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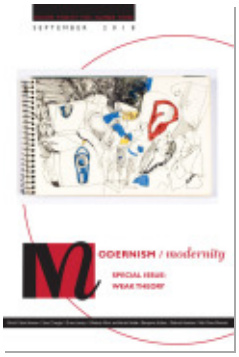

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> "I keep on typing the same typo: not obliterate but obliterature."
>
> —Kate Zambreno, *Heroines*[1]

In his magnum opus *Economy and Society*, Max Weber offers two contrasting types, the priest and the sorcerer, as the representative figures of religion and magic. The distinction, which serves to explain how religion differentiates itself from magic and thus legitimates itself as a modern institution, rests on a more general and more surprising division between the professional and the non-professional. What differentiates the priest from the sorcerer is his "professional equipment of special knowledge, fixed doctrine, and vocational qualifications."[2] Unlike the sorcerer, the priest acquires his authority from the rationalization of his training: his ties to an organized and regularized enterprise; his mastery of religious concepts (as opposed to the sorcerer's exercise of "personal gifts"); his perpetuation of a systematic ethic based on the doctrine in which he was schooled. This specialization and professionalism, as Weber argues elsewhere, is the "condition of any valuable work in the modern world."[3] In contrast to magic's "irrational means" and "purely empirical lore," the professionalization of the priest establishes religion's modernity (Weber, *Economy and Society*, 425). Yet as Weber acknowledges, there remains a fluidity between priest and sorcerer belied by strict typology. Although the nature of their learning is different, the sorcerer may be as deeply learned as the priest.

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In her short story "The Mark on the Wall," Virginia Woolf also contemplates the uneasy division between modernity and magic by injecting genealogy where Weber acknowledged fluidity:

> And what is knowledge? What are our learned men save the descendants of witches and hermits who crouched in caves and in woods brewing herbs, interrogating shrew-mice and writing down the language of the stars? And the less we honour them as our superstitions dwindle and our respect for beauty and health of mind increases . . . Yes, one could imagine a very pleasant world. A quiet, spacious world, with the flowers so red and blue in the open fields. A world without professors or specialists or house-keepers with the profiles of policemen.[4]

Later, in *A Room of One's Own*, after being blocked from entering Oxbridge's famous library, Woolf's narrator gazes at the library from outside its walls and imagines another version of that "quiet, spacious world" as she ponders what the campus had looked like in the time of those "witches and hermits": "Once, presumably, this quadrangle with its smooth lawns, its massive buildings, and the chapel itself was marsh too, where the grasses waved and the swine rootled."[5] Woolf's declarations would seem to denigrate knowledge, yet her nostalgia for a world without universities is irreducible to a simple rejection of modernity or professionalization.[6] Rather, she is interested in how "learned men" evolve from "witches and hermits." In Weber's words, she attends to the way in which "two contrasted types flow into one another," and what that flow has to say about the definitional politics of knowledge (*Economy and Society*, 425).

In drawing Weber and Woolf together, we observe how some of the most powerful accounts of (and anxieties over) modernity coalesce around the themes of occupation, knowledge, and expertise. In the early twentieth century, modernization became synonymous with professionalization and with the compartmentalized conception of knowledge on which it was based. Sociologist Talcott Parsons labeled that compartment a "'field' of knowledge and skill" in his 1938 address to the American Sociological Association, with the word field appearing in quotation marks (reminding us that the term was once strange).[7] The parceling of knowledge into fields or specialties had some egalitarian effects. For example, it challenged class hierarchies by allowing professionals to advise those of higher status who lacked their specific expertise.[8] But the cost of this egalitarianism was the extraction of what may be called the moral component or higher purpose of learning. Specialty knowledge shifted emphasis away from the achievement of holistic understanding (what Parsons calls "wisdom") toward the more modest goal of "technical competence" ("The Professions and Social Structure," 460). When Woolf longs for "a quiet, spacious world, with the flowers so red and blue in the open fields," one cannot help but hear her chafing against an increasingly administered world.

Woolf's inquiry into the disavowed roots of expertise is an implicit comment upon the gendered divide separating the male professional from the female amateur. Her major critical work on the subject, *Three Guineas* (1938), shows how the professions concentrate expertise in credentialed (predominantly) male bodies, and, in response, develops an amateur method that disperses expertise amongst uncredentialed female

ones. Woolf's deliberate amateurism in *Three Guineas*, an antiwar text that is also pointedly an excavation and collation of women's life-writing, anticipates the experimental criticism of contemporary writer Kate Zambreno. Zambreno's *Heroines* (2012) is a similarly hybrid work of cultural criticism and feminist memoir that recovers the women writers ("mad wives") marginalized by what she calls the "modernist memory project" (13).[9]

We regard the radically different historical circumstances of *Three Guineas* and *Heroines* as enabling comparison rather than foreclosing it. Zambreno solicits such contextual flexibility by casting herself in the dual role of "mad wife" and "literary executor of the dead and erased" (*Heroines*, 110). Zambreno's deep identification with modernist women writers opens up historical distance for analysis even as it reveals how much has changed between then and now. Unquestionably, the major feminist battles of Woolf's time were for basic civil rights and equalities, namely suffrage, access to higher education, and entrance into the professions (all driving themes of *Three Guineas* that are largely settled in *Heroines*). Yet *Three Guineas* and *Heroines* hail each other across the lines of a century precisely because of their attention to the persistence of institutional discrimination despite landmark legislative and policy changes. The methods may grow subtler and more insidious, but as both Woolf and Zambreno show with respect to women's writing, gender discrimination continues to manifest in material practices of recording and reputation building. They take advantage of the vernacular practices of their time (print scrapbooking for Woolf and blogging for Zambreno) to bring into relief the discriminatory gatekeeping practices that determine the recognition of valuable work, as in creative and intellectual labor, and valuable works, as in capital-L Literature. In *Heroines*, Zambreno thus mobilizes Woolf's amateur-professional distinction to offer a thorough critique of the institutional processes that diminish female artistry and unsex the most successful women writers, Woolf amongst them, even in the twenty-first century.

By comparing Woolf and Zambreno, we treat amateurism as an evolving ethos and style of criticism cognizant of the changing same of structural inequality, but also responsive to the distinct conditions under which inequality endures and must be fought. While our appeal for an amateur criticism might seem to fall squarely on the postcritical side of the critique/postcritique divide, it actually attempts to elude such simplified alliances by yoking the inappropriate and immoderate feelings of "love," invoked by Rita Felski, with the "faultfinding" of what Bruce Robbins deems "socially critical criticism."[10] If amateur criticism regards anything as parochial, it is the ideology of criticism as science. We derive from the works of Woolf and Zambreno a feminist alternative to this disciplinary fashioning of criticism so associated with the canonically-defined modernist era.[11] Modernist criticism as amateur blends the trivial with the serious, the disposable with the preserved. These formal choices draw from a lineage of feminist writing tactics, and show these tactics to be at the vanguard of an institutional critique that ties the professionalism of the university to larger capitalist transformations in the management of knowledge. Woolf and Zambreno turn to low-prestige genres and use unapologetically emotional voices to reflect as well as diag-

nose a range of twentieth-century intensifications in the corporatization of media, the privatization of information, and the casualization of labor.

Although the amateur and the professional stand as opposing and polemically conceived identities on the spectrums of expertise, *Three Guineas* and *Heroines* further illustrate how tenets of amateurism and professionalism have informed and altered one another across print and digital media platforms. They make compelling use of what, following Zambreno's coinage, we will call obliterature. Zambreno never explicitly theorizes the term, but rather introduces it as the compulsive repetition of a typo ("not obliterate but *obliterature*"). Obliterature's origin in the compulsive and the accidental speaks to its hazy relation to literature proper as signaled by the prefix: "ob-," meaning both toward and against, adjacent and oppositional. In Zambreno's symbolic typo, obliterature is an amateur riposte to the modernist memory project; it is a shadow formation of Literature, understood to be a premeditated practice and object of professionalized study. Obliterature draws attention to the gendered formation of literary value while also denoting the casual, minor, repurposed, and ephemeral writing expelled from literary criticism's traditional purview. Such writing might include letters to the editor, junk mail, diary entries and their twenty-first-century digital descendants: blog entries, comments on a newspaper or magazine site, Instagram posts, LiveJournals, Snapchats, Tumblrs, or tweets. Obliterature, fittingly enough, is also popular parlance for a "letter or e-mail written while drunk off your ass," the textual equivalent of a drunk dial—something written so quickly that it cannot possibly adhere to convention, will never be elevated to the status of art, is unlikely ever to be more than tenuously archived, and may even harbor ambivalence or regret with respect to remembrance.[12]

As a term born of typographic error, obliterature holds itself open to the possibility that error and even failure to achieve certain standards of correctness can be intellectually and aesthetically enabling. The concept, as we develop it in this article, explains the literary phenomenon of not being fully in control of one's words and the labor phenomenon of not being fully in control of one's work. These positions of what Sianne Ngai calls "suspended agency" present weakness as both a psychic state and a structural position in which the myth of the self-possessed individual starts to unravel.[13] Whether that lack of self-possession manifests in an affiliation with "spontaneous" art forms, as seen in Zambreno's criticism, or in the disregarding of authorial intention, as seen in the production and publishing history of *Three Guineas*, obliterature probes the irrational effects of rationalized knowledge production.

In addition to seeing reparative potential in the structural and stylistic politics of Woolf's and Zambreno's amateur criticism, we see in obliterature an opportunity to reanimate the modernist memory project under a weakly theoretical umbrella. We use the term to create a colloquy around the historically maligned categories of the feminine, the amateur, the popular, the journalistic, and the contingent. Still, we do not intend this colloquy to result in a synthesis of such categories under a new master heading. Nor do we offer a strict set of criteria by which to distinguish past or future written works as obliterature. To do so would be to reproduce the nominalist and exclusivist tendencies that we identify with the institutionalization of Literature. Even

though Zambreno's coinage is in direct response to the once restrictive institutional gatekeeping surrounding modernism, obliterature, as we deploy it, resists the reactive urge to create a counter-canon or a separatist movement.

The productive capacity of obliterature lies in its status as a conceptual metaphor, which signals in spatial and relational terms (recall -ob means toward and against) how mainstream literary institutions and subcultural literary communities arbitrate value. Canonical and obliterary works orbit around one another, calling the canon's power and obliterature's powerlessness into question precisely through their proximity. An "orbit" usually conjures up the image of one celestial body revolving around another, but, in fact, two bodies may also revolve around a shared center of mass (known as a barycenter). Reading the obliterary and the canonical as barycentric, or locked in mutual orbit, presents the discipline of literary studies with its own version of astronomy's two-body problem. As we delineate the relationship between obliterature and the canon in this article, we make it "an open question what is primary, what is determinative, what counts as the center and what counts as the margins. . . . so that what appears primary in one locale can indeed lapse into secondariness in another."[14] This quotation, borrowed from Wai Chee Dimock, explains weak theory's epistemological difference from a strong theory that would posit a definitive, authoritative account of either the primacy of the canon or the subversive potential of the obliterary in forging modernist memory. As Woolf's and Zambreno's accrual of institutional prestige demonstrates, obliterature may become literature proper, absorbed into the institutional apparatus that is thought to obscure and obliterate emergent cultural production. Dimock's determination to hold unresolved the "open question" of primary and secondary literary forms leads us to re-describe the modernist memory project, not in terms of exclusivist ideology or resistant practices, but as a weak theoretical project in which dominant, forgotten, and emergent strains of modernism rotate in primacy and continually modify one another.

Born Scrapped

No one doubts that Virginia Woolf now enjoys a secure place in the modernist canon, yet *Three Guineas* has historically occupied an uncertain position within her *oeuvre*. Poorly received by many reviewers and disliked by her fellow Bloomsberries, the text has endured a longstanding subordination to her novels and her more warmly-received critical work, *A Room of One's Own*.[15] The two works' respective topics help explain their differential reception. As a woman writer, Woolf was deemed qualified to speak on *Room*'s themes of craft, tradition, and financial independence. But what expertise qualified her to speak out against war? Woolf flouts the demand for qualifications, and makes that demand a symptom of the double standards at the heart of English patriarchy. Woolf suggests that professional experts need the insights of amateurs, for who else but an amateur could see how the credentialed were implicated in the making of war. Embracing her position as an uncredentialed outsider, Woolf undertook the production of what would become (by way of error, failed projects, and major reimagination) *Three Guineas* by conducting research using an amateur method—scrapbooking. The

choice of so trivial a method for so urgent a theme places expertise at the embattled center of *Three Guineas*.

