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# GENDER FORUM

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## Gender and Consumerism

Edited by  
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## Editorial Deadlines

Spring Issue:

abstracts (October 1),

completed papers (January 1)

Summer Issue:

abstracts (January 1),

completed papers (April 1)

Fall Issue:

abstracts (April 1),

completed papers (July 1)

Early Career Researchers Special Issue:

abstracts (May 1),

completed papers (August 1)

Winter Issue:

abstracts (July 1),

completed papers (October 1)

## 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](mailto:gender-forum@uni-koeln.de).

We always welcome reviews on recent releases in Gender Studies! Submitted reviews should conform to current MLA Style (8th edition), have numbered paragraphs, and should be between 750 and 1,000 words in length. Please note that the reviewed releases ought to be no older than 24 months. In most cases, we are able to secure a review copy for contributors.

## 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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There are no submission or page charges, and no colour charges.

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## Editorial

1 We live in an increasingly materialistic society in which nearly everything is for sale. The effects of this development are ambivalent: while we can pick and choose the accoutrements that best fit our lives and the image we want to project, the ability to fulfill those wishes and goals is still impacted and dictated by our class status, our gender, our sexual orientation and our race. What I can consume depends on the amount of currency I have – be it social, cultural or monetary. And with the freedom to consume also comes the pressure to do so. Membership and acceptance in a community can be dependent on our ability to buy the latest fashion and the newest gadget or to travel to the hippest vacation spot. And this pressure, too, is gendered: adhering to beauty standards, for a woman, often involves footing the bill for expensive make-up, clothes, gym memberships or even plastic surgery. In this issue of *gender forum*, the contributors discuss various aspects of consumer culture and examine the myriad and often problematic ways in which consumption and gender are interrelated.

2 In the article “Feminism from a New Perspective: The Single Girl and Bachelor Phenomena”, Susanne Schmitz and Julia König shed some new light on the rise of consumer culture after the second world war and describe the ways in which the economic situation enabled women to establish themselves in the workforce and thus gain an independence they had never enjoyed before.

3 Situated in a different watershed era, in the booming 1980s, the film *American Psycho* focuses on the negative effects of consumerism in the milieu of the so-called "yuppies". In her article “Consumerism and Madness in Mary Harron’s *American Psycho*”, Svetlana Asanova traces the debilitating pressure to conform, and the resulting superficiality that drive the protagonist of the movie to murder. Here, the focus lies on the male psyche, as "engaging in commodified recreational activities started to lose its stigma as being a women’s domain", and men began to be specifically targeted as consumers in the second half of the 20th century.

4 In the third contribution, Ole Reinsch discusses the phenomenon of the *flapper girl*. With a side-by-side analysis of *flapperdom* in the US and in Germany, he tries to answer the question as to whether this consumption-oriented approach to femininity with its focus on physical appearance has feminist potential. "These women’s hedonism is highly marked by consumption: consumption of mass industrial products, consumption of mass culture and mass media, consumption of urban nightlife, consumption of sexuality", he writes. But did

this, albeit temporary, freedom to consume contribute to the goals of the women's and suffragette's movements?

5        This issue also features a review by Rosemary Onyango, who discusses the book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot. Here, too, questions of possession and consumption are considered, as Skloot examines the life of Lacks, whose cells were used for medical research without her knowledge or consent. Lacks and her family were never reimbursed, though the research with her cells has yielded numerous marketable results. Do we have a right to our own body? Does this right extend beyond death, and does it include tissue that was removed? Crucial to these considerations are the facts of Lack's status as a poor, black woman, which Skloot also takes into account in her analysis.