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Beyond the Bounds of the Book: Periodical Studies and Women Writers of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

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Scholars of realist and modernist literature have been slower than scholars of earlier eras to embrace the challenges of periodical studies, but they are now taking up the task. Certainly, the need to integrate the study of periodicals into a broad vision of literary history is obvious. Precisely *because* writing published in periodicals lacks the prestige and status of the bound book, it is an essential source for scholars who seek insight into writers who—by virtue of their gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, or other factors—have lacked access to the most privileged venues of American letters. Yet for the most part, literary critics are much better at reading books than newspapers and magazines. Since periodicals, by definition, are texts that appear at regular intervals, they make a liability of the critical tendency to privilege a single text.[1] Moreover, a rigid, excessively narrow focus on the status of authors and aesthetic value has often impoverished literary historians' treatments of newspapers and magazines. As feminist media historians have argued, a more flexible, broader approach is needed.[2]

With this perspective in mind, I offer an overview in this essay of how scholars of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American women writers have responded to the challenges of studying periodicals. After opening with a snapshot of turn-of-the-century periodical culture and women's central place in that culture, I discuss basic theoretical and methodological questions in the field: What is the relationship between literary history and periodical history? How can literary critical methodologies do justice to the unwieldy, multifarious nature of periodicals? In proposing new frameworks for study, including transnational exchanges and collaborative interdisciplinarity, I review some of the most significant recent research under three broad, interrelated rubrics:

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how periodicals fostered a vital tradition of African American women's writing, how they circulated new modes of psychic interiority, and how they created new possibilities for subjectivity and self-display. Even within the limited time frame of the decades around the turn of the century, this review is far from exhaustive; although it addresses some studies of fiction and poetry published in periodicals, it focuses primarily on nonfiction writings, either examined on their own or as a revelatory context for fiction. Scholars who have taken up periodicals as an object of study in their own right are doing more than unsettling canonical traditions. They are reorienting our understanding of how culture works, what it means to read and write, and why gender matters.

Historians agree that at the turn of the twentieth century, readers in the United States had access to more and different kinds of journals than at any other time in the nation's history. As the cost of newsprint plummeted in the final decades of the nineteenth century, advertising revenues skyrocketed, leading to the emergence of the world's first mass-circulation magazines and newspapers. Yet media historian Paul Starr has argued convincingly that, contrary to the "widely held view" that mass production led to a more standardized, homogenous culture, "the early mass media in America added more to cultural diversity than they subtracted from it" (250–51). In other words, despite the rise of corporate influence in journalism, mainstream journals were just one part of the phenomenon. In their overview of publishing in the United States from 1880 to 1940, distinguished print-culture historians Karl F. Kaestle and Janice A. Radway conclude that even as print culture was being nationalized, consolidated, and incorporated, multiple new venues and new specialized publications were constantly appearing. This vibrant environment created "new, cross-cutting possibilities for the construction of identities and the creation of communities that were sometimes generated in response to racialized, gendered, and sexualized hierarchies of power, and sometimes through elected affinity based on shared interests" ("Framework" 21). Throughout America, thousands of small presses sprang to life, providing critical outlets for voices raised in social protest, racial and ethnic pride, or artistic experimentation. The African American press was especially noteworthy: Between 1895 and 1915, more African American newspapers—some twelve hundred—were launched than in any other era of American history. Across the United States, Americans had access to alternative presses that varied widely in content, format, and even language. Although mainstream newspapers served as Americanizing aids for many immigrants, smaller ethnic presses in German, Italian, French, Polish, Yiddish, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Croatian, Arabic, and other languages also flourished, fostering communities in the native languages of recent arrivals.[3]

Historians also agree that women played a central role in the lively tangle

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of publications in both the mainstream and alternative media. As mainstream publishers and editors targeted female consumers, who were attractive to advertisers as the primary purchasers of household goods, the reader of the mass press became increasingly defined as female. This gendered development came in tandem with the industry's embrace of commodity culture and movement away from the vision of the press as an instrument of a unified political community engaged in rational debate. "For turn-of-the-century social observers," according to press historian Richard L. Kaplan, "nothing challenged the traditional republican associations of the press as much as the new inclusion of women in the reading audience" (129). Women writers reacted in various ways to the sensationalism of the mass-market press and the identification of women with mass culture. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, for instance, so hated the practices of newspapers such as William Randolph Hearst's *San Francisco Examiner* that she refused to speak to reporters from Hearst publications throughout her life, eventually founded her own feminist journal, and perhaps even encoded her hatred of so-called "yellow journalism" in her masterpiece, "The Yellow Wall-Paper."[4] The New Woman, an icon of female independence and power, fascinated the press, which often used her as a symbol of modernity.[5] Although men retained most editorial and staff positions at mainstream journals, more and more women entered the profession, sometimes in highly visible roles (Beetham 234–37).[6] Popular magazines provided a "multiple, inclusive context" for female writers, according to Elizabeth Majerus, opening up "more and different roles for women contributors; they could be modern without necessarily being modernist, and they could draw on modernism while still retaining other more traditional or mass-cultural elements in their work" (619). Women served as editors and writers for alternative presses, too; the woman's suffrage press is an obvious example, but socialist and anarchist presses also benefited from the work of women. African American women took critical positions in the African American press, and some of the most influential contributions to American literary history have come from scholars working to recover periodical writings by African American women of this era, as I discuss below.

