

CFP for “Woman Thinking” at ALA 2016

We welcome proposals on the topic “**Woman Thinking: Public Intellectualism in U.S. Periodical Culture**” for the American Literature Association Conference, San Francisco, CA, May 26-29, 2016 (<http://alaconf.org/>). This panel will be co-sponsored by the Research Society for American Periodicals and author societies including the Lydia Maria Child Society, the Anna Julia Cooper Society, the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society, the Edwidge Danticat Society, the Margaret Fuller Society, the Society for Rebecca Harding Davis and Her World, the Emily Dickinson International Society, and the Elizabeth Oakes Smith Society.

Historically, women have been excluded from the markers of intellectualism available to men, ranging from the academy to the church to the state. American periodical culture provided an alternative forum for women thinkers to participate in intellectual exchange and, in so doing, influence public opinion, critique societal practices, and advance human knowledge and freedom. While illuminating studies have linked women’s periodical work to their activism, less attention has been paid to the ways that women have engaged with periodical culture to establish themselves as *intellectual* authorities in the public mind. For this panel, we seek papers that explore the relationship between women’s periodical work and public intellectualism in America. We wish to emphasize that we look for papers on all women working and writing in periodicals, including those without author societies, such as Frances E.W. Harper, Ida B. Wells, Zitkala-Ša, Sarah Winnemucca, Sarah Josepha Hale, Fanny Fern, Grace Greenwood, etc.

In “The American Scholar,” Ralph Waldo Emerson described the ideal citizen as “Man Thinking.” How did women use periodicals to assert themselves as citizen-thinkers in their own right? How did this work against or in conjunction with women’s societal roles (domestic or otherwise) and how might this relate to the expanding boundaries of the positions of women and intellectuals in American society? How wide of a public does a woman need to address to be considered a public intellectual—local, regional, national, global? What types of literacy/writing may define women as intellectuals? In the case of editing, women often worked with an invisible hand, performing intellectual labor as feminized “carework.” How might such work be made visible to literary historians, and how might we think about editing as a way for women to enter public, intellectual discourse? As recent discussions in news and social media outlets have made clear, women of color have faced and continue to face distinctive exclusions from public intellectualism (consider the debate surrounding Melissa Harris-Perry as a public intellectual, for example). How have women of color established their own traditions of public intellectualism through periodical work? What do we have to gain by examining women’s periodical work through the lens of public intellectualism and what might we lose?

Please send 250-word abstracts and a brief biographical statement to Sarah Olivier at Sarah.Olivier@du.edu and Jean Lee Cole at jlcole@loyola.edu by **January 10, 2016**.