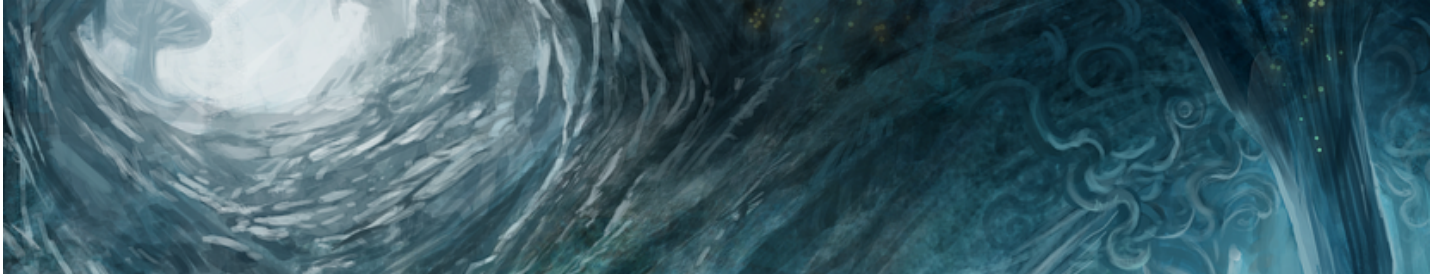


Issue
2016 **57**

GENDER FORUM

An Internet Journal for Gender Studies



Gender and Fantasy

Edited by
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ISSN 1613-1878

Universität
zu Köln



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Spring Issue:

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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 In her seminal *Fantasy: A Literature of Subversion*, critic Rosemary Jackson calls fantasy “a literature of desire” (3), one that “traces the unsaid and unseen of culture, that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made ‘absent’” (4). This argument, made in 1981, still holds true today. Fantasy literature abounds with creatures signifying desire, landscapes offering room for its exploration, and narrative techniques that facilitate what Tolkien calls “secondary belief” (49) into these worlds and the characters roaming them.

2 This issue of *gender forum* features articles on highly diverse fantasy novels. It features those that fall into urban fantasy, a setting that unites the supernatural with the world as we know it, those that play out in novels with fully realised secondary worlds, and those that see characters travel to the past to turn history into fiction. What all of these novels have in common is that the fantastic is often used as a means of exploring the boundaries of gender stereotypes and well-trodden genre markers. The exploration of the “unsaid and unseen” is thus also at the same time a critical re-evaluation of genre tropes and an actualisation thereof. The essays collected in this issue thus critically engage with the question of limits in a setting where everything is possible.

3 In “Why *Were* You Born?: An Analysis of the Anti-Feminist Implications of the Film Adaptation of *Coraline*”, James Curtis examines how an author’s attempt to write against gender-specific stock characters is reversed in the text’s film adaptation. Positing that Gaiman has the ability to create strong, independent female protagonists who use their own resourcefulness and independence to overcome harrowing situations, Curtis presents a critical analysis of Selick’s 2009 adaptation of *Coraline*. Gaiman’s feminist stance is lost as Selick introduces a new character called Wybie who not only helps Coraline, but in fact takes over much of the action-oriented plot and plays a pivotal role in securing the film’s happy end. Because of this repeated intervention by a male character, Wybie’s presence in the film often undermines Coraline’s strength and independence, thereby effectively robbing Gaiman’s original story of much of its feminist thrust.

4 Joshua Yu Burnett’s “Of Liberation, Lost Cities, Disappearing Feminists, and the Ascent of Ronald Reagan: Gender in Samuel R. Delany's *Neveryóna*” presents an insightful analysis of the effect of real-world politics onto the creation of serialised fantasy novels. While *Tales of Nevèrjón* was written between 1976 and 1978 – at the height of second-wave feminism – *Neveryóna* was written between June 1980 and November 1981, when Ronald

Reagan's political ascendance both reacted to and pushed back against the gains made by social movements such as second-wave feminism, Black power, and others. Burnett argues that the change of protagonists in the series, from woman warrior Raven to teenaged Pryn, and the complete absence of the female heroic figure, ties in with a stark cultural shift experienced at that time. Burnett thus explores *Neveryóna* as a commentary on gender during the Reagan era, when public policy and public discourse were both actively hostile to feminism and other liberatory movements.

5 Danielle Russell offers this issue's final contribution. In "Liberating the Inner Goddess: the Witch Reconsidered in Libba Bray's Neo-Victorian Gemma Doyle trilogy", Russell, following Jackson's central argument, argues that what "has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'" in the primary world is foregrounded in the secondary world. Engaging both with Victorian gender politics and stock representations of witches and goddesses across the ages, Russell posits that the figure of the mother – biological and surrogate – dominates in the trilogy. Tension and suspicion distort the mother/daughter dynamic, while the desire for that bond haunts the series' protagonist Gemma and her friends. Desired but elusive, the idealized mother is exposed as being unattainable. Bray's depiction of the Victorian family critiques a particular kind of family: one constructed in a way that permits abuse. However, the trilogy offers an endorsement of alternative definitions of family in general and mothers in particular. These are families of choice, built upon mutual respect, affection, compassion, and active mothering.

6 The articles, featuring worlds in which everything seems possible, thus also present the limits of possibility. The literature of desire becomes all the more poignant when that particular desire is not only traced, but also denied. Titular Coraline is denied her agency, *Neveryóna* the continuing presence of its woman warrior, and Gemma Doyle her mother. Interestingly, the desire and denial thereof is a female one, thus offering the notion that fantasy lends itself well to not only voicing desires in general, but female desire in particular.

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