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# GENDER FORUM

An Internet Journal for Gender Studies



## Gender and Jewish Culture

Edited by  
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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.

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## Editorial

1      **Gender and Jewish Culture** is the first issue of **gender forum** to address the intersections of gender and Jewish culture(s) and religion from a wide range of perspectives. The issue brings together two articles which analyze stereotypical constructions of femininity in Israeli fiction and the gendering of religious narratives, respectively. Additionally, the issue features an interview with Tanya Segal, Poland's first female rabbi, in which she addresses questions of identity, culture, religion and gender.

2      In "Abortion and the single woman as literary tropes in the works of Amos Oz" Dvir Abramovich provides a gender-based reading of a large sample of texts, concentrating on constructions of abortion and single women. In regard to the former, Abramovich points out that the moral rhetoric of Oz' texts ultimately serves to construct abortion as unethical. He identifies four strategies which are employed to present abortion as a moral evil – constructing the motives of those deciding on abortion as selfish, humanising the foetus, presenting the actual operation as gruesome and finally invoking psychological risks in those undergoing abortions. Similarly reactionary, Oz' constructions of unmarried women are less than favourable, showing them as lonely, morally bankrupt and potentially dangerous. Abramovich then goes on to show that these connotations do not apply to unmarried men. Thus, his systematic analysis manages to show the prevalence of certain rhetoric strategies serving heteropatriarchal ends in Oz' writing.

3      Concentrating on the foundations of monotheistic religions, Magda Romanska's contribution "Performing the Covenant: Akedah and the Origins of Masculinity" re-evaluates the covenant between Abraham and God from a gender perspective. Drawing on Derrida and Kierkegaard, she analyses the male ethics of self-sacrifice as well as the gendered connection between death and wisdom. In an analysis of Sarah's part in the story she then describes the systematic exclusion of women from the covenant with God, and hence from the possibility of becoming an ethical subject within this logic. The mechanisms through which this exclusion is achieved are shown to be manifold – the ritual of circumcision, binding men to each other and collectively to God, is elaborated on alongside the narrative silencing of Sarah and Abrahams privilege of being able to hear the voice of God. Sarah's death, in this context, operates on a very different level than the sacrifice requested of Abraham and reveals that the only path to the divine open for women is to become the subject-object of sacrifice.

4      Rohee Dasgupta's interview with Rabbi Tanya Segal takes up questions of Jewish culture and religious practice. Being the first female Rabbi in Poland, Segal currently leads the progressive reform congregation Beit Warszawa and attempts to further the development

of progressive Judaism in Poland. Having worked as a dramatist and actor in Moscow's Yiddish theatre and having studied both theology and theatre in Israel, she elaborates on the connections between performance, cultural experience and religion as practice. Her Midrash theatre project is a method of exploring theology using art and promotes individual creativity in dealing with traditional texts. This performative re-reading also allows for multiple perspectives, enabling a 'dialogue' with traditional female figures of Judaism. However, while the position of women in progressive Judaism is much stronger than in its orthodox counterpart, the difficulties of developing a Jewish identity in Poland make this a priority for her over the aim of overcoming the patriarchal rabbinical order.

5 This issue of **gender forum** features reviews of *Africa After Gender?* (edited by Catherine M. Cole, Takyiwaa Manuh, and Stephan F. Miescher), *Driving Women: Fiction and Automobile Culture in Twentieth-Century America* (by Deborah Clarke), *Staging Black Feminisms: Identity, Politics, Performance* (by Lynette Goddard), and *The Jewess in Nineteenth-Century British Literary Culture* (by Nadia Valman).