

# “You best be using *hir* correct pronoun”: Gender Issues and Pronominality in *The Worldbreaker Saga*

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## **Abstract**

From Ursula K. Le Guin to Octavia Butler, speculative fiction has often addressed and explored gender norms, challenging traditional social constructions and expanding the notion of gender beyond its conventional boundaries. This paper investigates Kameron Hurley’s gender and genre-bending *The Worldbreaker Saga*, which subverts the role of women in patriarchal cultures on one hand, while blending together science-fantasy elements on the other to construct a richly diverse alternative reality populated by assertive/passive males and females, ungendered as well as gender fluid characters. The linguistic analysis proposed looks at the functional expansion of the so-called closed class of pronominal elements, as well as at the interrelated lexical items found in the texts. Moving outside the traditional gender dichotomy and exploring unbiased gender-fair language through a combination of Corpus Linguistics tools and Critical Discourse Analysis, this study speculates on the spectrum of flexible sexuality and gender identities put forward in the saga.