READING PERIODICALS: THEORIES AND PRACTICES

The study of the bound book favors "activities of social and cultural elites," observe Kaestle and Radway, reminding us that despite the book's special status, its dominance was always contested by other print forms, and "there were far more readers of newspapers and magazines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than there were readers of books" ("Framework" 19–20).

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In almost all circumstances, it is easier to publish one's writing in ephemeral media, which require less of a material investment than book publishing. Accordingly, periodicals have been long recognized as a critical resource for scholars interested in the recovery of women writers neglected by the makers of literary history. And the journal designed specifically for female readers—whether a popular magazine like *Ladies' Home Journal* or a suffrage periodical like the *Woman's Tribune*—"is the consummate form to connect and coalesce women's literary representations, one that can enhance our understanding of the situated nature of women's writing" (Mock 131).

Despite decades of recovery work and many promising scholarly ventures, the study of periodicals remains fractured, hampered in part by the ongoing devaluation of journals (especially those targeting women) and in part by the nature of the periodical itself, which refuses to honor the disciplinary boundaries that scholars depend upon to organize their research. For literary critics, a daunting miscellany within the object itself frustrates attempts to synthesize its content, while its unmistakable contingency demands more attention than we are usually willing to pay to the nuances of specific social and political environments.[7] Moreover, periodicals disrupt convenient, familiar understandings of writing and reading: Editorial collaborations challenge models of single authorship, and because writings published in periodicals enter into their readers' daily lives in a different material form than do bound books, they circulate in a variety of unpredictable and sometimes undignified ways. An article published in a journal might attract multiple readers within a very short time period, as the journal changes hands, or it might go directly into the trash. A periodical text's status as *text* is itself unstable: A newspaper might be used to cover windows, wrap fish, or line shoes; a magazine might be called into service as wallpaper or scissored to make scrapbooks. And, according to Kaestle and Radway, evolving circulation and business models in the Progressive Era

> increased the possibility that a single text would be circulated redundantly through different nodes of what looked increasingly to some like a single integrated system. A text might appear first as a magazine or newspaper short, migrate later through trade distribution outlets as a traditional hardbound book, materialize as the subject of a review in a newspaper book review section or as an object of "chat" on a radio book program, reappear later as a cheap reprint, and then emerge finally in yet another form as a Hollywood film. ("Framework" 20–21)

This "massification" had profound implications on the reading and writing practices of turn-of-the-century Americans ("Framework" 21). It also altered the very nature of the periodical's ephemerality: With redundancy of circulation, a single disposable text could end up hanging around for quite some time.

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Doing justice to magazine and newspaper writings, which appear in a print environment that includes visual texts such as illustrations and advertising, requires us to develop flexible models of reading, ones that refuse to isolate a literary text from the other texts, written and visual, that surround it. The recovery work demanded by periodical studies involves the recovery not just of selected texts but also of dynamic print environments in which multiple texts self-consciously respond to each other. Charles Hannon's study of Zitkala-Ša's periodical writings, which examines the discourses of racial nativism (including visual images) against which she had to assert her own sense of herself as both Sioux and American citizen, is a fine example of such work; it reveals multiple texts responding to each other, rather than considering Zitkala-Ša's writings as an isolated object of analysis. Ann Ardis calls for studies that focus on both the "*internal dialogics*" of journals, examining the relation between a single journal's various components, and the "*external dialogics*" of journals, examining "discursive exchanges with other print media" (38).[8] Ardis also endorses Aled Jones's suggestion that we think of periodicals as ordering both time and space—"as instruments for the ordering of geographic space, or as a form of territory mapping" (qtd. in Ardis 38). This approach encourages us to look at how periodicals map geographic and temporal space in unexpected, even startling ways, and it dovetails nicely with Susan Stanford Friedman's argument that we adopt "a form of spatial practice built on cultural parataxis"—adapting the nonhierarchical juxtaposition of elements often found in high-modernist poetics—in order to displace a Eurocentric modernism centered on white men, in which women and racial others are always on the margins (51, 36). Although Friedman's proposal for "a dialogic method of reading based in global juxtapositions" is not specifically concerned with periodicals (36), her method is certainly applicable to them since periodicals so often evidence a logic of parataxis, presenting readers with multiple items without necessarily including a connective logic to impose a hierarchy on those items.

