

AUDIO ESSAY

Podcasting Feminism: The Multimodality of Women's Writing and Literary-Historical Studies

Christie Hurrell

University of Calgary

Kathryn Holland

MacEwan University

Karen Bourrier

University of Calgary

Jessica Khuu

University of Calgary

Created by a team of literary scholars, students, and a librarian, *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing* comprises twelve informal interviews that synthesize and share scholarly work on women's writing from medieval times to the present, with capacious definitions of "women" and "writing." The podcast is closely connected to *Orlando: Women's Writing in the British Isles, from the Beginnings to the Present* (Cambridge UP, 2006–), a textbase of original scholarship on women's writing encoded with a bespoke XML tagset. Examining the interplay between the podcast and textbase within our broader scholarly landscape, this audio essay focuses on issues inherent in translating knowledge between written and oral forms in the podcast lifecycle, from the process of creating a lively and accessible scholarly interview to the difficulties of transcription. This discussion mirrors the content of the podcast: feminist critics like Diane Watt, whom we interview about medieval writer Margaret Paston, have challenged the idea that women needed to read the written word in order to be considered literate, arguing that dictation could constitute an alternative form of literacy. By challenging text-based representation as the primary legitimate form of scholarship, we foster a more inclusive view of scholarly communication that speaks to the existing tradition of multimodality in feminist writing. Providing insight on the affordances of the podcast medium and library partnerships for advancing the aims of feminist scholarship and the preservation of new forms of scholarship, the essay explores our reflections on networked knowledge production and multimodal representation, which make scholarship accessible in and beyond academic contexts.

Keywords: podcasts; orality; women's writing; feminist scholarship; scholarly communications; libraries; archives

Podcasting Feminism: The Multimodality of Women's Writing and Literary-Historical Studies



Figure 1: Oak tree logo for *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing* and the *Orlando* textbase.

Listen to [*Podcasting Feminism: The Multimodality of Women's Writing and Literary-Historical Studies*](#).

Show Notes

Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing was funded by a Connection Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

The project's website is <https://orlandoprojectpodcast.org/>.

Mary Elizabeth Leighton, who peer reviewed our podcast, is part of the team behind the *Victorian Samplings* podcast: <https://www.craftingcommunities.net/victorian-samplings>.

The team behind the podcast is:

- Gabrielle Baker, BA Student, English, MacEwan University
- Karen Bourrier, Professor, English Literature, University of Calgary
- Kathryn Holland, Assistant Professor, English, MacEwan University
- Christie Hurrell, Librarian, Libraries and Cultural Resources, University of Calgary
- Jessica J. Khuu, BA (Hons) Student, English, University of Calgary
- Darian Mahmi, BA Student, Psychology and Gender Studies, MacEwan University

A reference list of scholarly sources referenced in the piece follows the transcript. A full list of the podcast episodes is available in Appendix A.

Transcript

[music intro]

CHRISTIE. What is women's writing, and why does it matter? How do we define it in our own time and in explorations of other historical moments? How do works published by women writers in the past resonate in our imaginations and remain relevant in the twenty-first century? How do they shape our understanding of women's writing and the worlds it inhabits?

These are the questions we set out to address in *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*, a feminist literary history podcast dedicated to synthesizing and sharing scholarly work on women's writing from medieval times to the present.

My name is Christie Hurrell. I'm an academic librarian and the technical lead for the *Orlando* podcast.

KATHRYN. I'm Kathryn Holland, a modernist literary scholar, associate director of the *Orlando* Project, and a co-host of the *Orlando* podcast.

KAREN. I'm Karen Bourrier, a specialist in nineteenth-century literature and co-host of the *Orlando* podcast.

JESSICA. And I'm Jessica Khuu, the producer of the *Orlando* podcast.

CHRISTIE. This audio essay presents an overview of our work producing *Orlando: A Podcast*, which is named after two major forerunners in the history of women's writing and in the history of scholarship about women's writing. The first is *Orlando: A Biography*, Virginia Woolf's 1928 novel about the historical contingencies of gender and creativity. The second is the online textbase *Orlando: A History of Women's Writing in the British Isles from the Beginnings to the Present*, which—named after Woolf's experimental novel—has followed in Woolf's steps as its own experiment in feminist literary history.

