

Passing on Feminism

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Abstract

Passing on Feminism

Candis Steenbergen, Ph.D.
Concordia University, 2009

“Passing on Feminism” examines generational discourses that have circulated around North American feminisms since the turn of the twentieth century but particularly from the early 1970s until 2008. It reflects upon the ways relationships between feminists and feminist histories and theories have been represented by and reproduced through the use of generational frames and wave metaphors, and critiques these frameworks in terms of what is ultimately *passed on* via their use. Chapter One considers generational discourses as affective narratives steeped in often competing understandings of what it means to *pass on* feminism. The second chapter locates these discourses within a broader context of what constitutes “legitimate” feminist history and historiography, while Chapter Three delineates feminisms’ “problem of generations” as one constructed in multiple spheres simultaneously: the personal, the scholarly, and the public. Chapter Four analyzes thirty-eight years of generational discourses as disseminated by *The Globe and Mail*, noting the repetition of news frames used to discuss feminisms from 1970 to the present time, while the final chapter contrasts that data by bringing over-looked feminist discourses to light. Together, these chapters articulate generational debates as struggles over not only what has already been *passed down*, but also about what the association between feminisms’ past, present and future conveys; raising the question, of course, of which feminisms ultimately count and which ones get *passed over* in the process.

Dedication

For Jan Steenbergen
Ineke (Steenbergen) Hogewoning
Geertje Steenbergen,
and Lillian S. Robinson,
who passed away while this thesis was written.

And for Berlyne Chime Steenbergen
and Terran Thomas Steenbergen,
who were born.

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In many ways, my work on this dissertation progressed through the encouragement and support of two waves of support. The first involved weekly Survivor Nights, lots of wine and good food and seemingly endless chats about teaching, research, theory and practice (and everything in between). For those amazingly warm and fun moments I thank Selena, Jason, Christian, Chloe, Peter, and Marc—I miss our Thursday nights so much!

The second wave is much less ordered but no less influential:

Thanks to Yasmin Jiwani for her insight, organization, collaboration and encouragement (and research and coding methods). Her experience and counsel has had (and will continue to have) an indelible influence on my thinking and writing.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Feminism and “the Problem of Generations”	1
Chapter 2	History and the <i>Passing On</i> of Feminisms.....	28
Chapter 3	Tracing Waves, Interrogating Generations, Making Feminist History.....	71
Chapter 4	“Feminist Generations” and <i>The Globe and Mail</i> , 1970-2008.....	110
Chapter 5	Outside the Frames: <i>Passing On</i> Feminism and Feminist Publishing.....	154
Conclusion	Passing On Feminism: The Resonance of Generations.....	190
References.....		205
Appendix A.....		237
Appendix B.....		240

Social movements can endure over decades and even centuries, cycling through higher and lower levels of mobilization, yet simultaneously they change character over time...The task of scholars of social movements is to explain how long-lived challenges...both persist and are continually made anew (Whittier, 1997: 760).

Chapter One

Feminism and “the Problem of Generations”

An exciting call for papers landed in my inbox in January, 2002. The International Third Wave Feminism Conference, hosted by the Institute for Feminist Theory and Research and the University of Exeter, sought presentations that “address[ed] the parameters of second wave feminism, posing the question of a third wave in feminist theory and history in order to redirect feminist enquiry without acceding to the defeatism implicit in postfeminism.” Potential themes spoke simultaneously to both the work I had done during my MA and the work I anticipated doing at the doctoral level. Covering a broad range of theories, politics and practices, the call highlighted many of the issues I was already grappling with, including an interrogation of ‘sisterhood,’ (un)popular feminisms, history, gender, race, sexualities and class, poststructuralism, Western configurations of feminism, the location of a third wave within a context of second wave restructuring, and more. While three of the four conference keynotes—whose names, Germaine Greer, Elaine Showalter, E. Ann Kaplan and Susan Stryker were listed across the top of the call in bold lettering—raised a flag for me (“Why are three self-proclaimed second wave white Western feminist megastars considered the experts on the third wave?”), it still felt like an almost natural bridge for me and my work, and I was overjoyed by the possibility of attending. My acceptance letter—complete with travel and accommodation logistics and a preliminary programme—arrived in February.