As both an expressive medium and archival activity, scrapbooking has its roots in the making of commonplace books, a tradition that dates back to the fifteenth century. The major compositional difference between scrapbooking and commonplacing is cutting and pasting texts versus copying them down. Of course, these are not firm distinctions—nor are there firm functions delimiting the scrapbook. As Ellen Gruber Garvey argues, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scrapbooks (like commonplace books before them) could serve as "adjuncts to professional careers," contribute to the material culture of fandom, or in a more political vein, allow "people in positions of relative powerlessness" to make "a place for themselves and their communities by finding, sifting, analyzing, and recirculating writing that mattered to them."[16] An alternative practice of quotation and editing, scrapbooking for Woolf is not about savoring the authority of the written word; it is about asserting the disenfranchisement of women through the manipulation of knowledge in the deliberate form of cheap, sometimes free, printed matter.[17]

Three Guineas had its genesis in three large scrapbooks, which Woolf constructed over seven years (1931–37). The books are a vernacular archive, bringing together cuttings from newspaper articles, pamphlets, and photos with handwritten and typed transcriptions of quotations from books. In their form, they embed decisions about the selection, preservation, arrangement, and recirculation of knowledge before writing for public consumption ever begins. As Merry M. Pawlowski notes, Woolf rarely mentions her scrapbooking in her letters and diaries.[18] This relative silence has made it possible to minimize their theoretical and artistic value even while maintaining their historical and preparatory value.[19] Yet the scrapbooks offer more than preparatory work for the thwarted "essay-novel" *The Pargiters* and the revamped project of *Three Guineas*. They supply inspiration for the formal design and aesthetic strategy of the published work. Scrapbooking informs the work's structure of address and strategies of textual arrangement; it incorporates the democratically distributed creativity of cutting and pasting into Woolf's biting rebuke of the oligarchic hoarding of educational opportunity in a patriarchal English society. In our view, the unpublished scrapbooks, amongst the many "reading notebooks" Woolf kept, are not media to be subsumed and rendered obsolete by the written work that is *Three Guineas*.[20] They leave their obliterate traces all over the published book. This semi-public, semi-encrypted presence belies any easy hierarchy between excerpting others' words and creating one's own. It also works to bridge the gendered divide between the literal and the literary where the literal denotes (and demeans) the preparatory, often feminized, physical work of gathering materials and the literary denotes (and elevates) the inspired, often masculinized, mental work of inventing new artistic forms.[21] The visibility of scrapbooking makes for a specifically female model of read-write authorship in *Three Guineas*—one that is particularly appropriate to interrogating the role of gendered power in the joint production of specialized knowledge with militarized violence.

This interrogation begins politely but immediately: Woolf adopts an explicitly feminized, amateurized rhetorical style reflective of the educational and economic discrepancy between English men and women. Casting herself not as the inaugurator of a conversation, but as the recipient of an invitation to speak to the question: "How in your opinion are we to prevent war?," Woolf accepts the invitation to express her opinion by reflecting upon the conditions constraining female opinion.[22] Unlike the barrister, "an educated man," Woolf has very little "paid-for" education and no credentials authorizing her speech (*Three Guineas*, 5). With less access to the specialized knowledge of "politics, of international relations, of economics" that one would expect to ground a discussion of the causes of war, Woolf has no other choice but to speak and to write "amateurishly" (8, 154).

Her amateur criticism is marked by belatedness, deflection, and procrastination (the first line of *Three Guineas*: "Three years is a long time to leave a letter unanswered, and your letter has been lying without an answer even longer than that" [5]). Woolf uses such indirect and self-effacing strategies as a form of subterfuge, smuggling in etiologies of war that professional experts, working on the topic in isolation from more generalized forms of social critique, are unable to see. Expert blindness to tacit knowledge—the cultural attitudes and social mores that contribute to what Woolf calls "atmosphere"—leaves unexamined diffuse but integral tributaries to war. Such tributaries encompass the major institutions of public life: universities, professions, religion, athletics. These spheres form the bedrock of a patriarchal culture not just by systematically excluding women but also by cultivating competition over cooperation and contrasting the glory of victory with the shame of defeat. For Woolf, such an atmosphere breeds the "feelings that lead to war" and "induce young men to become soldiers" (27). Such a conclusion might seem qualitative at best and unfounded at worst—a sweeping cultural observation without the facts, such as army recruitment numbers, to back it up. But Woolf's observations are bolstered by empirical investigation of a deliberately unscientific and superficial kind. Rather than count soldiers, she counts the medals, ribbons, bars, and feathers that they wear. She explains clothing's "advertisement function" and claims that the "sartorial" and "hygienic splendor" of ceremonial militarism performs its own kind of recruitment, its own deflection of war's horror and filth (27).

Through these and other meticulous descriptions, Woolf's cultural critique partakes in a historically specific and stigmatized tradition of women's amateurism that Bonnie Smith traces to the professionalization of history as a university discipline in the nineteenth century. Smith's remarkable study shows how professional historians developed disciplinary standards by cutting themselves off from a range of writings deemed low, trivial, and superficial. This process of separating professional history from amateur accounts was, crucially, a gendered one, and the formal techniques it devalued reflected the techniques most associated with women's writing and topics. The panorama, which allowed women to situate travels or the domestic arts within a larger "pictorial frame," became subordinate to the "linear importance of modern history."[23] Surface description of historical actors—their "physiognomy, comportment, and general aura"—was trivialized by professionals who felt the profundity of history

was located in precisely the opposite: the abstract (read: impersonal and disembodied) mechanisms of causality (Smith, *Gender of History*, 53). Such techniques of what Smith calls "high amateurism" recall the genre of the scrapbook as far as they seem to invest more energy in the synchronic than the diachronic, the visual arranging of material rather than the dissecting of it. Yet, everywhere in *Three Guineas*, Woolf redirects the visual trappings of amateurism onto symptomatic or structural critique—nowhere more so than when she links repeated textual references to photographs of "dead bodies" and "ruined houses" to actual photographs of the institutions she indicts for war (14). She uses surface to get at the deep occlusions of institutional consciousness, namely the discrepant conditions under which expertise is acquired, disseminated, and rewarded. Rather than aspire toward specialized knowledge herself, Woolf suggests that preventing war and promoting pacifism require the intellectual effort of the "untrained mind" (8). Such a mind stays amateur, which is to say, it does not narrow its focus. It wanders and it gleans.

Gleaning is a term acquired from agriculture. It refers to the practice of collecting leftover grain from a harvest, and as Garvey tells us, serves as a particularly evocative metaphor for the activity of scrapbooking—one used by scrapbook makers themselves. An activity of and on the fringe, gleaning derives particular meaning and value from eclecticism. The "gleaner . . . takes what is available, and puts it to her or his own uses."[24] This is certainly what Woolf does in *Three Guineas* when her roundabout response to the barrister, known only as "Sir," leads her to quote variously from what is available: women's diaries, travel narrative, newspaper articles, Whitaker's Almanac, biographies, memoirs, pamphlets, and institutional reports. Much of this textual material harkens back to the reading notebooks where Woolf transcribes quotations onto index cards, clips printed ephemera, and sometimes (as with *The Martyrdom of Madrid* pamphlet) pastes documents in their entirety (figs. 1, 2, and 3). The scrapbooks thus provide the architecture through which Woolf elaborates the "active method" of *Three Guineas* to "consider and compare" (15).

Such consideration and comparison unfolds through the language of tangibility. As if in a courtroom, Woolf argues by placing, laying, and copying printed materials before her interlocutors, first the barrister and later the honorary treasurers of a women's college rebuilding fund and an organization dedicated to helping women enter the professions. The following examples illustrate how the material practice of scrapbooking permeates the comparative metaphors of *Three Guineas*:

1) Therefore let us place them before you, warning you that they are taken only from such records as are available to an outsider and from the annals of the university which is not your own—Cambridge. (35)
2) Let us then lay your letter asking for help to prevent war, before the independent, the mature, those who are earning their livings in the professions. (50)
3) The honorary treasurer's glance seems to rest upon a little scrap of paper upon which were written two dull little facts which, since they have some bearing upon the question we are discussing, how the daughters of educated men who are earning their living in the professions can help you to prevent war, may be copied here. (55)

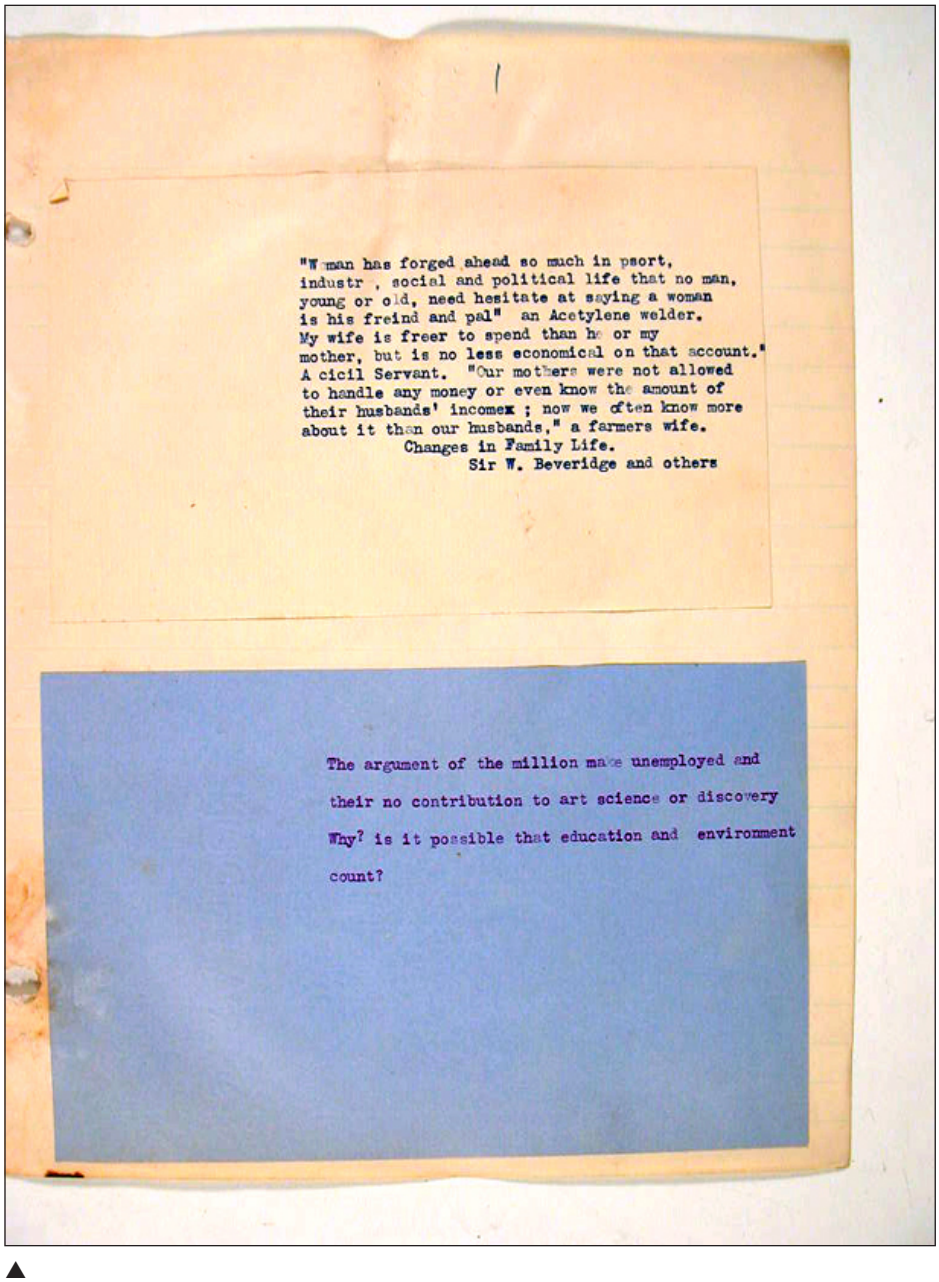

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Fig. 1. Typed notes pasted to the page. The first is a question from *Changes in Family Life*, by Sir W. Beveridge. The second appears to be a note Woolf took in response to an unknown source. From *Three Guineas Reading Notebooks*, vol. 1, page 1. Courtesy of The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Estate of Virginia Woolf.