As the introduction to the Orlando Project explains, contrary to a long-held belief that women's writing emerged only in the eighteenth century, "women have been writing in English for almost as long as there has been writing in English," and the Orlando Project brings together the histories of over a thousand of these writers. Launched in 2006, it is an expansive source of original scholarship about women writers' lives and works that enables interpretation of the production, textual features, and reception of women's writing through feminist lenses.

KATHRYN. Both *Orlando* the novel and the Orlando Project offer incisive and vivid narratives about writing by women and its conditions of possibility. With the *Orlando* podcast, we wanted to extend this conversation.

Conceived, recorded, produced, and distributed entirely during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, the podcast developed from conversations between myself and Karen about how our experiences with the Orlando Project and the broader landscape of feminist literary history related to the global shift to digital communication, in and beyond pedagogical contexts. We saw an opportunity to bring the histories of women's writing in the *Orlando* textbase to a wider audience, including students and the general public, through lively conversations with experts in the field.

As we see it, podcasting not only helps to make scholarly communication more inclusive but is in many ways a natural form for discussions about women's writing because orality has historically been central to women's writing practices. Indeed, while the *Orlando* textbase describes itself as a history of women's *writing*, it uses capacious definitions of both "women" and "writing." The term "writing" is intended to signal the textbase's emphasis on manuscript, lost, non-canonical, and other forms of writing beyond those designated as "literature," and the content of the textbase itself takes a more expansive approach to creative expression and includes in its corpus many non-textual works. We know that many women told their stories orally or dictated to scribes, and a visitor to the *Orlando* textbase who does a keyword search for the term "oral" will find relevant results of works spanning thousands of years. Examples include the genesis of the *Iliad* in the later-eighth century BCE, Julian of Norwich learning rhetoric via oral traditions in the 1300s, Jeni Couzyn's consideration of Gaelic oral traditions in her introduction to *The Bloodaxe Book of Contemporary Women Poets* in the 1980s, and Grace Nichols's use of Caribbean, Asian, African, and North American Indigenous oral traditions in her 1990s poetry for children.

So, engaging in an oral mode of scholarship through the podcast—toggling between written and oral modes iteratively as we moved from the Orlando Project's textbase, to recorded conversations about women's writing, to transcriptions of those conversations, and now to an audio essay reflecting on that work—seems to us to continue a long tradition in women's writing.

In this audio piece, we will incorporate excerpts from the podcast throughout, we'll describe our intentions for the podcast and the challenges and achievements in creating and sharing the podcast, and we'll reflect on its contributions to our understandings of women's writing, particularly in the context of the feminist archive.

[audio transition]

KAREN. When conceptualizing this project, we considered the many other podcasts devoted to books and reading, ranging from the popular show *What Should I Read Next?* hosted by Anne Bogel, the Modern Mrs. Darcy, to the more scholarly *How to Read*, which features short interviews with literary scholars.

While other podcasts, most notably *Reading Women*, focus on women writers and women's stories in an attempt to "reclaim half the bookshelf," their focus is almost entirely on contemporary women writers from a non-scholarly perspective.

Our podcast aimed to bring historical depth and a scholarly perspective to discussions of women's writing, while maintaining an accessible tone.

CHRISTIE. Our podcast also sought to emulate and build upon lessons learned by forerunners in the academic podcasting space including Hannah McGregor, Stacey Copeland, and Siobhan McMenemy, who incorporate scholarly conventions such as citation, peer review, and preservation into their practice. By combining the more conversational and casual style of a podcast with some of the traditions of peer-reviewed scholarship, our team aimed to join with others to, as the Amplify Podcast Network Manifesto puts it, "reimagine the sound of scholarship."

JESSICA. The project was funded by a federal grant, and the process of writing the grant application allowed the team to work through and plan the structure, form, content, and theme of the podcast. Although the pandemic restricted some forms of collaboration, it also provided an opportunity to foster intimacy over long distances, and the podcast centred pleasure and fun in its design. In producing the episodes, I intentionally left in features like laughter, vocal tics, and background noises to highlight the humanity and materiality of the audio form.