TRANSNATIONAL EXCHANGES

Three recent studies suggest the rich promise of such transnational mappings of periodical culture. They also illustrate how effectively these analyses can reveal political stakes that might not initially be apparent in an author's work, allowing readers to reread texts with a deeper sense of key themes and relevant transnational frameworks. In a study that contextualizes Asian North American writer Sui Sin Far's fiction within a print-culture network that was circulating the trope of "yellow slavery," Yu-Fang Cho analyzes romantic love and marriage "as signs of universal humanity" in stories about Chinese immigrant

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women published in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century California magazines ("Domesticating the Aliens Within" 116). These narratives, Cho suggests, reveal "the underlying ideological connections between domestic and foreign forms of 'benevolence,' since the logic that animated U.S. white women's reform of working, racialized, and immigrant women also shaped missionary women's 'rescue' of Chinese, Native American, and Mormon women . . . and their conversion of 'heathen' women abroad in Africa and Asia" (117). Although the Chinese women represented in these stories are humanized by love and marriage, Cho concludes, "these tropes also persistently reproduce their racial 'excess'—their 'enslaved' status and other signs of essentialist cultural difference" (121).[9]

Brent Hayes Edwards's brilliant *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* highlights the significance of black periodical culture: Edwards even makes the intriguing assertion that black internationalism was "only spoken in ephemeral spaces" (186). His book, which includes a convincing study of Jessie Fauset's writings for the *Crisis*, argues that close attention to periodical writings corrects the misconception that black women's writings of this era are primarily personal and psychological and thus lack sustained engagement with social and political issues (132). Edwards's analysis of Fauset's nonfiction finds a "pronounced" anti-imperialist commitment: "With translation from the French, book reviews, historical portraits, and travel narratives of her voyages to Europe and North Africa, Fauset's work in the *Crisis* was instrumental in casting the New Negro movement in a transnational frame" (134).[10] Colleen C. O'Brien takes up one of Fauset's most important predecessors in her study of anti-imperialism and international labor in Pauline Hopkins's work for the *Colored American Magazine*. She reads Hopkins as a sophisticated cultural critic, deeply invested in political transformation, with a "particular interest in the way Anglo-American men marshaled power in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War" (248). She sees Hopkins as a radical journalist and argues that scholars' tendency to read Hopkins's work solely for its commentary on US race relations has kept them from recognizing the sophisticated anticapitalist strain of Hopkins's thought, which saw race and gender as intertwined in networks of capitalist oppression. "In this context," O'Brien suggests, Hopkins "writes of insurgent heroes and heroines who trouble conventional gender roles and racial categories, she reappropriates biblical rhetoric to demand economic justice, and she infuses that insurgent and evangelical spirit into transnational histories of race relations that further a Marxian ideal of proletarian revolution" (246).[11]

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By mapping new territories within the contingent spaces of periodical culture, scholarly work like that of Cho, Edwards, and O'Brien raises the bar for critics who seek to place women's periodical writing within the histories of American literary realism, naturalism, and modernism. Adhering to conventional disciplinary practices will not get the job done. Judith Yaross Lee observes that literary historians have tended to view "periodicals as a midwife to literary production," while journalism historians tend to study them from the viewpoint of insiders, examining the interactions of editors, contributors, readers, and other stakeholders (198). To achieve a more holistic approach, Lee suggests finding a space *between* these two disciplines. To do justice to periodicals, she writes, we must study them as collaborations within a specific time and place and, at the same time, we must pursue a demanding form of textual analysis that blends literary, social, economic, and political history. Lee is far from alone in this vision: The urgent need for interdisciplinarity has been invoked in virtually all assessments of the field in the last decade. In their rousing call for a new, interdisciplinary commitment to the emergent field of periodical studies, modernist literary scholars Sean Latham and Robert Scholes dismiss as "artificial" the distinction between literary history and journalism history and suggest that the most effective way to study periodicals in all their complexity and range is not to continue along the established path of particular projects developed and pursued by individual scholars, but to develop interdisciplinary teams supported by institutional networks, coordinated along the lines of research labs in the sciences (519, 529). The prospect of making collective, rather than individual, contributions to knowledge should be especially appealing to scholars dedicated to the study of women writers since collaborative models are evident everywhere in the history of women's periodical work and indeed have already been embraced by some contemporary feminist scholars. We cannot and should not rely upon the newest generation of scholars to make this happen, however. Overcoming the significant professional barriers to this kind of work—such as current standards of review that privilege individually authored research in the humanities—will require a sustained commitment from established scholars in the middle and later stages of their careers.

