

## Representation and Exchange: Feminist Periodicals and the Production of Cultural Value

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Barbara Godard examine la situation changeante des périodiques féministes canadiens au cours de la dernière décennie. Alors que le but non-lucratif est la force créatrice et politique des publications féministes, cela les laisse vulnérables aux coupures de subventions gouvernementales qui résultent en une augmentation de la corporatisation des institutions culturelles canadiennes. Ce changement de politique ne reconnaît pas la valeur de l'approche sans but lucratif des publications féministes qui donne priorité à la création de méthodes de connaissances alternatives et à la dissémination des idéologies féministes: "Non seulement la logique de la libre-entreprise est-elle imposée aux périodiques qui perdent leurs subventions, mais le gouvernement (cyniquement) réoriente ses propres programmes et catégories pour appliquer la logique d'économie de marché à tous les périodiques .... Le fait de devoir constamment justifier les oeuvres créatives au secteur corporatif impose une forte surveillance qui conduit à des formes d'auto-censure et de 'déradicalisation.'"

"[T]he *divine* power of money—lies in its character as men's estranged, alienating and self-disposing *species naturae*. Money is the alienated ability of mankind. That which I am unable to do as a man, and of which therefore all my individual essential powers are incapable, I am able to do by means of *money*... Since money, as the existing and active concept of value, confounds and exchanges all things, it is the general *confounding* and *compounding* of all things..." (Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* 168-9)

"Women are incorporated into a sphere that both is and is not in civil society. The private sphere is part of civil society but is separated from the 'civil' sphere. The antinomy private/public is another expression of natural/civil and women/men... [T]he meaning of the civil freedom of public life is thrown into relief when counterposed to the natural subjection that characterizes the private realm." (Carole Patemen, *The Sexual Contract* 11)

A highpoint in the recognition of feminist culture in Canada appears to have been 1985-86. I note this in hindsight as I return to a brief study I made of Canadian feminist periodicals in 1988 with a view to looking at the changing position of such periodicals within the cultural field over the last decade. I highlight these years not only because of the number and variety of feminist periodicals published then but because in 1985 these were significant enough to the academic institution to require indexing in the CRIAW supported *Canadian Women's Periodical Index* which began in May, and because women were perceived to have enough political and economic capital at their disposal to warrant a glossy free-distribution magazine with a feminist slant, *City Woman*. That it ceased publishing after eight years in the fall of 1985, while the *Index* continued until summer 1994 indicates the narrative trajectory of the shift in question, one of retrenchment. In 1985, Canadian feminists had recently participated actively in the articulation of public policy through their work to get Section 15 inserted into the Bill of Rights (1982) and their organization of a televised debate on women's issues during the federal election of 1984. In 1997, the sphere for feminist organizing and for the articulation of feminist discourse has shrunk as a consequence of shifts in government policy which entailed large cuts in 1990 to the budget of the Women's Programme, administered by the Secretary of State, and, subsequently in 1996, the abolition of the active research and publishing programme of the Advisory Committee on the Status of Women. Ominously, only one leader met with feminists for a political discussion during the federal election campaign of 1997 and that on a cable channel. Feminist periodicals are ceasing publication at an increasing rate within a political climate that favours a decreased role for state intervention to counterbalance market-place forces. This conjuncture effects a realignment in the relations of private and public spheres that limits the claims of women to full citizenship.

My analysis will inevitably be incomplete since it will not encompass the entire cultural field in Canada whose dynamics distribute value within the polysystem, awarding prestige and legitimacy through an ideology of recognition. In my concern with where value is to be located—in a body, in a name, in a speculative game—I am nonetheless motivated by the question of Pierre Bourdieu: "Who is the true producer of the value of the work?" "What creates the authority with which authors authorize?" (76). He goes on to stress the importance of considering multiple levels of social reality in the meaning and value of cultural

works. Symbolic forms and systems of exchange cannot be set apart from other modes of practice. New modes of cultural practice can only be defined as a system of differential stances in relation to other possible "*prises de positions*." Conflicts between different positions constitute particular manifestations of the structure of the field. Consequently, attention to the differing relations of feminist periodicals in Canada to the systems of exchange offers some understanding of the processes of social reproduction during the period in question. Crucial in Bourdieu's elaboration of the cultural field is his recognition of the function of artistic mediation—of publishers, critics, museums and other such sites for marking distinction—as producers of the meaning and value of a work which is not a matter of individual creativity (as in Romantic theory), or of literariness (as in structuralism), or even of discourse (as it is for Foucault and new historicists). The differing stances and publishing histories of periodical publishing, then, can open up some questions concerning cultural value which is, in Bourdieu's formulation, the constitution, preservation and reproduction of authority and symbolic power in the field (270). Value is radically contingent on a complex and constantly changing set of circumstances involving multiple social and institutional actions.

