

South Atlantic Review Special Issue: Political Literature

As creators and curators of culture, writers chronicle their reality, envision alternate realities, or offer escapes from reality. They have their fingers on the pulse of every political issue, every movement, every crisis, every alliance, every act of oppression and resistance. Literature, never created in a vacuum, is both shaped by and shapes the political life of its own time and place—and, in the finest of works, other times and places. Whether compelled by moral duty or intellectual interest, authors in every milieu have challenged or celebrated the status quo in their works. As Chinua Achebe writes in “The Novelist as Teacher” (*New Statesman*, 29 Jan. 1965), “The writer cannot expect to be excused from the task of reeducation and regeneration that must be done. In fact, he should march right in front.” Novelists, playwrights, poets, essayists, and filmmakers have crafted discourse that explores the meaning of being a social actor—ways of being, thinking, acting, and speaking within structures of power and privilege.

We are seeking essays for a special issue of *South Atlantic Review* that will investigate the ways in which authors, texts, and critics have engaged questions of power, identity, equality, freedom, economy, patriotism, dissidence, violence, and ideology in public life. The following list offers some possible topics and approaches:

- **Access:** How have political texts been made more or less accessible to reading and viewing publics?
- **Authors and Audiences:** What are consequences of texts that are prescient, polemical, or provocative? What do writers say about why, how, and for whom they write political or dissident texts? In what ways do writers work within or outside of a trend, movement, or community? How have writers suffered or succeeded from political writings?
- **Marginalized Groups, Publics, Counterpublics:** How has literature portrayed marginalized groups? To what extent do marginalized people figure as subjects or objects? How have groups shut out of public spheres represented themselves in literature?
- **Historiography:** How, and with what level of fidelity, do fictional texts portray historical events/people? How do writers achieve verisimilitude? What meanings arise from historical accounts of politics?
- **Ideology:** In what ways are the production, distribution, and/or consumption of political literature ideological/political? In what ways does literature challenge or perpetuate the master narrative naturalizing hegemony?
- **Interdisciplinarity and Intertextuality:** How have various disciplines used political literature to enrich research, teaching, and service? How do texts, writers, and critics speak to each other? How do artists working in various media influence each other within a political moment, movement, or crisis?
- **Teaching:** How do we (or should we) teach political literature? What are some of the most effective, ethical ways to engage our students in productive discussions and written analyses of these texts?
- **Technique:** How and why are elements of satire used in texts? In what ways do texts create utopias and dystopias? How do these alternative societies enable us to see truths about our own societies? What do adaptations, sequels, prequels, serial works, pastiches,

parodies, generic transformations, and/or fan fiction offer toward new understandings of political texts?

- **Translation:** What is lost or gained by translating the political experience of one language tradition into that of another?
- **Rhetorics:** In what ways is the production, distribution, and/or consumption of political literature rhetorical? What are the overt or covert messages of these texts, and how are they constructed? In what ways are writers of political texts “political writers”? Rhetors?

This special issue on “Political Literature” explores the literature of politics and the politics of literature. We are seeking a broad array of genres, cultures, political systems, issues, identities, viewpoints, and methodologies. We define the terms “political” and “literature” broadly in order to encompass a rich variety of texts and theories.

For consideration, please send a 250–500 word proposal and an abbreviated (2-page) CV to Diana Eidson (deidson@auburn.edu) by **June 1, 2017**. Completed essays (using MLA style) will be due on **October 15, 2017**.

Guest Editor:

Helen Diana Eidson
Auburn University