Given the profound benefits of collaboration in the study of periodicals, perhaps it is not surprising that much of the last decade's most important research has appeared in collaboratively produced publications. Several edited collections have made major contributions to the field: Kaestle and Radway's *Print in Motion: The Expansion of Publishing and Reading in the United States, 1880–1940*, Ann Ardis and Patrick Collier's *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880–*

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1940: Emerging Media, Emerging Modernisms, James P. Danky and Wayne A. Wiegand's *Women in Print: Essays on the Print Culture of American Women from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Sharon M. Harris's *Blue Pencils and Hidden Hands: Women Editing Periodicals, 1830–1910*, Aleta Feinsod Cane and Susan Alves's *"The Only Efficient Instrument": American Women Writers and the Periodical, 1837–1916*, and Todd Vogel's *The Black Press: New Literary and Historical Essays*. Ellen Gruber Garvey strikes a hopeful note in her foreword to one of these collections, *Blue Pencils and Hidden Hands*:

> Recent work on . . . print culture and publishing history is allowing us to go beyond seeing magazines as containers for literature to see new aspects—the magazines' role in creating communities, their relationships with one another, and their commercial importance. And new research on women editing periodicals is allowing us to examine and reexamine questions about magazines as a genre: about their creation, about the communities surrounding them, about how women, who might have been excluded from other kinds of careers, created and ran them. (xxii)

Garvey's point is well taken. Among the studies that bear out this optimism are Hanna Wallinger's narrative of Pauline Hopkins's tenure at the *Colored American Magazine* (70–86), James H. Cox's study of Zitkala-Ša's editorial work at the *American Indian Magazine*,[12] and Jayne Marek's analysis of Jessie Fauset's association with the *Crisis* and the *Brownies' Book* and Nora Holt's association with *Music and Poetry*.[13]

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND PERIODICALS

Recent work on African American women writers and periodical culture has been especially enlightening and merits special mention; the depth and scope of current scholarship on African American women's periodical writing in this era exceeds that of any other subfield. Scholars such as Frances Smith Foster and Carla Peterson have led the way in making forceful arguments for paying careful attention to African American periodicals and demonstrating, through their own studies, how much we have to learn about reading communities and literary activism from African American women's periodical publications.[14] In an important recent essay, Foster offers an elegant account of the Afro-Protestant press and proposes a model for African American print culture that includes not only "separately published volumes written with a promiscuous audience of whites and blacks, men and women, friends and foes but also of periodical, broadside and pamphlet publishing, church and social documents, commemorative, educational, or organizational literature writ-

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ten by African Americans for African Americans." Foster compares the distinct genres to fingers on a hand, arguing that although each genre serves its purpose, "like the hand itself, print culture is more than its parts," and therefore we must consider each genre both on its own merits and as a part of the print-culture whole ("Narrative" 732). P. Gabrielle Foreman's *Activist Sentiments: Reading Black Women in the Nineteenth-Century* sets out to do this by reading black women's novels and narratives as "happily married to—rather than painfully divorced from—their journalistic prose, organizational involvement, and reception communities" (3). Foreman suggests that writers like Frances E. W. Harper, whose career was nurtured by her association with the *Christian Recorder*, "envisioned a continuum between their faith, their journalistic prose, and the fiction they hoped to pen or had already written" (95). Edlie Wong finds a different kind of continuum in her analysis of Julia C. Collins's novel *The Curse of Caste; or, the Slave Bride*, which was serialized in the *Christian Recorder* in 1865, as the Civil War came to an end. In a subtle and telling discussion, Wong calls our attention to the "longing for kinship" dramatized in Collins's novel and connects that longing to the melancholic memory voiced in the "Information Wanted" notices published in the *Recorder* alongside Collins's novel—briefly worded, deeply moving notices from African Americans seeking information about family members from whom they had been separated (687, 697).