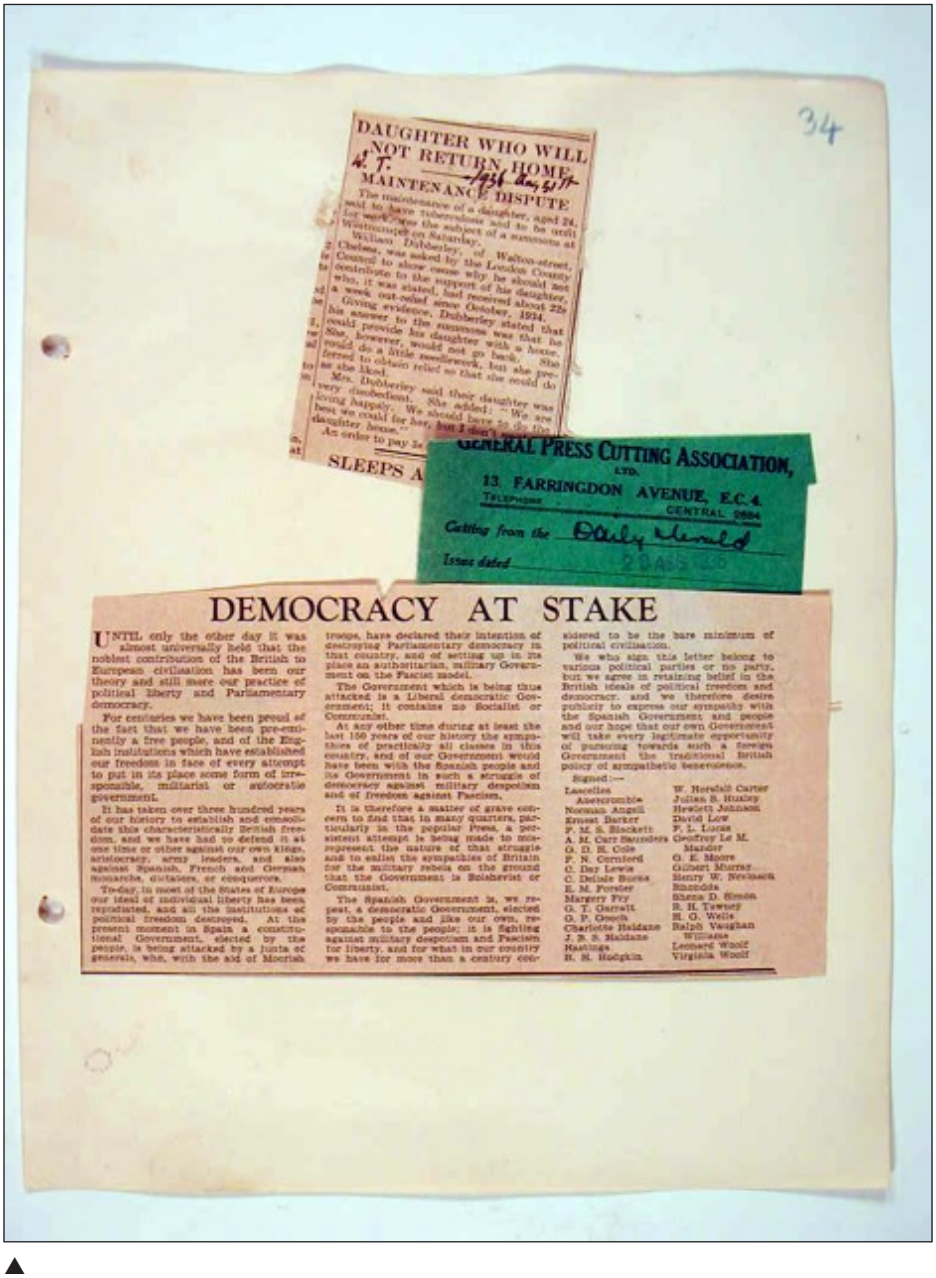

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Fig. 2. Newspaper clippings and a label from the General Press Cutting Association. From *Three Guineas Reading Notebooks*, vol. 2, page 34. Courtesy of The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Estate of Virginia Woolf.

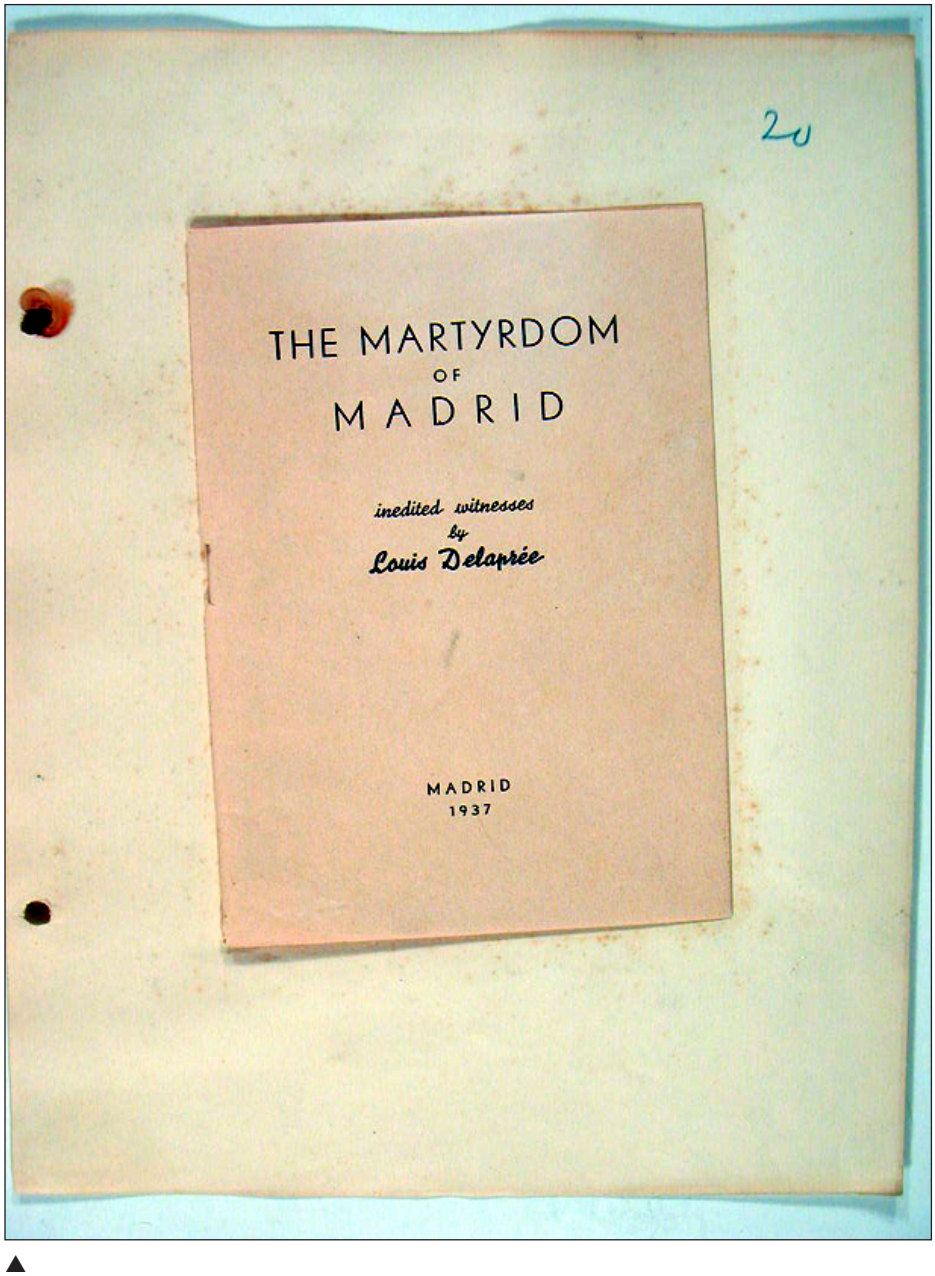

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Fig. 3. Copy of Louis Delaprée's pamphlet *The Martyrdom of Madrid*. From *Three Guineas Reading Notebooks*, volume 3, page 20. Courtesy of The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Estate of Virginia Woolf.

 Woolf brings disparate claims and causes together, money for women's uplift and money to prevent war, by recirculating printed information—be they formal request letters or facts transcribed onto scraps of paper—amongst her unsuspecting interlocutors. Such recirculation enables information to cross interest groups rather than remaining insulated within the groups to whom they have immediate relevance or applicability. The concentration of eclectic cuttings in the scrapbooks facilitates the rhetorical diffusion of printed material in the written and published work as recirculation becomes Woolf's way of speaking across the ellipses of European war and English patriarchy. Every time Woolf lays or places a letter before someone outside its intended audience, she reveals a network of linkages that were unapparent to the letter-sender before. She thus forces her interlocutors, especially "Sir," out of the echo chamber of the like-minded.

The most obvious trace of Woolf's material practice of scrapbooking is found in *Three Guineas*'s five photographs: a military general, four heralds blowing their horns (with a policeman behind them), a university procession of men in academic gowns, a judge followed by several barristers, and an archbishop. That these "illustrations" (as they are described in the list included in the first Hogarth Press edition) were for so long omitted from editions of *Three Guineas* demonstrates the way in which such visual materials—the scrap, the clip, the photograph—are deemed preparatory and ancillary to the more significant textual argument. Several recent editions have restored these original illustrations and the annotated edition includes not only the photographs but a compensatory appendix containing selections from the scrapbooks in which *Three Guineas* initially took shape.[25]But Woolf's original inclusion of these photographs, especially when contrasted with her pointed exclusion of the "atrocity photographs," is a deliberate exercise in considering and comparing evidence.[26] As Jane Marcus suggests, Woolf refuses to reprint photos that would inflame feelings of violence and recirculate the spectacle of brutalized bodies. Instead, she compares the reactions such graphic images stir in different audiences by describing them —what they show, but also how they enter almost benignly into English domestic life. "Here then on the table before us are photographs," she writes, in yet another example of the material evidence contributing to the structure of *Three Guineas* (14). Woolf and her interlocutors constitute the "us"; they are the joint audience for these photographs. On the page before her, however—the page she shares with *us*, her reading public, in the actual text of *Three Guineas*—is a very different set of photographs. This set, inseparable from Woolf's descriptions of "horror and disgust" at the atrocity photographs her readers cannot see, take on those viscerally negative feelings (14). Through their proximity to the descriptions of the war photographs, the institutions of patriarchy represented by the photographs included in the text become accessories to atrocity.

Scrapbooking offers Woolf the visual, rhetorical, and material strategies by which to do more than simply include female voices in public debate; she takes aim at public dialogue's existing structures of address and exchange. Rather than isolate foreign and domestic policy questions, she fuses distinct donation requests in order to combat the perception that preventing war and promoting gender equality are distinct causes. This move can be tendentious when it leads Woolf to minimize the differences that inform

pacifist and feminist campaigns and to indict institutional bodies of which she is an indirect beneficiary (by virtue of belonging to the class she calls "daughters of educated men").[27] However, it also combats what she calls the "hypnotic power of dominance" by restoring connective tissue to segmented spheres of knowledge (*Three Guineas,* 177). The eclecticism of Woolf's amateurism enables her to provide a social portrait wider and more holistic than a professionalized disciplinary study focused on a single issue or policy question. Such a holism, with its emphasis on making distinct groups apparent to and accountable to one another, serves the project of preventing war just as, in Woolf's estimation, the siloing of knowledge into university and government offices serves the project of perpetuating it. This is because the tendency to isolate authority and expertise from accountability to an uninitiated and differentiated public precipitates the belligerent contradictions of the liberal state. Those contradictions—Michael Taussig, following Weber, calls them "magic"—put a premium on individual freedom while at the same time curtailing that freedom through an institutionalized patriarchy and unwavering militarism so endemic to England's top legal, religious, and educational institutions as to be invisible to its professional class (its "Sirs").[28]

Three Guineas asks readers to see the pillars of English liberalism, particularly the universities, less as guarantors of freedom than as gatekeepers of information and influence. Woolf famously embraces her status as an outsider to these institutions, but that polemical embrace is couched within recurring and decidedly less glorious images of lurking before them and within them. Women "haunt the sacred gates" of Oxford and Cambridge; those admitted into such august institutions "linger" round newly discovered "forbidden places" once inside (*Three Guineas*, 35, 50). The systematic exclusion or diminution of women within English higher education leads Woolf toward a vision of women's education as surreptitious and profane: "culture for the great majority of educated men's daughters must still be that which is acquired outside the sacred gates, in public libraries or in private libraries, whose doors by some unaccountable oversight have been left unlocked" (107). More autodidactic than systematic, the education of women is marked by trespass and transgression. For women, knowledge is stolen property and reading an activity done on borrowed time.

Yet rather than bemoan women's lack of access to libraries, Woolf ironizes it by suggesting that the libraries themselves are inadequate: the product of a knowledge-making apparatus that discursively keeps women out. In contemplating the question of whether women can enter the professions without becoming part of the system she condemns, she consults the library shelves only to find them curiously lacking:

> The question we put to you, lives of the dead, is how can we [daughters of educated men] enter the professions and yet remain civilized human beings; human beings, that is, who wish to prevent war?
>
> This time let us turn to the lives not of men but of women in the nineteenth century—to the lives of professional women. But there would seem to be a gap in your library, Madam. There are no lives of professional women in the nineteenth century. (91)

 Woolf's wry presentation of what is not there conveys professional women's discursive death. That obliteration captures the consequences of the professionalization of history in the second half of the nineteenth century: the birth of the amateur as such. As Smith points out, the field's disciplinary history cohered around a scientific method that explicitly separated professional historians from their feminized and maligned "amateur" relatives.[29] So too the study of literature became a profession by relegating those without the appropriate university credentials to the realm of the inexpert.[30] These so-called amateurs—not only women like Woolf, but creative writers, antiquarians, members of author societies and book clubs—were great lovers of literature, but in the age of expertise, that only cemented their unprofessional status.[31] In Miriam Bailin's work on Frederick Furnivall, the founder of seven different nineteenth-century literary societies, and Carolyn Dinshaw's writing about self-identified medievalists (without university affiliations) from the nineteenth century through the present day, these amateurs are overly attached to, if not fully obsessed by, their subjects.[32] The criticism they produce is suffused with desire and other "unprofessional" affects; it is neither professionally credentialed nor tonally appropriate for academic scholarship. When published, it is recognized as something other than professional literary criticism (either academic or journalistic), not criticism proper but appreciation, tribute, memoir, or creative nonfiction.

