

---

## No Introduction Required

**Gina Heathcote**\*

My first encounter with Professor Di Otto, Francine V McNiff Chair in Human Rights Law at the University of Melbourne, centred on a request for a hard copy of her difficult to find piece titled ‘Integrating Questions of Gender into Discussion of ‘the Use of Force’ in the International Law Curriculum’.<sup>1</sup> Di posted – from Melbourne to London – a copy of the editorial proofs to me back in 2003, in a time before PDFs, and I was thrilled that such an important name in international law had taken the time to send her work on to an unknown, starting-out doctoral student. As Di retires I know better – this is, of course, a hallmark of Di’s approach to law and scholarship – taking others with her on her journeys, intellectual and activist, with generosity and feminist care.

To mark Di’s retirement from full academic life, many of us came together to speak about and to Di’s work in September 2016 at the Centre for Gender Studies, SOAS University of London.<sup>2</sup> As a follow-up tribute *feminists@law* has agreed to publish a selection of papers from the symposium. These writings trace the wonderful arc of Di’s scholarship across disciplines and sub-disciplines, recalling classic pieces surrounded by a rich wider oeuvre of work that marks an incredible contribution to international law, international human rights law and feminist and queer scholarship: in sum a tremendous intellectual legacy from a wonderful colleague and friend.

I have left the conversational tone of each of the pieces, as each work included here is full of emotion, care and generosity – as well as the mindful intellectual engagement that encapsulates the importance of Di’s contribution to feminist, queer, legal and international scholarship. Working with Di has been central to my own work and thinking, having come together with Di to host a symposium on gender and peacekeeping in the Asia-Pacific at Melbourne Law School in April 2012 that marked the shift from my self-identification as doctoral student to feminist and international legal scholar. I cannot think of another scholar I would have wanted to guide me during my arrival as an academic<sup>3</sup> – the journey with Di is as full of intellectual riches as it is full of affective memories with each deeply intertwined in her legacy as a scholar for many of us. As such, passion, joy, frustration and compassion enliven my memories of working with Di just as they do the submissions here: reminding us of the rigour with which we can encounter and enlarge our passions through academic work; resounding with the joy of connections and conversations; the frustrations of re-visiting and re-remembering; of the constant need for care, attention, and thoughtfulness with words whether spoken or written; and for the ongoing compassion we need to exercise as feminist

---

\* Centre for Gender Studies and School of Law, SOAS University of London, UK. [gh21@soas.ac.uk](mailto:gh21@soas.ac.uk)

<sup>1</sup> Dianne Otto, “Integrating Questions of Gender into Discussion of ‘the Use of Force’ in the International Law Curriculum” (1995) 6(2) *Legal Education Review* 219-228.

<sup>2</sup> A subsequent celebration was hosted at Melbourne Law School, reflections from which will appear in the Melbourne Journal of International Law.

<sup>3</sup> With of course equal and full gratitude to those who were with me at earlier and later parts in the journey at SOAS, the LSE and Melbourne Law School: you know who you are!

and queer scholars mindful of who, how and why we speak, if we speak, and – perhaps most importantly for those of use in the Global North – to listen.