‘Serious public mischief’: Young women, alcohol and the New Zealand press

Introduction

New Zealand women are drinking more than they have done in the past as it has become increasingly acceptable for women to engage in alcohol consumption practices alongside men. Survey data in this context has found that women drank more often and consumed more alcohol per typical occasion in 2012 than they did in 1995 (Huckle et al. 2013). Qualitative research has found that drinking plays a central role in young women’s socialising and that occasions of excessive drinking have regular spots in many weekly schedules (Hutton, Wright, and Saunders 2013; Hutton and Wright 2014). Such occasions are meticulously planned out, sometimes weeks in advance (Hutton, Wright, and Saunders 2013). These patterns reflect those found in other western post-industrial nations (Bailey et al. 2015). Indeed, New Zealand, along with other nations, including Australia, the UK and some parts of Western Europe, is said to have a culture of intoxication (Hutton and Wright 2014; McEwan et al. 2013), where excessive alcohol consumption practices are considered to be integral to a ‘good night out’, particularly among young people. These practices are understood to have emerged from the expansion of the night-time economy and the promotion of the pursuit of pleasure and hedonistic play, to young people of both genders (Measham and Brain 2005; Measham 2006).

Studies of women’s experiences of these cultures of intoxication have found that they are quite different to men’s experiences, however. Griffin et al. (2013) argues that women are invited to act as though they are liberated subjects (as are men), but find that they are still subjected to traditional notions of respectability (as men are not) in modern neo-liberal societies. It is said that femininity has become ‘an impossible space to occupy’ as a result (Griffin et al. 2013, 186). Young women are called upon by postfeminist discourses to be sexually assertive and ‘up for
it’ (see also Gill 2007; McRobbie 2007; Hutton and Wright 2014) and to participate in excessive drinking practices characteristic of cultures of intoxication (Griffin et al. 2013). Yet behaving in such ways still incur moral judgements about appropriate feminine behaviour.

It is important to ask questions to do with how, and why, in any given context in order that these judgements can be confronted. Ultimately, we need to ensure that young women are not deprived of the opportunity to engage in everyday pleasures, such as drinking alcohol, when young men are not (Jackson and Tinkler 2007). This paper explores the specific shapes that conservative notions pertaining to women’s practices of drinking have taken in the New Zealand setting. Its primary aim is to identify, within these shapes, the subject positions that young women are invited to occupy and that authoritative discursive agents are encouraged to speak to. It will be argued that these positions, when enacted in sites such as the media, help to erect and maintain the boundaries of a conservative femininity in contemporary societies which serves to restrict women’s public movements.

**Women and alcohol in New Zealand**

Alcohol consumption played an important part in male friendship rituals during the early colonial period in New Zealand. The tavern or ‘pub’ was a particularly important site in the development of a developing ‘frontier culture’, providing warmth and companionship for settler men working in small isolated teams in the countryside (or bush) (Phillips 1996). Women were not often seen drinking in public during this time (the early to mid-1800s). Not only were there far fewer settler women in relation to men, they were also expected to maintain the domestic sphere, where they would represent the virtues of sobriety, purity and nurturing (Banwell 1991). Such women represented a respectable femininity, or understandings of the ‘good woman’.

This understanding of the good woman would be invoked in a particular way in relation to alcohol during the late 19th century and early 20th century. Phillips (1996) argues that the
campaign for prohibition, which began in 1870 and lasted for 50 years, was the most powerful and sustained public movement that has ever occurred in New Zealand. Two understandings of the good woman appear in this campaign. Women of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), and others who supported prohibition, were understood to be ‘good women’ who practiced sobriety while safeguarding the moral virtue of their husbands and their families (Toynbee 1995). Women voting for continuance (that is, for alcohol to remain to be available for sale), alternatively demonstrated their ability to ‘guide the hearts and minds of their menfolk’ (McEwan et al. 2013). Thus, both understandings of the ‘good woman’ related to women’s propensity to morally ‘civilise’ men.

