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Citation: Graham, Laura, Raj, Senthoran, Munro, Vanessa, Westmarland, Nicole, Wheatle, Se-shauna, Sanders, Teela, Russell, Yvette and Maine, Alexander (2020) Dialogue on the Impact of Coronavirus on Research and Publishing: Monday 22nd June 2020. *International Journal of Gender, Sexuality and Law*, 1 (1). ISSN 2056-3914

Published by: Northumbria University Library

URL: <https://doi.org/10.19164/ijgsl.v1i1.1003> <<https://doi.org/10.19164/ijgsl.v1i1.1003>>

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**Dialogue on the Impact of Coronavirus on Research and Publishing: Monday 22nd June 2020**

Laura Graham, Senthoran Raj, Vanessa Munro, Nicole Westmarland, Se-shauna Wheatle, Teela Sanders, Yvette Russell, Alex Maine<sup>1</sup>

This roundtable took place via Microsoft Teams on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020. This version has been edited for clarity, continuity and cohesion. All participants were informed that the dialogue would be recorded, transcribed and published.

**Laura Graham (Chair):** Thank you all for coming. As you know, the IJGSL is about to publish its first issue. I was talking to a colleague at work about what comes next, and I wanted to put a Call for Papers out for the next issue, and whether this would be a good thing to do in light of the impact of Covid-19. One of the things that came up in that conversation was that journals in general would be having a lot of discussions about the impact of Covid-19 on publishing, on research, how to ensure fairness with reviews, and what kind of support we need to give people at the moment. Drawing on this, I thought it would be a good thing to tap into the expertise of a range of people who have different relationships with journals and research, to get a better idea of how research is being impacted, how Covid is affecting people with families, people with illnesses, and how we should respond going forward. So that's the framework of this. So, I just wanted to start off with thinking about the difficulties that are being

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Citation Format: Graham, L, Raj, S, Munro, V, Westmarland, N, Wheatle, S, Sanders, T, Russell, Y, and Maine, A, 'Dialogue on the Impact of Coronavirus on Research and Publishing: Monday 22nd June 2020' (2020) 1 *International Journal of Gender, Sexuality and Law* 403.

faced – drawing on our own experiences and those we are aware of from being involved with journals.

*Vanessa Munro:* I think that one of the things I am most mindful of is how diverse people's experiences are in the current context. So I'm sitting here home-schooling a 6 year old and an 8 year old and shielding a partner and trying to hold down a job, and that's tough. And your assumption might be that people who don't have those care-giving responsibilities and aren't doing that juggle are having this kind of wonderful research moment in their lives where they can be getting on with lots of things. But people have a really wide range of experiences. I think there's two aspects to it: there's a capacity aspect and then there's a motivation or being in the right mindset aspect. Whether or not you have care-giving responsibilities or other demands on your time, it's a very stressful and unnerving time for a lot of people. Even in those moments when I have time to do some research, it's often very difficult to get my head in a space to do it, and I imagine that might be an experience a lot of people are having that don't necessarily have the same time restraints.

The other thing I'm especially conscious of in this context is the way in which Covid is likely to impact differentially on different types of research. So you have funders that are still running grant and fellowship competitions during this period. And on the one hand, I think that's good because internal funding for research is being cut drastically across the sector, but on the other hand, there are certain cohorts of people who are likely to be better able to take advantages of that in this moment, and there are also certain types of scholarship that it is going to be easier to do - or put together a robust funding proposal for - in our current circumstances. This is just my experience, I've certainly not tested it empirically, but I do suspect that women tend to be doing proportionately more of the socio-legal, empirical, ethnographic field-work types of research that are going to be much harder in the current context. So it seems to me that there is a risk of a kind of 'double-whammy' impact.

*Laura Graham:* Those are really important points. If we pick up on different experiences first and then move on to the different types of research, I think those are both really important things to discuss. Something that struck me was that I've been extremely aware, when thinking about lots of different parts of my job where I ask people to do things, about child-care responsibilities. I don't have child-care responsibilities but I have found this time extremely difficult, particularly in the first month, when both myself and my partner had Covid-19. Coming out of that, my

ongoing mental health difficulties have impacted me. My experience has been that these concerns are not as clearly taken into account in expectations. Are other people finding that the issues around headspace and mental health are getting much focus from their universities?