In that the structure of the cultural field is linked to position within the field of power, or relation to the ruling class, two sets of issues are pertinent for feminist publishing, those involving differentiation according to prestige and to gender. Both raise the matter of the relative value of 'anti-economic' behaviours. In the former case, this involves the paradoxical "symbolic capital" which is, according to Bourdieu, the disavowal or misrecognition of "'economic' profits" in favour of "making a name for oneself," to consolidate a "capital of consecration" enabling one, through a signature or trade mark, to "consecrate objects" and so give value. Profits are subsequently appropriated from this operation (75). This is characteristic of works produced by the field of "restricted production" which are considered "pure" and function as elements of social distinction because of their rarity or difficulty. Their specific cultural authority is recognized by conservation in such institutions as museums or publishers and by reproduction in the educational system. Other instances of legitimation may be small groups connected with a periodical or literary magazine (121), a function filled diversely by feminist periodicals within this sub-field. Prestige is related to the field of production as such restriction differs from "large-scale production"

which competes for domination in the market-place and seeks a profitable return on investment. A division of labour is thus instituted between specialized and generalized aesthetic and cognitive production, between "high art" and "middle-brow art," that is transformed into an ideological tension between idealistic "devotion" and cynical "submission" (128).

Feminist cultural production as social or political art holds an ambiguous position here in that its direct affront on the field of power, with its economic and political capital, challenges the association of value to an avowal of disinterestedness. It also constitutes a heretical mode of new cultural practice in the arena of gender. The historical conditions under which money was transformed into "capital" in circulation provoked a "semiological crisis over the concept of value" between "intrinsic" or "extrinsic" value or a signifying process in the "act of exchange" (Thompson 17). This is bound up with structural transformations of the public and private spheres through a reconceptualization which produced domesticity and civil society as separate spheres. Through a process of "ideological contradiction," the constant movement of capitalist exchange in civil society is figured in antithetical terms to the stability of domesticity (18). The cultural work of redefining femininity and domesticity as the site of the emotional and the subjective occurs through the repression of women's work. Indeed, it is "the transmission of patrimony" which is the mode of circulation specific to the "domestic mode of production." Under the logic of such a patriarchal system, the feminine is subject to a masculine representation and evaluation where her use-value is appropriated and transformed for his exchange-value. In contrast to that of "economic man," women's labour is "classified as unproductive and unpaid" (25). Just as the good name of the artist is secured by putting art before profit, so is the excellent reputation of 'woman' founded in her labour of love. It is such a differential distribution of value that feminist publishing calls into question.

### Up Against the Mainstream

"[A] woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write," wrote Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* in 1929, a statement with resonance today in its summation of the conditions for women's participation in civil society as subjects producing cultural value rather than as the ineffable or vanishing point propping up an oedipalized

social contract in which women are signs/objects to be exchanged. For the “commodities” to go to the marketplace and to exchange signs amongst themselves would constitute, according to Luce Irigaray, a radical change in the symbolic order to inaugurate a different economy regulating value, an economy of use not surplus. “Exchanges without identifiable terms, without accounts, without end... Without additions and accumulations...[E]njoyment without a fee” (197). For, “[t]he law that orders our society is the exclusive valorization of men’s needs/desires, of exchanges among men” (171). While £500 per annum was sufficient for a writer of fiction then, it would not be nearly enough to support today’s feminist journalist and would-be-editor. However, the principles of economic capital and autonomy that Woolf elaborates, remain the material conditions requisite for any feminist writing venture that hopes to generate cultural capital.