This genre trouble persists today; Zambreno's *Heroines*, to which we now turn, resists easy classification and works in several different registers. Its publication in the Semiotext(e) Active Agents series at the MIT Press—a series from a once independent press that is now distributed by an academic publisher —marks this generic and stylistic multiplicity. Semiotext(e) left its partnership with Autonomedia, an independent publisher specializing in radical art, media, and politics, in 2001, when the current distribution agreement with MIT Press began. Semiotext(e) is hardly the only press to join a larger publisher in order to stay afloat; approximately two-thirds of the books published annually in the United States come through the various imprints of the "Big Five" publishing houses (which, until the merger of Penguin and Random House in 2013, had been the "Big Six").[33]

In the light of these larger trends toward conglomeration in publishing, Semiotext(e)'s move to MIT functionally strengthens its status as an autonomous, adventurous press in an increasingly corporatized landscape. And this institutional hybridity has left its mark on the structure of *Heroines* itself. Formally, the book bears little resemblance to an academic monograph or collection of essays; instead, it engages in a hybrid creative-critical mode of knowledge production through its fragmented collection of prose-poetry, argumentative prose, extended quotations, vernacular lectures, feminist and literary theory, and confessional writing. It contests the gendered idiom of mastery and the privileged discourse of professional critique even as it models a deeply learned engagement with its material. In Zambreno's hands, amateurism undisciplines intellectualism and moves it beyond the institutions of the university and the major publishing houses. Expertise is found elsewhere, and the line between the professional and amateur literary theorist, like that between the critical and creative writer, goes

blurry.[34] In its bibliographic note, *Heroines* is described as both "a work of synthesis," which sounds like the discourse of professional scholarship, and "a sort of stewing upon a vast number of things," which decidedly does not (Zambreno, *Heroines*, 299). Although she admits that she does not always cite her sources within the text itself, Zambreno provides an extensive scholarly bibliography that contains key works of biography, literary theory, and cultural history alongside primary literary texts written by modernism's "mad wives." Yet because *Heroines* was widely reviewed in the popular press and virtually ignored in scholarly journals, it is implicitly understood to be the work of an amateur critic—a lover of literature, but not an expert in it.[35]

The Madwoman in the Archive

Drawn in part from her now private blog, *Frances Farmer Is My Sister*, Zambreno's *Heroines* has two dedications: the first to Suzanne Scanlon, a friend, fellow blogger, and contemporary writer, and the second to "the girls who still seem, as they did in Virginia Woolf's time, so fearfully depressed" (*Heroines*, 7). It is thus Zambreno herself who suggests the pairing we have taken up in this article, who provides an explicit link not only between Woolf and herself but between the "fearfully depressed" girls then and now, nearly all of whom have been forgotten or will never be known, and who have undertaken the amateurized intellectual work of scrapbooking and blogging. These are not equivalent activities—the relationship between Woolf's scrapbooks and *Three Guineas* is not exactly analogous to the relationship between Zambreno's blog and *Heroines*, as we will see—but a similar spirit of feminist activism is associated with each method. In this second dedication, modernism is recoded as "Virginia Woolf's time," and Woolf, as modernism's premier "mad wife," serves as a gateway to that legion of women ("girls") who have been neither memorialized nor canonized. So many academic recovery projects depend upon the extensive archives of Woolf and other "major" writers; their papers are nearly always better preserved than those of more "minor" writers, and they therefore give us access—in brief snippets of letters and throwaway comments in diaries—to the otherwise forgotten lives of other "mad wives." In this way, the history of amateurism appears as scraps in the professionally-kept archive of the canonical.

Heroines is particularly invested in who we might think of as amateur modernists: the women who lived and wrote alongside the now canonical male names we will not rehearse here. With the exception of Woolf, who is now a mainstay of the undergraduate modernist syllabus, these are women who have been downplayed in and at times even omitted from decades of literary history. These women—Djuna Barnes, Jane Bowles, Vivien(ne) Eliot, Zelda Fitzgerald, the Baroness Elsa von Freytag Loringhoven, Anaïs Nin, Sylvia Plath, Jean Rhys, and many others—are Zambreno's "mad wives," and they constitute her feminist rebuttal to what she sees as the institutionalized patriarchy of modernism. It is worth noting that this critique is itself biased and imperfect, as it implicitly denies the presence of modernist women writers of color. As Roxane Gay

asked in an early review, "What does it say when the majority of a woman's heroines are white, heterosexual women?"[36] A worthy question that reminds us of the attendant forgetting accompanying every act of reclamation, every attempt to rectify the past. Although *Heroines* is guilty of its own blindness, Zambreno is reflective about the politics of memory and the "myth-making" that is central to the history of modernism: "[W]ho gets to be remembered? Whose writing is preserved and whose is not?" (*Heroines*, 109). In an early blog post, Zambreno argues that this "myth-making" should be seen as the concrete result of an editorial process: "the not reading and writing, the stages of silence, of being erased, the experience of being edited, of editing oneself."[37] Modernism has always been a carefully edited field, and Zambreno wants those generations of editorial work to be visible, questionable, and open to retrenchment.

As mentioned in our introduction, throughout *Heroines*, Zambreno thinks of herself less as an author than as an executor charged with guarding the legacy of her subjects. She traces the "disappearance or willful destruction" of modernist women writers in the archives:

> Jane Bowles' fragments trapped in a notebook begging to be freed. . . . Vivien(ne)'s notebooks mouldering in the basement of the Bodleian. Many went up in a garage fire. Others ominously went missing. We do not have entrance to the last three years of Sylvia Plath's journaled life. One of these bound journals "disappeared." Ted burned the second "maroon-backed ledger," containing entries up to three days before her suicide. For the children. We are told 1919 was the only year Vivien(ne) kept a diary during her married life. Is that true? (*Heroines*, 111)

In this vision of modernism, the "mad wives" and mistresses have been actively suppressed, their archives obliterated. In their time, their husbands, partners, and family members did not often consider their personal, diaristic writing to be worthy of publication or even preservation, and in the decades that followed, they have been unevenly recovered by scholars of modernism.

Yet despite Zambreno's avowed sense of herself as a "literary executor," she is frequently stymied by the gatekeeping mechanisms of academic credentialing. On her blog, she details her several attempts to begin a PhD program in literature—an aspiration questioned by several commenters.[38] Despite her "obsession with the modernists" and her desire to gain the credentials necessary to teach literature courses at the university level, she is repeatedly rejected.[39] As she continues to read and write about her "obsession," she contacts the Bodleian Library at Oxford to track down Vivien(ne) Eliot's unpublished texts, but they refuse to help her (in part because she does not have permission from the Eliot estate, and in part because they themselves do not have a Vivien(ne) Eliot "expert" who could quickly sort through the material). The irony here is almost too much to bear: Zambreno cannot access this material herself because she is not a professional, academic literary critic. To the Bodleian's knowledge, there has not been sufficient academic interest in Vivien(ne) Eliot to produce someone who would be recognizable to them as an expert on the material. Yet Zambreno cannot—despite repeated attempts—gain entry to the PhD programs necessary to qualify her

as precisely such an expert. A cultivated interest in T. S. Eliot may get you admitted to a PhD program; an immoderate obsession with Vivien(ne) Eliot will not.

Like the "mad wives" she returns to again and again, Zambreno is enmeshed in academic and publishing scenes unable to see their custodial bias and unwilling to acknowledge the gender politics at work in their arbitrations of aesthetic and social value. A haunter of the "sacred gates" of the university and the archive, Zambreno turns away from these institutions toward a digital media platform with a much lower bar. With Blogger, a free publishing tool (launched in 1999 and bought by Google in 2003) that allows anyone to set up a blog and link it to others' blogs, she connected up with other feminist writers who found themselves marginalized within various institutions of literature. At its most utopian, the subcultural feminist blogosphere provided a venue for what Zambreno called "this communion, this conversation, this casual liquidness, the superlative nature, that is generative and affirming as opposed to dismissive, that uses our own language instead of theirs" (*Heroines*, 281). Reviews of *Heroines* often comment on its "bloggy" style—a description that irks Zambreno because "90% of the book is not from the blog, never appeared on the blog . . . at least a good quarter of the book was written before I was even aware of blogs."[40] Despite this, the so-called "blogginess" of *Heroines* stems not only from the book's content but also from its method. Like her predecessors in the New Narrative movement, Zambreno does not shy away from including bits and pieces of her own subjective experience into the text as she "resuscitates" the mad wives (fig. 4).[41] Indeed, for Zambreno, "oversharing [is] a radical act."[42]

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the girl who cried. wolf.

Maybe there's something sick about all this confessionalism. I think there was always the essayist-me, the self I allowed to be revealed in my essays, online, in revelations about my quotidian or my past as it related to some inquiry or text. But there was a distance, still with the essayist-me, one that perhaps I allowed myself to reveal/revel in more in the essay collection. Lately online way too much of the Real has burst through, except curiously enough this most broadcast instance of the Real was fraudulent - the panicked message claiming that I had been assaulted in London, in a shaky poorly written missive begging for money - begging to be seen. If it was true it would have been a freakout of monstrous proportions - hit Send. And then what happened was a sort of rupturing through of the Real, I had to come out- not the author-I, but the I as I've conducted myself in public, as well in private - in an attempt to bandage the situation. Someone mentioned to me that I must feel like I'm being punished. Of course there's this sense that I've written too much about the private in the public sphere - that I've overflowed with too much self, in many ways a carefully chosen theatrical self but in other ways a raw immediate self.

The fraudulent message was brilliant. I still keep reading it. It implicates me absolutely. The girl who cried and cried and wolfed everything down and vomited everything up. There was always the sliver of a chance the message was true, and how could it not be, since I am often so depressed and desperate online? It is a form letter - it has been sent before - but felt so much more personal somehow coming ostensibly from me. An identity theft that morphed into a freakout about my own identity, how others used to see me, still might see me, the damaged damaged girl, broken and taped up again. A colleague at the creative writing program where I will be teaching originally received it - but I think people are far less likely to think an accomplished man was going to write this desperate cry for help crying as he writes it. As I am a girl - was a girl - was a fucked fucked up girl - people are way more likely to wonder how abject and broken I still am, wonder for a split second whether it was true, whether I had done this colossally damaging thing - not being mugged, but desperately writing anyone I knew for help. And in my response to the theft and manipulation of my public identity, I felt myself a girl losing it in public, which is everything I write to in my novel Green Girl. The spectacle of the unraveling woman. In a strange way I felt like Lindsey Lohan, the burst of the Real as I watched her receive her sentence in the courtroom - this is not reality television this is not fake she is not acting. Those are real tears she tries to cry behind the curtain of her hands a sort of shield. All of a sudden she's a pathetic fucked up girl who is punished so publicly, disciplined so publicly, for being a toxic girl. Look at her losing it in public.

▲

Fig. 4. Kate Zambreno, "the girl who cried. wolf.," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), August 10, 2010. Courtesy of Kate Zambreno.

Undertaken as an act of communion with her readers, this radical oversharing veers into the unprofessional deliberately and with an eye toward revaluing women's writing. Zambreno's defense of the political value of such oversharing implicitly links her to a long feminist history of reclaiming the personal as political.[43] But she also revitalizes and remediates a style of intensely confessional writing that some feminist critics have found difficult to embrace. Toward the end of *Heroines*, she calls attention to the way in which women's diaries are too often "considered an inferior form of writing by both critics and the culture-at-large": even critics like Elizabeth Hardwick and Simone de Beauvoir "[categorize] the diarist as the amateur, not the professional" (*Heroines*, 275–76). Zambreno's insistent diaristic intertwining of the personal, the theoretical, and the political asks her readers to value the qualities of the amateur at least as much as those of the professional—but it also asks them to take seriously the excessive emotion and deliberate displays of immaturity that are frequently linked to feminized, even girlish, forms of expression.

