

## Editorial

As 2015 draws to a close, the Editorial Collective is pleased to bring you the second issue of the *Women's Studies Journal* for the year. As with our other issues, here we continue to uphold our commitment to showcasing feminist research that speaks to the issues that affect women and gender in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Such a commitment could not be timelier. Contrary to widespread views that feminism is a thing of the past, a quick glance through our everyday newspapers shows that issues of women's and gender rights continue to be at the forefront of our social, economic and political debates. Consider, for instance, the mounting challenges to abortion laws by right-to-life groups, or the government's decision to establish a Taskforce on Equal Pay, or the recent calls for submissions on family violence and paid parental leave to Parliamentary select committees. Alongside these potentially scene-setting political transformations, gender is also enacted in multiple, localised and everyday lived realities. Our journal's engagement in feminist politics seeks to proffer an avenue for scholarly writing that continually (re)defines gender oppression, advocacy and action, resistance, and emancipation of the seemingly mundane and of the extraordinary, as seen and experienced through a variety of social actors. We are delighted that in this issue we are able to present some cutting-edge research that offers strong feminist theorisations of the *political* but which also gives voice to *personal* stories of marginalised women and gendered groups.

Our issue starts with our continuing series of essays on contemporary feminist thought in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This issue features an essay by Tracy Bowell reflecting on recent developments in feminist philosophy. Her essay highlights the marginalisation and othering of feminist philosophers and their work, and argues that such marginalisation arises from philosophy's 'anti-feminist problem'. The marginalisation of certain kinds of knowers and certain kinds of knowledges from the philosophical mainstream poses ethical questions of equity, fairness, inclusion and social justice that are applicable to many other disciplines featured in this ongoing series. As evident in our previous contributions, Bowell points to the growing intersectional focus within philosophical enquiry, noting that 'Feminist philosophy has embraced intersectionality, recognising, analysing, and theorising the interplay of diverse identities and oppressions. ... New questions and new fields of enquiry are revealed in the interstitial spaces between the epistemic and the political, the metaphysical and the moral' (p.6).

Ruth McManus's paper on coping and resilience in the aftermath of the Christchurch earthquakes is based on the Women's Voices Study, which was commenced in 2011 by the National Council for Women. Ruth's paper outlines the ways in which responses to disaster are gendered, but do not necessarily conform to the expected 'ideal' means of coping with trauma and loss. The Women's Voices Study and the work that is beginning to emerge from this project demonstrate the need to be prepared to act quickly in circumstances that create unexpected contexts for important research – the very existence of the project, as well as the data and analysis it is generating, is a testament to the resilience of the residents of Christchurch and Canterbury.

Intersectionality is also central to the paper by Jean Sergent-Shadbolt on bisexuality in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Drawing on focus groups that she conducted with 'non-monosexual' women, Sergent-Shadbolt highlights issues of representation of bisexuality in popular culture and the role of internet communities in identity formation and draws much-needed attention to the issues that bisexual women face in constructing and maintaining an identity for themselves. The paper concludes that, for these women, this identity-construction project occurs at the intersection of feminism and queer identities, requiring a rethinking of the hetero/homosexual binary, but ultimately possibly raises more questions than it answers in terms of challenging our accepted thinking about sexual and gendered identities.

A feature of our current issue is the publication of two essays by the winner and runner-up of the Journal's inaugural Graduate Feminist Essay competition, both addressing this year's theme of gender-based violence. The competition drew entries that clearly reflected the voices of a new generation of feminist scholars, redefining once more the vocabulary of feminist politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It was won by Mengzhu Fu, whose essay *What will it take to end gender-based violence?* focused on 'gendered structural violence in the lived experiences of young South Asian survivors of family violence' (p. 50). Her work specifically aims to explore how advocacy can be reconceptualised within an intersectionality framework. Our runner-up, Karen McIntyre, brings a background in creative art to her essay entitled *Painting indignity / painting in dignity: Art-making in response to gender-based violence*. She contextualises violence as an outcome of the patriarchal moorings of our society and proposes participatory art-making, as opposed to art therapy, as a viable means to 'self-represent [women's] stories without further humiliation' (p. 67). We congratulate both authors for their well-researched, strongly political and action-focused pieces. The fact that we have chosen to publish both of these essays is a testament to the quality of the entries received, and we are pleased to have developed this important means of recognising the work of young feminist scholars.

This issue also offers the usual book review section providing critical reflections on current feminist publications. Katie Pickles, from Canterbury University's History Department, reviews Carol Dyhouse's book on young women in Britain, entitled *Girl trouble: Panic and progress in the history of young women*. Ann Weatherall, from Victoria University, reviews Margaret Sparrow's *Rough on women: Abortion in 19th-century New Zealand*, and Samantha Keene, also from Victoria University, reviews Rebecca Stringer's book *Knowing victims: Feminism, agency and victim politics in neoliberal times*.

Once again, we would like to thank the many invisible hands and minds that have contributed to the successful production of the *Women's Studies Journal* this year. This includes our authors, our anonymous reviewers who have generously read and re-read versions of papers making sure that feedback is constructive as well as prompt, researchers and advisors who have given us valuable advice on feminist publishing, the Women's Studies Association, especially Hilary Lapsley, and our production team: Liz Rawlings, Jenny Rankine, Ruth Renner and Anna Thomson. We are also excited to announce our forthcoming special issue on the theme of Women and War, to be edited by feminist historian Nadia Gush, which will be published in mid-2016. Finally, this issue will be out in time for end-of-year celebrations. We wish you well as you spend time with family, friends and loved ones.

**Rachel Simon-Kumar, Carolyn Michelle and Johanna Schmidt, Co-editors.**