75 | editorial identities

From quite different vantage points this issue addresses complex understandings of gender identities. Here identities are understood as formed through processes that are provisional, contingent and through which the marks of desire are registered as pleasure, fear and anxiety. As such, the articles point to the importance of the analytical distinction between avowed political (and other) identities, and processes of subjectivity. Myra Hird looks at contemporary feminist debates about gender, the body and sexuality through the optic of childless women. She concludes that politics of inclusion rooted in the identity of women as childbearers offers very limited possibilities for childless women. For her, childless women offer a radical possibility precisely because of our positioning outside the categories of 'woman' and 'man' that destabilizes the ontological status of gender.

The ontology of woman/man is further contested through the reflections of Roberta Mock in the article entitled 'HeteroQueer Ladies: Some Performative Transactions between gay men and heterosexual women'. The witty and evocative style of her piece transports us to the 'scenes' of performativity that lead her to define queer as the liberation of sexual desire. A different scene is mapped by the following article that analyses how self-published newsletters – print or on-line – provide spaces for young woman to contest dominant and market-driven images of either 'passive innocence' of 'assertive/sassy/ knowing' women and in this contestation another space is created for different representations. These intermingle critiques of girl power, explorations of different dimensions of femininity, political agendas, questions of cyborg diasporas and analyses of risk taking.

'Constructing the Self in Mental Health Practice' by Nicole Moulding examines the gendered nature of mental health worker's constructions of the 'eating disordered self'. Institutional discourses implicated in the feminization of 'deficient identity' are produced through specific regimes of governmentality. Her empirical research utilizes interviews with health workers and analyses how their discourses of women with eating disorders deploy psychological constructs of 'identity' to frame their explanations.

Shahnaz Khan also uses empirical research to inform her analysis in her article entitled 'Zina and the Moral Regulation of Pakistani Women'. She pays in-depth attention to testimonies of women incarcerated under the Zina

Ordinance in Pakistan. Moral/legal regulation are bound together through state violence, which is imbricated with patriarchal governance of women's sexual moralities. She emphasizes how inequities of class render poor women particularly defenceless against a system that can incarcerate for life. In order to look at the structural conditions that sustain the laws in Pakistan, Khan links economic development and human rights to globalization and the continuing cost of militarization.

Julia Wells analyses oral histories conducted by her students in Zimbabwe as part of a Women's Studies course on African history narrating the lives of three generations of Zimbabwean women. The women's stories give account of the subtle and overt ways in which women 'sabotage patriarchy' utilizing education and work opportunities to do so. They negotiate boundaries of respectability instead of taking flight from their familial environment. Interestingly, she looks at how this occurs generationally across colonial and post-colonial conditions. The research illustrates the contradictory ways in which christianity is figured in the lives of these women. So often researchers prioritize the resistances of urban women, a tendency that is counteracted by her focus on rural women in Africa.

The concluding piece shifts to a quite different focus in its consideration of the impact of feminist economics on mainstream economic debates in the Netherlands.

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