I worked on my paper in between coursework and teaching, and rapidly realized that my initial abstract outlined a truly ambitious venture: I had proposed an overview of third wave thought, politics and practice in the Canadian context, one that mobilized two recurring themes circulating around the notion of the third wave: “contradiction” and “paradox” (to be presented in under fifteen minutes). My reading around feminist generational discourses had already started to trouble many of the core assumptions I had outlined in my paper summary, and less than two years of living in Québec had only begun to scratch the surface of my understanding of the disjuncture between Francophone feminisms and Anglo feminisms in the rest of Canada (let alone how a third wave could/would impact that). My thoughts and writing were also distracted: by my eagerness to meet like-minded people who were themselves wrestling with many of these issues, by my concern over the implications of being slotted on a panel entitled “Defining the Third Wave,” and by the anticipation of flying overseas for the first time. I had been accepted to my feminist dream conference, and there was so much to do, so much to see and so much to learn!

Arriving at the conference site in late July and receiving my event package, I was struck by the magnitude of the occasion: over one hundred presenters—many of whom I had read and used in my own research—and many more observers had assembled in Exeter to discuss third wave feminism. While I wasn’t a newcomer to conferences and conference culture in general, I was certainly a naïf to feminist academic gatherings of this size, particularly ones that were so thematically precise, timely and relevant to my own research. Admittedly, I was overwhelmed by many factors; the crowd (all of whom appeared more confident

than I felt), the conference programme (displaying a staggering array of talks and performances packed into three days) and the unfamiliar twinges of jetlag. I was simultaneously star struck by recognizable brains, exhilarated by the possibilities, and rendered timid from not knowing a soul.

The event booklet provided a précis of the conference's overarching ethos, asking delegates to not only consider "a moment in feminist history" known as the 'third wave,' but also to be aware of some key central questions guiding the event:

1. Is there a third wave of 'feminism' at all? If so, what has happened to the first and second wave?
2. 'Second wave' feminism is characterized at least in part by the practice of activism: getting real things changed in the name of feminism. Social activism appears to have given way to academic practice as the dominant mode of 'western' feminism at the turn of the Millennium. What has happened to the political agendas of the feminist project? Is this a strategic retreat, a post-modern fragmentation of narrative, or a backlash against the social shifts achieved during the 1960s and 1970s?
3. If feminism is predicated on the social fact of the relative oppression of women, and post-structuralist modes of thought have 'deconstructed' sexual identity, why do academics and artists persist with the unfashionable notion of 'feminism'? What does 'feminism' mean under contemporary academic and social conditions?
4. 'Equality' has given way to 'difference' in contemporary feminist work. How can this lead us anywhere but into static cultural relativism? If 'essentialism' is anathema to feminism, what kind of common ground is available to women, given the proliferation of difference under contemporary social and theoretical conditions?¹

¹ It should be noted that these debates have become increasingly important in sharpening discussions (and fueling arguments) around feminist strategies past, present and future since the mid to late 1970s. As Boehm (1992) notes, this debate has been positioned as "the site where feminist theory meets feminist practice," as it engages issues of social policy, feminist philosophy, 'classical' political traditions as well as grassroots activism and feminist practice (203; see also Eva Feder Kittay, 2000: 575). Linda Alcoff (1988) breaks down the tensions between "extremes" of essentialism in cultural feminism (citing specifically the work of Mary

Big questions, all of them. But they were not new to me or to the debates circulating around the third wave moniker. Challenging the very existence of the third wave (and speculation over the impact that a third has on the still-active second) had been, and continued to be, one of the more fundamental aspects of the tensions I had read and witnessed since my work on this topic began. The second question seemed to construct a similar framework, one that predictably led to the third: The second wave was/is an active feminist project for social justice and change, the emergence of a third signals both a theoretical and political shift in that movement that requires a rethinking (and possible