Eleven of the twelve episodes were recorded virtually on Zoom, with no two participants in the same physical location. I was present at all of the interviews to record the audio, and we took advantage of the platform's automatic transcription functionality.

I edited and produced the podcast using the open-source Audacity software and GarageBand, and we shared it via a commercial podcast hosting service, with additional outreach done through social media and the podcast website. The website contained additional details and links where listeners could learn more about the guests and writers, as well as imagery, full episodes, and transcriptions. The twelve episodes were released between 2021 and 2022.

KAREN. As co-hosts shaping the content of the podcast, Kathryn and I used our networks to select the featured writer for each episode and approach potential guests. Our goal was to interview diverse academics whose research represented a range of historical periods as well as different identities relating to race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability.

For each interview, we aimed to draw from the expertise and investments of each guest to introduce audiences to women writers who are at once representative and distinctive of their genres and periods. We did not focus explicitly on connecting the interviews to the *Orlando* textbase, but instead crafted the interviews and overall arc of the podcast in its spirit. We aimed to centre the lives and works of individual writers to tell a unique story in feminist literary history, using a storytelling approach we thought would be most compelling for a general audience.

The introductions to each episode, which were developed and recorded separately after the interview was recorded, represent a synthesis of the research done to prepare for each episode. The introductions are only a couple of minutes long, but quickly foreground the historical context of the writer, the expertise of the guest, and some of the topics covered in the episode.

The interviews themselves were also relatively brief, and all episodes were edited to a length of approximately thirty minutes.

CHRISTIE. The podcast was peer reviewed by Mary Elizabeth Leighton, an English professor at the University of Victoria with experience in podcasting. We used an open peer review process—meaning that the identities of the reviewer and creators were known to each other—adapted from the one described by Siobhan McMenemy. Because editing completed audio podcasts is very challenging, we decided to conduct peer review after the first four episodes were created. We did not make changes to those episodes as a result; rather, the reviewer's feedback informed the final two thirds of the episodes. The review complimented aspects of the podcast including its spontaneity, directness, and accessibility to a wide range of audiences, including undergraduate students.

We incorporated feedback from the peer review process, most notably by seeking out a woman writer from a working-class background and in bringing the voices of the writers more directly into our podcast by quoting their work in each introduction. In the introduction to our episode on Sylvia Plath with scholar Jennifer Douglas, for example, the co-hosts recite lines from a poem as well as contextualize Douglas' approach to Plath's archive:

[Excerpt from Episode 9, 00:47-02:10]

KATHRYN HOLLAND. *The tragic elements of her life story, particularly her death by suicide, can at times overshadow her literary achievements. In one of her best-known poems, "Lady Lazarus", the speaker, whom readers tend to associate closely with Plath, claims: "Dying / Is an art, like everything else. / I do it exceptionally well. / I do it so it feels like hell. / I do it so it feels real. / I guess you could say I've a call."*

KAREN BOURRIER. *Plath's mother, Aurelia, is often seen as a meddlesome presence in the archive, wishing to present a slanted portrait of Sylvia Plath as a dutiful daughter. Drawing from her years of research on Plath and her personal experience of losing a daughter, Douglas argues for a reading of Plath's archives, annotated in Aurelia's hand, as grief work—a testament of a mother's grief for her beloved daughter.*

KATHRYN HOLLAND. *While archives are traditionally imagined to be collections of material coalescing organically, Douglas highlights the strategic and subjective elements of their creation. She asks us to consider the active role that many people, from the family members who inherit the records to the archivists who process the collections, play in shaping them. These active agents in the archive are often women, given that librarianship is a feminized profession, and, as we discussed, women from the medieval times to the present are often the recordkeepers of the family. We consider the possibility that the archive itself is a form of life writing.*

JESSICA. I was an undergraduate student in English literature when I joined the podcast, and I was drawn to this project through my interest in orality and storytelling, which stems from my family's experience. I grew up listening to stories passed down through my mother and grandmother, detailing our family's survival of the Cambodian genocide. They repeated these stories to remember the lived experiences of family members, some as young as six, who became some of the many bodies scattered throughout Cambodia's killing fields.