Wong's reading of Collins's novel vividly demonstrates the power of close contextualization; she deepens our understanding of Collins's narrative by attending to the paratactic nature of the periodical in which it first appeared. Jacqueline Goldsby's extraordinary study of lynching in American culture takes a very different approach to journalist and antilynching activist Ida B. Wells by situating Wells's work in a much broader context, going well beyond the immediate material context of her writings. Goldsby shows not just that Wells was a pioneering activist (the story is by now a familiar one), but that Wells exposed problems inherent in mainstream newspapers' approach to lynching. In a reading distinguished by close attention to both biographical detail and print-culture history, Goldsby argues that Wells parodies emergent genres of news writing and suggests that her arguments against lynching were intensely subversive "not simply because of what she said, but because she framed those propositions in terms that challenged her readers to recognize how the styles of news writing shaped what they knew about lynching" (47). Goldsby suggests that Wells's pamphlets "constitute a starting point for exploring how forms of progress in early-modernist America sanctioned the proliferation of racial violence" and that her writings show "how, as American journalism turned modern at the end of the nineteenth century, newspapers abided by and abetted the

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murders of black people as the sum (rather than the price) of their ambitions" (49, 71). This provocative claim tells us a great deal not just about Wells, but about the wider print culture to which she was contributing.[15]

CORRESPONDENCES AND CIRCULATING INTIMACIES

A fundamental characteristic of the periodical press, notes Margaret Beetham, is the way it invites readers to become writers, most often through letters, columns, and competitions (235). As scholars confront the implications of the interactive modes of reading associated with periodical studies, they are reshaping our understanding of the public—mass publics, public spheres, and public identities—and recasting our assumptions about the origins and nature of psychic interiority and intimacy. Mary M. Carver's study of the letters to the editor published in the 1880s and 1890s in the *Woman's Journal*—the dominant voice of the suffrage movement and the longest-running suffrage paper—argues that the consciousness raising practices associated with the private settings of the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s are apparent in the public letters column of a much earlier era. Carver suggests that "the press was an interactive communication partner" that allowed women to form "a community of geographically separated" suffragists (15).[16] Similarly, Kristin Mapel Bloomberg's analysis of Clara Bewick Colby's twenty-six years as editor and publisher of the *Woman's Tribune*, a suffrage journal founded by the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association in 1883, argues that Colby used the paper "to engage in a form of intimate woman-to-woman communication so desperately needed by women on the prairies and plains of the American West" (37). According to Bloomberg, Colby's radical feminism—considerably more radical than most other suffrage papers—reached out to an audience of rural Western women who lacked "urban conveniences of public lectures, weekly papers, monthly magazines, or a ready-made community of like-minded sisters with whom to share their views" (39). This intimate sharing extended to Colby's own family: In 1895, the *Tribune*'s "Children's Corner" was renamed "Zintka Lanuni's Corner" after Colby's "adopted Lakota Sioux daughter," who was "reportedly found by Colby's husband . . . on the Wounded Knee battlefield (51, 44). Bloomberg argues that Colby, who linked full equality for women with full equality for Native peoples, used her Indian daughter "as an essential link bringing together white people and people of color" and created an extended family with her readers "by presenting herself explicitly to her readers as a mother to a child of color" in the context of "a conscious understanding of the gendered intersections of race and class" (54, 55).[17]

Sidney Bland documents a more middle-of-the-road editorial path toward

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feminist community building in his study of the *Delineator*, a hugely successful women's magazine that evolved from a compendium of sewing patterns to a domestically inclined muckraking journal and boasted a million subscribers by 1920.[18] In a fine analysis of what Ardis would call the "internal dialogics" of the *Delineator*, Bland examines the juxtaposition of various treatments of suffrage and the New Woman, documents how reader responses helped to shape the journal's content, and calls attention to a notable print-culture phenomenon that redefined family intimacies through the circulation of images and narratives of orphans: *Delineator* editor Theodore Dreiser's spectacular "Child Rescue Campaign," a three-year crusade designed to find homes for children in orphanages and to promote the welfare of poor children (177–79). Like Carver and Bloomberg's studies of suffrage-journal exchanges, Bland's analysis reminds us that periodicals did more than represent intimate bonds *to* readers, for they created emotional connections between and among readers, fostering community as they circulated new ideas about familial relations.

