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abstracts (October 1),

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Early Career Researchers Special Issue:

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completed papers (August 1)

Winter Issue:

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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.

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.

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Editorial

1 “Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em,” states Malvolio in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* and one is inclined to use the same words in describing one of the most influential and creative dramatists, William Shakespeare, himself. We keep returning to Shakespeare not only because of the 38 plays he penned, but also because of his unique, unmatched way with words which to this day resonates with critics and audiences alike. This year, 2014, marks the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth and this issue of *Gender Forum* will focus on how gender is addressed in works of Shakespeare in honor of this event.

2 Jim Casey examines in his paper the various expectations placed on male bodies in the early modern period, the repeated challenge of 'proving' one's masculinity, and the various critical reactions to violent action in Shakespeare's plays. Casey argues that early modern ideas regarding 'manhood' and the gendering of bodies have been misinterpreted by many recent critics, and the myths of gender *renversement* and masculine anxiety have been greatly overstated. In contrast, he argues that the complex relationship between the body and the construction of manhood has been downplayed, while the important sociocultural expectation of masculine bodily sacrifice has not been fully appreciated. Furthermore Casey argues that most critics diminish the significance of masculine service and death, stating that the connection between honor and violence extends beyond the aristocracy and provides an important foundation for early modern English society.

3 In her article Charlotte Fiehn discusses the courtship of Cordelia in Shakespeare's masterpiece *King Lear*, arguing that when Cordelia confounds her father's desire for flattery in Act I, Scene 1, it not only defines the parameters of legitimate parent-child relationships for the play, but that her response to Lear's test, the momentous answer, “nothing” (1.1.96), affirms the legitimacy of natural law and primogeniture. Additionally Fiehn postulates that Cordelia's reply allows her to stress a duty to her future husband, leading to a second test of love that bears out Cordelia's position on the responsibilities of a wife. The Kings of France and Burgundy must consider whether they will marry Cordelia without the benefit of her dowry, reckoning her value solely on the basis of her character. Fiehn's paper explores the representation of marriage in *King Lear* in both this instance and in the relationships of the primary and secondary plots. It examines marriage as a central if often overlooked element

within the broader tragedy, and as a means by which Shakespeare considers the broader legitimacy and illegitimacy of relationships.

4 According to Jennifer Flaherty, Paula Vogel's dark comedy *Desdemona: A Play about a Handkerchief* is similarly probing, examining the isolation of women past and present through her reinvention of the characters in Shakespeare's *Othello*. Flaherty argues that rather than creating a heroic Desdemona who defies her fate, Vogel chooses to depict an environment in which such a character would be impossible. Instead, Vogel creates a silly, spoiled, and promiscuous Desdemona who attempts to subvert the patriarchy that controls her. Flaherty continues her argument by discussing how displacement is used by Vogel to demonstrate the painful limitations of female agency. In her paper Flaherty argues that the feminism of *Desdemona* does not demonstrate empowerment, enlightenment, or equality, but is replaced with a kind of negative empathy, concluding that Vogel asks her audiences to say 'no' to constraints on female agency and 'no' to female complicity and isolation. By not saving Desdemona, Vogel invites her audiences to save themselves.