I became aware of the experiential knowledge embedded within those spoken narratives, and this awareness catalyzed my interest in exploring the intersections between oral storytelling, everyday lived experiences, and written literature. During my studies, I conducted an honours project drawing from the works of several theorists such as Marc Augé, Walter Benjamin, Guy Debord, and bell hooks. In this work, I argue that the materialities of modern life contribute to the unconscious devaluation of storytelling and dialogic learning as a social phenomenon.

Emphasizing the importance of experiential storytelling against the backdrop of formal historicization acknowledges how meaning is not created by isolated individuals or material objects but rather hinges on the lived experiences of a larger collective.

KATHRYN. Jessica's focus on oral storytelling helped Karen and I recalibrate the way we prepared for the interviews, to craft episodes that were easy to listen to while still being scholarly. We had initially pursued a traditional path of doing copious research and using that research to craft complex, multifaceted interview questions.

This approach resulted in dialogue more suitable to an academic conference than to a podcast, and Jessica advised us to adjust our preparation style. Over-preparation resulted in a stilted interview. We found that reading an article or two by the author and the Orlando profile was more than sufficient to produce an informed but still lively conversation.

Knowing just enough about a woman writer to ask a few informed questions put us in a similar position to the audience: we were able to ask questions from the point of view of someone learning about a writer for the first time, and share in the excitement of learning something new.

Because we aimed to create varied opportunities for student mentorship and collaboration, we hired research assistants Gabrielle Baker and Darian Mahmi. The project benefited from the skills and knowledge they brought to their work in research support, website design, and social media content creation.

In addition, their contributions opened up our collective conversations about the podcast's reach, its links to the cultural interests of undergraduate students, and our strategies for making the podcast resonate with people who are curious about women's writing but might otherwise remain unaware of or uninvested in it.

[audio transition]

CHRISTIE. Our focus on writers' material circumstances, and our use of the audio medium, helped surface numerous discussions that relate in interesting ways to orality, different forms of literacy and modes of literary expression, and definitions of "writing" and "writer." The following excerpts from the episodes illuminate some of these themes.

One of the most common elements emerging from our interviews was the difficulty in considering the entirety of an author's life and work when relying on the fragmentary paper trail left behind in archives, museums, and libraries.

We consider the finished episodes as pieces of oral history that "enhance the parameters of the archives [that] we are addressing to the future," as Marianne Hirsch argues in her piece about orality and feminist archives.

Examining women's writing through a historical and intersectional lens challenged us to reconsider the place of orality in women's writing.

In our interview with Diane Watt, she tells us about Margaret Paston, a prolific letter writer in the fifteenth century, and whether or not Paston was herself "literate" in the contemporary sense of the word. Watt makes a strong case that although we cannot know for certain if Paston could read and write herself, she was certainly a writer.

[Excerpt from Episode 5, 06:08-09:14]

JESSICA KHHU. Now, a question you must get a lot is whether most medieval women were illiterate? And there has been some debate over whether or not Margaret Paston was actually able to read or write despite the fact that, you know, she's the most prolific letter writer in her family. Could you possibly tell us a little bit more about that debate?

DIANE WATT. Absolutely.

KAREN BOURRIER. Yeah, totally fascinating!

DIANE WATT. So the situation seems to have been that—well, basically we don't actually know anything about Margaret's education. You know, she really first comes into view with that letter that Agnes writes describing her meeting with her future husband, so we know about her family background, we know that she was wealthy, you know, we know about her parentage, but we don't know anything about her education.

KAREN BOURRIER. Well, we have a lot of wealthy women in the earlier period. We're really seeing that money helped women contribute to literary culture.

DIANE WATT. Well, exactly. Because one of the things was that you didn't really actually need to be literate to be able to read and write in the sense that I think that we see this also in The Book of Margery Kempe which is, you know, also from the early fifteenth-century Norfolk.

