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## (IN)AUTHENTIC TRANSGRESSIONS IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE AND CULTURE

In a political, social, and cultural interregnum which calls for new forms of representation of experience that will hopefully respond to our rapidly changing realities *(In)Authentic Transgressions in Contemporary Literature and Culture* is inspired by the idea that it has been very difficult to achieve any kind of authentic transgression in the revisionary climate of the late twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries. In the age of post-postmodernism, which testifies that we are never short of or bored with 'posts' and '-isms', fewer and fewer phenomena are experienced as transgressive, every form of transgression is at some point absorbed by the mainstream, and transgressivity's subversive potential has in certain a way been appropriated since transgressivity has come to be expected in literature, art, and criticism. To counter such expectations, the contributors to this special issue, all selected on the grounds of their expertise and prolific work in their respective fields, focus on divergent yet curiously intertwined issues of agency, gender, and representation to arrive at (in)authentic contemporary transgressions from the angles of the post-9/11 novel, children's literature, and digital realism.

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In his paper “Tabish Khair’s *Just Another Jihadi Jane*: Transgressing to Transform and Transcend”, Faruk Bajraktarević boldly tackles the highly controversial contemporary issue of terrorist attacks, focusing on female agency as contextualised transgression in Khair’s “eye-opening story of Isis recruitment”, in the words of Indra Sinha. Through a theoretically informed interpretation of Khair’s novel, the author rethinks female subjectivity and agency in the context of neo-orientalist views of war on terror. Like the chosen novel, Bajraktarević’s text dismisses binary representations of female jihadists and offers refreshingly sharp critique of generic and dichotomous portrayals of female participation in jihadi organisations which abounds in well-grounded arguments that inspire further discussion.

Responding to expectations concerning gender, villainy, and monstrosity in the markedly different context of J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, Bojana Vujin and Viktorija Krombholc explore the transgression of normative gender and sexuality in representations of villainy in children’s literature. Their insightful paper, ingeniously titled “High-Voiced Dark Lords and Boggarts in Drag: Feminine-Coded Villainy in the *Harry Potter* Series”, thoroughly examines the use of transgressive bodies as instruments of characterisation, with special focus on female features in male characters as signs of monstrosity and evil. The authors remind us that gender nonconformity and non-heteronormativity is not in itself new, but the paper’s main concerns are particularly resonant in a world in which gender has become more fluid and ambiguous than ever.

Fluidity and ambiguity also mark the mediated interactive worlds in a variety of fictions which Vladislava Gordić Petković analyses as representatives of digital realism. Providing insight into several contemporary writings created in and influenced by the digital era, her paper “Digital Transgressions: Fiction and Change in the Era of Technological Expansion” examines one of the most burning issues of the day, that of the digitalisation of experience. Through an expert exploration of digital existence in fiction which transgresses generic and formal boundaries, as well as those between “the virtual and the (corpo)real”, the author sheds light on the complex interplay between technology and (representations of) reality, successfully addressing the compelling need for redefining reality, realism, and the self.

From their specific vantage points these papers form a kaleidoscope of windows into transgressive literary and cultural practices

by discussing sensitive and interrelated topics like gender, villainy, sexuality, or trauma. Each one points out the pitfalls of representation in the areas of female agency, body normativity, and realism in a time of digitalised experience, and highlights an aspect of (in)authenticity of contemporary transgressions. At first sight vastly different, these papers are bound by and suggestive of links, which are not always easily discernible, between terrorism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, digitalised communication, and constructedness of reality in a paranoid, media-obsessed, and utterly confused world.



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