

Ex-position Feature Topic Call for Papers
Literary Fantasy and Its Discontents

(Guest Editors: Sharin Schroeder & Ping-Ta Ku, National Taipei University of Technology)

Publication Date: December 2019 (Issue No. 42)

Submission Deadline: March 31, 2019



The journal is happy to collaborate with the English Department of Taipei Tech (National Taipei University of Technology) and publish a feature topic focused on the theme of their November 2018 conference, "Literary Fantasy and Its Discontents." Submissions from scholars not participating in the conference are also welcome.

What follows is based on our partner's conference call for papers. For more information about the conference, visit the website: <<https://literaryfantasytaipei2018.wordpress.com>>.

In her still influential *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature* (1984), Kathryn Hume defines the literary fantastic as any departure from consensus reality, believing that it holds an equally significant position in literary history as mimesis. Rather than being a recent and sometimes academically marginalized genre, fantasy, for Hume, is integral to almost all literature.

The dialectics between literary fantasies and consensus reality have recently become more relevant than ever: current events remind us of how elusive consensus reality can be. This feature topic takes this concern over (un)reality as a jumping-off point for our theme: Literary Fantasy and Its Discontents. We welcome research articles that consider fantasy in its many forms: both as a (frequently politicized) literary genre or mode and in the word *fantasy's* broader meanings of delusion, unconscious wish, or falsehood. How do fantasies assist in the formation of national identities? How do they impact the narratives—be they harmful or beneficial—that nations and people groups tell themselves about their origins, their capabilities, and their future? How do reader responses to the fantastic in literature differ from responses to texts that are predominantly mimetic, and how do these differences condition reception history? How has the fantastic been used in reform movements and the rhetoric of reaction? What are the ethics of literary fantasies (or the fantastic mode), and how have they been applied?

We invite submissions addressing any aspect of the theme; culturally specific studies on any region and any period in history are welcome. Topics include but are not limited to the following:

Fantasy in theory:

- Utopias and/or dystopias
- Fantasy and the cultural industry
- Fantasy and Orientalism
- Fantasy and radical technologies
- Philology, folklore, and myth
- Racial theories and fantastic literature (e.g., Matthew Arnold, Ernest Renan, Robert Knox)
- Fantasy and environmentalism or climate change
- Marxism and fantasies, including Chinese communist theories regarding the fantastic escapism
- Mythopoeia

Fantasy, history, story-telling, and identity:

- Oral histories and/or folktales and cultural identity
- Nineteenth-century Fairy Tale Collectors such as the Brothers Grimm, Andrew Lang, and the members of the Folk-Lore Society, and their collections
- Medievalism (in art, literature, TV and film, gaming, etc.)
- Fantasy and revolutions (including Romanticism and the French Revolution)

Fantasy and nationalism:

- National epics (*The Epic of Gilgamesh, The Iliad, Beowulf, Ossian, Le Morte D'Arthur, the Kalevala, Icelandic Sagas, and the Poetic and Prose Eddas, etc.*)
- Nationalism and pseudo-history (e.g., portrayals of Vikings, Anglo-Saxons, etc.)
- Magical realism and national identities
- Travelers' tales and nationalism
- Politics and nationalism in children's literary fantasies
- Colonial and post-colonial nationalisms and literary fantasies
- Repressive governments such as ISIS and North Korea, and their national fantasies
- Fantasy or folklore and twentieth-century Nazism
- Fantasy and national or ethnic identities

Fantasy and politics:

- The politics of or within best-selling literary fantasies such as *The Lord of the Rings*, the *Gormenghast Trilogy*, *The Master and Margarita*, *The Books of Earthsea*, *Harry Potter*, *His Dark Materials*, *Game of Thrones* and others
- Political satires written in the fantastic genre or politicized fantasies
- Sexual politics and fantasy / sexual fantasy and politics (“The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” the *Arabian Nights*, etc.)
- Fantasy, politics, and nationalism in early modern literature (Shakespeare, Marlowe, Spenser, Milton, Sidney, etc.)
- Victorian fantasists, politics, and/or reform: William Morris, Charles Kingsley, George MacDonald, Lewis Carroll, Christina Rossetti, Dinah Mulock, Margaret Oliphant, Tennyson, the Brontës, Dickens, Thackeray, etc.
- Politics, literature, and “alternative facts”

Medium and reception histories:

- Mediums and fantasy: oral traditions, books, periodicals, comics, film, etc.
- Literary fantasy and its publishers
- The international diffusion and reception history of national fantasies across borders
- Western fantasies in the East / Eastern fantasies in the West
- Politicized reception histories of fantasy
- Rediscovered or repurposed fantastic texts

***For submission guidelines, visit the journal’s website:*

<http://ex-position.org>