

Feminized Work and the Labor of Literature: New Literary Perspectives on the Times, Spaces, and Forms of Women's Work, edited by Emily J. Hogg and Charlotte J. Fabricius. Edinburgh: University Press, 2025. Pp. 216. \$120 (hardback); open access (ebook).

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Feminized Work and the Labor of Literature is an edited collection by Emily J. Hogg and Charlotte J. Fabricius, which re-thinks and re-considers feminized labor in literature and the publishing sphere. The book scrutinizes the work of “feminized scholars” (19) and the connection of “feminization, labor, and literature” (19). It contributes to an ongoing scholarly discussion about the value and hardship of (feminized) labor, intending to explore feminized labor beyond women’s work, which is reflected in the editors’ introduction but remains missing from the individual contributions that mostly focus on women. Building on the scholarship of established researchers touching upon care as a gendered subject (e.g. Fraser, Friedan, Dowling, Haraway), the individual contributors collect new and intriguing materials to showcase the still ongoing precarity of feminized labor through their research methods, creative contributions, and new and established voices to broach this ongoing debate and add critical and valuable perspectives from literary studies to the discussion.

The collection initiates the conversation with Fabricius’s and Hogg’s introduction that sets the tone. It is followed by three thematic sections entitled “The Labor of Literature,” “The Work of Change,” and “The Employment of Form” in which we find the collection’s nine individual contributions. The first chapter by Nicola Wilson, “Feminist Bibliography: Aki Hayashi, Literary Assistant,” addresses the invisible feminized labor in publishing, focusing on the female assistant who stands behind the male author’s success. Wilson argues for editing as a collaborative research practice as a core aspect, and a form of care work in a male coded field. Lucie Duggan’s “Reading Women’s Work in the Karen Brahe Library” investigates the meaning of women’s work for the Danish library’s collection from a historical and contemporary perspective, tracing the library’s origin back to its female founding figure, revisiting early

household documents by and for women, and thereby exemplifying female engagement with literature that transcends the boundaries of the home and brings it to the library and archives. Varsha Panjwani's "The Labors of Shakespeare's Sisters" approaches the care work behind William Shakespeare's success as a writer through the imagined stories of female characters supporting his success. In this 'what if' scenario, Panjwani aims at making the invisible labor of household maintenance, as well as the management of lives and interpersonal relationships visible through the analysis of literary fiction, paying attention not only to the famous male author and his successful publications, but the entire process accompanying the writing and fame that would go unnoticed otherwise. Leah Misemer's contribution, "Comics in the RESISTance: Modelling the Feminized Work of Activism," traces the relevance of comics as activist media and feminized labor. Based on the premise that "[c]omics have always been a form of and for resistance" (85), Misemer investigates the genre's political potential as acts of resistance in the contemporary US. Roberta Garrett's text discusses the reinvention of motherhood through contemporary US and UK literature, showcasing successes and failures, and the conflicting ideas that prevail. Leighan Renaud's chapter "Terror as Usual: Gender Based Violence and Women's Work in Cherie Jones's *How the One-Armed Sister Sweeps Her House*" addresses the generational impacts of violence in Anglophone Caribbean fiction. Lindsay Turner's "Scrappy Time: Domestic Work and Adrienne Rich's Literary Fragment" discusses the meaning and power of domestic work and female labor in Adrienne Rich's selected works. Helen Charman's contribution "Cheap Talk: Conversation, Gender, and Labor in *Talking to Women*, *The Pumpkin Eater*, and *The Golden Notebook*" collects the voices of women in the UK to highlight the problem of the indistinguishability of professional and leisurely occupation in feminized writing and speaking. Ida Aaskov Dolmer and Emily J. Hogg examine motherhood and labor in their contribution "Problems with Progress: Reading Transhistorically for Feminized Work in Buchi Emechet's *Second-Class Citizen*," and Christina Lupton's afterword "Women's Work Across Contexts" summarizes the question of economic viability, visibility, and value of women's labor showcased in this publication. Despite its

focus on feminized labor in literature—writing, publishing, collecting, archiving, imagining, creating—this edited collection also provides valuable insights into non-normative forms of living and aging against patriarchal, chrononormative, and economically viable structures. While the topic of care and the struggles of emotional labor have long found resonance within age studies through critical interventions such as Julia Twigg and Karl Atkin’s *Carers Perceived* (1994), or more recently, Janna Klostermann’s *At the Limits of Care* (2025), the volume could have been further enriched by addressing questions of age and aging, since they play a central role in various contributions in the context of gendered power structures and the experience of work over time. Although the study makes no claim to engage with the topic of aging, scholars of aging studies will likely take note of the absence of aging as an overlooked dimension in care work. I believe Hogg and Fabricius’s book to be a valuable and insightful contribution to gender studies and literary studies, with various aspects that also make it a compelling read for scholars in the field of aging studies.