Daly), but it is Joan Scott who, as early as 1988, noted that “equality-versus-difference” has been mobilized as a way of speaking about “conflicting feminist positions and political strategies,” but that really, the issues at stake are far more complex and require much more nuance. Staged as a dichotomy, “equality” and “difference” “structure an impossible choice.” She writes: “If one opts for equality, one is forced to accept the notion that difference is antithetical to it. If one opts for difference, one admits that equality is unattainable...Feminists cannot give up “difference”; it has been our most creative analytic tool. We cannot give up equality, at least as long as we want to speak to the principles and values of our political system. But it makes no sense for the feminist movement to let its arguments be forced into preexisting categories and its political disputes to be characterized by a dichotomy we did not invent” (385). Patrizia Longo’s (2001) work demonstrates that these debates continue to resonate among (and catapult between) feminists, calling for “a better approach [that] implies calling into question the reductive common definition of several concepts such as politics, universalism, equality, and difference” (269). And Louise Archer (2004) outlines multiple ways of “conceptualizing and thinking about social differences, such as “race”, gender and social class” by outlining “why the theorization of difference is still a topic worthy of feminist thought and discussion—both in terms of feminist politics and practice and also, more specifically, for feminists engaged in social science and education research” (459). Time after time, ideas continue to be presented and discussed in an attempt to address issues (and notions) of difference—all of which, inevitably, force a grappling with issues of inclusion, identification, responsibility, and accountability, and which also engage with a necessarily rethinking of what strategies for feminist movement, transformation and/or revolution could potentially emerge. Many argue that the resolution of these debates is still long in the coming; particularly those who see an invigoration of them in the current generational debates within feminism as discussed here. Rosemary Tong (2006), for instance, goes as far as to argue that the future of feminist thought relies on the resolution of the equality/difference debates because—in her view—“unless women and the category of gender have some role to play in feminism, it is not clear that labeling one’s self a “feminist” makes sense anymore” (2006: 23). I, however, would argue that her frame negates the realities of how feminism and “feminist thought” are currently being reconceptualized alongside shifting understandings of gender, sex and sexuality as well.

reconceptualization) of what constitutes “feminism” in the current temporal moment. As I read down the list, a second flag raised. Was I detecting the defeatism the initial call warned against? Were the next three days going to be an exercise in intergenerational hostility, blame-mongering and division? Was it going to be more of the same?

Apprehension crept in as I wandered, waiting for the proceedings to begin. Germaine Greer was the first keynote speaker and her talk, “Do We Really Need Men?” was performed for a packed audience.² Fiona Meredith (2003) recalls Greer’s address much the way I do:

...‘Do We Really Need Men?’ (Answer: No, not really, but they do have a right to exist in the same way that moles, spiders and gorillas do) in which [Greer] graphically evoked the evil ‘whirlpool of essentialism’ gurgling menacingly just beside her left foot, and proceeded to jump blissfully into it (128).

I was grateful that Greer was cheeky and relieved that her talk was light; sparing us some of the vitriol about the current state of feminism she had expressed in her 1999 book, *The Whole Woman*.³ And it was fascinating to watch this controversial feminist figure that I had read (and read so much about) in action: part comic, part instigator, simultaneously humorous, reckless and troubling. “Whatever one’s reservations about Greer’s theory,” Meredith writes, “she is a

² A version of this talk was published in *The Guardian* in November 2002 as “Surplus to Requirements?” (www.guardian.co.uk/gender/story/0,11812,839992,00.html). This version seems to have caused more controversy than her talk did.

³ Greer’s *The Whole Woman* was the book she had said she would never write: a sequel to the groundbreaking *The Female Eunuch* (1970). Presenting a harsh critique of the current state of the women’s movement, Greer thrashed contemporary feminists and feminisms, and—in a ten-page chapter—added her perception of the latest generation of young women to a list of what she called “false starts and blind alleys” in feminism’s history (310). Greer outlined what she saw as young women’s (non)participation in the women’s movement, and consequently dismissed young feminist attempts at activism as a “cultural phenomenon” amounting to little more than the recycled work of “kinderwhores” (310).

barnstorming choice to open a conference—insouciant, funny and rude” (128).

