “confirmed that they recognized the socially conscious
intentions of the writers, . . . [which] reflected real-life portrayals of their social experiences and lent sound advice on commonly shared problems.”

Whitsitt assiduously contextualizes his discussion in a historical account of the development of shari’ah (Islamic law) and the principle of ijtihad (the law’s interpretation) and of the conflicting contemporary reception of the law and its evolving “situational” interpretations in northern Nigeria. His argument and examples focus on one of the more conservative and one of the more progressive romance writers and show that both are “feminist” in valuing education and justice (under Islamic law) for women, and both also value reform in the name of Islamic law. The conservative Bilkisu Ahmed Funtuwa, probably the most popular of all the Soyayya writers, uses her novels (like Ki Yarda da Ni and Allura Cikin Ruwa) to support education and professional careers for women despite also supporting and presenting a kind of “how-to’ guide on coping with polygamous marriage” and purdah. Balaraba Ramat Yakubu, an “opinionated, outspoken, and a self-proclaimed feminist,” “strives to bring the exploitation of Hausa women to the public’s attention” and does so, as she claims in her interview, in absolute “agree[ment] with everything Islam decrees, without trying to make any alterations to it, given that it protects the freedom and rights of women.” In novels like Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne and Wa Zai Auri Jahila? Yakubu “harshly criticizes” forced marriage and polygamy as “institutions,” in Whitsitt’s words, that “inhibit women’s human potential,” “fail to meet the intellectual standards of modern society,” and amount to a “pastime of men who have shamelessly deviated from [polygamy’s] religious application.”

Whether traditionalist or modernizing, this romance literature is now the target of widespread hostile conservative criticism even while steadily producing one national bestseller after another; for those who actually read it and for its authors, Soyayya writing “has assumed the thankless task of suturing diverse social attitudes.”

This issue of Tulsa Studies is the first to be squired entirely by our new managing editor Sarah Theobald-Hall, following Linda Frazier’s retirement in August (see “From the Editor,” vol. 21, no. 2). Linda was responsible for numerous successful transitions among editorial interns and a few book review editors during her seventeen years with the journal, but this one has been the most stunningly smooth succession of all, thanks to Sarah as well as to Linda. They both have my deepest gratitude and have hugely earned the gratitude of all our writers and readers.

Guest-edited by Shirley Geok-Lin Lim, the spring 2004 issue “Where in the World is Transnational Feminism?” emerged, as Lim explains, “from a sense of urgency about the rapidly changing forces pressing on women, taken as a social, economic, and gendered class, when nations and territories get shaken up in a globalizing world.” Deriving from panels at the 2002
MLA Convention in New York City, the revised essays on this question suggest, as Lim explains, that “these forces [are] today more promising and more dire in consequence than when Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan’s important book discussing transnational feminist practices appeared in 1994. Because literature and the arts are both sensitive and susceptible to the earliest pressures on human consciousness and feelings, these changes are reflected in and shape women's writings as they do most cultural works” (unpublished Preface). This fascinating issue will include Gillian Whitlock’s “Consuming Passions: Reconciliation in Women's Intellectual Memoir”—an essay on South African and Australian Aboriginal women's memoirs; Kenneth Chan's “Cross-Dress for Success: Performing Ivan Heng and Chooew Leow's An Occasional Orchid and Stella Kon's Emily of Emerald Hill on the Singapore Stage”—an essay on Singapore drama, performance, and queerness; Kenneth Chan's interview with Ivan Heng; Yi Zheng's “Personalized Writing’ and its Enthusiastic Critic”—an essay on contemporary Chinese women’s writing and post-Socialist feminism; Marjorie Pryse's “Literary Regionalism and Global Capital: Nineteenth-Century U.S. Women Writers”—an essay on the local and the global in U.S. feminist criticism; Jane Lilienfeld's “Contingencies of Dispersed Identity in Lydia Minatoya's The Strangeness of Beauty”—an essay on Asian-American author Minatoya's diasporic, hybrid novel in the context of Japanese empire-building; and Susan Fischer's “Women Writers, Global Migration, and the City”—on representations of Jamaican immigrants in London in Joan Riley's Waiting in the Twilight and Arab immigration in Hanan Al-Shaykh's Only in London.

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