EXPERIMENTS IN EMBODIED SUBJECTIVITY

At the same time that periodicals were fostering intimate, potentially transformative exchanges in the paradoxically public spaces of their columns, they were also shifting the very foundations of that intimacy by unmooring selfhood itself.[19] In *Frantic Panoramas: American Literature and Mass Culture, 1870–1920*, Nancy Bentley suggests that mass culture functioned "as a powerful force field that seemed able to unravel socialized identities at the deep level of sensory experience and thus to unsettle inherited structures of feeling and perceiving." Thus, one's "internalized social position . . . was precisely the structure of subjectivity most in question. For better or worse, inside the dizzying spaces of mass culture an individual's specific social location no longer seemed to strictly dictate experience or perception" (15). When women writers entered these "dizzying spaces" of print culture, their own embodied subjectivity inevitably came into play.[20]

As Colby's strategic deployment of her own motherhood suggests, the old topic of the female body is being read anew in periodical studies and receives treatment variously as a widely circulating icon, a much manipulated vehicle for feeling, an anchor for experience and consciousness, and a source of sexual and commercial power. Ideas about the ways that literary expression figures the female body have evolved dramatically, well beyond the now basic assertions of constructedness and performativity, which sometimes verged on formulaic. One illustration of the benefits of these new approaches is Angela Sorby's essay on popular poet, advice columnist, and self-help writer Ella Wheeler

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Wilcox, published in *Legacy* last year. Sorby reads Wilcox's sensational verse and personal letters as exemplary of a new aesthetic of intimate self-display, an aesthetic that signaled a profound shift in late-nineteenth-century attitudes toward sexuality, poetry, and publicity. This nuanced study serves as a lovely instance of how taking women writers into account can allow scholars to advance the ongoing—but far from finished—attempts to define modern American literature without erasing popular literature. Sorby directly addresses what she refers to as Wilcox's "national reputation as a bad woman writer" (70), and she sees Wilcox's racy poems as expressions of possessive individualism, not sexual daring. She also takes note of Wilcox's choice to publish her poems in newspapers, a decision that put her poems in a context by no means exclusively literary:

> To appear in a newspaper was to leave the realm of the literary and enter the space of the sensational; it was to leave the space of the refined (though still dressed, as it were, in the refined language of poetry) and enter the space of common reader. Throughout her life, Wilcox's poems appeared next to accounts of domestic violence, lynchings, and political corruption—stories that reflect the urban instabilities of the later nineteenth century. And because of reprint conventions between newspapers, they (rather than magazines, which protected their copyrights) spread her work most widely. (83)

A different kind of media-manipulating pose is celebrated in Catherine Keyser's *Playing Smart: New York Women Writers and Modern Magazine Culture*, a forthcoming study of women who wrote middlebrow humor for magazines like *Vanity Fair*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and the *New Yorker*. Keyser analyzes the links between femininity and modernist anxieties about mass culture in the work of Edna St. Vincent Millay, Dorothy Parker, Anita Loos, Mary McCarthy, and others. In deliberately taking up smartness as a pose, Keyser argues, "these humorists treated fashion as costume, sex appeal as a sign of autonomous desire, and humor as both mask and medium. In their work, the pose of smartness metamorphoses from the prescription of the periodical into a tactic that establishes modern subjectivity and enacts satirical critique of the surrounding field." Ultimately, she suggests, women writers used humor "to reflect on specific problems of modernity: the influence of the new mass media and magazine culture, the instability of gender roles and the use of normative stereotypes to ballast them, and the public embodiment of celebrity women" (6–7).[21]

For a less amusing case study characterized by masquerade, surveillance, coercive assimilation, and a creepy ingenuity, we can turn to Jacqueline Fear-Segal's analysis of Marianna Burgess's mysterious editorial persona, The Man-on-the-band-stand, in the *Indian Helper*, the Carlisle School's long-running

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school magazine for Native American children. Each week, the *Indian Helper* printed a notice announcing, "The Indian Helper is PRINTED by Indian boys, but EDITED by The-Man-on-the-band-stand, who is NOT an Indian" (qtd. in Fear-Segal 124). Speaking in the deliberately enigmatic voice of The Man-on-the-band-stand, Burgess interjected commentary, advice, and judgments throughout the pages of the *Indian Helper*, which was designed to support the Carlisle School's campaign to civilize its Native American charges. As Fear-Segal notes, the persona's link to the bandstand—an elevated structure at the center of the Carlisle campus from which all parts of the school were visible—invites comparison to Foucault's panopticon, and from 1887 to 1904 Burgess repeatedly used this imaginary position to discipline the children in print by calling attention to minor acts of rebellion and cultivating the sense that The Man-on-the-band-stand was always looking over their shoulders (129). Attending to Burgess's editorial work for the *Indian Helper* opens up a variety of possibilities for queer reading in the context of a racist cultural project, given her cross-dressing persona as bandstand-man and her choice of a woman for a life partner (133–34). Taken together, these three very different studies—of a sensational newspaper poet, an elite set of smart and funny magazine writers, and an obscure woman editor who struck a powerful, gender-bending pose for an audience of Native American children—suggest the range and complexity of women writers' self-display within American print culture.

