

Call for Papers on *Disability, Shame and Discrimination*

Guest editors: Bronwen Hughes and Maria Cristina Nisco
(University of Naples Parthenope, Italy)

The many forms of exclusionary othering that we witness today, both in online and offline contexts, involve isolating certain members of society or social categories by making them feel different, inadequate, alone, and lacking in those physical, psychological or characterial traits which allow a person to feel that they belong and that, by extension, they can actively and usefully contribute to society (Sherry et al. 2020; Wilkin 2020).

Othering stands at the opposite end of the spectrum to inclusiveness or inclusivity; it is born of the age-old power play whereby dominant groups stand together, finding strength in numbers and elective affinities, and minority groups are excluded and shamed for not possessing whatever trait the dominant group considers a prerequisite for membership. As much research has documented in recent years, othering occurs specifically in relation to categories such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class, age, and of course disability, upon which the contributions to this special issue will focus (Ging and Siapera 2019; Kiuppis 2018; Lumsden and Harmer 2019).

Discriminatory practices can also operate in an intersectional manner, targeting combinations of these ideologically disparaged categories. Hence, for example, disability can be combined with sexual orientation, gender or ethnicity to create carefully crafted pockets of inequity where prejudicial behaviour runs rife leaving the objects of intolerance feeling hurt and ashamed.

The injury meted out by discriminators then fuels a never-ending spiral, with shame leading to feelings of defectiveness, worthlessness and a fear of stigmatization which can, in turn, bring about physical and psychological conditions such as anxiety and depression (Watermeyer and Swartz 2015). As Goffman states: "The stigmatized individual tends to hold the same beliefs about identity that we do; this is a pivotal fact [...] Further, the standards he has incorporated from the wider society equip him to be intimately alive to what others see as his failing, inevitably causing him, if only for moments, to agree that he does indeed fall short of what he really ought to be. Shame becomes a central possibility, arising from the individual's perception of one of his own attributes as being a defiling thing to possess, and one he can readily see himself as not possessing" (Goffman 1963: 17).

In recent years, the growth and expansion of new media and the ever-increasing engagement with self-representational practices have further increased the ways disability can be mediated (Barnes 1992; Johanssen and Garrisi 2020). On the one hand, this serves to enhance positive visibility, on the other, however, this increased exposure lays the persons involved open to new and heightened forms of discrimination and intolerance. As Ellis and Kent observe, "the web 2.0 has been developed in and by the same social world that routinely disables people with disability" (Ellis and Kent 2011: 2) and digital technological progress often serves merely to duplicate the forms of inaccessibility and discrimination found in the offline world.

Be it online or offline, discrimination against people with disabilities wreaks havoc with their physical and psychological well-being. Gaining control of language is therefore essential to challenge those detrimental perspectives that dominate many sectors of society (sport, workplace, school, to mention but a few); and although words cannot remove physical barriers, they can foster an enabling environment by weakening dominant worldviews of disability while bolstering and reframing the identities of disabled persons and groups.



- Barnes, Colin 1992. *Disabling Imagery and the Media*. London: Ryburn Publishing.
- Ellis, Katie and Kent, Mike 2011. *Disability and New Media*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Ging, Debbie and Siapera Eugenia 2019. *Gender Hate Online: Understanding the New Anti-Feminism*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Goffman, Ervina 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of a Spoiled Identity*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Grue, Jan 2020. *Disability and Discourse Analysis*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Johanssen, Jacob and Garrisi Diana (eds.) 2020. *Disability, Media and Representations: Other Bodies*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Kiuppis, Florian (ed) 2018. *Sport and Disability: From Integration Continuum to Inclusion Spectrum*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Lumsden, Karen and Harmer, Emily (eds.) 2019. *Online Othering: Exploring Digital Violence and Discrimination on the Web*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sherry, Mark et al. 2020. *Disability Hate Speech. Social, Cultural and Political Contexts*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Watermeyer, Bryan and Swartz, Leslie 2015. "Disablism, Identity and Self: Discrimination as a Traumatic Assault on Subjectivity". *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 26:3, 268-76.
- Wilkin, David 2020. *Disability Hate Crime: Experiences of Everyday Hostility on Public Transport*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

For this special issue on **Disability, Shame and Discrimination**, contributors are encouraged to submit proposals reflecting high-quality, original research, with the aim to foster critical thinking and explore the issue from a variety of perspectives.

Possible methodological/theoretical frameworks (the list is exemplificative and by no means exhaustive):

- Applied linguistics
- Sociolinguistics
- Conversation Analysis
- Systemic Functional Linguistics
- Corpus Linguistics
- Critical Discourse Analysis
- Positive Discourse Analysis
- Multimodal Analysis
- Media Studies
- Disability Studies
- Queer/LGBTI Studies
- ESP

Possible fields of investigation may include, but are not limited to:

- Media and social media
- Hate speech, hate crime and cyber-bullying
- Inclusive education/language use



Human rights and social justice
Discrimination in the world of sport and health
Discrimination in the legal/institutional/political context
Discrimination in the field of feminist studies, women's studies, migration studies
Identity and Diversity
Normalcy and Diversity
Terminological issues
Labelling and shame
Narratives of illness and pain

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For this special issue of *International Journal of Language Studies*, we will be accepting up to 8 papers of between 7000 and 8000 words in length.

We invite contributors to submit abstracts of no more than 300 words including 3 keywords but excluding references, to Bronwen Hughes bronwen.hughes@uniparthenope.it and

Maria Cristina Nisco mcristina.nisco@uniparthenope.it

Dates to remember:

- Submission of abstracts to guest editors: by **26 November 2021**
- Notification of acceptance/rejection to prospective contributors: by **8 December 2021**
- Prospective contributors submit their individual papers to guest editors: by **17 April 2022**