Women like Margaret Paston, just for class reasons alone, would rely on scribes—being a scribe seemed to be a kind of manual activity. So none of the letters are written in Margaret's own hands. They're written by her sons, her chaplain, trusted family servants. But as far as we can tell, none of these letters are written in her hand and we can tell that by cross-referencing the different letters—it's such an extensive collection, that you can work out the hands of the various letter writers. So it does seem that she wasn't writing. That doesn't necessarily mean she couldn't write; she may have simply chosen not to because, you know, she's of that sort of social class. And similarly with reading, she may have been able to read and she may have chosen not to read.

We know from The Book of Margery Kempe, Margery Kempe describes having priests reading to her. Something similar could have happened with Margaret's letters—the letters that Margaret received. She could've had them read to her. But yeah, whether she actually had any literacy or not is impossible to know for certain. It could have been that she had some limited literacy. She certainly owned some religious books, but these would be liturgical books for her religious devotions for attending church. She may have been able to read some basic Latin phrases, possibly some basic English phrases, she may be able to write them, but we just, we don't know for certain, but we do know that there's no evidence that she's writing any of these letters in her own hands.

CHRISTIE. The topic of literacy also came to light during our conversation with scholar Tara Bynum about Phillis Wheatley Peters, a woman abducted from West Africa as a young child and sold into slavery in Boston in the eighteenth century. Bynum notes that archival evidence cannot answer all of our questions about how Wheatley Peters learned to read and write English, and become a published poet in her young teens:

[Excerpt from Episode 6, ~04:30-06:08]

TARA BYNUM. Emory University has Wheatley's copy book, or a copy book that has been attributed to Wheatley. And in it, you see in the way of a copy book, a number of poems from other people. There's been some debate too about whether or not it's entirely in Wheatley's hand, or if it also includes the hand of other students that may have learned with her. This is where there's, you know, the complexity that I have spoken about in terms of who Wheatley is because there are so many missing—or what we would understand to be missing—pieces of her story. And how she is educated is one of those missing pieces.

KAREN BOURRIER. Yeah. So Wikipedia and Orlando both assert that the Wheatleys taught her how to read, but this seems to be problematic.

TARA BYNUM. Well, I think that there's some truth to that, but I guess what's not clear is, is it Susanna Wheatley that's sitting down with—

KAREN BOURRIER. Uh huh.

TARA BYNUM. —with Phillis Wheatley? Is it John Wheatley that's sitting down with Phillis Wheatley? Or is it the case that the Wheatley family made sure that she was educated? The copy book would suggest that Wheatley is a part of kind of a community of students. There are other student names that are listed in the copy book.

KAREN BOURRIER. Oh.

TARA BYNUM. So at the very least I think that I have questions.

KAREN BOURRIER. Yeah.

CHRISTIE. In an interview with Vanessa Warne, who studies Victorian novelist and poet Alice King, Warne describes how King, who was blind, worked with her sister and the newly invented technology of the typewriter to produce her work.

[Excerpt from Episode 10, 10:11-12:09]

VANESSA WARNE. So she was a very successful essayist, and she also wrote poetry. Now the interesting thing is we've referenced kind of how well educated she was, how many languages she spoke, but what we haven't really talked about is exactly what you were asking me about, Karen, which is how she went about the act of writing, like what was involved in the production of her work. And interestingly, while she was well aware of new tools available to blind people, such as, for example, braille, which was an extremely important nineteenth-century innovation, she, to put it to her own words, are, "I have never taken the trouble to learn the braille character."

KAREN BOURRIER. It's a lot of work to learn braille. It's not easy, right? Like it's hard.

VANESSA WARNE. She, she, she didn't do it because, as she explained, she didn't need to, because she was extremely well supported by her sister Frances King, who served throughout both of their lives as her amanuensis. So, that was kind of noteworthy. So she had a really important human partner in this work. But she also had an innovative technological support. So she loved typewriters, the machines. She called them "beautiful and wonderful" machines.