Most published literary criticism treats only a small sliver of the many-layered print cultures that have flourished in the United States. For some scholars, this is as it should be; for them, literature exists as a unique and inherently restricted category, and we run the risk of diluting its value when we stretch the category too far. Yet many, if not most, scholars now recognize literary value as an evolving and historically specific category in its own right. For those scholars (I am one of them), the rewards of extending our inquiry beyond the narrow confines of the bound book outweigh the risks because we have so much more to learn about how reading and writing have changed lives. Current scholarship on women writers and periodical studies has made considerable progress in improving our understanding of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century print culture, but it has left us (as all good research does) with new questions.

Frances Smith Foster observes, somewhat wryly, in her discussion of periodicals in African American literature, "The definitions and assumptions with which one begins have a significant influence upon the story one finds" ("Narrative" 735). And there is no doubt that we can generally find what we are looking for in periodicals: Their very incoherence guarantees this, and they give us tremendous freedom to pick and choose, to decide what is worth mentioning

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and what is not. We must strive to respect the integrity of the periodical form rather than subordinating it to our own agendas. Often, we are characterizing a text that our readers may not be able to see for themselves without considerable effort, although digitization is changing that. But even easier access to periodicals will not change the fact that readers rarely seek out texts unless they already have frameworks for reading them—and the frameworks for reading women's periodical writings are still very much in the making.

NOTES

1. In this essay, I use the terms *periodical* and *journal* interchangeably to describe any text that was issued at regular intervals. For the most part, I am referring to newspapers and magazines, although some of the scholarship I cite goes beyond those two broad categories to include items such as school newsletters.

2. In their analysis of transnational alliances among early-twentieth-century feminist periodicals, Delap and DiCenzo argue that a media history focus on circulation offers "a broader and more flexible perspective and critical context" than a literary critical focus, which impairs attempts to recapture the dynamic nature of periodicals because it is too narrowly preoccupied with the status of authors, formal experimentation, and aesthetic value. Understanding feminist periodicals, they suggest, "requires attention to the 'crossing and recrossing' of popular and mass-market channels of media distribution with the political and the literary, and the morphing of genres as they cross national boundaries" (52, 63). Delap and DiCenzo offer instructive discussions of three feminist journals, the *Freewoman*, the *Woman Rebel*, and the *Forerunner*. In a related analysis, Ardis invites us to reconsider "the heuristic usefulness of distinctions between a 'black press' and an 'American' or a 'British' periodical press" (37).

3. On the foreign-language press, see Hudson, Miller, Kanellos, Lomas, and Danky and Wiegand, *Print Culture in a Diverse America*. Of special note is Lomas's study of the small but significant feminist journals within the Spanish-language revolutionary press of the Southwest, where the Hispanic exile press circulated ideas in support of the Mexican revolution of 1910. Lomas locates and analyzes three journals—Teresa Villareal's *El Obrero* (*Worker*, 1909), Isidra T. de Cardenas's *La Voz de la Mujer* (*Woman's Voice*, 1907), and Blanca de Moncaleano's *Pluma Roja* (*Red Pen*, 1913–1915)—and she notes that there is much more work to be done in this field: "Recovery of documents such as these and research of their impact on various communities and on women's social history reveals the history of the development of feminist consciousness in the borderlands. The voices and pens of these women articulate a passionate rebelliousness whose documentation has been long absent from the cultural theaters of both Mexico and the United States" (68).

4. Knight explains how much and why Gilman despised the sensational press, particularly William Randolph Hearst, after an incident in 1892 in which the Hearst-owned *San*

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Francisco Examiner asked Gilman for information about her impending divorce from her first husband, Charles Walter Stetson. Gilman trusted the reporter and spoke openly, then asked him not to spread the information around since she hoped to spare her dying mother any worry, but the *Examiner* published a full-page story anyway (46–47). Her outrage eventually inspired her to found the *Forerunner*, a monthly feminist magazine that she singlehandedly wrote, edited, and published from 1909 to 1916. Edelstein, following up on the implications of Gilman's antipathy toward the yellow press, finds in "The Yellow Wall-Paper" a critique and protest of sensational ("yellow") journalism.

5. *Beyond the Gibson Girl: Reimagining the American New Woman, 1895–1915*, the title of Patterson's study of the New Woman in fiction, indicates the power of the visual image—Charles Dana Gibson's pen-and-ink drawings of a confident, elegant, statuesque, white woman with upswept hair—that circulated in periodicals.

