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Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier

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Editor

Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier

University of Cologne
English Department
Albertus-Magnus-Platz
D-50923 Köln/Cologne
Germany

Tel +49-(0)221-470 2284

Fax +49-(0)221-470 6725

email: gender-forum@uni-koeln.de

Editorial Office

Laura-Marie Schnitzler, MA

Sarah Youssef, MA

Christian Zeitz (General Assistant, Reviews)

Tel.: +49-(0)221-470 3030/3035

email: gender-forum@uni-koeln.de

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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.

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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Editorial

By Laura-Marie von Czarnowsky, University of Cologne, Germany

1 Robert Burton once famously claimed that “We can make mayors and officers every year, but not scholars” (305). However, the second annual Early Career Researchers issue of *gender forum* highlights the potential of another group of young academics and their keen interest in gender studies. This year’s articles focus on gender in the context of sociology, literary studies, film studies, and cultural studies, bringing together a wide variety of critical thought on a complex and continuously engaging topic. Gender forum is proud to provide early career researchers with a platform to share their ideas, and to connect with scholars of similar interests.

2 This year’s issue opens with Jessica Rose Corey’s article “‘My sister went to Steubenville, OH and all I got was this lousy shirt’”: Composing Feminist Activism with The Clothesline Project”. Against the backdrop of the current discourse about sexual violence on US university campuses, Corey’s article examines the The Clothesline Project as a form of feminist protest. The Clothesline Project, which invites survivors of sexual violence (and those commemorating them) to communicate their experiences via text and illustrations on tee shirts hung on a clothesline in a public space, addresses politics involved in issues of violence against women, especially on college campuses. Corey’s research extends the prevailing notion that “the personal is political,” and demonstrates how activists balance personal investment in social change with public arguments that may influence such change. Finally, it shows how paradoxical notions like ‘silence speaks’ allow for subversive communication in material, visual, textual, ‘spoken’ and ‘unspoken’ forms.

3 In “On the Curious Case of a Black Slave Owner in Edward P. Jones’s *The Known World*—or a Queer Reading of Black Abjection and Autonomy”, Joseph Kai-Hang Cheang explores the queer dimension in African-American literary imagination. Cheang offers an alternative reading of the novel that sees Henry’s slave owning status as a manifestation of his reciprocated affection for his former master. It is clear that there is a sub-surface affection between the white slave owner and his erstwhile slave in an era when the races were so deeply segregated. In thinking through what Cheang calls a “queer apprenticeship” between Henry and William, this essay posits interracial relationships as a site of ambivalence.

4 Hyo-seol Ha also examines gender relations in African-American literature. “‘I should have gone to Mary’s’: Filling the Void in Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*” examines the

complex relationship between race and sexuality in Ellison's novel. The male characters in Ellison's novel blindly pursue the same ideal masculinity, which is defined by social power and sexual prowess. In the novel, African-American and Caucasian male characters collectively create an ideal 'Man' by exerting oppressive power over African-American women. Focusing on the perspective of the narrator, Ha's article examines how African-American and Caucasian men give chase to each other in search of an ideal masculinity and thus overshadow female African-American characters. Ha's essay thus presents a reading in which these doubly oppressed women fill a void in the novel left by the male characters struggling to reach a perfect masculinity.

5 Tegan Zimmerman's essay focuses on "Transnational Maternal Genealogies in Contemporary Canadian Women's Historical Novels" and presents a sustained analysis of these genealogies in contemporary Canadian women's historical novels. In contrast to conventional historical novels which privilege the lives of men, women's historical novels centralize women's lives. Zimmerman's article concentrates on the creation and expression of transnational maternal genealogies in an increasing number of contemporary historical novels by Canadian women. Beginning with Joy Kogawa's seminal novel *Obasan*, published in 1981, Zimmerman traces the trajectory of this gendered genre to recent times with Padma Viswanathan's *The Toss of a Lemon*. According to her reading, transnational maternal genealogies differ from other dominant trends in the genre such as masculinist mainstream historiography and "historiographic metafiction". Furthermore, transnational female characters challenge "traditional boundaries of historical fiction". Despite the critical acclaim, many Canadian women novelists have attracted little scholarly attention, thus this article partakes in the critical work which can and should be done to remedy this gap.

6 The final article of this year's Early Career Researchers issue takes a critical look at the presence and use of sex toys in contemporary culture. Olga Tchepikova's "The Power of Pleasure Devices: Sex Toys and Dominance in Society and Pop Culture" investigates the role of sex toys in the sex industry and beyond, signalling not only their high popularity but also a fundamental demand for these products. Sex toys thus become relevant for the discourse about the distribution of sexual power relations. According to Tchepikova, the role of sex toys in the construction of hierarchy ultimately depends on the user's subjective perception of pleasure, which however is shaped by numerous factors that have an impact on building this subjectivity. Those are, among others, perceptions of sex toy usage shaped by the dominance of heteronormativity and further, particular attitudes towards sex toys reflected in society and text productions in popular culture. This is explained by Tchepikova with reference to a

variety of contemporary TV shows and films with regard to their treatment of sex toys in a heteronormative setting.

7 *Gender forum* is proud to give these five early career researchers a platform for their engaging and thoughtful research and looks forward to continuing this yearly tradition of showcasing promising scholars in 2015.

Works Cited

Burton, Robert. *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Ed. Holbrook Jackson. New York: Everyman Library Edition, 1932. Print.