One of the constants of feminist periodicals is that they exist outside the dominant mode of capitalist publishing, on the margins and in opposition both through their borderline position with respect to the marketplace and their commitment to contestatory ideology. Feminist periodicals are developed to further feminist ideologies, to create new circuits for disseminating knowledges and practices that seek to transform the feminine condition under which women have been subject to systemic oppression: they are not in the business of producing commodity-texts to maximize the profit of a corporation. Signifying practices which challenge the symbolic order, feminist periodicals also establish counter-institutions that would legitimate alternate ways of knowing. Key to this challenge is their existence outside the dominant fiction of the marketplace as a determinant of value. Rather than engaging in a soft sell, feminists foreground their critical and transformative project. They self-consciously aim to produce a position for a specific reading subject, a feminist reader who engages in critique of dominant reading and, by extension, publishing practices.

Its disinterest in the profit motive is paradoxically both the strength and the vulnerability of feminist publishing. Knowledge, art for its own sake, is both a critique of disinterested practices (always haunted by economic interest) and a potential for recuperation (women’s altruistic labour—ever at a loss). As an alternative to the mainstream press and in exchange for their editorial independence, feminist periodicals enjoy none of the safety nets of dominant practices. Advertising, which is the main source of income for mass market publishing, is directed in

women's magazines to produce woman as passive, decorative object, not as reasoning, critical subject. Consequently, feminist periodicals engaging in large-scale production, rivaling such dominant institutions as *Chatelaine*, cannot depend on the traditional sources of support—ads for make-up, high fashion, “feminine hygiene” and food—that in/form those dominant signifying practices on woman. Other advertisers refuse to place their ads in what they perceive as publications with a limited readership (single gender, that is). Ads from professional women, from women's bookstores, ads announcing women's cultural events, exchange ads with other feminist publications—small, plain, mostly verbal ads—graced the pages of Canadian feminist magazines like *Branching Out*, *Herizons* and *La vie en rose*, which, as almost monthlies, adopted an illustrated format to appeal to large national and even, in the latter case, international audiences.

It is the format of this advertising which distinguishes these magazines from the glossy creations of marketing agencies, like *City Woman* (1990s version is *Modern Woman*), which aim at a similar professional audience, in an effort to recuperate and deflate the political impact of the feminist movement and serve an audience of working women up to the fashion advertising industry through the commodified images of the independent business woman or even lesbian chic. One could find in the pages of *City Woman* a mixture of reporting on women's culture, life styles and profiles, even Eleanor Wachtel on politics, interspersed, however, with perfume, make-up and clothes ads. But one did not find updates on feminist issues such as control of reproductive rights, political rights of First Nations' women, or pornography, as in the feminist counterdiscourse.

The ease with which feminist discourse can be manipulated to turn an emancipatory discourse for women into an oppressive discourse on woman, is something of which feminists have long been conscious. The forces of appropriation in the ambiguous context when a feminist tries to direct a commercial enterprise—to the mutual dissatisfaction of both groups—are described in Doris Anderson's novel, *Rough Layout*, a fiction that gives an ironic inventory of the sad lessons she learned when she tried to take *Chatelaine* down the feminist path in the 1960s and 1970s while it remained within the fold of the MacLean-Hunter publishing empire. In the novel, Anderson details the compromise a feminist editor is obliged to make in such a context. She defends herself against the charges of one of her bosses (“I have to admit I have doubts about you

from time to time. I really have to question myself about your judgement when you run some of the stuff you run on birth control, equal pay, liberalized divorce." 149) by running the type of Gibson Girl fashion poses he prefers. On the other hand, after failing to establish for her superiors the value of professionalism as sufficient qualification for one of her editors, she asks the woman to wear a skirt or decent pair of slacks into the office so that she will blend better with the new decor which has been planned to make the magazine a trendsetter of taste. The blandness of *Chatelaine* in the 1980s is testimony to the recuperating force of the dominant institution. In 1985 the magazine published an article on post-feminism by Bronwyn Drainie, an ironic post-mortem for Anderson and the kind of feminist journalism she helped develop.

