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From the Editors

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From the Editors

We are pleased to announce the publication of the sixth issue of the *Journal of Feminist Scholarship*. This issue begins with two articles on popular culture and visual arts, one examining the construction of Black women's identities in films that depict civilizations in crisis and the other offering a queer theoretical reading of the wide-ranging politics of the X-Men franchise.

In "Mother of a New World? Stereotypical Representations of Black Women in Three Postapocalyptic Films," Karima K. Jeffrey explores the ambiguity of cinematic representations of Black matriarchs who have a part to play in the redemption of humanity in a postapocalyptic world. However, despite the fact that these women defy the patriarchy, they do so—ultimately—through embodying modern-day versions of Black female stereotypes that Jeffrey traces back to the world of plantation slavery. They remain trapped by controlling images of their gendered and raced functions as nurturing and/or sexual(ized) beings.

Gendered politics of cinema and pop-cultural production and consumption is also of concern to Michael Loadenthal in "Professor Xavier is a Gay Traitor! An Antiassimilationist Framework for Interpreting Ideology, Power and Statecraft," which offers a detailed and abundantly illustrated analysis of the X-Men movie franchise in relation to competing homonormative and antiassimilationist models of embodied social existence and citizenship. Loadenthal examines these models both in the context of the fictional world of X-Men mutants and through a discussion of real-world queer resisters opposing reformist LGBT organizations that seek rights for nonheterosexuals by cultivating a neoliberal politics of integration within the state.

Samantha Balzer's article, "Beginning with the Body: Fleshy Politics in the Performance Art of Rebecca Belmore and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha," similarly focuses on the aesthetics and politics of embodied performance of identity and social relations. Balzer examines Belmore's *Vigil*, a memorial to women who have disappeared on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and Piepzna-Samarasinha's contributions to the collective project *Sins Invalid: An Unshamed Claim to Beauty in the Face of Invisibility*, which draw on the artist's experience of disability. By positioning flesh and skin "as a site of political development," Balzer argues, this work stakes out a space for challenging binary oppositions of individuals and community, corporeality and geography, and the present and past, while engaging difference and antagonism in the creation of unsettling and complex political art.

Productive negotiation of difference is also at the heart of Kelly Concannon and Laura Finley's discussion of their experiences in developing a student-faculty feminist collaborative research project in "Feminist Interruptions: Creating Care-ful and Collaborative Community-Based Research with Students." This project has focused on the College Brides Walk, an activist event initiated in 2011 as an educational campaign to promote public recognition and conversation about domestic and dating violence. The article details the framework of critical ethics of care and analysis of the power

relationships involved in collaborative knowledge construction, as the faculty and student researchers seek to map the reception and assess the effectiveness of the activism project. Through dialogue, the students and faculty not only reflect critically upon their own work but also identify methodological principles to guide future feminist collaborative research projects.

Finally, with this issue we are pleased to introduce a new occasional feature that presents interviews with feminist activists, artists, and scholars, offering an ongoing reflection on the global richness and diversity of feminist work and experience. In "Portrait of the Feminist as a Publisher: A Conversation with Urvashi Butalia," Anupama Arora and Sandrine Sanos initiate this new format through their probing dialogue with one of India's foremost feminists, as they discuss her pioneering publishing work, the Indian women's movement, gendered revisions and negotiations of historical experience, issues of violence and the state, and problematic aspects of globalized feminist politics.