Women’s embodied practices of drinking, however, would remain largely unseen up until the 1970s. From 1910, women were legally banned from entering public bars and from serving alcohol (though existing license holders and barmaids were exempt). An alliance of temperance organizations had lobbied the Government to enact this change by arguing that women were both at risk of corruption by intoxicated men and that they were risky to men insofar as they would corrupt men into drinking (McEwan et al. 2013). Māori women (except for those married to men of European descent) were not legally allowed to drink at all, except on doctors’ orders (Park 1995). News reports about illegal drinking by women suggests that these regulations were resisted by some women (and some men) at some times, however. In the following quote, from which this paper takes its name, a senior sergeant is cited in response to charges brought against a publican found to be serving alcohol on a Sunday to a group that included women:

What we say, without any reflection on the defendant, is that this is a serious public mischief by encouraging drinking among young women. (Senior Sergeant Fox cited in The Evening Post, May 10, 1934).
It is of note that the fact that the publican was selling alcohol on a Sunday – which was also against the law – was significantly underplayed in the report in relation to the ‘mischief’ of encouraging drinking by women!

Within New Zealand’s contemporary culture of intoxication, women’s embodied practices of drinking are now highly visible. As discussed, women are drinking more, and more often (Huckle et al. 2013). They are regular consumers of the night-time economy, alongside men (Hutton, Wright, and Saunders 2013; Hutton and Wright 2014). Moreover, research into young women’s drinking has found that they engage with and inhabit the ‘impossible space of femininity’ in complex ways: they are resistant, opportunistic and transformative of cultural ideals about femininity in relation to an assortment of objectives and internal group norms. Young women have been found to engage deliberately with conservative femininities in situations where it is important for them to remain in control, for example (Hutton, Wright, and Saunders 2013). Maori and Pacific young women have also been found to disengage purposely with those aspects of their ethnic identities that obstructed their pursuit of a good time (Hutton and Wright 2014). These studies have afforded important insights into the ways by femininity is enacted by embodied women within New Zealand’s culture of intoxication.

Yet, we still don’t know much about the shapes of conservative femininities and about how (and why) they construct the understandings that young women resist against as they engage in drinking practices. Nor do we know much about where they are principally located. Research into the nexus between young people, alcohol and social media has traced spaces in which conservative femininities are re-enacted by young women themselves. Hutton et al. (2016) for example, found that young women carefully manage how they appear in photographs uploaded to Facebook and other social media sites to avoid appearing ‘trashy’ and ‘tragic’ (“drunken
femininities”), which is often at odds with the experience of being intoxicated that was had (Hutton et al. 2016). In doing so, by producing edited versions of themselves, these young women construct idealised subject positions (sanitised “drinking femininities”) for others to enter into. A study by Rolando, Taddeo, and Becaria (2015) also found that representations on YouTube generated by users themselves re-enacted ‘double-standard’ ideas. But from where did the understanding of an appropriately feminine way to drink develop in the first place?

Day, Gough, and McFadden (2004), in their examination of definitions of women’s drinking in the UK media, found that mainstream sexist discourses inform the ways in which women are represented. They argue that it is important to study news media representations insofar as they reflect ‘common-sense’ assumptions ‘out there’ and so the media can serve as an evidential or excavation site for capturing meanings (which perhaps exist more formatively elsewhere). A discourse analysis perspective, alternatively, understands the media as a site of power in its own right insofar as it not only reflects meaning but re-enacts it (Foucault 1973). In this way, the news media can be seen as an evidential and enactment site where the shapes of conservative femininity are both reflected and rearticulated, and where subject positions pertaining to “drinking femininities” (Hutton and Wright, 2014; Hutton et al. 2016) are offered to real embodied young women and to those who speak to them (parents, teachers, health promoters, for example) and about them (concerned citizens, for example). This means that even where women resist a subject position by performing outside of its boundaries, they are likely to encounter it again, elsewhere.

