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## Note from the Editor: Issue 2, Open access

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### **Keywords**

editor's note

### **Author Biography**

Laura L. Runge is Professor of English at the University of South Florida. She has published on pedagogy, gender and women authors from the eighteenth century, including *Gender and Language in British Literary Criticism, 1660-1790* (Cambridge) and “Teaching Eighteenth-century Women Writers” in *Literature Compass* (2010).

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Our first anniversary has allowed us to consider many relevant and complex questions about the intersections between a traditional academic journal and web formats. In a nice thematic dovetail with this volume's organizing theme, we have had the opportunity to think about who will access our site, who we wish to attract as contributors and readers, how we will get the word out to the academic community and web communities, and how best to embody and encourage excellence as a journal that seeks to fill gaps in current scholarship and pedagogy discussions and to reach a larger audience than a traditional journal might. In response to some of these issues, our web team redesigned our site to make it more flexible and responsive to new readers. We encourage you to browse the site and interact with the new features.

In putting together this volume, we also have considered questions of access associated with our own academic moment: who has access to the brilliant online resources available to us now, such as *ECCO*, *EEBO*, *The Brown Women's Writing Project*, *Orlando* (made freely accessible for all of March 2012)? What do our students have access to: Primary resources? Secondary research? What do they need to become active, engaged, intelligent, well-read citizens of the twenty-first century? Notions of contemporary access intersect with questions about modes and methods of access for writers of the long eighteenth century, especially women writers. Who had access to what and how? What languages could they access and what kind of educations? How did they move around the City? How easily could they move from the city to country? What literary circles were they able to access? How does gender make these avenues more or less available? The articles in this volume seek to address such questions of eighteenth-century and contemporary access in four major arenas: scholarship, pedagogy, digital humanities, and reviews.

As the "Digital Humanities" evolves into a practical and heavily theorized area in its own right, this issue of *ABO* engages explicitly with the benefits and pitfalls of online accessibility. Janine Barchas' upcoming web project, "What Jane Saw," explores what an art exhibition might have looked like to Austen and what its digitally reconstructed representation might offer for current scholars and students of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Sheila Cavanagh uses her expertise as the creator of The Emory Women Writers Resource Project and The World Shakespeare Project to explore how her engagements with such dynamic and specific projects can be most useful to the field in general and specifically to the scholars who create similar projects. Patricia Hamilton ponders Charlotte Lennox's access to books and uses this question of access as a jumping off point to explore our own digital access to these same ideas and resources and to consider how such accessibility enters into the dynamics of scholarship, research, and, inevitably, promotion and tenure in the twenty-first century.

The ways in which gender affected eighteenth-century women's access to the social, cultural, economic, and legal modes of their society provide material for the essays in our scholarship section. Kaley Kramer's article, "The Limits of Genre: Women and 'History' in Frances Sheridan's *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* and Elizabeth Griffith's *The History of Lady Barton*" explores how women had access to law, lineage, succession, experience, memory, and property, calibrating these issues between the two novels and dialogues of history and memoir. Anne Milne's work accesses Mary Robinson through the feral, a space of "rich unaccountability between domesticated and wild," and posits how such a consideration requires re-evaluation of Robinson and her work both in her own time and in ours. Emily Bowles examines the language

about and of bodies in Aphra Behn's *The Dumb Virgin*, suggesting that "all amatory bodies are accessible to us as twenty-first century readers if we learn how to read the signs configuring them." We also participate in the practice of accessibility by publishing an excellent essay by the Aphra Behn Society's 2011 Graduate Student Essay Prize winner, Elizabeth Mathews, which analyzes Behn's *History of the Nun* through a focus on trauma and the narration of the suffering female body.

Perhaps one of the best places to explore the limits and meaning of open access is in the classroom, the place where many of us spend significant hours. Our pedagogy section introduces a new feature, the Pedagogy Share pages, where scholars who write about their classroom endeavors also share the more practical aspects of life in the classroom; syllabi and assignments are linked hand in hand with theory and criticism of classroom practicalities. Thus, Allison Conway, Sharon Harrow, Nora Nachumi and Laura Runge explore issues of feminism in the twenty-first century classroom and provide their own teaching documents that demonstrate their practical explorations in dealing with theoretical and critical discourses and concerns. Kate Levin engages in one of the more frequently taught texts in the eighteenth-century classroom, *Fantomina*, offering her assignments as a guide to negotiating the pitfalls and advantages of this text. Srividhya Swaminathan examines the ways that her race, her students' race, and the location of a university affect how teachers can access students and students can access texts.

Our Review section provides thoughtful, reflective reviews on books as well as on other areas of interest—this volume offers a review of the Houston Museum of Fine Art's exhibition of seventeenth-century Flemish and Dutch art in addition to reviews of new studies on the public/private dichotomy in the colonial Atlantic world, women's literacy in Early Modern Spain, virtuality and Romanticism, women's domestic service in Early Modern London, and the New Science in women's literary discourse.

In thinking about open access, we've developed two new sections since our last volume: Notes and Discoveries and Ask Aphra. Notes and Discoveries will contribute to research discussions, allowing access to information on a wide range of research information. Ask Aphra takes the spirit of Eliza Haywood's *The Female Spectator* and offers access to advice and best practices for the academic challenges that new and experienced scholars may face. We look forward to our readership's engagement with both sections—please access them, respond, and enjoy!