In what she calls her "subsubcommunity of literary blogs . . . many of us also read and write like girls":

> It is perhaps not "serious" criticism, but intensely personal and emotional. A new sort of subjectivity is developing online—vulnerable, desirous, well-versed in both pop culture and contemporary writing and our literary ancestors. . . . We read, intensely and emotionally, like Emma Bovaries. We read like girls, often prone to passion and superlatives—passing around books like love letters in the mail. These spaces operate as safe havens to be all sorts of identities at once, to be excessive, to feel and desire deeply. (279)

To read like a girl, or throw like a girl, or run like a girl, is to do it the wrong way. But Zambreno reclaims this girlish method as distinct from both patriarchal and more maturely feminist modes of critical engagement. She is far from alone in this: from HBO's *Girls* and Issa Rae's web series *The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl* to the rise of the interdisciplinary field of Girl Studies within the academy, being girly is now getting a different kind of attention. The growth of Girl Studies is in part a reaction to the adult-oriented nature of most Women's Studies curricula. As Mary Celeste Kearney notes, "feminists have a lengthy tradition of uneasy identification and, sometimes, disidentification with girls, which unfortunately has led many women activists to believe, albeit often unconsciously, that girls are irrelevant to feminist politics and scholarship."[44] Encouraging and participating in this (subsub)culture of girlishness, Zambreno introduces, indeed overshares, the intimate details of her life as part and parcel of her careful curation of literary theory and cultural history.

"Oversharing" becomes radical when the performance of sheer abundance and the adoption of naiveté ("like Emma Bovaries") become intellectual stances against professional socialization. Refusing to abide by the scientific method of critique or its impersonal codes of conduct, Zambreno displays a self-conscious sense of embarrassment while also revealing her familiarity with Flaubert. Her off-kilter manner contributes to an esoteric environment in which embarrassment is not only permissible but also a learned way of engaging with the high culture of the modernist canon.

A community of "oversharing" is forged as its members blog about their relationship to reading and writing. In other words, oversharing is about how members share in addition to what they share—form as well as content. Zambreno writes in a collection of associated fragments rather than mounting a single strong argument. She describes her method as "some sort of formula of (insert autobiographical scene here) + essaying on the outside" (fig. 5; Zambreno, "WTF is an essay"). The theoretical is always interrupted by personal—sometimes bodily—history; Zambreno not only refuses to write in the impersonal idiom of professional literary criticism, she seems constitutively incapable of doing so. It's not that it would be impossible to finish the sentence "In *Heroines*, Zambreno argues . . . ," but Zambreno makes it nearly impossible to finish that sentence with any finality. Instead, she collects, she juxtaposes, and she annotates, resisting the temptation to develop a strong theory of feminist modernist studies. Like Woolf before her, she cuts and pastes, arranges and rearranges, "scissorizes" and re-saves as a means of acting out and preserving her obsessions. Zambreno and Woolf remediate print and digital culture as a way of compensating for the lack of institutional experts on the topics that they—and other women—care about. Their chosen methods of literary production eschew identification with professional expertise or masterful authorship. Instead, they draw on the low-prestige resources of mass media culture to present feminist criticism as the distributed knowledge of so many semi-anonymous reader-writers.[45] Such obliterate criticism, as it takes shape in the digital age, not only stages participation by reclaiming and collating the voices of forgotten female reader-writers (as with Woolf's *Three Guineas*); it counts on the actual participation of contemporary readers to add value to the work and to give oversharing a vitally collectivist edge. Rather than being asked to digest a fully-formed, didactic argument or witness an uninterrupted confession, readers of Zambreno's blog, through the comments section, asserted a presence in and, at times, even exerted some pressure over what Zambreno would write and share next (fig. 6).

Nowhere is such a pressure clearer than in the transformation of Zambreno's critical project over time and over a series of blog entries punctuated by regular comments by a core group of readers. She began her blog in December 2009, and while her devoted readership grew slowly over time, Zambreno confesses that she initially thought of *Francis Farmer* as her "online notebook" rather than her blog.[46] Years earlier, her "apprenticeship as a writer" had begun with what she described as "an elaborate notebooking system," and she first used *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* as a digital version of one of these notebooks (Zambreno, *Heroines*, 273). This easy transition from paper scrapbook to virtual blog is hardly surprising. As Garvey has observed, "the 'cut and paste' terminology used by computer programs and applications reflects the history of scrapbook making: the icons at the top of our computer screens refer to the formerly literal practice of cutting and pasting as part of writing" ("Writing with Scissors," 21). The remediation of scrapbooks into notebook-blog derives from the understanding that "pieces of information—whether in the form of articles, books, or snippets—are detachable, movable, and classifiable under multiple headings" (21). The relative ease of the elaborate online notebook, and the way in which its comments sections soon

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WTF is an essay

I have now been meandering around this essay on Barbara Loden for three months. I have carried it under my skin. I have thought about it, I like to take it out and look at it, dream about it, take walks meditating on it, but I can't bring myself to really write it.

I think I'm at this point of wandering/wondering about the essay form. I love the essay but I am unsure about the formalized essay and what I can contribute to it. I think, like the novel, it's a really open form with so many possibilities. But I want to break it or try something new with it and I find myself relapsing into old forms. But I also always told myself, some sort of prior coming to consciousness—that if a form or styles comes easily, allows me to write, than that is wonderful, to keep with that. But I cannot seem to keep with it. I feel in Heroines I developed some sort of formula of (insert autobiographical scene here) + essaying on the outside. I don't want to slip back into the rote ness of needing to include the literal material self and my quotidian in an essay. And yet, I feel really drawn to actually writing the quotidian in an essay, to take what I've learned from these weird experiments on the blog.

An essay has to be more than "insert autobiography here." Or "insert piece of theory here."

Small point—every review or mention on Heroines has mentioned its "blogginess." I don't like "bloggy" as an adjective to describe writing. Queasiness. What is "bloggy"? It sounds like—"chatty." Ooh, death knell. "Chatty." And it's ahistorical too, perhaps something I've supported—when 90% of the book is not from the blog, never appeared on the blog. And—at least a good quarter of the book was written before I was even aware of blogs. I feel in such a rush to fix it every interview I'm doing I'm trying to articulate and differentiate, enough so that I feel like saying to self: Shut up already. And yet I bring it up now, because it is twitching in me. Nothing wrong with an aesthetic that's like a blog. But "bloggy"? Urgh.

For weeks and weeks I have been meditative and mindful, at least every other week, the alternating week I've been a high priestess of catatonia. I thought I had to write this essay in a depressive mode. This morning I'm trying to work on it highly caffeinated and hormonal.

Does one have to LIVE an essay before writing it?

Can an essay I write be anything more than a hot mess.
Can I as a woman be anything more than a hot mess.
What is wrong with an essay being a hot mess?

When did I become so apprehensive of failing that I stopped attempting?

Posted 24th September 2012 by Kate Zimmerman

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Fig 5. Kate Zambreno, "WTF is an essay," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), September 24, 2012. Courtesy of Kate Zambreno.

Kate Zambreno 8/10/10, 5:16 PM

thanks [redacted] this means a lot. a lot a lot. the blog began something different - to essay on literature. but i have felt so drained about that lately and so have been essaying the self. i agree that it is necessary to do so, but sometimes i worry, about the forum, and whether i am engaged enough outside of the self.

yes, green girls forever. do we ever outgrow our greenness or are we always unsifted in such perilous circumstances?

Reply

[redacted] 8/10/10, 7:12 PM

i must agree with this first comment. and say that i too have feared i've loosed too much of myself on my blog... and then, suddenly, that i haven't loosed enough. that i have gone about the whole thing in too safe a way, that my fears too often get the better of me, that i'm afraid of embarrassing myself. or worse: embarrassing my family. maybe my fears of being seen as "weak" or "crazy" have kept me too still, too quiet. and that Quiet might make me weak and crazy for real. this is, for as sentimental and teenage as it sounds, one of the deepest engrained reasons why i write. that first call to write- to end that crazy-making silence.

and so, to echo Miss Thing, i agree that these themes are common. i don't see them voiced much either. but when i do, i am always grateful. and more than that, i am impressed and inspired.

maybe we are always green. evergreen. ever so slightly. and the chime of this could instead be seen as a strength rather than an unsiftedness- a symbol, something eternal, possibly sacred and necessary as you say (and as i so readily believe). a hidden territory. and i am comforted by the glimpses i catch of it. this is one of the places i come to catch that glimpse.

Reply

[redacted] 8/10/10, 7:22 PM

I agree with everything [redacted] said above. Like a lot of people, I got drawn to literature for personal reasons--personal emotions, personal identifications. But in many of the conversations & dialogues you see about literature nowadays, this personal element is lost. It's at the core, but it's missing, or ignored, or neglected, or people are too embarrassed to admit or speak to it for fear of seeming unprofessional or unintellectual or whatever. Things can rapidly become overly academic and dry. And that's why I'm drawn to your blog, b/c you speak/write to your personal connection to literature, to the continuum between personal life & literary life that's never been cut & dry, that needs to remain this sloppy, indefinable continuum in order to stay vital & relevant. And when you write on this blog you are writing both as an author and a person. That's what I think you do for literary criticism, you put the person back into it. See, you're a humanist despite yourself.

▲

Fig 6. Kate Zambreno, "the girl who cried. wolf.," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister*, August 10, 2010. Courtesy of Kate Zambreno.

provided an informal intellectual community for Zambreno, slowly began to shift the aspirations she had for various writing projects. Instead of the notebook laying the groundwork for a project to come, Zambreno reflects on "this note-taking as the project itself" (*Heroines*, 281–82). The "casual, cultural criticism" of her blog (and its comments) is "ephemeral, not wanting to be formalized":

> Perhaps our writing needs to be fragmented to fit our fragmented times. Sometimes yes the online notebooks feed our other writing, as experimental incubators, like Rhys with her Ropemaker Notebook. But sometimes the posts are just what they are—unfinished, fragmented, explorations into something. We don't wish to formalize them into books. We want them to remain as they are—RAW, our own material. (282–83)

The "unfinished, fragmented" nature of her notebook-blog is a reaction against the neatly manicured formality of published books and articles (the present one included). Unlike books, "blogs are never done, unless you murder them. And then they can be made into books."[47] *Heroines*, despite its comparatively "raw," fragmented construction, is not an ongoing digital project. Although it partially grew out of a blog, the book is less subject to quick and explicit engagement—its community is implicit, measured by sales and reviews rather than directly participatory blog comments and links.[48]

Zambreno's notebook-blog posts, like Woolf's scrapbooks, have their own autonomous existence despite regularly being read as adjuncts to more important and more public book projects. Zambreno works within two separate models of amateur knowledge production—the "unfinished" and the "fragmented"—that suggest that both *Frances Farmer* and *Heroines* are influenced by a rich history of feminist collection, collage, and subcultural redistribution. Whether ongoing, like Zambreno's (now private) blog, or unpublished, like Woolf's scrapbooks, the amateur object often appears unfinished—perhaps even failed. Jack Halberstam suggests that such failure to finish (or to publish) can have a strategic function in the context of resistance to patriarchal, heteronormative, capitalist social structures: "Under certain circumstances failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world."[49] Halberstam's queer theory of failure resounds in the first post on *Frances Farmer* in which Zambreno explains her motivations for blogging: she refuses to finish, polish, or otherwise make her writing legible to anyone other than a small, subcultural group of fellow feminist reader-writers. The post—"My Vomitous Blog Manifesto"—is long, associative, and avowedly unedited, moving from Nietzsche to Cixous by way of Dodie Bellamy and Eileen Myles. It seems to be abandoned rather than finished, as though Zambreno wrote furiously, even breathlessly, until she suddenly ran out of time. (She concludes this first post by apologizing for the "vomit," listing additional things she'd like to write about, and signing off because she's "tired."[50]) It is as though she hit "publish" with the understanding that the unfinished, unedited tendrils of thought would be picked up later by both her (in future posts) and her readers (in the comments). This is not studiously composed stream-of-consciousness writing; this is spontaneity as method.

Admittedly, Zambreno observes that her method slowly shifted over time as her readership grew and the pressure of publicity curtailed some of her initial spontaneity. But her ongoing commitment to unfinishedness links Zambreno's project with Bellamy's *Barf Manifesto*, which in turn began as a meditation on Myles's "Everyday Barf." Bellamy calls for the revaluing of passion, obsession, and attachment in contemporary writing: "Passion is underrated. I think we should all produce work with the urgency of outsider artists, panting and jerking off to our kinky private obsessions. Sophistication is conformist, deadening. Let's get rid of it."[51] In place of the "oppressive" cleanliness of the essay, Bellamy offers "the Barf" as a "feminist, unruly, cheerfully monstrous" literary form:

> The Barf comes naturally to women because women like to throw up *fingers down throat, one, two, three, bleh* . . . The Barf is an upheaval, born of our hangover from imbibing too much Western Civ. The Barf is reflective, each delivery calls forth a framing, the Barf is expansive as the Blob, swallowing and recontextualizing, spreading out and engorging. (*Barf Manifesto*, 30)

Women like to throw up. Bellamy uses crass provocation to make an argument for women's literature and against "Western Civ"—an argument whose very name, "Barf," preempts the claim that valuing literatures on the basis of identity is mere political correctness. Zambreno's blog is a version of Bellamy's barf: unfinished, unedited, unprofessional, unsophisticated.