*Teela Sanders:* Alex and I are at the same institution so we might have different takes on this, but I think our resounding messages from the executive board are about mental health and physical safety, and ensuring people feel safe and are safe, particularly when thinking about reopening campus in the longer term. So I think there is a lot of prioritising of that. What I haven't seen is how that turns into practical assistance. That is something we're going to have to see how that is dealt with in the long-term. Obviously, there are very practical issues about engaging back with the physical space and what that means for people, and how that works with people's personal health, holistic health, as well as their career priorities. Covid will inevitably have an impact on people's careers even though, institutionally, there is a concern to make sure that doesn't happen. So, I think ultimately, it's a long-term game in terms of how universities and institutions manage workplaces, manage workloads, manage expectations for people across the different career paths. While there are immediate concerns to be dealt with, it's more the longer-term impacts that we might be seeing.

*Alex Maine:* I think relating to that as well, as an ECR, who is on probation, I'm only at the start of my probation, and they have been clear that people on probation won't be at a detriment because of this. They've said they'll take into account that people are going through this, so it is heartening knowing that. But there's still that idea that publishing is such a difficult process and a long-term process that things are being irrevocably delayed which might be quite worrying for people.

*Teela Sanders:* Obviously there are implications for REF, maybe post-REF there are implications. I'm not sure many people are in a post-REF mindset. But going forward, if there is such a strong link between publications and auditing, which ultimately means about performance and progression as well, then those longer term impacts of Covid might play out through spaces like journals, book publishing, contracts, as well as grant funding and monetary income. So there is a long-term view to be had, and having this conversation in a couple of years might be interesting as well.

**Laura Graham:** Another thing to think about, obviously, for people with children, is going into September and there being so much uncertainty there. We need to think about how we respond to this in the next year or so in terms of childcare responsibilities when it's unclear how schools are going to open. Nicole, having children, do you have any thoughts on that?

**Nicole Westmarland:** Yeah, I'd partly echo what Vanessa said about individual circumstances versus ability to work are really really complex. The thing about having children (and I'm a single parent with no second parent so there isn't even the respite of them going somewhere else for two days a week), that's something that is quite clearly visible in your face, which you can see in a meeting, if there are children, or I'm preparing dinner, that you can't see with other things. I get quite a lot anyway the question of 'how do you do it? How do you manage? How do you cope'. I get that quite a lot anyway in normal times. I know it's well-meaning but I get a bit sick of it in the best of times and even more so now. Having lived through infertility for a long time, I know that not having children when you really want them, so, for example, being single or being alone without children because you can't have them, is a really horrible situation. So, while it's difficult to have children, it's also very difficult to not have children if you want them. Having children is at least a physical thing so people can see it and know that it's there, while some of the other things might be a bit more invisible that people are struggling with. I have to be careful as a senior academic to let people know that they can still come to me, especially single people without children who aren't shielding, who might otherwise be seen as having the life that other people might want. I need to be really open and make sure that people feel that they can still come to me and that they're not putting something else onto me. People have come to me, so I hope I'm doing an ok job at that. Kids also drive you forward. While they're difficult to get things done, they do get you up every day, and you do have to go to bed because they're going to wake you up. So, in a way, they're both a disruption in that you can't obsess for 23 hours of the day to find the latest Covid-19 stats for your area (although I do spend quite a few hours a day doing that) but they drive you forward in that way. It's incredibly difficult to look at the implications of Covid on equalities-type work and submissions to journals, but it's raised the question of how we deal with these issues of how we deal with these types of inequalities anyway within applications, within job applications, within promotions. I'm sure we all have lines in our documents about the things we want to be taken into consideration, but then actually how they're actually taken into consideration is quite vague. It will differ from university to university, but also panel to panel, as well depending on who's looking at them. It's made me wonder whether we need to try and quantify some of this, so if you are on maternity leave, what does that actually

look like in terms of missed opportunities. There's no doubt it has a trickle-down effect – if you look at who becomes Vice-Chancellors, it's not single parents, because you haven't had the opportunity to build up that kind of management of really large sums of money, etc. which is a big part of the workload of Vice Chancellors these days. In terms of schools, I haven't got a clue what's happening, and what will be my availability next year.

