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Bodies on the Line

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About

Gender forum is an online, peer reviewed academic journal dedicated to the discussion of gender issues. As an electronic journal, *gender forum* offers a free-of-charge platform for the discussion of gender-related topics in the fields of literary and cultural production, media and the arts as well as politics, the natural sciences, medicine, the law, religion and philosophy. Inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier in 2002, the quarterly issues of the journal have focused on a multitude of questions from different theoretical perspectives of feminist criticism, queer theory, and masculinity studies. *gender forum* also includes reviews and occasionally interviews, fictional pieces and poetry with a gender studies angle.

Opinions expressed in articles published in *gender forum* are those of individual authors and not necessarily endorsed by the editors of *gender forum*.

Submissions

Target articles should conform to current MLA Style (8th edition) and should be between 5,000 and 8,000 words in length. Please make sure to number your paragraphs and include a bio-blurb and an abstract of roughly 300 words. Files should be sent as email attachments in Word format. Please send your manuscripts to gender-forum@uni-koeln.de.

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Article Publishing

The journal aims to provide rapid publication of research through a continuous publication model. All submissions are subject to peer review. Articles should not be under review by any other journal when submitted to *Gender forum*.

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Editorial

by Olga Tarapata, University of Cologne

1 For a long time the relationship between gender and disability has been viewed in a subtractive or additive fashion, often pointing to the emasculation of men or double discrimination against women, often limiting itself to binaries. The portrayal of disability annihilating gender and exacerbating systems of oppression can be found in mainstream media and disciplinary scholarship alike. While identity is commonly explored through the axes of race, class, and gender, this issue of *Gender Forum* chimes in with arguments that have been put forward to include the category of the body or more explicitly disability. Be it Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's assertion of 'feminist disability studies' or Tom Shakespeare's, Russell Shuttleworth's, and Thomas Gerschick's work on 'disabled masculinities,' or approaches within Queer Studies by Rober McRuer or Mark Sherry, the shared objective is to catalyze a negotiation of the interlocking of identity markers in subject formation and the resulting particularities of oppression that permeate all of these discourses. In tackling these questions, conceptualizations of bodily difference similarly move to address the construction of normalcy, heteropatriarchy, and privilege.

2 With a pointed interest in gender and disability, *Bodies on the Line* investigates the relationship between these analytical categories, their representation in the Arts, and their influence on lived experience. In this regard, the title of this issue speaks to the ways in which gendered and disabled bodies are compromised in Western societies of the twenty-first century. As this question cannot but be approached from an interdisciplinary angle, this issues' focus is threefold in that the contributions address manifestations of the interplay between gender and disability on a cultural, medical, and ideological level. The title also plays on Kimberlé Crenshaw's analytical framework of intersectionality that illuminates how systems of power around individual identity categories interlock and thus provides the background beat for the following essays.

3 In her contribution "Fabulous Fetishization: Kylie Jenner's *Interview* Cover and Wheelchair Identity Politics," Jessica Benham discusses a series of photographs taken by Steven Klein in which media star Jenner is clothed in black leather and latex, and positioned in a golden wheelchair. In her analysis of the visual rhetoric of the

photographs, Benham examines the function of the wheelchair as a fashion prop in Klein's photographic compositions and studies the photographs' references to Allen Jones' provocative sculptures before she approaches the relationship between the hyperfeminine non-disabled body and the wheelchair from a disability studies perspective. Via the concept of *cripping up* and theories of disability simulation and performance, Benham argues for the wheelchair to serve as a visual narrative means that, in effect, glosses over the lived experience of wheelchair-use. In line with Garland-Thomson's observation that the "history of disabled people in the Western world is in part the history of being on display, of being visually conspicuous while politically and socially erased," Benham highlights how wheelchair-users' have politically contested the trivialization of wheelchair-use in Klein's photographs by posting counter photographs on social media thereby demanding the social acceptance of people with disabilities (56).

4 Emerson Parker Pehl's essay approaches the question of the gendered disabled body from a distinctly medical angle. By historicizing the medical classification of gender dysphoria, Parker Pehl offers a detailed account of how changes in medical diagnostic systems affect trans individuals particularly when they are simultaneously diagnosed with psychiatric disorders or cognitive disabilities. In their essay "Hierarchies of 'Treatment:' The Influences of Comorbid Psychiatric Diagnoses on Individuals with Gender Dysphoria," Parker Pehl problematizes the access to medical methods of gender affirmation in cases of comorbid diagnoses thereby illuminating the real life consequences of hierarchies of treatment for marginalized bodies. When Jasbir K. Puar explains how "the emergence of 'disability' and 'trans identity' as intersectional coordinates required exceptionalizing both the trans body and the disabled body in order to convert the debility of a nonnormative body into a form of social and cultural capacity" that comes into effect in the medical industrial complex, Parker Pehl provides a lucid concretization of what this means for trans individuals with comorbid psychiatric diagnoses (77).

5 Nikila Lakshmanan's essay "The New Eugenics of Transhumanism: A Feminist Assessment" examines strategies of human enhancement as suggested by members of the transhumanist movement with regard to their ideological stance. Lakshmanan considers transhumanists' positions on gender and disability through a disability studies lens arguing that it is particularly the female disabled body that is under attack. In this way Lakshmanan's contribution on bioethics accords with

Melinda Hall's observation that "at the center of the debate over human enhancement is the question of disability – that is, a calling into question of disability, its value, and its meanings" or Dan Goodley's criticism that the "uneasy transhumanist dance between the binaries of disability/normalcy, deficiency/capacity, essentialism/freedom of choice demonstrates the ethically questionable ambitions of human enhancement when the erasure of disability is implied" (ix, 25). Lakshmanan comes to the conclusion that the tenets of transhumanism significantly (and worryingly) resemble those of the eugenics movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

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