Autopsies followed the cessation in 1987-8 of two major Canadian feminist periodicals, *Herizons* and *La vie en rose*. In the latter case, failure was a great surprise, though, paradoxically, a result of its strengths. Indeed, it had been heralded as an amazing feminist success, a magazine which published stimulating articles on a variety of feminist issues attracting both popular and academic support. Feminist scholars came from France to write theses on this phenomenon! But, as Martine d'Amours writes in investigating its demise, the editors recognized in retrospect that they had lived for seven years on "love and water," while neglecting the commercial aspects of publishing. While they had been rich in ideas, they had been poor in economic capital and had not carried out systematic subscription campaigns using the networks at their disposal, feminist and trade union networks. When the crunch came and they needed to raise the subscription list by 10,000 to assure a monthly print run of 28,000, the editors had only \$15,000 to finance a campaign. To return to a black and white publication aimed at a smaller audience seemed too high a price to pay for the editors who had created the magazine of their dreams. To reorganize for the audience that they had no doubt was there, would take initiative and energy, neither of which Francine Pelletier, a founding editor, had to spare. Women her age hustle to earn a living or are overwhelmed by the responsibility of small children. Many are also engaged in political action. Burnout in these circumstances is inevitable. The total commitment necessary to start a feminist magazine would have to come from a younger generation. *La vie en rose* was in fact the production of a generation of feminist activists who by then were nearing 40.

The problems facing *Herizons* were of a different order, though equally a consequence of the magazine's visibility. Billing itself as offering

"women's news and feminist views," and published by a group of women in Winnipeg, its original mandate was to engage with local feminist issues and to this end it published bilingually in English and French. Later, it aimed at a national audience and although keeping articles of local interest on such groups as the Nellie McClung theatre collective, it addressed general issues like the rise of REAL Women, the role of women in the Canadian Labour Congress, Lauri Conger, feminist popular musician, and the boycott of South African products. But in this, *Herizons* was too successful and it attracted the ire of right-wing women who sought the support of the dominant institution to silence this challenging voice. Financial failure was the ostensible difficulty the magazine could not surmount. Lacking an advertising revenue like other feminist publications, *Herizons* had escaped the cruel realities of the unbalanced budget through the aid of government grants. However, this made it equally vulnerable to the dominant order. The rise of conservatism led to a letter-writing lobby by women's groups like REAL Women against the magazine's subsidy from the Secretary of State. Without it, *Herizons* could not survive past its fifth birthday, though it has subsequently been revived under different editors. The cutting of the grant from the Women's Programme turned out to be an ominous warning of the future and the retreat of the state in the 1990s from its redistributive function in the objective of greater equality.

That government might well be at odds with feminist signifying practices had long been clear to members of collectives applying for such aid. The welfare state did not readily embrace feminist goals of equality in its policies, but required forceful prompting by feminists. In its first applications to the Canada Council under its support for periodicals programme, the Toronto-based quarterly *Fireweed* was judged to have too varied contents to meet the criteria for a 'good' literary magazine. At that point, arts' council grants served to legitimate symbolic capital. The institutional desire for purity, for upholding the law of genre with its norm of disinterestedness, positioned the hybrid publishing ventures of feminism with its explicitly engaged art-making on the margins. Now, the same arts' councils demand both literary quality and popularity in the market-place, pushing for a realignment of the boundaries between restricted and large-scale publishing, and so placing a journal like *Tessera* in a state of contradiction. While it is judged to be of a high quality, the journal is deemed to have too small an audience to be worthy of



support and with grants the symbolic capital of legitimation. Increasing readership would mean either publishing less innovative, and hence less challenging, material or internationalizing the contributions so as to appeal to a "global" market. In either case, it would entail homogenization with loss of its critical edge and contravene what has been praised under the official criteria for a grant, quality and Canadianness. Feminism too might well be sacrificed under the fiscal imperative to pursue profit as has been the case with WTN which has "gone soft" on its public-service mission, and placed more emphasis on its acronym than on the full name of the station, the "Woman's Network" (Van Den Broek 21).

While the conflicting codes of feminist ideology and the dominant publishing industry have occasioned practices which make feminist publications financially vulnerable because under-capitalized, the impact of chronic under-financing and the consequent constant scramble for money is greater given another divergent practice of feminist periodicals, namely that of the collective editorial board. Instead of a hierarchically organized body of experts hired to attend to specialized activities, feminist periodicals are run by collectives whose major commitment is to an ideological position or set of issues. Consequently, they rarely have any permanent staff let alone a business manager with financial expertise to handle a crisis when it arises. More significantly in the long run is the fact that members of these collectives are unsalaried. They offer their editorial work on a volunteer basis, re/producing the traditional characteristics of women's work as a "labour of love." From the early nineteenth century, the question of professionalism was raised with respect to women writers whose amateur status positioned them outside the dominant publishing industry increasingly engaged in the selling of commodities in the form of intellectual property. "Women artists are all amateurs," wrote John Stuart Mill (340), aligning women with the negative in the binary opposition professional/amateur, public/private, which was important in the development of bourgeois ideology, professionalization coinciding with the evolution of industrial capitalism to its corporate form (Feltes).