6. Beetham's essay deals primarily with British women and periodicals, although her observations are relevant for the American scene as well. For more details about American women's roles as journalists, see, among others, Beasley and Gibbons; Whitt; Roggenkamp, "Sympathy and Sensation" and chapter two of *Narrating the News* (25–47); and Lutes.

7. For an example of the rewards and demands of careful political contextualization, see Batker, who analyzes the fiction of Zitkala-Ša, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, and Anzia Yezierska, among others, in the context of their reformist journalism.

8. Pierce's study of the women's magazine crusade that inspired legislation to reduce death rates for pregnant women and newborns is a fine example of this kind of work; she documents the "strategic use of sentiment in a dialogue about motherhood that resonated across editorial boundaries" (91).

9. See Chapman for another compelling analysis that uses periodical writings, in part, to examine the political dimensions of Sui Sin Far's work. Chapman makes a strong case for Sui Sin Far's role as a feminist advocate who saw American suffrage as overly individualistic and unjustly dismissive of domesticity.

10. I cannot do justice to the depth and breadth of Edwards's analysis here, but his observation that black periodicals of this period often promoted bilingualism, with English-language editions publishing Spanish and French pages, is worth noting: "Black periodicals were a threat above all because of the transnational and anti-imperialist linkages and alliances they practiced, carrying 'facts' from one colony to another, from the French colonial system to the British, from Africa to the United States" (9).

11. For two more notable analyses of Hopkins's nonfiction, see Patterson 50–79 and Rich 67–102.

12. Cox discusses Zitkala-Ša's writings as community organizer and activist and details the impact of her editorial choices regarding women; he notes, among other things, her choices to publish newspaper clippings on women's temperance and suffrage movements and her privileging the role of women in global affairs in a report on a European

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visit by President Wilson and his wife, in which she explains that the First Lady is a direct descendant of the Powhatan tribe princess, Pocahontas (189). Cox demonstrates that Zitkala-Ša's editorial stances defy easy ideological categorization: "Her role as editor most clearly illustrates Bonnin's tendency to defy the work of late-twentieth-century scholars seeking to align her with various groups of Native writers and intellectuals. . . . Rarely focusing on a single ideological position for an extended period, often contradicting and qualifying what appear initially as clear statements against assimilation or against Native religious practices, as a Native intellectual Bonnin deploys many strategies in her negotiation of the colonial context that shaped and still informs the relationship between Native Americans and the federal government" (193).

13. Marek makes an eloquent plea for more attention to women's work for small, ephemeral publications, and she reads Fauset and Holt in the tradition established by Pauline Hopkins's work at the *Colored American Magazine*. Additionally, she argues that we find in Fauset's and Holt's work "an insistence on critical analysis of ideas, events, and artworks that proves indispensable to the intellectual and social radicalism of the Harlem Renaissance" (109).

14. See also Foster and Haywood.

15. For more important scholarship on African American women and periodicals, see Dworkin, Rooks, Gardner, Broussard, Toohey, Wagner, and McHenry's *Forgotten Readers* and "Reading and Race Pride." Dworkin's excellent anthology of Hopkins's nonfiction writings has made an especially significant contribution to the field, as have McHenry's studies of the literary African American women's club movement.

16. For a different perspective on the *Woman's Journal*, see Rodier's essay on Lucy Stone's complex involvement with the journal's content, politics, and finances.

17. For another provocative analysis of a letters column in a Progressive-Era journal, see Unger's discussion of Belle Case LaFollette's attempts to fight racist government policies.

18. The *Delineator* was one of the women's magazines known as the "Big Six"; its rivals included *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Pictorial Review*, *McCall's*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Woman's Home Companion*.

19. On a related note, Ardis suggests that the use of pseudonyms and multiple authorial personas in periodicals of the modernist era merits more attention: "In a post-bourgeois public sphere marked (still) by radical social injustices, the contributions of both magazines and specific individuals to the dialogics of the public sphere are enacted through an armature of authorial prosthetics with which we have not yet fully come to terms" (43). For another instance of "authorial prosthetics," see Jessie Fauset's (male) persona The Judge, a regular column in the children's publication the *Brownies' Book* (Marek 110–11).

20. Ida B. Wells's journalism offers a fascinating perspective on embodiment. In addition to Goldsby, see Totten, McMurry, and Schechter.

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21. For a different kind of exploration of literary modernism's emergence from the gendered dimensions of mass culture, see Biers. She reads Djuna Barnes's early journalism to suggest that her distinctive literary style can be understood as a response "to the cultural meaning of sensationalism and the dilemmas about the new mass reader underwriting contemporary press debates" (237).

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