**Discourse, subjects and ‘the media’**

‘Discourse’ in a broad sense refers to all talk, text and practice. Because people use talk (and texts and practices) to do things the study of discourse can be described as the study of what
any particular statement, piece of text or bit of action does (Potter and Wetherell 1987). A discourse is understood to do a specific something and is often referred to as a discursive formation. The ability for a discourse to do a specific something relies upon the degree of authority afforded it, where it is used and how often it can assert itself. Discourses are not conscious entities, but come into being through practice by discursive agents (individuals, institutions and ideologies) (LeGregco and Tracy 2009) who act from subject positions. A subject position is a location within discourse that is made available for individuals. Because meaningful practice cannot take place outside of discourse, subject positions must be taken up or entered into (Foucault 1973). As we are subjectivised we become the agent through which a discourse gains or maintains its legitimacy.

As argued above, discourses are reflected and re-enacted in the media. Media, in a contemporary context, refers to a wide array of diverse platforms where content is both created and shared among online communities and ‘networked publics’. Social media, in particular, is said to have dramatically reshaped the information and communication ecosystem (Boyd 2014, see also Yar 2012). Media professionals now interact and compete with ‘citizen journalism’ and other user-generated content. Still, the traditional news media remains significant insofar as it reflects and enacts powerful, dominant discourses (Schirato et al. 2010). Moreover, the findings of both Ronaldo, Taddeo, and Beccaria (2015) and Hutton et al. (2016) suggest that the capacity of user-generated media to resist conservative discourses about femininity with regards to alcohol may be limited.

**Sampling and method**

News articles from New Zealand newspapers were sourced from two databases: the *Australia and New Zealand Reference Centre* and *Factiva* using the search terms ‘women’ AND ‘alcohol’ AND ‘drinking’ from January 2000 – December 2002 and January 2010 – December 2012.
These two points in this 13-year time frame were chosen because each sat at the end of a period in which increases in women’s drinking had been found (Huckle et al. 2013). The sources used can be described as ‘broadsheet’ metropolitan newspapers. Most media outlets in New Zealand are owned by a just a handful of companies (Myllylahti 2015) and the country does not have distinctive, competitive ‘tabloids’ like the UK does. The sample was limited to articles that were available in full text (n=135) and is a mixture of ‘hard’ news articles and editorials.

Analysis of the sample was informed by Willig’s (2001) ‘stages’ for a Foucauldian analysis of discourse, and involved asking particular questions of the text that pertained to the aims of the research: in what ways is women’s drinking constructed? What subject positions are made available by these constructions? What possibilities for action stem from these subjectivities? What consequences emerge from these subjectivities? Three discursive formations were identified from this exercise: an escalation discourse; a bad girls discourse, and a vulnerable bodies discourse. These discourses are described and examples are provided of them in the results section, below. Notably, although the search terms employed did not constrict the sample to reports about young women’s drinking, the discourses in the sample overwhelmingly referred to ‘young women’ and the ‘problems’ that stemmed from their purposive engagement with consuming alcohol. The discussion refers in the main, then, to young women across an approximate age range of 18-25 years.

Results

Escalation

The escalation discourse suggests that the increase in the number of women drinking has become a trend and that the increase in the number of drinks they consume has been dramatic. Women are becoming, it is argued, ‘like the boys’ whose regular drinking is understood as
routine. This discourse was most prominent early in the 2000s, at the beginning of the sample, as the following extracts illustrate:

…current trend of boozed-up babes (Manukia and Davis, 2001, August 24).

…dramatic increase in alcohol consumption in young women aged 18 and 19 (Scanlon, 2001, November 20).

…adopting drinking patterns akin to their male counterparts (Catherall, 2001, May 20).