Refused the professionalism they acquired after much struggle as they now take their distance from the dominant institutions, contemporary feminist editors require rewards of other sorts in the tangible forms of feminist solidarity and the ability to communicate one's vision and influence feminist thought to change social relations of domination. All

feminist collectives experience tensions brought on by the rapid development of feminist thought which has frequently taken feminists into divergent theoretical trajectories from similar starting points. In 1988, conflicts at Women's Press in Toronto resulted in a changing of the guard that saw one group eliminated from the collective (reemerging as Second Story Press) by another group which took charge on an explicitly anti-racist platform. Much discussion in the feminist press was subsequently addressed to the interrelated issues, to the systemic racism of feminist groups which thus inadvertently reproduce the dominant order and to the political processes of feminist collectives which need to find new mechanisms for arriving at decisions in a group where all members must concur in the majority decision or when consensus rules the decision-making process. While their "*querrelle de chapelle*" never became a court battle for control of assets, as with the French periodical *Questions féministes, Les têtes de pioches* in Quebec foundered in the 1970s over a theoretical split. The writers and journalists (including Nicole Brossard, France Théoret, Michèle Jean) who founded this first feminist tabloid on radical grounds, attempted to expand by each inviting a friend of similar persuasion to join. However, the increased number made more complex the negotiation of differences of point of view. The new group wanted to take the periodical in a Marxist direction. The founders took charge of the group again and published a few more issues. By then, they knew they had had a determining influence on the direction taken by feminism in Quebec, so the impetus for continuing the review diminished proportionately to the degree of its success.

In the spring of 1988, according to the *Directory of Canadian Feminist Periodicals* published for the Third International Feminist Bookfair in Montreal, there were more than 50 feminist periodicals appearing regularly in Canada, of which some 47 were profiled in the directory. There was also an increasing institutionalization of feminist periodicals into a complete but parallel system of diffusion as the feminist community made access to this alternate press easier and simultaneously legitimated this cultural production within the feminist community itself, initiating the kind of ironic relation to the "laborious accumulation of capital" of "a certain economy of abundance" that Irigaray posits as the effect of feminists "enjoy[ment] of their own worth among themselves" (196-7). Under the heading "The Feminist Connection," *Broadside* published a list of Canadian feminist presses, periodicals and bookstores in its summer 1988 issue. CRIAW (Canadian Research Institute for the

Advancement of Women) periodicals index was launched in 1984, while the Canadian Women's Indexing Group at OISE produced a retrospective index to Canadian feminist periodicals and a bilingual feminist thesaurus with the aid of a SSHRCC grant for research tools. Two of the influential early Quebec periodicals of the 1970s, *Quebecoises deboutte!* and *Les têtes de pioche*, eventually became books in re-editions published by Les Editions Remue-Ménage (1982). Despite these signs of limited academic recognition and legitimization of feminist knowledges and cultures within the field of symbolic power, a number of these publications, especially those unfunded and dependent on voluntarism such as *Broadside* and *(f)lip*, ceased publication during 1988.

