

Editorial

Eighteen months. Four issues. In the short time since the new editorial collective took over production of the *Women's Studies Journal (WSJ)*, we continue to be committed to introducing innovative measures to revitalise the journal. Our aim is to develop the *WSJ* as a medium that connects academics and practitioners keen to further feminist scholarship in Aotearoa/New Zealand, while also making it a publication which responds to topical issues of the day. To this end, we are delighted to inform our readers of two strategic actions instituted recently: first, the *WSJ* now has an Editorial Board comprising leading academics located around the world and in Aotearoa/New Zealand who are known for their exceptional scholarly contributions in feminist studies. The Board will support the editors in the submissions and review processes, and periodically provide advice about strategic direction. A full list of the Board can be found at the end of this editorial, and also appears on our website. Second, in order to encourage the voices of emerging scholars, we have introduced an annual Graduate Prize for student essays on set themes, with the winning essay being published in the journal. Further details will be announced early in the New Year.

We also present a new contribution category for the journal on contemporary feminist thought in Aotearoa/New Zealand. These are invited peer-reviewed essays which will appear in the next few issues, surveying research in diverse disciplinary areas. With a focus on Aotearoa/New Zealand, these essays are a stocktake and critical overview of current feminist scholarship and will be particularly relevant for classroom teaching, while for general readers they offer a concise overview of core themes and theoretical influences informing feminist research and critique within specific fields. We introduce this section with our first special feature essay, in which Elisabeth McDonald reviews the field of criminal law, pointing specifically to areas where feminist legal theory has contributed to local reform.

Alongside these developments to strengthen the journal's relevance within academe, we recognise that the second half of 2014 has seen significant domestic political changes that have direct implications for women. Our Parliamentary elections on 20 September rendered a majority vote to the incumbent National Party led by John Key. Recent judgements in the so-called 'Roast Busters' case and Bartlett Equal Pay case have variously dismayed and offered cause for hope; on the one hand fuelling concerns about the vulnerabilities faced by young women, whilst on the other renewing efforts to address the historical and contemporary devaluation of women's paid work. Contributions in this issue directly and tangentially reflect upon these important and highly topical issues.

In a specially invited commentary, former Green and Mana MP Sue Bradford provides an overview of the impact of the outcomes of the 2014 election for those who are not 'white', and 'wealthy'. She discusses the under-representation of women in Parliament and Cabinet, as well as the likely effects of a continuation of current policy directions for the poor, amongst whom women – especially Māori and Pasifika women – are disproportionately represented.

Two of the papers in this issue pick up on the theme of representation in other contexts in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Judith McGregor draws on her time as the Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner at the Human Rights Commission to critique the chronic under-rep-

resentation of women in company boardrooms, suggesting that as strategies such as voluntary disclosure of the gender balance of boards have done little to address this imbalance, we need to consider implementing mandatory quotas. Jocelyn Handy and Lorraine Rowlands illustrate how the organisational structure and culture of the Wellington film industry marginalises and impedes the career progression of women film workers. Their research suggests that women's labour market disadvantage stems from a gendered inequality regime in which the industry requires film workers to be dedicated, highly flexible, and (implicitly) unencumbered by the demands of family life and childcare; a normative ideal that is implicitly masculine.

Investigating issues of particular relevance to younger women, Cate Curtis and Cushla Loomans present research examining the impact of casual 'body talk' on body image, suggesting that even if well meaning, the ways in which family and friends talk about women's bodies (including their own) potentially has a negative influence on the body image of young women. Fiona Beals undertakes a genealogical investigation of the ways in which young women who fail to conform to norms of femininity are constructed as 'deviant', suggesting that the recent focus on aggression among young women is not a novel concern.

We have a special essay by Judith Galtry commemorating the life and scholarship of Susan Moller Okin on the tenth anniversary of her death. Okin, a feminist political scholar born in Aotearoa/New Zealand, has published prolifically on women and the family since the 1980s. Her 1998 path-breaking essay 'Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?' opened new debates on the role of culture and women's rights that continue to have relevance today.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to extend best wishes for the festive season to all our readers and contributors, and to particularly thank those who have acted as peer reviewers for us this year.

Carolyn Michelle, Johanna Schmidt and Rachel Simon-Kumar

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