The escalation discourse also focuses on the impact of young women's intoxication on the resources of law enforcement agents and medical establishments, suggesting that it is becoming overwhelming. This focus appeared at both ends of the sample:

Drunken young women on the streets of Wellington overwhelmed police on New Year’s Eve. So many women were “completely out of it” drunk that police could never have kept pace … the problem was getting worse each year and was a great concern (Scanlon, 2002, January 2).

The number of women turning up grossly drunk and wanting medical attention … has shocked St John Ambulance workers (“Number Of Drunk,” 2010, January 2).

There are two subject positions offered by the escalation discourse. Early in the sample, a young woman who engages in drinking is denoted as a passive consumer who is a victim of aggressive alcohol marketers:

Young women are an attractive marketing target for alcoholic beverage vendors (“Young Women Behaving,” 2002, January 9).
Women are also depicted as *active consumers* within a context of women’s social and financial emancipation. This can be seen in the following passage, which describes women’s drinking in terms of a quest for gender equality. Notably, this *active consumer* is one who wants to be ‘like a man’:

> Equality is here – in the booze stakes at least … the race for equality has entered the pubs (“Girl boozers’ health,” 2002, January 4).

Later in the sample, women’s active consumption, as part of their pursuit of equality, is presented as a problem to be tackled. The following passage, written by a prominent New Zealand columnist, explains:

> Ever since feminism began, some women have wanted to imitate men … it will be a struggle persuading young women that they shouldn’t get just as trolleyed as their boyfriends (McLeod, 2011, February 10).

While feminism is held responsible for a deterioration of feminine attributes among young women, they are deemed to remain wholly committed to the value that is placed upon their appearance by a patriarchal society. As the columnist goes on to suggest:

> The only argument young women are likely to take seriously is that excessive drink and drugs will ruin their looks eventually, but eventually is a long way off when you’re under 30 (McLeod, 2011, February 10).

Overall, the escalation discourse constructs women’s drinking as a problem. An increase is interpreted to be a drain on public resources, as well as worrying for the continuance of an appropriate femininity. Young women who drink need to be convinced that they shouldn’t do so as much as young men do, that ‘equality’ pertains to civil matters and that every-day cultural
practices, like drinking alcohol, are exempt. The language of pursuit (of equality, by young women) and of struggle (to discipline them, by others) illustrates that the escalation discourse can be seen as a discourse of futility. Further, each of the subject positions made available in this discourse are adverse to a positive drinking femininity. One is either a victim or an agent with masculine attributes.

**Bad girls**

The *bad girls* discourse is marked by its language of feminine denigration. Only one subject position is offered in this discourse; the overtly intoxicated and aggressive young woman (the *bad girl*). In the early 2000s the suggestion was that women’s drinking was potentially problematic. As the following passages illustrate, a decade later the problem was seen to be an entrenched one:

Girls behaving badly are hitting the headlines this week with towns all over New Zealand reporting outbreaks of fair-sex drunkenness. Are the nation’s women heading for the gutter with bad drinking habits? (Manukia and Davis, 2001, August 24).

Packs of feral, out-of-it young ladies regularly pop up in the news media as a less-than-shining example of how bad our alcohol sodden culture has become (“The Sounds Of,” 2011, March 9).

Anyone who is out late in any urban area throughout New Zealand – Taranaki included – on a Friday or Saturday night has a good chance of spotting aggressive and often highly intoxicated young women who are quite prepared to be part of violence … legless-drunk young women spoiling for a fight (“Keeping Up With,” 2012, July 21).
This discourse is overtly moral in its tone, interpreting the agency of a young woman who engages in drinking alcohol as transgressive and drawing on vulgarisms and assumptions to emphasize this understanding. Indeed, the ‘bad girl’ discourse can be viewed as a discourse of derision, where disinformation, myths (and even lies at some times) are employed in order to undermine particular practices (see Ball 1990). The subject position it offers is a rebel femininity, one that does not adhere to routine (and appropriate) feminine behaviour and so anyone occupying it is likely to be looked upon negatively. It is also notable that the ‘bad girl’ appears exclusively in urban settings. Indeed, the wholly negative ascription of the bad girl is akin to how the ‘ladette’ has been depicted in the UK context. There, references to aggression and other unladylike behaviours mean that the ladette can be associated with the least desirable elements of the working class (see Jackson and Tinkler 2007).

