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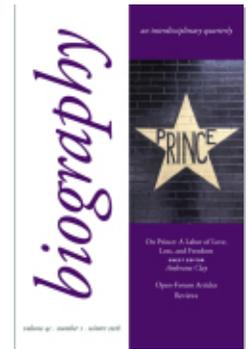
Editor's Note

John David Zuern

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of *Biography* is the first to combine open-forum articles with a guest-edited cluster of essays on a particular theme. The result is a collection richly varied in terms of topic, methodology, form, and geography, with contributions dealing with life writing in Canada, Hong Kong, South Africa, the UK, and the US.

The four pieces gathered in the cluster “On Prince: A Labor of Love, Loss, and Freedom” represent something of a departure for the journal. They are all deeply personal responses to the legendary performer’s passing in April 2016, each offering a finely tuned testimony to Prince’s particular influence on the writer’s life. Engaging race, gender, sexuality, age, desire, grief, joy, and community as they both mourn and celebrate Prince, these essays bear intimate witness to the relationality and intersectionality of selfhood, a notion at the core of so much life writing scholarship. We very much welcome the change of pace, and we are grateful to Andreana Clay for serving as the guest editor for the cluster, and to Scott Poulson-Bryant, Greg Tate, and Steven W. Thrasher, who along with Andreana have given *Biography* the privilege of presenting their beautifully crafted tributes to our readers.

As often happens, the open-forum articles in this issue, although grouped together only by the vicissitudes of our production schedule, turn out to resonate with one another in a number of ways. Norma Clarke’s study of the reception of James Prior’s biography of Oliver Goldsmith and Hedley Twidle’s examination of the scandal surrounding Ronald Suresh Roberts’s biography of Nadine Gordimer both recount highly public feuds over the claims a literary biographer can rightfully make to the “life” of his subject. At stake in both cases are also the literary legacies of politically fraught nations, Ireland and South Africa, respectively, insofar as that cultural history is embodied in the works and reputations of renowned authors.

The First World War provides a point of connection between Jamie Wood’s effort to uncover autobiographical elements in T. S. Eliot’s poem “Gerontion,” published in 1920, and Alan Filewod’s reading of plays written and produced by former Canadian service members to portray their experiences of trench warfare. Wood’s and Filewod’s projects represent not only scrupulous archival research but also painstaking critical tact, as each critic seeks to identify traces of authorial self-representation in texts that do not explicitly announce themselves as autobiographical. Prose narrative tends to predomi-

nate in life writing studies, and with these fine articles we are glad to be giving poetry and drama the attention they are due.

Another kind of painstaking research—along with another set of compelling questions about what makes a text “autobiographical”—is exemplified in Stefano Calzati and Roberto Simanowski’s study of the use of Facebook by a group of university students in Hong Kong. Taking a more quantitative approach than we often see in submissions to *Biography*, Calzati and Simanowski bring together ethnography, narratology, and linguistics to develop a taxonomy of post types, then analyze the contents, contexts, and frequency of their subjects’ posts to reflect on the diverse roles Facebook has come to play in the online lives of young users of a range of social-media platforms.

Biography’s commitment to interdisciplinarity and a broad international scope is on full display in this issue, as is—more subtly—our excellent working relationship with the staff at University of Hawai‘i Press. We want to thank in particular Emily Benton, who agreed to let us change our cover’s usual color scheme to feature a hue approximating Prince’s trademark purple. We also thank Lizzy Shramko for our cover photograph of Prince’s star on the wall of the First Avenue nightclub in Minneapolis.

John David Zuern