

Editor's letter

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I am once again pleased to welcome our readers to a new edition of the *Humanities Directory*. In the third edition, we introduced a series of articles involving feminist literature and criticism. As a result of that issue, we received several additional articles on the subject of feminist criticism and decided to publish these articles in a separate edition.

As I mentioned in my previous introduction, it may seem strange that the idea of feminist literary criticism continues to be debated. The articles which were presented in the third edition of the *Directory*, as well as the two which are included in this fourth edition, will hopefully contribute positively towards debate, and serve to remind readers that writing and criticism is not the sole domain of men.

When reading the six articles that comprise the third and fourth edition of the *Directory*, I was reminded of a speech by Hortensia, a Roman matron who protested the enactment of a tax used to finance the Civil Wars of Rome which occurred after the assassination of Julius Caesar. That speech, which protested the unfair taxation of Roman women, while Roman men were spared a similar levy, might be said to mark the beginning of feminism. Hortensia, officially powerless in a society ruled exclusively by men, expressed her belief in the equality of the sexes and chided the Senate for penalizing women for a war they did not condone, endorse, or start. Hortensia was successful in her protest, and her courage and sense of justice is, I believe, at the heart of feminist literary and social criticism.

In this edition, we welcome back Erna Cooper who is a scholar, artist, and film director residing in the Los Angeles area, as well as in Paris. The current edition of the *Directory* includes a new chapter from her book entitled *Chiaroscuro: Aesthetics, Values, and Autobiography in the Works of Willa Cather and Marguerite Duras*. The book explores the lives of these two women who experienced hardship and personal loss, yet in spite of their setbacks, attempted to maintain their artistic vision and integrity in a male dominated world. We hope to publish Erna's complete book, along with her artwork, in future editions of the *Directory*.

The second piece in the current edition is a study of Nigerian Drama by Dr. Osita Ezenwanebe. In her article, Dr. Ezenwanebe explores the concept of "gendered space" in the play *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*, by Ola Rotimi, the acclaimed African playwright. Dr. Ezenwanebe's exploration of the space occupied by men and women in their daily lives underscores the often convoluted power relations within families and in society at large.

Not only have the past two issues of the *Directory* explored the concept of feminist literature and criticism; our authors have spanned the globe and have occupied various positions within

academia. It has been my pleasure to share their work with our readers; I hope that their insight into feminist literature and criticism will lead other academics to pursue research related to feminist literary theory, and that, like Hortensia, their voices will endure through millennia.