KAREN BOURRIER. And they only came out like in the 1880s, right? Am I—

VANESSA WARNE. So she—well, she's gonna be using them right around that time, yep. So she's gonna be using them in the eighties. And she was intoxicated by them. So she was able to make a switch from having a human hand take her dictation to typing herself. And she, she loved typewriters. She talked about how she could write as accurately and as quickly as any person could write with a pen, but, as she noted, the manuscript she generated was actually easier to read than anything written with a pen.

CHRISTIE. In our interview with Mishuana Goeman about the multimodal outputs of contemporary writer Heidi E. Erdrich, we discussed Erdrich's innovative form called the "poemeo," a term coined together with her daughter and sister to describe a form that combines poetry read out loud with video images created by visual artist collaborators and accessed via QR codes.

[Excerpt from Episode 12, 19:00-20:11]

MISHUANA GOEMAN. Heidi's use of language within her own poems too reflects that love of her own language. But what she brilliantly has done is put it with these poetic poems or these "poemeos" as she calls them, which are poems and videos, right.

KATHRYN HOLLAND. Oh great.

KAREN BOURRIER. Oh, tell us about these. [laugh]

MISHUANA GOEMAN. Yeah, you can hear the language, and then you have the visual that's compatible. And part of that is she's taking this turn with working with native artists in—oh gosh, the Curator of Ephemera. She very much curates different art. At the end of each poem you see an art where she was writing about that poem and kind of in—

KAREN BOURRIER. So kinda like ekphrastic?

MISHUANA GOEMAN. Yes, yes.

KAREN BOURRIER. Yes, okay. I remember that word. [laugh]

MISHUANA GOEMAN. Very much so. And so she takes on the politics of it, but within that she also uses QR codes, where it links to the poemos in the QR codes. So she's using technology, which she says is already outdated or may be outdated by the time this book comes out. And QR codes now, instead of becoming outdated, because of COVID, are everywhere.

KAREN BOURRIER. They're everywhere. Yeah.

KATHRYN HOLLAND. They're so now. Yes.

MISHUANA GOEMAN. Yeah. So I think when she was doing that, within that—I mean, I've never seen QR codes inside a volume of poetry before, so quite brilliant.

[audio transition]

JESSICA. Having attempted to transform scholarship on women's writing throughout history into a lively conversational format, we also wanted to ensure that the podcast was accessible to a broad audience and preserved as part of the scholarly record.

Transcription of audio conversations can increase accessibility for a variety of potential audience members including individuals with auditory disabilities, non-native English speakers, listeners without expertise in literary studies, and scholars seeking to find or cite specific parts of the episodes.

The transcription work proved to be much more challenging than we had anticipated. Polishing the automated drafts created by the Zoom software required major effort. Trying to correctly transcribe oral speech, especially in conversation which makes reference to major and minor historical figures all the way back to the fifteenth century, is challenging and requires both careful listening and painstaking reference work in both primary and secondary source material. For example, after our episode with Tara Bynum on Phillis Wheatley Peters, we ended up consulting Wheatley Peters's letters to directly confirm the spelling of certain figures mentioned in the episode. To properly decipher the name of an Anglo-Saxon nun, Bertgyth, mentioned in passing by Diane Watt, we went back to Watt's own writing to confirm the figure and the spelling of her name. Working on transcribing the episodes afforded me a rich avenue for developing research skills beyond those available through more traditional research assistantships.

KATHRYN. Between November 2021, when the first episode was published, and December 2022, when the project closed, the episodes were collectively downloaded a total of 3,109 times, with a range of 20–379 downloads for each individual episode. The project's website and Instagram account proved valuable for reaching a global audience. By March 2022, the podcast's website had welcomed visitors from more than twenty countries, including Australia, Brazil, China, Israel, Ireland, Malta, Mexico, South Korea, and Taiwan. Individuals and organizations—such as Linda Morra (host of the *Getting Lit with Linda* podcast), Blue Heron Books (a store in High Falls, New York), and the Modernist Studies Association—follow the Instagram account, suggesting the *Orlando* podcast's appeal for our intended audience of students, academics, and the broader public. The podcast's broad reach reinforces the power of oral storytelling as an inclusive and powerful medium for communication, and fulfilled the project's overall goal to be a tool for outreach.