*Laura Graham:* You've brought up some really important things there about how we do manage this practically. You said from a senior position, how you manage it, but for more junior people here, what are we looking for from senior people? Does any other ECR here want to consider that? Another point – I'm probably guilty of trying not to ask people who I know have a lot on to take on more work, but then maybe I'm restricting opportunities. So, we perhaps need to think about, on a practical level, how to manage this, rather than just paying lip service to it. Does anyone have any thoughts on that they would like to bring in?

*Senthoran Raj:* I was thinking about this quite recently. I've been working on an edited collection with a colleague of mine in Bristol and one thing that has become quite clear is that the pandemic hasn't shifted the problematic tone in some people's reviews of your work. So I think an ongoing issue for junior academics in particular, and academics more generally, is the quality of constructive criticism and feedback. Sometimes the responses you get are a couple of lines that excoriate your work and can be quite dismissive, which can be really demoralising, especially if you don't have the same sorts of experience and connections that other academics may have to deal with those sort of pushbacks. This isn't just based on my own experience, it's something I've discussed with other junior colleagues. We learn how to teach as part of our employment, because as PhD scholars and academics we're not taught pedagogical skills when we study as such. So one thing that comes to mind in relation to peer review is how do you cultivate the ability to give critical feedback, which is very important, in a generous, empathetic, and constructive way. I think that's an important issue – everyone makes jokes about Reviewer Two – but I think we can use this moment to think about how we relate to one another, and particularly one another's work, in ways that are generous and constructive rather than dismissive or tokenising or caricaturing.

*Se-shauna Wheatle:* I've got so many thoughts because of all the interesting things people have said. One thing I'm thinking about is that because of a crisis like this, and

the resounding financial effects it will have on universities, is that it exacerbates all the power differentials that already exist in academia. That could potentially have some negative effects. For one thing, being disempowered or feeling disempowered within an institution means that you don't feel as able or as equipped to voice some of the concerns that you might have, to feed back some of the difficulties you might be facing in the situation. The other thing that worries me about what the future means is that we've been talking about some of these issues for a while, and beginning to confront some of these issues in academia, for instance around feedback and how to deal with reviewer 2, how to manage mental illness and caring responsibilities within academia. I'm worried that the effects of the Covid crisis will set so much of that work back because emphasis will be placed so much on economics and short-term views of economics, and short-term views of what is best for the universities. That is one of the anxieties I have about this crisis and I'm not sure how we confront all of that, either individually or within our institutions, or as a collective within academia.

*Laura Graham:* I've been thinking about that too. If we look at this year, it's not just been Covid, there's been other upheaval everywhere. The fires in Australia, the BLM protests, can impact people beyond just Covid, but as you say this brings to a point and highlights some of the key issues that people are having with academia more broadly. If we can go back to one of Vanessa's points from earlier about different types of research. How are people managing to do different types of research? Is anything empirical just stopped?

*Vanessa Munro:* To follow up on what Se-shauna said as well, I totally agree that what's happened over the past while amplifies a whole set of existing inequalities. But the naturally sunny-dispositioned part of me hopes that it might also create moments where, because those inequalities are even more visible and dramatic, we can think more candidly and creatively about what we can do to improve our processes within Universities. So, for example, when we don't have as much money to fund research internally, how do we mitigate the impact of budget cuts to make sure that ECRs get most benefit, because we know it is their career progression that is otherwise going to be most seriously impacted. Or, we know we won't all be physically on campus floating around the building, so how can we improve our mentoring procedures – we can't just assume that if someone wants a chat they can find us in the corridor, so we have to be more proactive than that.