These shifts reflected the inevitable burnout, but also the development of feminist theory as it addressed new questions, especially the complex ones of the difference(s) within feminism, those of class and race which destabilize the universalizing claims of liberal or separatist feminism with their focus on the unitary subject, Woman. At the end of the 1980s, "identity politics" emerged as a critical site of feminist discourse. New publications were founded among ethnic and cultural minorities seeking legitimation within the cultural field. In Toronto, *Our Lives* from the Black community, *Diva* (1988-94) from the South Asian community, and *Tiger Lily* (1986-93), produced by women of colour, began publication, while *La Parole Métèque* emerged in the same period in Montreal to give voice to a variety of cultural communities who use French as their vehicular language. A decade later, all have ceased or suspended publication, though *At the Crossroads*, a tabloid format subtitled "The Only Real Source Promoting Black Women's Art" with extensive sales into the US, is now celebrating its fifth anniversary. It is symptomatic of current directions in feminist periodical publishing, the constitution of new groups within feminism on the grounds of lifestyles or occupations, rather than the general newsbulletin keeping feminists informed of policy changes and cultural events in particular geographical locations. The visual arts world has fostered two such periodicals with *Matriart* in Toronto and *In/Versions* in Winnipeg. Visual art is also featured with creative writing in the annual *Sweetgrass Grows All Around Her*, published since 1996 by Native Women in the Arts. While some funding for the large format book-size issues comes from the "First People's Words" programme of the Canada Council, support also comes from a number of corporate sponsors including Ontario Hydro, Inco and Celanese Canada. New magazine format periodicals which began in

1997 address the constituencies of adolescents with *Reluctant Hero*—by and for teens—and large women with *Canada Wyde*. The newspaper format quarterly *Woman* is perhaps a more accurate forecaster with its corporatist objectives announced in frontpage articles of its summer issue with titles such as “Journey to a Juno” and “Women Entrepreneurs: serious economic impact.” Despite such signs of new directions, there have been more endings than beginnings in the 1990s to a large extent because the legitimation of feminist cultural production occurred within the sub-field, perpetuating the doctrine of separate spheres, and was unable to displace the symbolic power and permanently transform the relations of ruling.

### Coping with Backlash

Statistics on the number of feminist periodicals published in Canada in 1997 are hard to come by with the collapse of the periodicals index. Of the 34 listed as current subscriptions by the Nellie Langford Rowell Library at York University, at least four have suspended publication. The 17 periodicals listed under “Women” in *Quill & Quire*’s 1997 media list include two that have ceased publication, though two long established feminist literary periodicals, *Fireweed* and *Room of One’s Own* are not on this list, appearing under literary or cultural headings. In addition, the list includes only two francophone periodicals. While some of the reasons for suspension are the perennial exhaustion of human and financial resources, the major one is the silent *coup d’état* which has taken over the levers of public policy-making at all levels of government in Canada, directing a basic reorientation of fiscal and social policy to implement the agenda of corporate Canada, especially the dismantling of public services and social programmes and privatization, in order to facilitate investment and competition for profit and install surplus value as absolute. The figure of the state intervening to prevent deformity through the excesses of a single sector of the social and to encourage equitable participation in the social, characteristic of the discourse on cultural policy in the 1950s and 60s (Godard), has vanished. In this privileging of a single fiction or frame (monetary exchange) as constituting the ‘real’ in the logic of late capitalism, the kind of exploration that makes demands beyond the instrumental, beyond the individual, and of any transformation other than exchange, is constricted which in turn has a repressive effect on diversity and dissent. Democracy is threatened

when citizens with rights are transformed into consumers. The state is disciplining the population to make the necessary adjustments to this new system of corporate rule by, among other things, abolishing the institutions for feminist policy making and discursive formation.

It all comes back to money, its "divine power" to transcend the limitations of individuals and to make things move, as Marx wrote. Whose money, though, and how openly it circulates is what is at stake. In the various editorial "departures" or post-mortems after the cessation of a journal, money and work are the constant refrains. While the connection between the labour of producing a magazine and the change in government policy is not made explicit in the final issue of one of the longest running periodicals, *Northern Woman Journal*, in April 1996, the positioning of its editorial lamenting the lack of "womanly power needed to bring the Journal to fruition every four months" above a large-type request for donations to help pay off the printing and mailing debts on the inside of the front cover, with the back cover given over to the obituary of the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues after 23 years emphasizing its work on issues such as "family law, violence against women, childcare, pay equity and pensions... health, environment, reproductive technology," and the issue focused on the negative impact for women of changes to the federal Canada Pension Plan and Unemployment Insurance, implicitly frames the intimate connection between government policy and women's economic well-being as this relates to cultural production. In opposition to this lack is the conventional feminine praise of work well done which is its own reward. "Radiance" is the pleasure of being involved with something "as necessary as the Journal," which after 23 years continues to "entertain, inform and affect women." "The work that pours into each issue is work in its purest form; it is satiable, gratifying and rather magical" (2). This praise of use-value is nonetheless framed by these messages of its limits in face of the power of capital to effect policy changes to further impoverish women.