There is another reaction to "imbibing too much Western Civ": not throwing up but cutting up. This is exactly what Zambreno does. The cut-up or fragmented nature of her blog remediates the scrapbooks, commonplace books, and collage associated with centuries of women's writing. What is distinctly *twentieth*-century about Zambreno is how she codes that fragmentation—as akin to outsider art—and how she conceives of her responsibility to it.[52] Eschewing metaphors of productive women's work—sewing, mending, or tidying scraps of material into a pleasing whole—she instead aligns her creativity with the pathologized and the perverse. Cutting as writing, but with a willful undercurrent of self-harm. With Bellamy and Myles as her immediate models, Zambreno admits that she is drawn to the mantle of the "outsider artist" and to writing that resembles "great big goopy crazy collages": "unneat writing, destructive writing, disordered writing, anarchic writing" ("My Vomitous Blog Manifesto"). Though *Three Guineas* is not an immediate intertext in this case, reading it back through *Francis Farmer* and *Heroines* gives new meaning to its most brazen, even "crazy" moments of creative violence. Think of Woolf's writing the word "feminism" in "large black letters on a sheet of foolscap" only to light it on fire, watch it burn, and then "bray the ashes" with her "goose-feather pen" (*Three Guineas*, 121). Turning scraps of paper into tinder or cuttings into cut-ups, Woolf's and Zambreno's writings reveal a libidinal and even manic side to preservation. More than explaining a responsible, even pious urge to retrieve forgotten or obliterated voices, obliterature captures the amateur critic's desire to destroy, to self-destruct, to follow impulses that cannot be corralled back into a productive project.

Cutting up does not create a coherent, strong, active voice; instead, it creates through the destruction and transformation of such an idea of voice. In its refusal to respect the boundaries between self and other, copy and original, professional and amateur, cutting up recalls Halberstam's treatment of collage as a powerful queer feminist method that binds "the threat of castration to the menace of feminist violence and both to the promise of transformation, not through a positive production of the image but through a negative destruction of it that nonetheless refuses to relinquish pleasure" (*Queer Art of Failure*, 136). Cutting up is reparative because, like collage, it is destructive, and the transformative violence feels good—to both its creator and her audience.

Zambreno imagines herself as an outsider artist writing for an "insider audience" of like-minded feminist writers.[53] She began the blog as a kind of digitized private notebook, but soon her community of commenters, many of whom were women writers with blogs of their own, began to function as a "legitimizing network" (*Heroines*, 292). Considered failures by their families, rejected by mainstream publishers, and denied stable academic work in universities, Zambreno and her "insider audience" turn away from these institutions—and toward each other.

Zambreno's "unfinished, fragmented" posts, written and read online in a passionate community of fellow writers, valorize a kind of devoted attachment to literary and artistic objects (and personalities). These attachments sometimes cross the line into obsessions, but they are never incompatible with incisive literary criticism. As Peter Coviello suggests, the most affecting and effective forms of criticism "share, after all, a submerged and wholly estimable premise, which is simply that loving things, loving them articulately and combatively, is itself a style of engagement not a lot less rich for being as informal, uncredentialed and overheated as it is."[54] He describes this mode of intellectual exchange as collaboration in "a kind of world-making: of converting the bursts of joy you experience in the presence of certain kinds of objects into usable terms, a vocabulary made of parsings and principles you might use to grapple with a difficult, broken world" (Coviello, "Talk, Talk"). Coviello's description of this criticism—"informal, uncredentialed, and overheated," and fueled by "bursts of joy"—is strikingly similar to Dinshaw's conception of amateur sensibility as that which is driven by enthusiasm, if not an almost unseemly level of devotion.[55] Enthusiasm, partiality, excitement, attachment: these are precisely the attitudes that are disciplined and suppressed (too quickly, perhaps) in the work of academic literary criticism. As Michael Warner suggests, these attitudes are at the root of "uncritical reading," and from within the professional culture of "critical reading," they appear "unsystematic and disorganized."[56]

Recently, however, the "descriptive turn" in literary studies has revalued such amateur energy. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's "reparative" criticism, Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus's "surface reading," Sharon Marcus's "just reading," and Heather Love's "close but not deep" descriptive reading practices are just a few examples of methodologies that question the strong theories behind symptomatic critique.[57] Felski's "postcritical reading" has to date made the most strenuous case against the dominance of ideology critique, but she herself notes that the outright opposition of postcritique to critique is unhelpful. She charges literary critics to "move beyond the stultifying division between naïve, emotional reading and rigorous, critical reading" (Felski, *The Limits of Critique*,

180).[58] Rather than retreat into an apolitical fog, the postcritical then has a place in renewing dissent from injustice even if that renewal takes on a different tone, syntax, and attitude to a hermeneutics of suspicion. As Diana Fuss writes in her sensible assessment of Felski's work, "conflict and connection, agon and eros, are never far apart."[59] To treat the critique/postcritique relationship as a zero-sum game concedes a mutual exclusivity between fighting injustice and loving literature that is indeed symptomatic of professional partisanship and a distraction from the larger disenfranchisement of colleagues within a fully corporatized university. Rather than depoliticize amateurism, we embrace the unexpected light it sheds on academic labor.[60]

Obliterature, Amateurism, Weak Theory

We orient our concept of obliterature to the amateur spaces of literary and cultural criticism—those which exist sometimes in concerted political opposition to the dominant institutions of literature and always in apposition to them as their participants study, modify, and foil the processes of sanctification, endurance, and preservation essential to canon formation. A not-quite-word, "obliterature" arises from Zambreno's unintentional writing and, in *Heroines*, she situates it at the conjuncture of her own sense of personal and technological obliteration. The term makes its first appearance as Zambreno narrates the paralyzing effects of the "domestic storms" that occasionally color her life with her partner, John. Afterward, as they "clean up" their emotional lives, John reflects on his unintentional ability to "erase" her: "That's the worst thing I can do, is erase you" (*Heroines*, 69). What is, in that scene, a function of John's unwitting "training" in the routines of patriarchal privilege is later echoed in Zambreno's fear, after a bizarre experience with Google Analytics, that the internet is "erasing" her.[61] This fear of erasure, of being obliterated by institutional pressures and values inimical to her growth as a writer, naturally follows her obsession with the nearly forgotten "mad wives" of modernism and her self-appointed position as their executor. And so Zambreno's typo—*obliterate* into *obliterature*—is necessarily informed by identity and attuned to ephemerality, a product of her personal sacrifices as a "trailing spouse" and her choice of digital medium. This particular medium is double-edged indeed: it expresses her commitment to transitory writing and stokes her anxiety over being disposed of by the very platform that disseminates her voice.

The erasure Zambreno fears as a "small-press writer" and amateur researcher stems from experiencing first-hand the archival protocols that have failed so many "minor" writers: "Who is archiving these scraps of our existence? . . . What does it mean to be aware of one's own preservation?" (*Heroines*, 230, 283–84). What it means, at least in part, is that Zambreno, like Woolf before her, turns away from, but is also in thrall to, the institutions that have traditionally policed the distinction between "who to preserve, what to throw away," between "amateur and professional, between major and minor, so tied to capitalism" (283, 231). Zambreno's allusion to capitalism speaks to an orthodox Marxist position: that the reproduction of social relations and cultural values rests on material structures of inequality. Yet this insight does not prompt her to

make a play for institutional dominance or to organize directly against those structures. Instead, she starts a blog, which, ironically enough, becomes a more prestigious form through her experiments with it.[62] Nearly a century earlier, Woolf had co-founded the Hogarth Press, a self-publishing scheme rooted in the Bloomsbury aspiration to create a para-institutional literary and cultural community. Zambreno's feminist blogging is a twenty-first century digital extension of Woolf's twentieth-century experiment in writing and publishing, but with an absolutely crucial difference: Zambreno does not own her platform. Google does. The small-press writer turns to the behemoth tech company for the "subsubcommunity" created by user-generated content.

The irony of Zambreno's material circumstances does not neutralize the power of amateur criticism nor does it invalidate the bonds forged through the blogosphere. However, it checks any tendency toward equating para-institutional subcultures with independently-owned media. In this sense, the obliterary takes the recovery and reclamation of historically suppressed voices, an old yet perennially necessary feminist project, one step further. It makes the feminist scholar of modernism more attentive to the expansion, diversification, and corporate monopolization of cultural networks across print and digital media. Moreover, the obliterary renders up an entirely different configuration of literary culture than is generally acknowledged by the institutional protocols and theoretical metalanguages of the academy. In the "time of the semipublic intellectual," the separate spheres of literary culture—the critical and the creative, the public and the private, the academic and the journalistic, the non-profit and the for-profit—are converging to bring the possibilities of new media technologies together with the shunting of credentialed scholars into non-, alt-, or para-academic positions.[63] To say this is a structurally sour situation is an understatement, yet there is some lemonade to be made in the "different and exciting ways that scholarly authority can be expressed in the current landscape" (Loofbourow and Maciak, "The Time of the Semipublic Intellectual," 444). New types of online writing reach different audiences and require different skills; they allow experts to "recognize the beautiful amateurism of learning new things," while making the rigors of academic scholarship more widely (and more quickly) available (Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now?*, 39). For us, the obliterary leads towards a more various and more precarious intellectual sphere and to collaborations, like those on Zambreno's blog, that are not interdisciplinary but extradisciplinary. Such collaborations reflect the coalitions being forged on the outskirts of professionalism where the literate institutional insider forms unpredictable alliances with the obliterate institutional outsider.[64]

Almost a century apart, Woolf and Zambreno embrace amateurism as a critical mode whose expressivity depends on, but is also compromised by, the affordances of mass media. Woolf writes "amateurishly" as an act of feminist and pacifist subterfuge reliant on the cheapness and ubiquity of print; Zambreno forthrightly rejects the "push towards 'finishing' towards 'polish' towards 'professionalism'" in favor of "unfinished, bodily, excessive" prose in an internet age where distraction is the norm (*Heroines*, 283). For both Woolf and Zambreno, amateurism turns vernacular patterns of expression into deliberate forms of subversion. Amateur criticism is a circumvention of the professionalized and disciplined form of thought institutionalized within the modern university. In

such a setting, what Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (following Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak) call "the thought of the outside" is constitutively impossible.[65] Harney and Moten's "undercommons" is comprised of those deemed "unprofessional," those who seem like amateurs, and those who "exceed the profession . . . and force the university to consider them a problem, a danger" ("The University," 104–05). In his laudatory introduction to Harney and Moten's collection of essays, Halberstam describes the "subversive intellectual" as "unprofessional, uncollegial, passionate, and disloyal."[66]This subversive, undisciplined intellectualism shares the eccentric energy of amateurism; it must "resist mastery" and "privilege the naïve (or nonsensical)" (Halberstam, *Queer Art of Failure*, 11–12). In Harney and Moten's "undercommons," however, we find not just those who have deliberately chosen to embrace amateurism (Halberstam, Harney, and Moten amongst them) but those who may unintentionally occupy the position of the stigmatized "unprofessional": "composition teachers, mentorless graduate students, adjunct Marxist historians, out or queer management professors, state college ethnic studies departments, closed-down film programs, visa-expired Yemeni student newspaper editors, historically black college sociologists, and feminist engineers" ("The University," 104). This is a lengthy, eclectic, necessarily unfinished list. In this light, amateurism is not just one rhetorical strategy among many but an oppositional and obliterate structural position that is the inevitable byproduct of—and labor for—the corporatized university. Harney and Moten describe this position as "in but not of," but we might also think of it as "near but not in." As, in other words, adjunct.

What is the relationship between the amateur and the adjunct—that disenfranchised and eternally temporary worker so invested in maintaining her membership in a profession that continually bars her full entry and participation? The adjunct's relationship to the university is characterized by what Lauren Berlant calls "cruel optimism": the desire for something (in this case, for professional recognition within the university setting) that actually hinders the possibility of a better life (in this case, for the fair working conditions and living wage that might be found elsewhere).[67] The adjunct is an undervalued expert, a credentialed yet still disenfranchised contingent worker, an amateur by default in a profession that fully supports and legitimizes an increasingly small number of its aspirants. Academic work has become, in Aaron Bady's formulation, a "vocation stripped of its profession, a devalued form of labor that we must nevertheless struggle to do."[68] When she began *Frances Farmer*, and while she was composing *Heroines*, Zambreno was adjunct faculty, barred from teaching the courses she truly cared about and often unable to find classes at all. At that time, she was also a "small-press writer" and a blogger; none of her professional identities were readily legible as "successful" occupations.[69] Neither "in" nor "of" the university, Zambreno—like Woolf before her—was nevertheless in its shadow, an outsider in its midst. Yet, in a significant departure from Woolf, Zambreno was also a product of the university system for which she would serve as contingent labor. In this way, her writing in *Francis Farmer* and *Heroines* offers an account of the anonymous work done by legions of adjunct laborers—largely women—who have been exiled from the realm of the expert even after they were educated and credentialed by the university.