**Vulnerable bodies**

The vulnerable bodies discourse suggests that female bodies are more easily damaged by alcohol:

> The enzyme, alcohol dehydrogenase, which processes alcohol into a safer substance in the stomach, is 70 to 80 per cent more effective in men than in women. The liver takes longer to process a drink in a woman and alcohol can affect women differently at different stages of their menstrual cycle (Betts, 2001, December 28).

The vulnerable bodies discourse also emphasizes the hazards of alcohol consumption upon an unborn child. Acting knowingly to prevent this risk is of national importance:

> There is a direct link between people being jailed and foetal alcohol [syndrome] (“Gambling with Babies,” 2000, December 7).
You immediately drop your child’s IQ by five units. Getting the abstinence message through to pregnant women is the key to New Zealand’s future (Pickering, 2000, December 13).

The risk with unplanned pregnancies is even higher, with many women not realising they are pregnant for weeks, possibly months, and continuing to drink. By the time they realise, the damage may already have been done (Chapman, 2011, April 4).

Female bodies are also ‘at risk’ from everyday feminine practices while drinking:

… women breaking their ankles while drunk and wearing stilettos (“Drunken Assaults Worry,” 2011, November 12).

An increasing number of young women are starving themselves for days before drinking to keep their calorie intake levels down, says an expert (“Young Women At,” 2011, November 3).

The vulnerable bodies discourse also focuses on the risk of feminine drinking practices in public spaces, specifically in relation to sexual assault:

The young women were so drunk they could have been fair game for anyone, Mr. Gilpin said (Scanlon, 2002, January 2).

Young women found drunk and alone on Christchurch streets are “easy prey for sexual predators”, police say (“Drunk Women Risk,” 2011, February 10).

Male responsibility is often normalized, and attacks are to be expected if one finds themselves in an ‘at risk’ situation:
“From mickey finns in the ‘50s to spiking in the ‘70s … drugs have been used for centuries by men to sedate women and rape them” (Rape Crisis spokesperson cited in “Warning For Women,” 2002, October 25).

Three subject positions are articulated in the *vulnerable bodies* discourse. The first subject position is that of a *risk actor*. Here, the discursive subject is called upon to plan for risk, be alert to risk and to act as a risk guardian (of other women):

Date rape drugs were becoming increasingly fashionable among men keen on a sexual conquest … [women should] watch their drink as if it was their handbag (NZPA, 2000, December 8).

Women should use common sense when they went out at night. Having a plan of action, and sticking to it, was one step to avoiding trouble. Staying in groups and keeping an eye out for each other would also help (Pokoney, 2001, December 31).

The second subject position is that of the *careless consumer*. She cares *for* consuming, but not about its dangerous effects on her body or that of her unborn child:

Pregnant teenagers prioritized their social life, and “often drank alcohol during pregnancy” (Arnold, 2001, September 21).

Up to five girls a week are being raped or sexually assaulted in some areas after losing control of themselves during heavy drinking binges (“Sex Attacks Grow,” 2002, March 18).

The third subject position is that of an *ignorant victim* (ignorant of her female body, and of the alcohol industry). This position was most apparent at the end of the sample:
While binge drinking and intoxication is a serious issue for either sex, the problem is exacerbated with young women because they can become pregnant (“Think Before You,” 2011, February 11).

There’s a big alcohol lobby financed through liquor companies and it’s pretty hard to actually get any traction to really point out how damaging it is to pregnant women or for the babies” (Clinical Psychologist cited in Chapman, 2011, April 4).

