

## EDITORIAL NOTE

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We are pleased to present the third volume of *Gender Questions*. In this volume we include articles focusing on different regions of the world dealing with diverse and multidisciplinary issues related to gender. Topics exploring conditions in Zimbabwe and Nigeria as well as literature focusing on African-American masculinities are presented, while some of the other contributions move beyond one location to highlight issues related to multiculturalism, migration and portrayals of a well-known fictional character.

Our first contribution focuses on multiculturalism, which was also the topic of discussion at a workshop held at the University of Stellenbosch in March 2015. Anne Phillips, the author of an important book on *Gender and culture* (2010) and a scholar from the Gender Institute at the London School of Economics, was the guest speaker at this event. Following these interactions, we present here an electronic interview between her and Deirdre Byrne (one of the co-editors of this journal), followed by reflections on this conversation by four prominent South African gender specialists from different institutions: Amanda Gouws, Desiree Lewis, Louise du Toit and Stella Viljoen. Where



cultural practices and the struggle for gender equality are at odds with one another, new thinking and forms of activism are required and these conversations highlight this in exciting ways. In their reflections on this conversation, the South African scholars robustly interrogate the implications of multiculturalism on a local level, through discussions of the representation of sexual diversity and other local phenomena.

Kezia Batisai's article, 'Being gendered in Africa's flag-democracies: Narratives of sexual minorities living in the diaspora', is based on fieldwork undertaken in 2011 and 2014 in Johannesburg and Cape Town. The lived experiences of sexual minorities who are immigrants from Zimbabwe, Uganda or Nigeria are explored in this contribution. This article enriches queer research by highlighting the intersections of migration, sexual minority and gender.

The next article, 'The evolution of a feminine stereotype: What Tinker Bell teaches children about gender roles', by Suneé Jones, takes us into the world of children's literature and films. Jones explores developments in the portrayal of the Tinker Bell character in the popular Peter Pan tale by focusing on the original novel, the first Disney characterisation and recent depictions in Disney films. She argues that changes in representations of Tinker Bell are indicative of a conscious recasting of female characters in broader society.

Mariam Youssef, in her article entitled 'Incarceration, transformation and awareness in the African-American novel', focuses on the construction of African-American masculinities through incarcerated characters in selected works. She argues that, in depicting the different experiences of these male characters, the agency of African-American men is explored and alternative forms of empowerment are unearthed.

Anne Reef provides another literary analysis in her article entitled 'Mind your p(ederast)s and q(ueer)s: The school as phallic parent in Mark Behr's *Embrace*'. The author focuses on the novel *Embrace* through a Lacanian psychoanalytic lens, which is often used in analyses of the way gender is portrayed in literature. The school environment is regarded as a space for exploring the developing sexuality of children, and in this case the queer child. In the novel, however, the school represents the parent and the state during apartheid South Africa, enforcing white male and heterosexual hegemony in violent ways.

Tafadzwa Rugoho and France Maphosa's article, 'Gender-based violence amongst women with disabilities: A case study of Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe', highlights the higher incidence of gender-based violence against women with disabilities than against able-bodied women. They made use of focus groups in their research to gain a deeper understanding of this phenomenon in a specific Zimbabwean context. Other factors, such as poverty and health among people with disabilities, were found to be of importance, but the reported lack of respect from various community members is particularly stark in this research.

Iyabode Ogunniran examines aspects of the legal milieu for women in his article 'Gender issues and the Nigerian constitution: A ray of light, or twilight in the horizon?'

By linking various pieces of legislation within a fluid and volatile political landscape, the recognition of women as political leaders but also the rights of ordinary women to inherit are highlighted. The historical lens of this article helps us to understand incremental changes towards greater gender equality in this country.

Lastly, there are reviews of two books entitled *Queer Africa: New and collected fiction* and *Care in context: Transnational gender perspectives*, both by multiple authors.

The articles collected in this volume of *Gender Questions*, we believe, represent a diversity of approaches to the remarkably diverse field of gender studies, from a range of disciplinary protocols and paradigms. In their unique ways, they all ask the question: How is human society moving towards gender equity and gender justice? This question is one which, in the face of escalating levels of gender-based violence and gender discrimination, we can no longer ignore.