I attended one of the six panels in the afternoon, choosing the session entitled “Anorexia” partly because there was a young Canadian scholar on the roster and mainly because—alongside other themes like pornography, the canon, women’s studies and activism—it looked as though it would be the one least mired by the hostility I was hoping to avoid. I was wrong. The second presentation, “The Ana Sanctuary: Women’s Pro-Anorexia Narratives in Cyberspace” raised the hackles of many of the people in attendance. The paper was an exploration of pro-anorexic (or pro-ana) websites and an attempt to utilize third wave feminist discourse as a way of understanding these spaces as places existing outside the surveillance of the medical establishment. The speaker—while being careful of the sensitive nature of her topic and subjects—suggested that third wave feminism provided a language for which these narratives could be read as resilient, and their bodies as sites of struggle and resistance; that simply listening to and taking these narratives seriously was a transgressive act.⁴ It was a fascinating talk that not only highlighted a phenomenon that I didn’t even know existed, but also provided a reconceptualization of the ways in which feminist scholars read “problematic” narratives. I enjoyed the session, and learned a lot about methodology and the potential for mobilizing third wave thinking as a scaffold for critical thinking. The discussion period was preoccupied with this particular paper, and the first comment came from a very angry woman who expressed her distaste for the

⁴ A version of this paper was published in the *Journal of International Women’s Studies*, Special Issue: “Harvesting our Strengths: Third Wave Feminism and Women’s Studies,” Volume 4, Number 2 (April 2003).

topic, its framework, and the way in which the speaker evoked the third wave as a rationale for her inquiry. What followed was much of the same; some upset by the content of the talk, others miffed by its third wave frame. The conversations spilled into the hallway, and I set about wandering again, feeling more and more discouraged by what was transpiring.

That evening, the second headliner took the stage. Elaine Showalter, the noted American second wave feminist, literary theorist and cultural critic was giving a keynote entitled “21st Century Feminism,” and I was curious to hear her speak, particularly in light of her (2001) survey of feminism’s icons, *Inventing Herself: Claiming a Feminist Intellectual Heritage*. Of the little I knew of her work, that book seemed to have an interest in feminisms’ historical trajectory and a concern for its preservation and transmission. However, her talk was short and rather rudimentary; she spoke solely to the American post-9/11 experience, framed the “waves” in the standard three-wave breakdown (voting, institutional change and a big question mark), and suggested that the third was specious in light of her own understanding of feminist theory and practice.⁵ The conversation afterwards was respectful but heated. The “young women” in the room were angry largely because they were seated right in front of her and she proceeded to speak right through them. As for me, my day was done, and I was exhausted. I skipped dinner, drinks and the movie and headed back to my room, disappointed that I hadn’t yet found an ally and wondering, “Am I the only one who thinks that

⁵ Showalter may have been pulling from her earlier work on this point. Her (1979) “Toward a Feminist Poetics,” she mapped the history of feminist contributions to literary theory and criticism and in so doing, divided it into three “phases”: the Feminine phase (1840-1880), the Feminist phase (1880-1920), and the Female phase (1920 -).

something's off here? Is it me?"

Returning to my room, I pulled out my presentation notes and reread. I read idly, thinking about why my initial enchantment with the event and its possibilities had waned, about how tired I was, and how disillusioned and alone I felt. I scribbled notes, made a few changes, and read some more. The more I flipped through the pages of what I was supposed to present the next morning, the more banal my little 15 minute presentation seemed, and the more I added, deleted, and changed. As the evening wore on, I found that I had made more changes than the bulging margins could contain or that I could possibly follow aloud, so I pulled out a fresh notebook and began transcribing. And that led to even more rewriting. Compelled by the need to respond to what had transpired over the course of the day—and my desire to link it to broader issues—I wrote until dawn. Still drunk from jetlag and shaking from the all-nighter, I headed into the breakfast room for coffee just minutes before my panel was going to begin, with a completely transformed presentation in hand.