*Healthsharing*, which ceased publication in 1993, departed the scene less quietly. Amy Gottlieb, among the third wave of editors, states forcefully that "successive women will be *robbed* of this precious resource. And this is so clearly a collective loss" (117). Rage is her response to what she identifies as "Tory deficit cutting attacks on working people and progressive and feminist movements in Canada." Government funding had financed the magazine. With a 15% reduction of this funding in 1989,

financial problems became serious. However, it was the \$2 million cut to the Secretary of State Women's Programme the following year, which eliminated funding for 100 women's centres across the country and three national feminist magazines, as well as for a number of feminist research and advocacy groups such as CRIAW and NAC, that proved the fatal blow. Women's groups responded immediately to what was clearly a political move to silence critics and demobilize feminist movements. While funding to the centres was ultimately restored, that to the national women's groups and publications was never reinstated. *Healthsharing* continued to publish for three years with the help of volunteer labour and a project grant from Health and Welfare to build a Canadian Women's Health Network. But it was operating on a crisis footing without infrastructural support. With the withdrawal of public funding to support the fight against forms of discrimination in society especially sexism and racism, and the diversion of tax funding to provide security for speculative investment instead of all citizens, women's organizations and feminist magazines are being pushed into the economy of the market in search of funding. This exacerbates the contradictions of feminist publishing, on the one hand requiring a sacrifice of women's already scarce resources—"we work for less money, donate more money, put in more unpaid time" (117)—on the other necessitating greater subservience to the dominant structures in the pursuit of project grants. Research agendas thus become skewed to punctual policy determinations rather than to long-range, investigative and critical matters. The publication of a journal and the dissemination to a broader public of a critical feminist discourse challenging the status quo becomes an impossible task.

These effects are visible in some of the other publications threatened by the loss of stable funding from the Women's Programme. *Canadian Woman Studies*, as a more academic journal, was helped out by a grant from SSHRCC. However, production costs exceed this and funding must be sought for each individual issue. Topics are dictated by the availability of project funding. So, an issue on Women and Sports (15, 4 1995) acknowledges the help of the Women's Programme of Sports Canada, while an issue on Women and Literacy (14, 4 1994) received support from the National Literacy Secretariat (Canada) and the Women's Programme, Human Resources Canada. A double issue, Women's Rights are Human Rights (15, 2 & 3 1995), gathered support from a long list of organizations including CIDA, the Women's

Programme Status of Women Canada, The International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development and the Women's Economic and Leadership Development Programme in Bangkok. While production values remain unchanged and the magazine continues to publish large issues in its glossy format, the research dependent on such established institutions risks becoming more top down, targetted research, rather than exploratory and feminist initiated. More immediately, however, this situation changes the functions of editors from generating ideas to grant writing. Cultural workers use their analytic and writing skills instrumentally in the service of funding applications, within the discursive frames of those institutions, rather than to challenge their categories and rhetoric. That these limitations are recognized by the editors is manifest in the editorial to the 1994 fifteenth anniversary issue on Women's Writing where the editors express their long-standing wish to publish such a collection of writing "but the absence of funding has been a deterrent." Funds from the Ontario Ministry of Culture under the NDP government finally made it possible.

Such measures are not always available or enough, however. While the Winter 1997 issue of *Women & Environments* optimistically comments on its changing formats and announces its participation in Earth Appeal, a new charity to channel funds to it and other groups from targetted donations or corporate employee deduction programmes, it also announces an expansion to include advertising and ends with a (traditional!) call for volunteers. At the same time, the issue of *Women's Education/Education des femmes* announced the decision of the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunitites for Women to stop publishing it. As federal funding was repeatedly cut back, the magazine tried what *W&E* proposed: it changed formats, reduced other expenses, staged a Celebrity Book Auction, sought out funders for many issues, and initiated a corporate fundraising campaign. Despite this, the federal Women's Programme still funded 66% of operating costs. Signals from the programme that all funding would soon be withdrawn lead to the decision to concentrate efforts on building the organization to continue its work of providing learning opportunities for women in ways other than through its publications. This is an indication that even the money for services that might have enabled *Healthsharing* to survive had it fit into that category is now being cut. Sanguine as Gottlieb was about the availability of arts funding at provincial or federal level had the magazine not fallen through these cracks too, the difficulties for publishing in

the arts are more accurately indicated by the long-deferred writing issue of *CWS*. Cutbacks in arts funding have perhaps been less noticeable in the feminist community because of the fewer number of "high art" feminist journals.