CHRISTIE. When the project closed at the end of 2022, grant funding was no longer available to sustain commercial hosting and distribution of the podcast episodes. At this point, the audio files and text transcripts were transferred to the University of Calgary's Digital Asset Management System, or DAMS. Using workflows developed by my colleagues, I added descriptive and administrative metadata, transcripts, and audio files. The DAMS is well indexed by search engines and library discovery tools, and the presence of full-text transcripts increases accessibility and promotes discovery. Each episode was assigned a digital object identifier (or DOI) to promote citation and reuse of the episodes as teaching, research, and learning objects. The episodes are openly licensed using Creative Commons licenses, allowing them to be remixed or reused for non-commercial purposes. In the 2023 calendar year, the podcasts were downloaded from the DAMS between 284 and 774 times, with the average number of downloads per file at 429. Our peer reviewer asserted that she could see the episodes being included on a course syllabus or cited by other literary scholars in their own research, and these statistics may provide some evidence to back up this assertion.

[audio transition]

KAREN. *Orlando: A Podcast* toggled from written text to oral text and back again. As we moved from digital textbase to conversational podcast to written transcriptions of our conversations, we expanded our own ideas about scholarly communication, women's writing, and orality. Kathryn and I, along with additional collaborators, are currently at work on a four-volume history covering women's writing from medieval times to the present, also based on the *Orlando Project*. Most of our previous writing within our respective fields of Victorian studies and modernism has been for an academic audience. Working on a podcast with a more general audience in mind has been invaluable as we attempt to synthesize scholarship in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women's writing for a more general audience. Jessica took her experience with the podcast into her honours thesis, "Backscattered Scraps: Storytelling, History & Apocalypse in Supermodernity," which examines the intersections between written literature, the lived experience of twenty-first-century urban dwellers, and the decline of oral storytelling. For Christie, collaborating on the podcast was a way to expand the concept of scholarly communications through praxis, by adapting existing practices of scholarly publishing to new forms. The experience of collaborating on *Orlando: A Podcast*, convinced us of the potential of oral storytelling to convey the complex history of women's writing to a broad audience.

[music outro]**Acknowledgements**

This project was supported by funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the University of Calgary, and MacEwan University. The team would like to acknowledge all of our podcast guests for their contributions, as well as colleagues at Libraries and Cultural Resources, University of Calgary.

Competing Interests

The creators have no competing interests to declare.

Ethics

Institutional ethics approvals were not required for this project.

References

- Allford, Jennifer. 2022. "The Power of Speaking Rather than Reading and Writing Stories." *UCalgary News*, March 8. <https://www.ucalgary.ca/news/power-speaking-rather-reading-and-writing-stories>. Archived at: <https://perma.cc/KFE3-YDU6>.
- Amplify Podcast Network. n.d. Accessed January 9, 2024. <https://amplifypodcastnetwork.ca/>.
- Bernardin, Susan. 2017. "'There's a River to Consider': Heid E. Erdrich's 'Pre-Occupied.'" *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 29 (1): 38–55. <https://doi.org/10.5250/studamerindelite.29.1.0038>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022a. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 5, "Margaret Paston / Diane Watt." <https://doi.org/10.11575/wkm3-y645>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022b. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 6, "Phillis Wheatley / Tara Bynum." <https://doi.org/10.11575/v461-dw85>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022c. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 9, "Sylvia Plath / Jennifer Douglas." <https://doi.org/10.11575/gyjj-0q66>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022d. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 10, "Alice King / Vanessa Warne." <https://doi.org/10.11575/bdcx-7349>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022e. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 12, "Heid E. Erdrich / Mishuana Goeman." <https://doi.org/10.11575/7ncq-sc68>.
- Brown, Susan, Patricia Clements, and Isobel Grundy, eds. 2006. "Introduction." In *Orlando: Women's Writing in the British Isles from the Beginnings to the Present*. Cambridge University Press. <https://orlando.cambridge.org/>.
- Brown, Susan, Patricia Clements, and Isobel Grundy, eds. 2022. "Mary Prince Profile." In *Orlando: Women's Writing in the British Isles from the Beginnings to the Present*. Cambridge University Press. <https://orlando.cambridge.org/profiles/prinma>.
- Copeland, Stacey, and Hannah McGregor. 2021. *A Guide to Academic Podcasting*. <https://scholars.wlu.ca/books/2>.
- Couzyn, Jeni, ed. 1985. *The Bloodaxe Book of Contemporary Women Poets: Eleven British Writers*. Bloodaxe.

