

## Editorial

---

Back in 2019, we started our *WSJ* editorial with the words: ‘This has been a challenging year, which has left us profoundly conscious of the journal’s location in a world fraught with uncertainties and anxieties’. Reading these words again now, their prophetic freight is sobering. This has been a year of trauma, anxiety, ‘new normals’ and new vocabularies: COVID-19, lockdown, level 4 (or 3, or 2, or 1), social distancing, bubbles, face masks, managed isolation, tracking apps and clarion calls of ‘Wash Your Hands’. COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on the world: many lives have been lost, or changed forever, due to the virus itself or the multiple traumas (such as physical and mental ill-health, poverty, job loss and family violence) that cling to its ‘long tail’. It has highlighted and magnified multiple inequities within our communities, shining a light on the complex ways that gender, race, age and class leave us either far more vulnerable to the virus or impacted the hardest by it (or both). Our ways of relating to each other have also been affected: standing too close to someone, let alone touching them to shake their hand, pat them on the shoulder or (heaven forbid), give them a hongi or a peck on the cheek have now become actions that are fraught with anxiety, or even disapproval. Life, it seems, has changed for the foreseeable future, however optimistic we might want to be.

Editing this year’s journal in a pandemic-stricken world has been a challenge for so many reasons. But we end 2020 with a double issue to be proud of. The contributors (many of whom are graduate students) offer an array of articles, research reports and interviews that consider gender and sexuality in Aotearoa/New Zealand and beyond from a number of fascinating perspectives. We have chosen to have a special focus this year on queer lives and queer communities. This is a topic very dear to the hearts of the *WSJ* editorial team, because we value and celebrate the full humanity and dignity of *everyone* who resides within our beautifully diverse queer communities, wherever they locate themselves within – or beyond – the LGBTIQ+ spectrum. And our contributors likewise hold this dear to their hearts too.

Starting things off, Harriet Winn and Sarah Buxton both consider the history (or herstory) of Auckland’s lesbian community from the 1980s and up to the present day, while Meghan Williams traces Wellington’s drag king movement over the past few decades. All three scholars use oral histories in their articles to marvellous effect, allowing readers to hear the words of the people who built and shaped these communities, and whose presence has so enriched the wider queer community of this country. Continuing our queer theme, Luka Leleiga Lim-Bunnin draws on the work of Kristie Dotson and Linda Tuhiwai Smith as she interrogates the power of language to perpetuate epistemic violence against Samoan and further Indigenous gender-divergent people. Lim-Bunnin argues that Indigenous sovereignty remains an unachievable goal until there is greater recognition that colonial violence against *all* Indigenous people – including gender-divergent Indigenous people – is in urgent need of dismantling. Meanwhile, Elizabeth Newton-Jackson takes us beyond the boundaries of Oceania to explore the ways that public artworks and memorials (in Australia, North America and Europe) can celebrate or commemorate queer lives and communities. Finally, Juliana Brown’s research report explores staff and students’ experiences of being non-monogamous and/or polyamorous while navigating their lives on an Aotearoa/New Zealand university campus. Her participants’

testimonies remind us that the dominant discourse of long-term (heterosexual) monogamy being the 'ideal' for all relationships remains both pervasive and persistent.

Beyond our queer focus, we have more fascinating offerings to share. Olivia Stanley writes about purity culture in the Aotearoa/New Zealand schools and churches she attended as a teenager, using an autoethnographic lens to discuss the dangerous impact of purity ideologies and abstinence-only sex education. Katja Phutaraksa Neef explores the work of contemporary Indian artist Pushpamala N., who uses her art to subvert the traditions of nineteenth-century colonial photography and thus undermine its problematic gaze. In our research reports, Jessica Thompson and Denise Blake use a feminist framework to investigate how medical misdiagnosis among women can lead to inequitable health outcomes. Louise Humpage et al. share their community-based research, which explores how men from refugee backgrounds 'do' family and fathering in Aotearoa/New Zealand. And looking once more beyond our own shoreline, Elaine Sinden's research report considers the theory and practice of gender mainstreaming at international, national and local levels, with a special focus on South Africa and the City of Cape Town.

The 2020 issue ends with two very special interviews, conducted by the journal's co-editor, Kirsten Locke. Kirsten spoke with educationalist Professor Alison Jones and community leader and human rights activist Anjum Rahman. Working with Charlotte Thomson, Kirsten has crafted the interviews into rich and engaging narratives that capture the extraordinary and impactful lives of both Alison and Anjum, including their engagements with feminism throughout their lives and careers.

We hope you enjoy this journal issue. Kia kaha, kia māia, kia manawanui. Be strong, be brave, be steadfast. And above all, be kind to each other.

**Caroline Blyth, Kirsten Locke, Yvonne Underhill-Sem and Suzanne Woodward**