Slashed these budgets have been, particularly since 1995 when, after losing ground to inflation for a number of years, and a 1.8% cut in 1993-4, the federal budget in March announced a 5.2% cut to cultural spending which was followed in July, on the heels of the Tory victory in Ontario, with a staggering 28% cut to the Ontario Arts Council (Godard). This was prelude to a March 1996 cut of \$5.1 million to the Canada Council. Further cutbacks in the spring of 1997 have reduced the Ontario Arts Council's budget by over 40% in less than two years. In the complete restructuring that is underway at the two councils funding is still in place for periodicals. However, the criteria of evaluation have been changed with an increasing demand for proof from periodicals of their market viability. This has produced the absurd situation after last year's competition where a longstanding literary periodical had its publication grant slashed in half, while being awarded twice this sum from a different competition for promotion and marketing. Did *Aquelarre*, the bilingual Spanish-English magazine published in Vancouver for a decade, get caught in such a squeeze and lose its Canada Council grant? Over the last few years, jury members for the periodicals' competition have increasingly been selected from among editors of mass-market publications such as *Macleans* or *Saturday Night*. Not only is the logic of free enterprise being forced on periodicals that lose their grants, but the government is (cynically?) reorienting its own programmes and categories to apply the logic of the market economy to all periodicals. Cultural work is redefined in the process to fundraising alone. The need to persistently justify creative work to the corporate sector imposes a powerful surveillance that leads to forms of self-censorship or 'going soft.'

Funding has been withdrawn from arts service organizations which serve as instances of legitimation and formulate concepts, opening a discursive space for the arts in the public forum. This is clearly a political move to limit debate and dissent. Funding has also been reduced for a number of artist run galleries and centres in the last year. The Women's Art Resource Centre in Toronto lost all its Canada Council funding on the grounds that its work was not of high quality. That its documentation and promotion of women's productions in the visual arts was highly politicized and challenged purely aesthetic criteria was manifest in its



journal *Matriart* (1990-?) which has had a regular column on the art institutions, exposing and critiquing the gender bias in their exercise of the legitimating function. Titled "Who Counts and Who's Counting?" this regular column has tabulated public institutions and commercial galleries' holdings and exhibitions of women's art, showing them to be only a small percentage of the men's work exhibited. This gendered difference in exhibition history would account for statistics which show that while the majority of practicing artists are women, their incomes are only 63% of men's, even less than that at mid-career (Godard). Whether *Matriart* will survive to continue this important analysis of the gendered differential in the production of symbolic value by the art institutions is a moot point. The loss of such sites of feminist legitimation has heavy consequences, as Virginia Woolf reminds us, in the absence of women from the historical record, the active memory of civil society.

In the last decade, the role of the state in sustaining the public sphere in Canada has changed so that 'balance' has been reconfigured. Instead of a figure of mediation among competing claims, it has become a restrictive figuration of a single framing of the social: the 'bottom line.' Since the eighteenth century, the idea of an autonomous, unregulated marketplace that could adjudicate among social purposes has fostered a faith in the market as a progressive institution in which self-serving individual choices will ultimately benefit all. Now, the invisible hand of the market is poised to grab complete sway over public policy. In doing so, it labels all value except that of exchange as 'special' rather than general 'interest' (Godard). Increased feminization of poverty has been the effect of such policy changes, especially in Ontario. Some 130 feminist groups, signatories of the Ontario Women's Declaration on December 6, 1995, demanded that the Tory government "cease its policies of discriminatory cutbacks" so that the "hard-won legal, economic, social and political gains women have achieved" could be maintained. They also protested against the "deep cuts in funding for the arts and culture," stressing a connection between feminism and culture as sites of opposition to this social realignment (Godard). In light of the increasing threats to the periodicals and organizations that have developed and disseminated this feminist critical discourse in the last twenty-five years, it is crucial for feminists to find new forums in which to continue this activism and reaffirm their rights as citizens to share in the collective wealth.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this text appeared in *Border/lines* 16 (1989): 12-17.

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