- Fulton, DoVeanna S. 2006. *Speaking Power: Black Feminist Orality in Women's Narratives of Slavery*. State University of New York Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/jj.18253142>.
- Khuu, Jessica Jane. 2022. "Backscattered Scraps: Storytelling, History & Apocalypse in Supermodernity." Bachelor of Honours thesis, University of Calgary. <https://hdl.handle.net/1880/119199>.
- Leighton, Mary Elizabeth. 2022. "Orlando: A Podcast Peer Review Invitation and Response." <https://orlando-projectpodcast.org/about/>.
- McMenemy, Siobhan. 2019. "Scholarly Podcasting Open Peer Review." Wilfrid Laurier University Press. <https://www.wlupress.wlu.ca/Scholarly-Podcasting-Open-Peer-Review>. Archived at: <https://perma.cc/NH2Z-55E8>.
- Prince, Mary. 1831. *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave. Related by Herself. To Which Is Added, the Narrative of Asa-Asa, a Captured African*. F. Westley and A.H. Davis. <https://www.slavery.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Detail/the-history-of-mary-prince-a-west-indian-slave.-related-by-herself.-to-which-is-added-the-narrative-of-asa-asa-a-captured-african/937181>.
- Rubery, Matthew. 2016. *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*. Harvard University Press.
- Watt, Diane. 2007. *Medieval Women's Writing: Works by and for Women in England, 1100–1500*. Polity.
- Woolf, Virginia. 1928. *Orlando: A Biography*. Hogarth Press.

Appendix A: Complete List of *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing* Episodes

- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. "Episode 1, "Radclyffe Hall / Jana Funke." <https://doi.org/10.11575/DC/ETZQ-WJ61>
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 2, "Lady Mary Wortley Montagu / Isobel Grundy." <https://doi.org/10.11575/dc/zrz3-8d20>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 3, "Bola Agbaje / Kanika Batra." <https://doi.org/10.11575/DC/8RS2-KG32>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 4, "Lady Hester Pulter / Alice Eardley." <https://doi.org/10.11575/dc/fyve-nf75>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 5, "Margaret Paston / Diane Watt." <https://doi.org/10.11575/wkm3-y645>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 6, "Phillis Wheatley / Tara Bynum." <https://doi.org/10.11575/v461-dw85>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 7, "Mary Seacole / Alisha Walters." <https://doi.org/10.11575/7w9e-8r21>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 8, "Jane and Anna Maria Porter / Devoney Loosner." <https://doi.org/10.11575/amx4-h636>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 9, "Sylvia Plath / Jennifer Douglas." <https://doi.org/10.11575/gyjj-0q66>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 10, "Alice King / Vanessa Warne." <https://doi.org/10.11575/bdcx-7349>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Jessica J. Khuu, hosts. 2022. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 11, "Alice Munro / Annie Murray." <https://doi.org/10.11575/ddw9-z512>.
- Bourrier, Karen, and Kathryn Holland, hosts. 2022. *Orlando: A Podcast on Women's Writing*. Episode 12, "Heid E. Erdrich / Mishuana Goeman." <https://doi.org/10.11575/7ncq-sc68>.

How to cite this article: Hurrell, Christie, Kathryn Holland, Karen Bourrier, and Jessica Khuu. 2025. Podcasting Feminism: The Multimodality of Women's Writing and Literary-Historical Studies. *KULA: Knowledge Creation, Dissemination, and Preservation Studies* 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.18357/kula.271>

Submitted: 15 January 2024 **Accepted:** 26 August 2024 **Published:** 15 July 2025

Copyright: © 2025 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

KULA: Knowledge Creation, Dissemination, and Preservation Studies is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by University of Victoria Libraries.

OPEN ACCESS 