

Tillie Olsen's fiction and essays have been widely and rightly acknowledged as major contributions to American literature. Her work has been particularly valued by contemporary feminists. Yet few of Olsen's readers realize the extent to which her vision and choice of subject are rooted in an earlier literary heritage—the tradition of radical political thought, mostly socialist and anarchist, of the 1910's and 1920's, and the Old Left tradition of the 1930's. I do not mean that one can adequately explain the eloquence of her work in terms of its political origins, or that left-wing politics were the single most important influence on it. My point is that its central consciousness—its profound understanding of class and gender as shaping influences on people's lives—owes much to that earlier literary heritage, a heritage that, in general, has not been sufficiently valued by most contemporary literary critics.

1. The primary purpose of the passage is to
  - (A) argue that Olsen's understanding of class and gender is her greatest gift as a writer
  - (B) acknowledge Olsen's importance as the leading spokesperson for a radical literary heritage
  - (C) point out a literary heritage to which Olsen's work is related
  - (D) urge literary critics to investigate the origins of a literary heritage
  - (E) suggest that Olsen's work has been placed in a literary heritage to which it does not belong
2. According to the author, which of the following is true of the heritage mentioned in the passage?
  - (A) It emphasizes gender as the determinate influence on people's lives.
  - (B) It has been the most important influence on Olsen's work.
  - (C) It includes political traditions that span three decades of the twentieth century.
  - (D) It explains the eloquence but not the subject matter of Olsen's work.
  - (E) It reflects primarily the development of socialist political thought in the early twentieth century.
3. In the sentence "I do not ... influence on it" (lines 5-7), the author does which of the following?
  - (A) Broadens an existing classification.
  - (B) Contradicts the passage's central thesis.
  - (C) Qualifies a commonly accepted point of view.
  - (D) Presents conflicting explanations for a phenomenon.
  - (E) Denies possible interpretations of an earlier assertion.
4. According to the author, Olsen's work has been
  - (A) rightly acknowledged for its contribution to political thought
  - (B) thought to represent the beginning of new literary tradition
  - (C) a needed impetus for social change
  - (D) most clearly influenced by feminism
  - (E) deservedly admired by readers