So in my more positive days I think there are some potentially good things that can come in the longer term. On empirical work, though, it's definitely tricky, and especially for PhD students. I mean, in a sense, people who are in post have slightly more opportunity to say 'you know, I was working on that project, but I need to change the methodology or even I can't progress it just now and I just need to shelve it and come back to it in 6 month's or a year's time'. That's the way things work sometimes. But for PhD students, this is a really difficult moment because there are a number of them who had a plan or a trajectory of work that they just cannot now do, so they're cobbling together alternative methodologies, which is really stressful; and not all of them are benefitting at this stage from the reassurance of funded extensions that would alleviate that stress a bit.

**Nicole Westmarland:** Particularly Participatory Action Research, that type of research that you're relying on close working relationships with other participants to help to design the study, I think that has been hit the hardest out of all the methods.

**Laura Graham:** One of the reasons I thought to have this conversation, especially with this journal, is that a lot of gender and sexuality research does employ those methods, and also, based on my submissions, it's quite a gendered area, so any gendered impact will affect this area as well. Looking at the time, I wonder whether we can move on to think about experiences from journals and what journals can do in response to that. So, those of you involved in journals, do you have any insights about what you've been thinking about or any experiences you're having. Yvette, you're the editor of quite a big journal in the area of gender and the law, is there anything you're learning that's worth mentioning?

**Yvette Russell:** FLS (Feminist Legal Studies) have been working on these types of issues for a long time, in particular in the work that Ruth Fletcher led, and that we've written about in our editorials on wench tactics.<sup>2</sup> This has involved thinking about what it means to be, in Sarah Franklin's words, a 'wench in the works'. What does that mean in terms of feminist publishing and for knowledge production and what demands we can make of institutions and publishers? We've been involved with a feminist collective that's led by *Feminist Review* and includes the journals *Sociological*

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<sup>2</sup> Fletcher, Ruth, Diamond Ashiagbor, Nicola Barker, Katie Cruz, Nadine El-Enany, Emily Grabham, Sarah Keenan, Ambreena Manji, Julie McCandless, Sheelagh McGuinness, Sara Ramshaw, Yvette Russell, Harriet Samuels, Ann Stewart, and Dania Thomas. 'Wench Tactics? Openings in Conditions of Closure' (2017) 25(1) *Feminist Legal Studies* 1-23.



*Review and Feminist Theory* who are preparing a collaborative statement for release about what sort of things we want to prioritise in terms of the political economy of publishing, re-evaluating scholarly publishing and communications, and a lot of the things we've been talking about today.<sup>3</sup> This includes how we might go forward thinking about sustainable and collective publishing and building new collaborative structures and infrastructures. One thing that's very useful and I don't know if people have read it before, is a paper published by a group of feminist geographers in 2015, where they're arguing for something called slow scholarship.<sup>4</sup> We have been thinking about this in terms of wench tactics, so thinking what does it mean to do slow scholarship, to call into question the temporalities of publishing. What would an aesthetic that slows the university down and engages with imagining a sort of pluriversity that is open to epistemic diversity? What would that mean and what would it look like, and how can we contribute to that in terms of publishing? At the heart of a lot of these discussions is, of course, the political economy of the neo-liberal university. We as editors are implicated in the publishing hamster wheel, but we do have a real opportunity to be a wench in the works, to slow down this process and think about generative knowing practices in a different way. We might think about different modalities of time, for example, to think about repair, recycling, improvisation as scholarly and political goals. So that's something that we're interested in and actively pursuing in our editorial work, our collaborative work with other journals, and going forward in different funding bids as well.

**Laura Graham:** Thanks, Yvette. Some really important discussions there, and brilliant you've been having them for such a long time. Are there any practical tips you could make to other journals to put those discussions into practice for reviewers, editors, authors, and everyone involved in the journals?