Like other modernists and critics of modernism drawn to the figure of the amateur, Woolf and Zambreno turn skeptical eyes toward institutionalization, disciplinarity, and the deracination of knowledge production. Laura Heffernan has argued in the pages of this journal that T. E. Hulme identified amateurism with restoring thought to the "undisciplined world."[70] In such a world, institutions are the objects as much as the agents of critique, and what we call amateur criticism is charged with restoring attention and feeling to the unequal social bonds constitutive of institutional knowledge's specialized fields. Rather than extract rationalized knowledge from passionate study, amateur criticism brings unprofessional postures and exploited workers back into focus in the name of making universities more accountable to those whom they discipline, exploit, and exclude under the garb of sensible policy.

Woolf, writing at the height of the university's rationalization, and Zambreno, at the height of its corporatization, alert us to what institutional knowledge-production continually regards with suspicion: obsession and attachment, trivia and ephemera, structural position and embodiment. These are the dimensions of criticism that their amateurism restores and our concept of obliterature emphasizes. In advocating for an amateur criticism, we are suggesting that the critique/postcritique debates, from which we have learned much but regard as at their saturation point, move outward to the edges of the profession where method mixes with madness. To boot, we are reanimating the modernist memory project with more of the sorcerer's touch than the priest's. This means fundamentally reconfiguring the literary field in a weak theoretical way such that the institutional and para-institutional, the canonical and the obliterary, the disciplinary and the extradisciplinary orbit around one another rather than rendering each other secondary, useless, or passé. With this barycentric spatial orientation in mind, we can begin rethinking what expertise is and where it lies. We can also more fully acknowledge the vernacular genres of print and digital media, which continue to be significant alternative platforms for the promotion of modernist art and commentary. The love and labor of criticism weave their way in and out of the university. Whether this movement bodes more promise or peril for artists, writers, and academics remains to be seen.

Notes

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1. Kate Zambreno, *Heroines* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 69.

2. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (1922; rpt., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 425.

3. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (1930; rpt., New York: Routledge, 2001), 123.

4. Virginia Woolf, "The Mark on the Wall," in *Monday or Tuesday* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1921). Available online at "The Mark on the Wall," Bartleby.com, 1999, bartleby.com/85/8.html.

5. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929; rpt., New York: Harcourt, 2005), 9.

6. For an account of how Woolf's complex engagement with professionalism permeates her entire *oeuvre*, see Evelyn Tsz Yan Chan, *Virginia Woolf and the Professions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

7. Talcott Parsons, "The Professions and Social Structure," *Social Forces* 17, no. 4 (1939): 457–67, 460.

8. For an example of this in Woolf's fiction, we might think of the description of Sir William Bradshaw, the specialist who attempts to treat Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*: "there was in Sir William, who had never had time for reading, a grudge, deeply buried, against cultivated people who came into his room and intimated that doctors, whose profession is a constant strain upon all the highest faculties, are not educated men" (Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* [1925; rpt., Orlando, FL: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2005], 95).

9. For Zambreno, this memory project began in the early twentieth century when impersonality and detachment became gendered properties that helped elevate male writers to canonicity while relegating female writers to the lowered status of personalities. This version of modernism may seem dated to professional scholars of the new modernist studies who have either witnessed or worked to bring about feminist, minority, and non-European revisions of the modernist canon. In *Heroines*, Zambreno does not engage with the new modernist studies, global modernism, or any of the other recent reformulations of modernism in the academy. Yet, her lack of engagement with contemporary scholarship in the field is less a flaw of her creative-critical work than a reminder of the specificity and maybe even provinciality of our professional discourse. Zambreno is not a professor of modernism; she is not a member of the Modernist Studies Association. Her lack of membership and unfamiliarity with conversations in the field serve as reminders of how difficult it has been for revisionist scholarship on modernism to reach beyond the guild. The legacies of the old modernist memory project still hold sway over the public perception of modernism. Zambreno's work in *Heroines* is symptomatic of the persistent divide between contemporary feminist, queer, and non-European expansions of the field and the hypercanonical mainstays of the undergraduate modernism syllabus. Yet even while seemingly unaware of or downplaying the revisions to the modernist memory project from within the academy, *Heroines* is sharply attuned to the partition of "diverse books" from "great books."

10. Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 17; Bruce Robbins, "Not So Well Attached," *PMLA* 132, no. 2 (2017): 371–76, 371.

11. Key essays in establishing criticism as a scientifically-inflected discourse include T. S. Eliot, "The Perfect Critic" (1920) and "The Function of Criticism" (1923), in *The Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Harvest, 1975), 50–58, 68–76. I. A. Richards asserts that criticism should be able to justify itself as an "applied science" in *The Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924; rpt., New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938), 204. With intriguing ambivalence, R. P. Blackmur writes "Criticism, I take it, is the formal discourse of the amateur." He invokes the amateur positively, but also defines criticism through its formalization and professionalization in "The Critic's Job of Work," in *Language as Gesture* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1952), 372.

12. *Urban Dictionary*, March 2, 2012, "obliterature," urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=obliterature.

13. Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 12.

14. Wai Chee Dimock, "Weak Theory: Henry James, Colm Tóibín, and W. B. Yeats," *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 4 (2013): 737–38.

15. In a scathing review, Q. D. Leavis called Woolf's "method" a "deliberate avoidance of any argument" (Leavis, "Caterpillars of the Commonwealth Unite!," *Scrutiny* 7, no. 2 [1938]: 204). Woolf wrote in her diary that "Maynard [Keynes] is said to be very critical . . . [but] never said a word [directly to her]" and, later on, "my own friends have sent me to Coventry over it" (Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 5, *1936–1941* [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984], 163, 188–89). After Woolf's death, E. M. Forster would offer a warm assessment of her work minus the "spots" of a too recalcitrant feminism, intimating they diseased the particularly "cantankerous *Three Guineas*" (E.

M. Forster, "Virginia Woolf," in *The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs and Commentary*, ed. S. P. Rosenbaum [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975], 215). Quentin Bell writes in his biography: "What really seemed wrong with the book [*Three Guineas*]—and I am speaking here of my own reactions at the time—was the attempt to involve a discussion of women's rights with the far more agonising and immediate question of what we were to do in order to meet the ever-growing menace of Fascism and war. The connection between the two questions seemed tenuous" (Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography* [New York: Harcourt, 1972], 205). Despite this lingering critical marginalization, however, *Three Guineas* has always been a touchstone of debate: as Anna Snaith notes, Woolf received more letters about *Three Guineas* than anything else she had written, and as Jessica Berman points out, *Three Guineas* occupied a central position in feminist reclamations of Woolf later in the century. See Anna Snaith, *Virginia Woolf: Public and Private Negotiations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 114; Jessica Berman, "*Three Guineas* and the Politics of Interruption," in *A Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. Jessica Berman, (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 214.

16. Ellen Gruber Garvey, *Writing with Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4, 10. Garvey explains that authors, physicians, and actors used scrapbooks to save excerpts of publications or reviews of their work. In turn, fans would also use them to preserve memories of significant theatrical or sporting events. For an account of the importance of the scrapbooks of ordinary theatre-goers, see Sharon Marcus, "The Theatrical Scrapbook," *Theatre Survey* 54, no. 2 (2013): 283–307.

17. Woolf could obviously afford a more expensive method, but the thrift of the method is part and parcel of the argument about institutional and financial access. Scrapbooking brought Woolf into a degree of solidarity with working-class women, as we know from a fan letter written by Geraldine Ostle, who had edited the reading notebooks of an unknown working woman by the name of Evelyn Wilson. See Anna Snaith, "Wide Circles: The *Three Guineas* Letters," *Woolf Studies Annual* 6 (2000): 1–168, 18–19. For a broader account of early twentieth-century print culture, see Faye Hammill and Mark Hussey, *Modernism's Print Cultures* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

18. See Merry M. Pawlowski, "Virginia Woolf and Scrapbooking," in *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*, ed. Maggie Humm (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 298. Pawlowski provides a detailed reading of the scrapbooks, and reconstructs the provenance of some of the clippings. And despite being absent from Woolf's diary and letters, scrapbooking does make one deeply memorable appearance in the opening of *To the Lighthouse*: "James Ramsay, sitting on the floor cutting out pictures from the illustrated catalog of the Army and Navy Stores, endowed the picture of a refrigerator, as his mother spoke, with heavenly bliss. It was fringed with joy" (Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* [1927; rpt., Orlando, FL: Harvest Books, 1981], 3). A domestic activity uniting mother and child, scrapbooking is suffused with ordinary intimacy and pleasure.

19. Alice Wood writes that the scrapbooks "reveal the thinking rather than the writing processes behind *The Years* and *Three Guineas*, although these processes are interlinked" (Alice Wood, *Virginia Woolf's Late Cultural Criticism: The Genesis of The Years, Three Guineas, and Between the Acts* [London: Bloomsbury, 2013], 75). We make a stronger claim here for the scrapbooks' imprint on the published form of *Three Guineas*. Wood and other Woolf scholars, working in the tradition of textual criticism, have placed the scrapbooks amongst the wider set of pretexts of *Three Guineas*, for example Woolf's reading notebooks, and the holograph fragments of *Three Guineas.* See also Naomi Black, *Virginia Woolf as Feminist* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

20. For an extensive study of Woolf's notebooks, see Brenda Silver, *Virginia Woolf's Reading Notebooks* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

21. On the differential value assigned to male and female creative labor, see, for example, Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin, *Women and Things, 1750–1950* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009). On the gendering of inventiveness and the complex agency of women "assistants," see *Literary Secretaries/Secretarial Culture*, ed. Leah Price and Pamela Thurschwell (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); and Whitney Trettien, *Cut/Copy/Paste: The Little Gidding Harmonies*, manuscript in progress.

22. Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas,* Annotated edition, ed. Mark Hussey (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2006), 5.

23. Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 170.

24. Ellen Gruber Garvey, "Scissorizing and Scrapbooks: Nineteenth-Century Reading, Remaking, and Recirculating," in *New Media, 1740–1915*, ed. Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey B. Pingree (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 208. Garvey describes finding a particular scrapbook that featured a print of Jean Francois Millet's painting *The Gleaners* on its cover.

25. For a list of the editions which cut the photographs and those that restore them, see Rebecca Wisor, "About Face: The *Three Guineas* Photographs in Cultural Context," *Woolf Studies Annual* 21 (2015): 1–49. For an extensive description of the publishing history of *Three Guineas*, see Rebecca Wisor, "Versioning Virginia Woolf: Notes Toward a Post-eclectic Edition of *Three Guineas*," *Modernism/modernity* 16, no. 3 (2009): 497–535.

26. Jane Marcus, introduction to Woolf, *Three Guineas*,xxxv–lxxii, lxiii. See also Berman, *"Three Guineas* and the Politics of Interruption," 207–13.

27. Rebecca Walkowitz argues that Woolf's comparisons, especially in a transnational context, can be selective and overgeneralizing as when Woolf compares "customary constraint" of women's liberty in England with the "statutory constraints" of liberty in nations under fascist rule (Germany, Italy, Spain) ("For Translation: Virginia Woolf, J. M. Coetzee, and Transnational Comparison," in *The Legacies of Modernism*, ed. David James [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012], 248). She nonetheless identifies positive potential in such comparisons as far as they mitigate national exceptionalism and create opportunities for political causes to learn from each other's histories and methods.

28. Michael Taussig, *The Magic of the State* (London: Routledge, 1997).

29. The "amateur" relatives of the professional historian include "historical novelists, political satirists, genealogists, writers of travelers' tales, collectors of folklore and antiquarians" (Smith, *The Gender of History*, 59).

30. For more on the professionalization of English literary study, see John Guillory, "Literary Study and the Modern System of the Disciplines," in *Disciplinarity at the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Amanda Anderson and Joseph Valente (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 19–43; Josephine M. Guy and Ian Small, "The British 'man of letters' and the Rise of the Professional," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. A. Walton Litz, Louis Menand, and Lawrence Rainey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 7:377–88; and Gauri Viswanathan, "Subjecting English and the Question of Representation," in *Disciplinarity at the Fin de Siècle*, 177–95. For recent assessments of the relationship between the institutionalization and practice of literary criticism, see Evan Kindley, *Poet-critics and the Administration of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017); and Joseph North, *Literary Criticism: A Concise Political History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

31. For more on the relationship between the love of literature and the developing practice of literary criticism, see Deirdre Shauna Lynch, *Loving Literature: A Cultural History* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015); and Rita Felski, *Uses of Literature* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008).

