

INTRODUCTION

The *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law* is pleased to announce that it has brought together volume 19.3 and 19.4 to present the total symposium publication, *Gender on The Frontiers: Confronting Intersectionalities*. This Symposium publication brings together thirteen scholars to comment on the intersection between gender, sexual orientation and other statutes, identities and modalities. By “confronting intersectionalities,” the Symposium authors expand upon the seminal writings of Kimberlé Crenshaw¹ and explore the ways that race, class, gender and sexual orientation collectively inform people’s lived experiences under the system of laws. In examining “gender on the frontiers,” the Symposium writers examine the frontier in both its literal and figurative dimensions—analyzing citizenship and belonging; borders and exclusion, and the societal and legal regulation of bodies.

While the articles featured address a common theme, the authors’ approaches are diverse, demonstrating that gender and sexuality studies is not just a discipline, but a lens, one which illuminates fields as varied as law, political science and performance studies. For ease of reference, the articles are organized alphabetically in each issue by author name but the many dialogues connecting the authors are various. This introduction hopes to illuminate some of those connections and brief summarize each article.

Libby Adler² and Sarah Valentine³ and discuss the ongoing struggle faced by two distinct groups of sexual minorities—transgender persons and queer youth—discussing the unique marginalization they face *within* the LGBTQ community, and the way it compounds their vulnerabilities in society at large.⁴

¹ Kimberlé Crenshaw, *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color*, 43 *STANFORD LAW REVIEW* 1241 (1991).

² Libby Adler, *T: Appending Transgender Equal Rights to Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Equal Rights*, 19 *COLUM. J. GENDER & LAW* 595 (2010).

³ Sarah Valentine, *When Your Attorney Is Your Enemy: Preliminary Thoughts on Ensuring Effective Representation for Queer Youth*, 19 *COLUM. J. GENDER & L.* 773 (2010).

⁴ Adler, *supra* note 2.

Barrak Alzaid focuses on gay bodies. He discusses how homophobic violence has come to advance two projects in Iraq: a visibilization project, whereby bodies are marked and “material difference is monitored, regulated and enacted”;⁵ and a state building/anti-imperialist project, or specifically, the eradication of perceived Western influence.⁶

Jessie Hill discusses the body in a final context, examining how the female body has been dissected and dismembered in recent Supreme Court decisions regarding abortion.⁷ Hill reviews the Court’s perplexing use of language that is at times clinical and at times purely emotive, a discourse which alternately appeals to the maternal instincts of women seeking abortions while alternately erasing them from view. Ultimately she concludes that the female body, and specifically, the vagina, have been transformed from the penultimate zone of privacy to public space—a *dangerous terrain* requiring increasingly intrusive forms of state regulation.

Perhaps in contrast, Angela Irvine’s Article looks at bodies rendered invisible, specifically, those of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender non-conforming youth whose existence goes unacknowledged in the juvenile justice system.⁸ Seeking to give these youth both vitality and voice, Irvine’s Article surveys the population and records their experiences with violence, parental abuse, and homelessness—revealing both the size of the community and their unique vulnerabilities of its members.

Sharmila Lodhia examines “transnational abandonment” or the use of immigration restrictions, visas, and borders to exploit persons—primarily women—for the social benefits of marriage before abandoning them overseas to avoid familial support obligations and

⁵ Barrack Alzaid, *Fatwas and Fags: Violence and The Discursive Production of Abject Bodies*, 19 COLUM. J. GENDER & LAW 617 (2010).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ B. Jessie Hill, *Dangerous Terrain: Mapping the Female Body in Gonzales v. Carhart*, 19 COLUM. J. GENDER & LAW 649 (2010).

⁸ Angela Irvine, *We’ve Had Three of Them”: Addressing the Invisibility of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Gender Non-Conforming Youth In the Juvenile Justice System*, 19 COLUM. J. GENDER & LAW 675 (2010).

equitable distribution of property.⁹ As Lodhia suggests, the rising incidence of transnational abandonment suggests a way that domestic violence has become “globalized”—increasingly involving publics, not a bounded domestic sphere.

Shankar Prasad and Caroline Nordlund reveal how the voting habits and political behavior of Indian women in the United States, and their support for liberal political parties suggest a complex set of values and identifications that defy political theory—particularly in light of the social conservatism and economic prosperity that otherwise describe the community.¹⁰

Anthony Varona also explores notions of democratic participation as well as democratic exclusion. He chronicles the rise of the ballot initiatives prohibiting gay marriage, and in doing so, uncovers the tactical lessons embedded in the movement’s recent electoral defeats.¹¹

By bringing these different voices and perspectives together, this Symposium publication advances the discussion on the ways that identities and statuses intersect—and the manner in which race, gender, sex, class, ability, and citizenship separately and in tandem create vulnerabilities and dependencies; invite publicity and surveillance, permit violence, regulation and statehood; and foster sympathies and solidarities. Thus we invite our readers to join the conversation.

Chinyere Ezie
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⁹ Sharmila Lodhia, *Brides without Borders: New Topographies of Violence and the Future of Law in an Era of Transnational Citizen-Subjects*, 19 COLUM. J. GENDER & L. 703 (2010).

¹⁰ Shankar Prasad & Caroline M. Nordlund, *The Political Behavior of Indian American Women: Gendered and Generational Perspectives on Race, Immigration and Socio-economic Status*, 19 COLUM. J. GENDER & LAW 747 (2010).

¹¹ Anthony E. Varona, *Taking Initiatives: Reconciling Race, Religion, Media and Democracy in the Quest for Marriage Equality*, 19 COLUM. J. GENDER & LAW 805 (2010).

