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# GENDER FORUM

An Internet Journal for Gender Studies



## Gender and Contemporary Film

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## Editorial Deadlines

Spring Issue:

abstracts (October 1),

completed papers (January 1)

Summer Issue:

abstracts (January 1),

completed papers (April 1)

Fall Issue:

abstracts (April 1),

completed papers (July 1)

Early Career Researchers Special Issue:

abstracts (May 1),

completed papers (August 1)

Winter Issue:

abstracts (July 1),

completed papers (October 1)

## About

*Gender forum* is an online, peer reviewed academic journal dedicated to the discussion of gender issues. As an electronic journal, *gender forum* offers a free-of-charge platform for the discussion of gender-related topics in the fields of literary and cultural production, media and the arts as well as politics, the natural sciences, medicine, the law, religion and philosophy. Inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier in 2002, the quarterly issues of the journal have focused on a multitude of questions from different theoretical perspectives of feminist criticism, queer theory, and masculinity studies. *gender forum* also includes reviews and occasionally interviews, fictional pieces and poetry with a gender studies angle.

Opinions expressed in articles published in *gender forum* are those of individual authors and not necessarily endorsed by the editors of *gender forum*.

## Submissions

Target articles should conform to current MLA Style (8th edition) and should be between 5,000 and 8,000 words in length. Please make sure to number your paragraphs and include a bio-blurb and an abstract of roughly 300 words. Files should be sent as email attachments in Word format. Please send your manuscripts to [gender-forum@uni-koeln.de](mailto:gender-forum@uni-koeln.de).

We always welcome reviews on recent releases in Gender Studies! Submitted reviews should conform to current MLA Style (8th edition), have numbered paragraphs, and should be between 750 and 1,000 words in length. Please note that the reviewed releases ought to be no older than 24 months. In most cases, we are able to secure a review copy for contributors.

## Article Publishing

The journal aims to provide rapid publication of research through a continuous publication model. All submissions are subject to peer review. Articles should not be under review by any other journal when submitted to *Gender forum*.

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There are no submission or page charges, and no colour charges.

## Detailed Table Of Contents

Editorial	1
<b>Zoila Clark:</b> Masks, Fans, and Nu Shu in Chinese-American Female Love Relationships	3
<b>Rita Banerji:</b> Bollywood Baffled Over Sex, Rape and Prostitution	20
<b>Alison Happel, Jennifer Esposito:</b> Pageant Trouble: An Exploration of Gender Transgression in <i>Little Miss Sunshine</i>	38
<b>Amy E. Forrest:</b> Disciplining Deviant Women: the Critical Reception of <i>Baise-moi</i>	55
<b>Victoria Herche:</b> <i>The Sapphires</i> (2012) and <i>One Night the Moon</i> (2001): Song, History and Australian Aboriginality	80
<b>List of Contributors</b>	95

## Editorial

1 This issue of *Gender Forum* focuses on the representation of gender and gender relations, as well as sex and sexuality, in contemporary film. Movies – from mainstream blockbusters to low-budget indie films – present a mirror of our culture. They both consciously and subconsciously engage with cultural tropes and narratives and reflect the ways in which our behaviors and actions are governed by gendered expectations. Sometimes they do so by presenting opportunities for subverting normative categories and sometimes they cast a spotlight on everyday situations that otherwise often go unnoticed or uncommented.

2 The first of the diverse and insightful articles in this issue is Dr. Zoila Clark's contribution "Masks, Fans and Nu Shu in Chinese-American Female Love Relationships". Clark analyzes the films *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* and *Saving Face* to investigate the issue of saving face, which she argues is experienced differently among Chinese-American Lesbians than it is by Americans as a result of the cultural transmission of Confucian beliefs through first generation immigrants. The focus here lies on the use of the *Nu Shu* language, which was created for and used only by women. This unusual form of communication created a possible romance between women who shared a secret language.

3 The second article comes from activist and author Rita Banerji, and is entitled "Bollywood baffled over Sex, Rape and Prostitution". Citing a wide variety of popular Bollywood movies as examples, Banerji argues that though Indian films are often censored for depicting relationships based on sex, sex is still the main selling point of these films. This points towards a commoditization of female sexuality. In this denial of female sexuality as a woman's independent identity and choice, Bollywood films reflect a society's unchanging attitude toward female sexuality.

4 The third contribution in this issue is a collaborative work by Alison Happel and Jennifer Esposito, entitled "Pageant Trouble: An Exploration of Gender Transgression in *Little Miss Sunshine*". In this paper, the authors investigate the 2006 film *Little Miss Sunshine* in terms of its representations of the relationship between beauty pageants and gender. Utilizing Butler's theory of gender performativity, Happel and Esposito explore how the main character, Olive, disrupts normative gender expectations and behaviors by performing her gender in transgressive ways at the pageant.

5        In her article called “Disciplining Deviant Women: the Critical Reception of *Baise-moi*”, Amy E. Forrest explores the socio-cultural reasons for the strongly critical reception of the contemporary French film *Baise-moi*, from an anarcha-feminist perspective. Her focus in this investigation lies on the limited ways in which violent women are generally represented in film, and the ways this is subverted in *Baise-Moi*, a film directed by two feminist, sex-positive women of color. The conflict between mainstream narratives and subversion is here shown via the reactions of journalists and film critics.

6        In our final article, "*The Sapphires* and *One Night the Moon*: Song, History and Australian Aboriginality", contributor Victoria Herche examines two Australian Indigenous film musicals that deal with the representation of Aboriginality and the painful aftermath of the Stolen Generations, colonial displacement and racism. Both films approach these issues differently, but they each use the elements of the musical genre, such as song and dance, to do so. Additionally, in both films a female presence acts as a reconciling power; the women's struggle towards cross-cultural understanding has introduced optimistic tones in the self-confidence of Australian Indigenous filmmaking.