**Yvette Russell:** In the wench tactics editorial, Ruth talks a lot about how we went about negotiating with our publisher using these wench tactics to leverage a slowing down of the pace of the schedule and get more resources to support our practice. So, there are ways we can think about what leverage means, and the collaboration

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<sup>3</sup> A Collective of Feminist and Social Justice Editors, 'After Open Access', 15 July 2020, available at: <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2020/07/15/after-open-access/> (last accessed 05 August 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Mountz, Alison, Anne Bonds, Becky Mansfield, Jenna Loyd, Jennifer Hyndman, Margaret Walton-Roberts, Ranu Basu et al. "For slow scholarship: A feminist politics of resistance through collective action in the neoliberal university." *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 14, no. 4 (2015): 1235-1259.

between different journals is really fruitful. We have to also think very carefully about what the future of publishing is, and think critically about things like open access, which is really quite problematic in itself. The prospect of what comes after open access is quite exciting; could we generate a platform for ourselves to publish from? This could enable us to design a new political economy of publishing. My view is that we can be quite radical in the way that we think about things, but at the same time being strategic, and leveraging our feminist activism when we can. I think that's what we have tried to do at FLS anyway.

*Laura Graham:* I'm actually in a good position with this journal, as it's an open access journal on a Northumbria platform, so I have a lot of control over when things go up.

*Yvette Russell:* That's great and I think that's the future. If we look at what is happening in Global South publishing, it's attached to an institution and it works from there. The problem we face at FLS is access to our archive, which our publisher owns.

*Teela Sanders:* These are all really important issues long-term in terms of how journals, publishing and open access are going to have a major impact on individuals' careers going forward, particularly in relation to REF. If journals do nothing and accept the status quo, then all the inequalities we've talked about – for instance, the gender pay gap, the lack of BAME members of staff – all these structural issues will only get worse because of what we're going through now. So there's a real onus on people involved to have a look at what's coming through and trying to mitigate in their own journals to prevent the status quo carrying on. If that means proactively having quotas for ECRs, or women, then the onus is on the journal to proactively intersect and engage with the structural inequalities. There are so many power relationships going on in relation to profit made by publishing houses which really contradict the principles around the production of knowledge and who gets to see that knowledge, particularly in relation to the Global South, and Covid has shone a light on these specific issues that we see every day as researchers, and are most likely why we entered the profession in the first place. Covid might be that pivotal moment where things are focused on in a positive way.

*Yvette Russell:* Coming back to Nicole and Laura's discussions, we have to take our own responsibility for calling into question the political economy of the university that's foisted on to us. This is a tension for FLS – we want to call that into question,

but we also want to be a platform through which scholars can publish in a really good journal which has a really good impact factor, and it's a case of balancing these things. I do have a sense of wanting to model slow scholarship, and to think about what that means in my job, to take that forward, and implement those types of changes.

*Vanessa Munro:* Thinking about the practical things that journals can do, obviously one thing is paying close attention to who is submitting to you and who is getting published with you – but it has to be about more than just gathering that information: once you have it, what are you going to do about it? And I suppose this is one of the reasons that I have some optimism about the ways in which concern about the impact of Covid can prompt action in response to underlying disparities too. So, at the *Modern Law Review*, for example, where I sit on the board, we've been tracking submission data which showed that we receive more submissions from men than women. And concern about the ways in which that could become an even greater disparity as a result of Covid prompted us to think about what practically we could do. I mean, we didn't want to put pressure on people already under pressure by just saying, 'well that's easy, just encourage submissions by women', as though it's as simple as that. But one of the things we did earlier this month was run a zoom session about submitting to the MLR specifically for female academics, to try to give some information and tips but also start a conversation about what might be preventing submissions. The three of us that devised the session initially had a lengthy conversation about whether people would be interested, would they even sign up, but we decided to put it on and see what happened. We had about 215 people sign up, from a range of countries and across all career stages. We recorded it and put it on the MLR website too and it's now had hundreds of views. So one of the pros about the really difficult situation we're in is that you can reach out in different ways to a much wider audience. And of course it is too early to say whether, or how much, that will translate into shifting the gender balance of submissions, but I think it is important – and this was something that we got specific feedback on from people who took part – for a general journal like the MLR to say, look we care about this issue and we want to start a dialogue about what more we can do as a journal.