The *vulnerable bodies* discourse depicts young women’s drinking as an activity that requires careful management. Women’s bodies and practices are defined here in terms of their differences to those of men, and the impacts upon bodies and from practices are couched in terms of being risky to the nation as a whole. Thus, the *vulnerable bodies* discourse is inherently a discourse of *risk*. Notably, this is the only discourse that offers a positive drinking femininity: that of the *risk actor*. Positive drinking femininities are therefore knowingly cautious ones.

**Discussion and conclusions**

The findings discussed in this paper reflect those of Day, Gough, and McFadden (2004), who argued that the UK media enacts sexist discourses when reporting on young women’s drinking practices. Each of the discourses identified express a degree of despondency that young women engaging in cultures of intoxication are far removed from historical (conservative) understandings of the ‘good woman’ who was sober, pure and nurturing. Jackson and Tinkler’s (2007) suggestion that young women who engage in cultures of intoxication have become the folk devils in a recurring panic about troublesome youthful femininities also resonates. Misplacement of anxiety is characteristic of moral panic (Cohen 1972) and recent evidence indicates that young men in New Zealand drink to intoxication far more often than young women do (Ministry of Health 2015). It might be, in the New Zealand context, that the historical
legacy of the colonial pub in the development of frontier culture prevents young men’s drinking from being a focal point of concerns about excess alcohol consumption. Suggestions that features of women’s drinking practices are symbolic of the nation’s current health, and are important for the nation’s future health, provides a suitable rationale for this skewed focus. What might also account for efforts to actively denigrate young women’s drinking, seen in the construction of the bad girl subject position, is a desire to re-establish, however remotely, the ideological connection between woman and civilizing influence as seen in the debates both for and against prohibition. It might be that as she becomes ‘like the boys’ the ability for him to be influenced by her or become ‘like her’ is seriously undermined. In this light, ‘discourses of derision’ are directed at young female drinkers in an effort to govern the actions of men (see Jackson and Tinkler 2007).

It may also be that the media have found themselves a versatile character in the subject of the young woman though which broader concerns about excess alcohol consumption by young people of both genders can be safely articulated. Young women’s contemporary drinking practices are inherently newsworthy in that they meet many salient news values. They are novel in that they deviate from past practices, there are particular risks that can be drawn from them, they might be seen as ‘fall from grace’ situations insofar as they mark a departure from traditional (conservative) understandings of femininity, for example (see Jewkes 2011). Further, classic news-making narratives, where there are victims, villains and heroes (with the latter two engaged in a battle) (see Wright 2015), can be observed in the casting of the young woman as a bad girl, and the health promoter or the alcohol regulator as the remedial agent. The depicting of the young woman as the passive consumer and the alcohol marketer as the aggressive advertiser can be seen as a scenario of the victim being targeted by the villain. The risk actor position can also be seen as heroic when she is a risk guardian of her peers.
Irrespective of their origin, what is most troubling is that the discourses identified in the news media about young women who drink alcohol serve to erect and maintain the boundaries of a conservative femininity that is strictly bounded around a risk actor subject position. What this means is that women’s active participation in the culture of intoxication and the pursuit of pleasure is overlaid with expectations that they will be risk conscious. Young women in the New Zealand context are asked to occupy and perform a drinking femininity that plans for risk, is alert to risk and acts appropriately in the presence of risk. If they do not, their embodied practices of drinking become risky in themselves insofar as they are likely to be interpreted to be problematic consumers (whether that be active or passive), as rebellious ‘bad girls’, as careless and unconcerned with the harmful effects of alcohol, or as unwitting victims of the wily ways of the alcohol industry. The emphasis on risk may explain why ‘letting go’, casting off the routines of self-discipline, and giving oneself the permission to behave in transgressive ways have been found to be key components of a pleasurable drinking occasion (Brown and Gregg, 2012; Hutton, Wright, and Saunders 2013). It can also explain why young women carefully monitor and edit their online displays of their drinking occasions to avoid the consequences that entail from being interpreted as inhabiting another subject position, however resistant the embodied experience might have been (Hutton et al. 2016). The risk actor subject position also limits the ways by which authoritative discursive agents can interpret young women’s drinking practices. Those who speak to young women (parents, teachers, health promoters) are restricted to forewarning figurative young women about dangers ahead, which may mean that efforts to reduce harm will speak past diverse groups of real young women who consume alcohol (Brown and Gregg 2012; Hutton, Wright, and Saunders 2013). This is more likely when young women are also managing the displays of their drinking online, as they are re-enacting conservative drinking femininities in doing so. Those who speak about young women (concerned citizens, journalists) have delimited categories with which to interpret the
actions of embodied young women engaging in the night-time economy and of ‘good times’ experienced with wild abandon in particular.

