Call for Papers

Special issue of Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers
“American Women's Writing and the Genealogies of Queer Thought”
Guest Editors: Travis M. Foster and Timothy M. Griffiths

Deadline: July 31, 2018

This special issue aims to address a key contradiction in the development of contemporary queer theory: on the one hand, queer intellectual history has clear though too frequently elided roots in feminism and women’s writing; and, on the other hand, many of queer theory’s most defining arguments draw inductively from astonishingly narrow archives that occlude women’s embodiment, history, desires, and experiences. We seek papers that engage this contradiction by bringing queer theoretical thought into dialogue with American women’s writing from the seventeenth century through the early-twentieth century. How does our understanding of queer theory and its history change when examined through a longer and more diverse archive than it is typically afforded? How does our understanding of women’s writing and its history change when examined as a conceptual participant in the genealogy of queer thought?

By addressing these questions, papers collected in this issue might aspire to suggest fields germane to queer theoretical study that otherwise go overlooked; clarify the overlaps and disconnects between the histories of feminist and queer literary studies; decenter gay-white-male iconicity in the study of queer-American culture; and/or expand notions of queer dissent emerging from archives that too often valorize masculinist, anti-relational alienation from “effeminizing,” “bourgeois” sociality. We list these conceptual ambitions as possibilities rather than prescriptions. On a more fundamental and open level, this issue acts as an occasion to circulate scholarship that generates new thinking on queerness and gender by highlighting a wide range of American women’s writing.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual transgression and its theoretics in women’s writing
- The relationship between queer thought and the sentimental and domestic traditions
- Early African American writing, black queer studies, and women-of-color feminism
- Ecofeminism, environmentalism, and queer ecology
- Sex and gender in Native American writing
- The linkages between sexual identity, gender performance, and theories of sovereignty
- Anti-imperialism and nationalism as they relate to sex and gender in women’s writing
- Women and queerness beyond lesbian recovery paradigms
- Heterosexuality as an ideology in women’s writing
- The queer ethics of caretaking and sympathy
- Women-authored poetry and its erotic imagination
- Forms of dissent, subversion, and sexual identity in women’s writing
- American religion, religious ecstasy, and sexual identity
- Gender and sexuality in the study of whiteness
- Women’s writing and critiques of antinormativity
- Queerness and anti-queerness in abolitionist literature
- Women and queerness beyond “romantic friendship” paradigms

Submissions of 8000–10,000 words (including endnotes and works cited) in MLA format are due by July 31, 2018. Accepted submissions will appear in Legacy 37.1 (Summer 2020). Please send electronic submissions and any inquiries to the guest editors: Timothy M. Griffiths (tmg2a@virginia.edu) and Travis M. Foster (travis.foster@villanova.edu).