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Gender and Humour II: Reinventing the Genres of Laughter

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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 Annette Keck, University of Munich, Germany and Ralph J. Poole,
University of Salzburg, Austria

1 The second issue of "Gender and Humour" deals with effects of current phenomena of comic genres, above all with regard to literature and the popular media. Several of the essays investigate in particular the changes in gendered perceptions of humour within modernism, often highlighting the differences in the socio-political climate of the 1920s and '30s compared to later decades. Margaret Stetz here revisits Max Beerbohm's initial adoration and gradual rejection of Rebecca West, who in turn let go of her anger against his condescending ways in her essay collection *Ending in Earnest* (1931). Stetz interprets West's narrator as one who laughs in support of women, particularly modern, career-oriented women, relegating Beerbohm to an outdated past generation.

2 In an intercultural comparative essay, Diana Mantel discusses Ruth Landshoff-Yorck's first novel, *Die Vielen und der Eine* (1930), reflecting aspects of a carnivalesque, sexually permissive life-style of the Weimar Republic, and compares it to Landhoff's later work of the 1950s and its depiction of a sexually suppressed New England society. Whereas the 'blackening' of humour here mirrors the author's own experience of life in exile, Eduard Lerperger's comparative analysis of humour focuses on the transition from novel to film and the entailing historically and generically mutations implied in such a shift. Taking Anita Loos' novel *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1925) and Howard Hawks' film adaption of 1953 as example, Lerperger follows the transformation from satire to slapstick and thus from scathing social critique to popular musical entertainment.

3 Finally, Christine Künzel moves from a discussion of women's absence from the canon of literary satire to offering a fresh view on Gisela Elsner as critically blocked-out satirist. The 'surprising' success and recognition of writers such as Elfriede Jelinek necessitates revisiting forgotten female satirists of former generations, Künzel claims, in order to uncover the blind spots of literary studies that hide a long-standing female tradition of satire. Bringing gendered notions of humour to our immediate present times, Anja Gerigk in her essay on the TV comedy *30 Rock* bridges the gap of an understanding of the carnivalesque as a pre-modern form of social comedy with a contemporary usage of humour as reflecting institutionalized and gendered hierarchies. While claiming that today's popular media sophisticatedly and effectively manage to employ comic modes as metafictional strategies, we

ultimately can discern the need to look back to historically more distant and socio-culturally diverging genres of laughter and see how they have continuously been reinvented across the boundaries of high and popular culture, of literary and other forms of cultural production, as well as of gender and national distinctions.