*Nicole Westmarland:* At the Journal of Gender Based Violence, I recently chaired my first editorial board, and it had to be done electronically because nobody could travel. But in getting to the stage of scheduling the meeting, we probably spent more time trying to find a time when we could meet and I could get child care for anyway. I think in terms of positives, that would have been an extremely expensive trip. I probably get 3 nights away from my kids a year, and it would be good if I could use one of those

three nights away a year for something personal rather than something work-related in the future. The fact that everybody was online - and there was another single parent and somebody who would have had to travel from another country – and we've done all of the work quite efficiently in a couple of hours, it does make us think whether all these trips before were necessary, in terms of the environmental cost as well, as well as the financial cost as the money has to come from somewhere, and the time cost. I had actually previously turned down the offer of Chair before because I was worried about having to physically go and attend meetings, so if we do develop a new way of working, starting adding other inequalities (if I was a wheelchair user, for example), that would also be another thing that could act as a barrier. So, maybe we can take some of these working practices forward in a positive way. Another point, one of the things the JGBV is thinking of doing is developing a 'how to do a peer review' so that new people can feel that they have the confidence to do a peer review, and secondly that they get taught in a feminist-friendly way of being kind and constructive while also being critical in developing reviews.

*Laura Graham:* That's a great idea that goes back to what Sen was talking about earlier. This is something that I'll be thinking going forward about peer reviews. The first issue is a special issue, so the reviews of other articles have been a bit more ad hoc, but it would be good to get something in place moving forward.

*Se-shauna Wheatle:* Will the instruction for peer review be aimed at just new reviewers or also people who have been doing it for quite a while, some of whom, as we know, don't do it very constructively.

*Nicole Westmarland:* It was meant to be aimed at bringing on new reviewers as, I think lots of people wonder 'what is the point that I'm able to review? – is it as a third year PhD, as a new PhD am I qualified to do a review?' In my team, we get people questioning if they should accept those invitations or not, the so-called imposter syndrome, I suppose.

Being part of a peer-review panel might give them the confidence to do that. I suppose if they've received peer reviews in the past which haven't been very constructive, that might be the only peer review style they've seen. So, it's also about resetting the idea of what peer review should look like as well. The other thing is that originally that was going to be tagged on to a conference but now the plan is to do something online

as a video. I guess we're all learning to be a lot less self-conscious about using videos, and seeing ourselves, and hearing ourselves played back than perhaps we have in the past too.

*Se-shauna Wheatle:* With some of the experiences I've had recently with journals, guest-editing, or just doing reviews, or being involved in different ways with journals, I wonder whether editors don't feel empowered to edit reviews. This is a discussion I've had with a few people over the years about if an editor sees a review that isn't constructive, or even crosses the line into being abusive, or sexist, or racist, is there a sense that they have the power or responsibility to edit that review, or is there a focus on retraining reviewers?

*Vanessa Munro:* I think that's really important. That's surely got to be part of an editor's function. It's not to say that you doctor reviews to change the assessment, but if there's something in the way the sentence or review is expressed that is inappropriate, unhelpful or unconstructive, then it's key to what an editor should be doing to modify the writing and make sure the key points get across without that tone. It is true, though, that practice on that is definitely varied and I think part of that is a wider cultural problem in academia about perceptions of where the 'cut and thrust of rigorous debate' stops and inappropriately harsh or unconstructive feedback to a junior scholar begins.

*Yvette Russell:* The decision-making model we have at FLS is that the contextual information that editors have access to it. Not of course, the in-depth information that Nicole was talking about, but if I know someone is an ECR, I can tell the board that when we make a decision. Often in those cases, we will err on the side of a revise and resubmit or implement a mentoring process to help the person turn their work around. That is a benefit of the way we put processes in place in the journal.

*Senthoran Raj:* I would just like to echo those points. I'd like to see those editorial governance processes extended across all journals. I think if we're talking about feminist journals and critical legal studies journals more broadly, there is some self-reflection around processes of collaboration and mentorship, but when it comes to some of the more traditional, doctrinal journals – I have not had the same impression. I don't normally submit to those types of journals because my work is primarily critical queer stuff, so I tend to pitch my work at journals that are already quite

receptive and already have generally quite good practices around this – but I wonder about colleagues who are doing more doctrinal type of work, and whether the processes in those journals are as reflective or as useful. I don't have much experience in that sense, so I can't comment on that, but I do wonder if more "traditional" law journals could benefit from this type of conversation.