32. See Miriam Bailin, "A Community of Interest—Victorian Scholars and Literary Societies," *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* 55 (2009), erudit.org/revue/ravon/2009/v/n55/039558ar.html; and Carolyn Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now?: Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

33. See André Schiffrin, *The Business of Books: How International Conglomerates Took Over Publishing and Changed the Way We Read* (London: Verso, 2000); and, for an updated account, André Schiffrin, "How Mergermania is Destroying Book Publishing," *The Nation*, November 28, 2012, thenation.com/article/how-mergermania-destroying-book-publishing/.

34. We might think, here, of the smartly theorized, "more or less realist" novels of what Nicholas Dames, writing in *n+1*, has called the "theory generation" (Nicholas Dames, "The Theory Generation," *n+1* 14 [2002]). Or the inventive citational practice in Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts* (which, like *Heroines*, integrates theoretical and autobiographical writing). Or we might look to Nick Sousanis's *Unflattening*, a doctoral dissertation submitted in comics form about the primacy of visual thinking in teaching and learning. Each of these writers works knowledgably—even expertly—with similar canons of "theory," but their genres and publication venues differ. See Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts*

(Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2015); and Nick Sousanis, *Unflattening* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

35. *Heroines* was reviewed in the *London Review of Books*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Paris Review Online*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Pank*, the *Examiner*, the *New Statesman*, *The Millions*, *The Rumpus*, *Lemon Hound*, and many other popular press venues. For an account of the "dismissive" tone that characterized several of these reviews, see Elisa Gabbert, "The Madwoman and the Critic: The Crime of Dismissive Criticism," *Open Letters Monthly*, May 1, 2013, openlettersmonthly.com/the-madwoman-and-the-critic/. It was not reviewed in any scholarly journals that focus on modernist literature and culture, though perhaps this will change as sites like *Modernism/modernity*'s Print Plus platform bring academic writing out from behind a paywall. Zambreno's work has since been mentioned in Kylie Cardell's *Dear World: Contemporary Uses of the Diary* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014), 11–12.

36. Roxane Gay, "How We All Lose," *The Rumpus*, October 26, 2012, therumpus.net/2012/10/how-we-all-lose/.

37. Kate Zambreno, "VDubs and the rest: Women Writers & Madness," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), January 27, 2010, francesfarmerismysister.blogspot.com/2010/01/vdubs-and-rest-my-favorite-literary.html?view=flipcard&zx=dd962e902d426c46. Zambreno's blog has since been retitled *I am the Daughter of Winfried Georg Sebald*; it is now private and explicit permission from Zambreno is required for access.

38. Over the course of several years, commenters questioned whether entrance into a PhD program (or even an MFA program) would be the right choice for Zambreno. Their reasons vary, but many counseled her to be wary of the stacked-deck competitiveness of the academic job market and what they saw as the intellectually stultifying professionalism required for success within the institution. See, for example, Jeff McMahon, February 14, 2010 (7:33 a.m. and 12:48 p.m.), comment on Kate Zambreno, "I am the ghost of an infamous suicide," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), February 13, 2010; Roz, March 15, 2010 (2:01 p.m.), comment on Kate Zambreno, "Thus he will purify it and consecrate it of the pollution," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), March 13, 2010; Kate Durbin, June 1, 2012 (3:37 p.m.), comment on Kate Zambreno, "documentary of the dumb cunt," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), June 1, 2012; and Maggie, November 21, 2012 (8:58 p.m.), comment on Kate Zambreno, "some notes on failure," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), November 15, 2012.

39. Kate Zambreno, "Dora is my sister," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), April 5, 2012, francesfarmerismysister.blogspot.com/2012/04/dora-is-my-sister.html?view=flipcard.

40. Kate Zambreno, "WTF is an essay," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), September 24, 2012, francesfarmerismysister.blogspot.com/2012/09/wtf-is-essay.html?view=flipcard.

41. For a personal account of the formation of New Narrative, see Robert Glück, "Long Note on New Narrative," *Narrativity* 1, sfsu.edu/~newlit/narrativity/issue_one/gluck.html. For an analysis of the importance of New Narrative for both Language poetry and leftist cultural politics in the United States, see Kaplan Page Harris, "New Narrative and the Making of Language Poetry," *American Literature* 81, no. 4 (2009): 805–32.

42. Kate Zambreno, "oversharing as a radical act," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), June 2, 2012, francesfarmerismysister.blogspot.com/2012/06/is-oversharing-radical-act.html?view=flipcard.

43. Though many feminist historians resist attributing the phrase "the personal is political" to any single individual, it is commonly associated with second wave feminism. We can date its appearance in print to 1970, when editors Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt gave the title to a short essay on consciousness-raising by Carol Hanisch. See Carol Hanisch, "The Personal is Political," in *Notes from the Second Year*: *Women's Liberation* (New York: Radical Feminism, 1970), 76–78. This essay is currently available, alongside Hanisch's 2006 commentary on the original essay's relation to feminist political history, on her personal website: "The Personal is Political: The Women's Liberation Movement Classic with a New Explanatory Introduction," Writings by Carol Hanisch, carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html.

44. Mary Celeste Kearney, "Coalescing: The Development of Girls' Studies," *NWSA Journal* 21, no. 1 (2009): 1–28. For another overview of the developing field, see Catherine Driscoll, "Girls Today: Girls, Girl Culture and Girl Studies," *Girlhood Studies* 1, no. 1 (2008): 13–32.

45. This was semi-anonymous in the sense that readers commented under pseudonyms, but Zambreno knew who many of the regular commentators were even if they may not always have been able to identify each other.

46. Kate Zambreno, "Je Suis Une Blogger," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), October 9, 2012, francesfarmerismysister.blogspot.com/2012/10/je-suis-une-blogger.html?view=flipcard.

47. Kate Zambreno, "the girl who cried WOOLF," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), October 9, 2010, francesfarmerismysister.blogspot.com/2010/10/dear-some-of-my-favorite-writer-reader.html?view=flipcard.

48. This is not to say that the book could not generate a more direct relationship between Zambreno and her readers, say through printed or electronic fan mail. But such an engagement would take much longer to develop and would not take place in a public forum for other readers to see.

49. Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 2–3.

50. Kate Zambreno, "My Vomitous Blog Manifesto," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), December 31, 2009, francesfarmerismysister.blogspot.com/2009/12/my-vomitous-blog-manifesto.html?view=flipcard.

51. Dodie Bellamy, *Barf Manifesto* (New York: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2008, 2010), 18.

52. Outsider art only becomes legible as a concept in the twentieth century though, once articulated, its roots could be said to go back earlier. See John M. MacGregor's classic account, *The Discovery of the Art of the Insane* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989). Jean DuBuffet coined the term *art brut* (raw art) in the 1940s to designate the work of those isolated from the art world and whose art seemed spontaneous, naïve, or lacking in intention. Zambreno is drawn to outsider art's pathologized origins and structural positioning though the category now also encompasses the self-taught, folk artists, craft-makers, and those who intentionally isolate themselves from the privileged domains of the mainstream art world.

53. Similarly, describing the early morning audience for the 2007 MLA panel that provided the occasion for what she refers to as her "first generation Barf," Bellamy admits relief that "the audience would be small, an insider collection of friends of the panelists, meaning I could do whatever the fuck I wanted. And what the fuck I wanted to do was to shit on academic pretension. Envisioning an insider audience is essential to me" (*Barf Manifesto*, 20).

54. Peter Coviello, "Talk, Talk," *Frieze* 148 (2012), frieze.com/issue/article/talk-talk/.

55. For a discussion of the way that amateurism is an unruly identity in an age of professional norms, especially given the "soulless professionalization of the university," see Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now?*, 22–23 and 38–39.

56. Michael Warner, "Uncritical Reading," in *Polemic: Critical or Uncritical*, ed. Jane Gallop (London: Routledge, 2004), 15. Warner's ventriloquized warning to students entering the discipline explicitly prohibits the intense and emotional reading practices described by Zambreno: "Don't read like Quixote, *like Emma Bovary*, like Ginny Weasley" (14, emphasis added).

57. See, for example, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay is About You," in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 123–51; Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, "Surface Reading: An Introduction," *Representations* 108, no.1 (2009): 1–21; Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 73–108; and Heather Love, "Close but not Deep: Literary Ethics and the Descriptive Turn," *New Literary History* 41, no. 2 (2010): 371–91.

58. See also Elizabeth S. Anker and Rita Felski's introduction to their edited collection of essays on the subject, *Critique and Postcritique* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 1–28.

59. Diana Fuss, "But What About Love?," *PMLA* 132, no. 2 (2017): 352–55, 355.

60. We recognize that amateurism is more difficult to embrace in the aftermath of the 2016 US presidential election. If the twentieth century taught us to be wary of professionalism—"I was just doing my job"—then perhaps the twenty-first is now teaching us to be wary of a facile amateurism —"Anyone can do this job." Indeed, as Fuss relates, living in the Trump era can make the project of postcritique feel "suddenly and dramatically out of sync with the times, like a relic from the Obama era" ("But What About Love?," 354). While we understand Fuss's point, we think that amateurism

draws attention to the very conditions that made a Trump victory possible: public distrust of increasingly corporatized institutions; raced and gendered inequities inherent in establishing expertise; the collapse of communication across credentialed and uncredentialed populations.

61. Zambreno occasionally reports on her usage of Google Analytics to track the popularity of her blog. See Kate Zambreno, "Every Young Girl Who Reads This Will Be Lost*," *Frances Farmer Is My Sister* (blog), February 7, 2010, francesfarmerismysister.blogspot.com/search?q=%22do+you+think+the+internet+is+erasing+me?%22&zx=e14f688876cf5d8b. In this post, she imagines what the consequences would be for her if an obvious Google Analytics error—"it said only one person read my blog yesterday (let's just say that would be a decline)"—turned out to be true. Would she still write for herself alone, or is the internet audience necessary for her continued production? She would still write, she thinks, but she can't be sure—just as she later admits that she doesn't *really* think the internet is erasing her, but she can't be entirely certain of it. Given the instability and unreliability of digital preservation efforts, this is perhaps less paranoid than she thinks. For example, writer Dennis Cooper's blog, which he had maintained on Google-owned Blogspot for over fourteen years, was removed by Google in June 2016 without warning or explanation. Despite the immediate uproar of the international arts community, it took months of legal wrangling for Cooper to recover his blog archive.

62. In an inevitable irony, there are now plans to house Zambreno's archive—analog and digital—at a major research university. The process, especially of archiving the blog, has been complicated by several technical challenges endogenous to digital preservation: how an internet archive will render the blog, whether it will be able to archive the comments, and whether embedded links will continue to function in an archive or end up broken, dead, or dangling.

63. Lili Loofbourow and Phillip Maciak, "The Time of the Semipublic Intellectual," *PMLA* 130, no. 2 (2015): 439–45, 439.

64. We could not help reflecting on the relation of this co-authored article to the amateur criticism we study. Despite a recent increase in funding opportunities designed to support collaborative projects, such as the ACLS Collaborative Research Fellowships and the NEH Collaborative Research Grants, the fact remains that collaborative writing, as a method in the individualist world of academic humanities publishing, is risky for untenured faculty. Placing an article in *Modernism/modernity* is decidedly not risky. Though our collaboration divides credit and refuses "strong" mastery, we admit we are writing about texts that are suffused with amateur energies in a professional and flattening, though hopefully not deadening, way. We—along with Dinshaw, Lynch, Loofbourow and Maciak, and others—seek not to dismiss the insights and grounding that professional scholarship offers, but to renew our study through convening with those bodies and affects that must be flattened in order to pass through the gates.

65. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, "The University and the Undercommons," *Social Text* 22, no. 2 (2004): 101–15, 105. As they caution, taking up a stance against the university is what defines the "critical academic," who is "the professional *par excellence*" (111).

66. Jack Halberstam, "The Wild Beyond: With and for the Undercommons," introduction to Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (New York: Minor Compositions, 2013), 10.

67. Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

68. Aaron Bady, "Black Study, Black Struggle," *Boston Review*, March 7, 2016, bostonreview.net/forum/black-study-black-struggle/aaron-bady-aaron-bady-response-robin-kelley.

69. This has, of course, changed: after the publication of *Heroines*, Zambreno garnered both critical praise and large-press contracts. Her novel *Green Girl* was published by Harper Perennial in 2014, and an earlier novel will soon be reissued by the same press. Her most recent project, *Book of Mutter*, will be released by the Semiotext(e) Native Agents series at MIT Press in 2017. And while she is still an adjunct professor, she now regularly teaches courses of her own design at Columbia University and Sarah Lawrence College.

70. Laura Heffernan, "Abstraction and the Amateur: De-disciplining T. E. Hulme," *Modernism/modernity* 21, no. 4 (2014): 881–89, 885. In a related vein, Jennifer Spitzer has also reappraised D. H. Lawrence in light of his amateur and satiric reading of psychoanalysis. See Jennifer Spitzer, "On Not Reading Freud: Amateurism, Expertise, and the 'Pristine Unconscious' in D. H. Lawrence," *Modernism/modernity* 21, no. 1 (2014): 89–105.