A number of social justice implications entail, many of which Day, Gough, and McFadden (2004) also noted. Prophetic warnings about risk in night-time spaces might engender a sense of fear among some young women and restrict their movements as a result. It is acknowledged in the criminological literature that one’s fear of crime and of experiencing harm can have a greater effect on one’s activities than actual recorded levels of crime can (Lee and Farrall 2008). Young women who do experience harm while out at night drinking may in turn be seen to be at fault, particularly if they have failed to plan for or act appropriately in the presence of risk (Jordan 2004, 2011). Moreover, casting a drinking woman’s body as a vulnerable one that needs controlling reflects (and re-enacts) understandings of ‘ideal’ female bodies. As Gurrieri, Previte, and Brace-Govan (2012) warn, this denies the complexities of embodied experience and serves to stigmatize those bodies that do not meet such ideals that are often predicated around male understandings of attractiveness and biomedical discourses of ‘health’. Lupton (2015) also notes that the notion of risk when used in health discourses is always tied to notions of disgust and revulsion, which can lead to the dehumanization of some groups and the subsequent unjust treatment of them. She draws on the example of smokers, whose ‘disgusting’ habit can result in them being seen to be less deserving of medical attention, to illustrate this point.

Feminist discourse theorist Judith Butler (1995) notes that agency can be found at the junctures in which discourses are renewed. These junctures are those moments when a health promoter plans a campaign, when a journalist frames up a story or when a young woman uploads a photo of her night out. Evidence that young women are using the spaces of social media to enact the very conservative drinking femininities which serve to restrict their embodied movements
(Hutton et al. 2016; Rolando, Taddeo, and Beccaria, 2015) emphasizes the need for further investigations into (and a critical engagement with) the breadth and depth of the gendered hierarchies that young women, and the authoritative agents who speak to them, encounter. A comparative analysis of subject positions across other enactment sites such as advertising and health promotion material, as well as official reports and other governmental discourses, would enable such an assessment. Further theorizing with regards to the use of alcohol for overcoming inhibitions, and women’s historical and contemporary engagement with licensed moments of carnival with which to employ alcohol in this way, could also enhance understandings of what women’s embodied drinking practices signify and how changes in those practices bring with them new significations. In may be, for instance, that it is in the junctures of carnival that conservative discourses about drinking femininities can be more effectively challenged.

References


Hutton, Fiona, Christine Griffin, Antonia Lyons, Patricia Niland and Tim McCreanor. 2015. “‘Tragic Girls’ and ‘Crack Whores’: Alcohol, Femininity and Facebook.” Feminism and Psychology, 26 (1): 73-93.


McEwan, Brett, Maxine Campbell, Antonia Lyons and David Swain. 2013. *Pleasure, Profit and Pain: Alcohol in New Zealand and the Contemporary Culture of Intoxication*. Hamilton, New Zealand: University of Waikato Faculty of Arts and Sciences.