*Se-shauna Wheatle:* I can answer that – they're not as reflective. And this includes journals I respect. I think the problem is structural and cultural, so harder to tackle.

*Laura Graham:* We are at time now, but is there anything that we haven't discussed that people want to discuss before we finish?

*Se-shauna Wheatle:* This was mentioned in your email but we haven't had a chance to discuss it yet, and that's how the past few months have impacted upon black and brown scholars. One of the things we have to confront is what I perceive as a feeling of isolation for black and brown scholars. This is something I've generally felt in my time in academia, and interestingly enough, in the wake of the protests, that feeling of isolation has actually heightened, despite all the floods of messages of support and the different types of messages you get from friends and colleagues, there's still a strong feeling of isolation. There's often a sense of a lack of understanding or a sense we're not being listened to (though I should try to speak for myself really). There's a distinction I think between the university or department having the right policy in place, which a lot of them do – my department has a lot of good policies around equalities issues – and having a culture of support, and a feeling that you're able to communicate your fears and concerns and anxieties to your colleagues, and I don't think we've quite achieved that in academia. That's the sort of thing that spills out from departments to journals as well. If you feel isolated, it's difficult to produce, to be creative in the way you need to be or the way you can be in academia.

*Senthoran Raj:* I just want to echo what Se-shauna has to say about some of these issues, and I think racism is absolutely a broader university problem, structurally. As scholars, there is a tendency for many of us to spotlight issues of inequality or discrimination in other sectors of society or in communities but there is often a reticence to see ourselves implicated in the kinds of bigotry and inequality we critique. We don't like to face the kind of scrutiny that we place on other institutions. A number of academics have said that attempts at dismantling white supremacy, such as

through “decolonising the curriculum”, are a threat to academic freedom, that it’s a threat to academic debate. But, what we’re really talking about here are fundamentally issues of white supremacy and how racism is part of what organises the “traditions” of specific disciplines or pedagogical practices. This isn’t really a difference of opinion either. When we’re talking about issues of white supremacy and racism, and other forms of bigotry, like misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, we’re not trying to engage in a debate as to their existence, we’re pointing out that it’s a reality. From my own experiences, and from talking to Black, Indigenous, and other people of colour scholars, we are emotionally exhausted from having to justify the existence of racism. Of course we can, and should, debate how best we might address racism and white supremacy. But, we can’t have those important conversations if we are constantly having to debate the existence of such things in the first place because people are unwilling to recognise their complicity. Many feminist scholars, especially Black feminist scholars, have written about this at length. The fact we have to constantly debate racism is part of the demoralisation and distraction that comes with white supremacy, where we have to justify there is a problem without being given the space to address it. There’s obviously a lot more that can be said about that.

*Laura Graham:* It also brings up another point where, although it has been written about extensively, having to justify these issues, or having to engage with racism or bigotry, takes so much time having to respond to that, that particularly for black and minority ethnic scholars, it narrows down how much time is available for other areas you have space for. It’s true in other areas of oppression too, but it’s really come to the fore at the moment specifically about racism. How can we respond to that?

*Se-shauna Wheatle:* It’s a catch-22. I think part of the thing is for white colleagues or non-minority colleagues to take responsibility. I don’t want equality work to rest on our shoulders, because it is emotionally exhausting and distracting if that’s not the core of your work, and it’s not our burden to teach people to not be racist. So that’s something I want to see. So, there’s a sense for my part that I want more responsibility taken and more citizenship work from other colleagues to be proactive about this issue. There’s a lot of information out there, and people can glean some of that information and those strategies, without always asking us to do a lot of the work. That’s what would be encouraging and would make me feel better about this time.

Laura Graham: Well thank you everyone for being involved in this. There's a lot to think about going forward, and hopefully we will continue to have conversations like this in the future.