

## Editorial

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Welcome to issue 29(1) of the *Women's Studies Journal* – an issue in which we highlight a number of important contributions to the making of (and challenges within) feminist knowledges.

This issue sees us continue with our special feature on contemporary feminist thought in Aotearoa/New Zealand, with two contributions to the series. Jennifer Curtin, from the University of Auckland, provides a critical overview of feminism within the discipline of politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand, while Robyn Longhurst and Lynda Johnston, from the University of Waikato, survey the field of feminist geography. Both overviews highlight the challenges of revisioning areas of knowledge that have long been entrenched in 'malestream' thinking. The development of feminist analyses within these disciplines, as these essays indicate, was far from a natural progression of ideas – rather, feminist knowledges were deeply contested and were an expression of resistance within academe.

The battles within academia are not quite in the past. Kathy Smits and Anita Lacey's piece demonstrates the continued challenges of combining politics and feminism, as they report on a roundtable discussion held at the 2014 conference of the New Zealand Political Studies Association, addressing the issues of teaching feminism and feminist approaches to teaching in political studies departments and programmes. The contributors to this discussion represent a wealth of experience and knowledge in this area, and make some excellent points, especially regarding the need for a balance between teaching that addresses gendered issues specifically, and 'mainstreaming' – incorporating feminist concerns into all aspects of teaching political studies. This piece provides a thought-provoking read for feminist academics, and anyone else interested in how feminist theory can, and should, influence our approaches to many other aspects of life.

Also in this issue is the first of what we hope will become an ongoing publication of feminist dialogues addressing significant contemporary debates relating to women's bodies, reproduction and sexuality, and other issues as they arise. Our inaugural dialogue addresses proposed changes to the Human Assisted Reproductive Technology Act (2004) which would permit increased compensation for egg and sperm donors, in part to acknowledge the (considerable, in the case of egg donation) burden this imposes on donors, but also to assist in increasing the supply of locally sourced gametes in the context of a growing and largely unregulated international trade in reproductive materials and labour. Such changes have wider implications, particularly given Aotearoa/New Zealand's current model of altruistic donation and surrogacy. The dialogue is introduced by former Labour MP Dianne Yates, who was instrumental in proposing and advocating for this legislation in Parliament. It also includes contributions from Rhonda Shaw, a feminist sociologist who has published extensively in this area; George Christy Parker, a strategic advisor at Women's Health Action, and bioethicists Liezl van Zyl and Ruth Walker, who have publicly advocated for a new model of 'vocational' surrogacy. This dialogue thus aims to provide a forum for the critical re-evaluation of established and alternative models in the rapidly-evolving field of assisted reproduction, from a range of feminist perspectives. We believe it is entirely appropriate that the *Women's Studies Journal* provide a forum for robust feminist discussion and debate on controversial issues such as these, and encourage readers to

offer proposals for other themes that may be appropriate for similar dialogues in future issues.

The issues of reproductive rights raised by this issue's discussion of the HART legislation continue to be at the forefront of public discussion, with MP Chester Burrows currently agitating to have the legislation relating to abortion altered so that minors would be required to inform their parents or guardians of their decisions to terminate a pregnancy. As Burrows himself notes, this proposed legislation is more nuanced than a simple pro-abortion vs anti-abortion argument. The debate itself speaks to some of the discussion raised by Marita Leask in her critical analysis of the presumed links between abortion and women's mental health in the 28(1) issue of the *Journal*. As the Family Planning Association takes advantage of the current debate to remind Aotearoa/New Zealand of our outdated and restrictive legislation regarding termination, it is clear that the feminist debates around this issue continue to be germane.

Also in the news as we go to press is Caitlyn Jenner's gender transition. While the questions posed in the media coverage and public discussion of Jenner's transition are not new to many of us, it is clear that issues raised around transgenderism continue to be perplexing for the general public, and are often still a bone of contention within feminist theorising and debates. In the Pacific, these discussions are often more nuanced by virtue of the existence of a range of indigenous instantiations of forms of transgenderism and other non-heteronormative peoples, many of whom are discussed in the new publication *Gender on the edge*, edited by Niko Besnier and Kalissa Alexeyeff and reviewed in this issue of the *Journal*.

Recent media events are also addressed in Cherie Todd's report on the '#GamerGate' controversy, following on from the misogynistic attacks on Anita Sarkeesian (among others) as a result of her critique of the sexism rife within gaming culture and the wider gaming industry. Following on from the recent 'Roastbusters' scandal, it is clear that the online realm is a site of ongoing concern for gender politics, and we expect to be addressing issues raised by the increasingly permeable borders between the 'virtual' and the 'real' in future issues.

As always, these current issues illustrate that the need for feminist politics, analysis and agitation remains as imperative as ever. Both old debates (e.g. those around reproductive rights) and new issues (e.g. the gendered nature of various online worlds) benefit from not only the wisdom of established feminist theorising, but also the younger voices of those whose bodies and minds are embroiled in these struggles right now. At the time of writing, we are receiving the final submissions for the new annual *Women's Studies Journal* Graduate Prize for a Feminist Essay, the winner of which will be published in our next issue. We look forward to continuing our tradition of supporting the work of the next generation of young feminists – the prize winners and many others.

**Johanna Schmidt, Carolyn Michelle and Rachel Simon-Kumar**