

FORUM FOR MODERN LANGUAGE STUDIES

Forthcoming Special Issue

Representations of Age in European Literatures

Call for articles

In her 1970 work about perceptions and representations of age in different cultures and literatures, *La Vieillesse*, Simone de Beauvoir remarked that “le vieillard n’est pas un bon héros de roman; il est achevé, figé, sans attente, sans espoir; pour lui les jeux sont faits.” Thinking more specifically about old women and the ways in which aging is different for them, Anne-Marie Houdebine-Gravaud has said that “le mot ‘vieillard’ existe mais non le terme ‘vieillarde’ [...]. C’est qu’une femme ne devrait jamais vieillir” (1999).

Many writers have, however, quite deliberately placed older characters at the centre of their work, and in 2006 two such novels in French met with commercial success (Benoîte Groult, *La Touche étoile*; Hélène Marienskié, *Rhésus*). In this context, this Special Issue seeks to look at the ways in which age has been perceived and represented, both negatively and positively, in European Literatures. Was Beauvoir right? What stereotypes about older people have been attacked or reinforced in literature? Have writers often seen age as a barrier between generations and how has the “generation gap” been represented? What place is there/has there traditionally been in European literatures for older people? How is old age different, or perceived as different, for women? Have different cultures approached it in noticeably diverse ways?

Proposals for articles in English (300 words) should be sent by 18 January 2010 to the guest editor, Joy Charnley (j.charnley@phonecoop.coop), who will be happy to respond to any queries. Completed articles will need to be submitted by September 2010 and publication is planned for April 2011. Articles should be up to 5,000 words, including endnotes, and must conform to the *FMLS* stylesheet (see the *FMLS* website; also available on request from the Production Editor, Mary Rigby: mary_rigby20@tiscali.co.uk).

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