Filtering into the conference room along with a large group, I approached the speakers table and glanced to the right. It was 8:30 in the morning, and the room was full, full—"Defining the Third Wave" was a hot topic, it seemed. The crowd settled, the session chair made introductions, the first presenter spoke, and then the second. In many ways, the paper I had dissected overnight reflected much of what was articulated by both presenters, and I was both relieved by the commonality and glad that my revised version veered slightly off their trajectory. I was the last speaker, and a facilitated discussion of all of the papers was to follow my talk. I approached the dais with mild trepidation, concerned more

about my wavering voice and shaky hands than what I was about to say. I began slowly, admitting that the previous day's events had prompted me to rethink what I was originally going to present. I confessed that I had arrived at the conference with the presumption that "we" (as feminists, scholars, activists, delegates, and participants united by a vested interest in this thing called the "third wave") would have clearly different takes on third wave feminism, but that somehow our collective starting point would be located somewhere beyond finger-pointing on the basis of age, us-versus-them frames of what constitutes "good" or "bad" feminism/feminist activism, or the status of being located (or placed) on a particular position in feminism's "family line." Somewhere beyond the tension-filled dichotomies that plagued mainstream discussions of feminism and the women's movement in the 1990s in the academy and in grassroots spaces, in the mainstream media and popular culture, in text and online. I acknowledged that my presupposition was undeniably flawed and deeply naïve from the start, particularly in light of recent feminist debates that mirrored—with astonishing accuracy—Elaine Showalter's sentiments (and especially the dialogue that followed it) the night before. I noted that the same tensions seem to emerge over and over again in various spaces and places; that on one particular list-serv, for instance, it had practically become a semi-annual phenomenon: "second wave" feminists dismissing (or outright bashing) the "third wave" or "the new generation of young women" for not being "political enough" or "feminist enough," and "third wave" feminists (whether or not they adhere to the label) barking back that they felt either unjustly dismissed as postfeminists or outright ignored. Regardless of the issues that spark the fights—language use, gender,

consumption, sexuality, popular culture—quarrels, name-calling and outright hostility emerging on the basis of generational understandings always seemed inevitably to lead to the same hostile, defensive, and angry debates.

I pointed out that there are tensions, problems and intricacies that revolve around the context of and for third wave feminisms in Canada, and that one particular aspect of them—generational conflict—often received the most energy, and that that phenomenon appeared to be persisting in this ‘international’ arena as well. I observed that there was an atmosphere of concern over the constitution of the so-called “third wave” at the event thus far, and remarked that it was largely directed at the younger contingent of the delegates; that “they” were being framed as the perpetrators of the anti-feminist/postfeminist strain that was hindering the feminist agenda and were principally responsible for splintering and fragmenting of women’s movements across the board. I compared Showalter’s keynote to a conference address given by self-proclaimed second waver Judy Rebick just two months prior, in which she delineated the waves clearly in terms of their successes in the English-Canadian context: the first established women as persons, the second instituted women in positions of power, and the third—“if one should emerge”—must focus on ending patriarchy as their sole unifying goal. “Second wave feminism, in 2002,” she proclaimed, “is dead. And as far as I can tell, there is no third wave. Only undercurrents,” much to the chagrin of the dozens of young women in her audience, many of whom were actively working in grassroots feminist organizations and in the academy.⁶ I

⁶ I also noted that the title of that particular conference, “From Bra-Burners to Buffy: Conversations among Generations of Feminists” also helped establish a particular kind of

explained that Showalter's analogy of the waves echoed Rebeck's statement, and noted that both were actively producing the very framework that lends itself so easily to hostile, reductive, and circular debate. I confessed that I was not only responding to what had transpired over the course of the last day and a half in Exeter, but that I was also reacting to what very much felt like the same old, same old: a need to defend myself and my cohorts (regardless of age) in the wake of tremendous hostility—anger fueled by this very process of defining a still-very-vague “third wave” as being somehow synonymous to an even more ambiguous category “young/clueless/apathetic/fraudulent/(post)‘feminist’.”

As I spoke, I could feel the climate in the room shift. One woman leaning into another's ear, whispering and pointing at her conference programme. Another shaking her head and taking notes, sighing aloud. Another crossing and uncrossing her legs, her face reddening. I could feel the cadence of my words hasten and heard my voice tremble that much more. Maybe this was a bad, bad idea. I glanced down at my notes. One short section left to get through. My heart raced as I realized that I was about to critique the very thematic frame of this session as my conclusion. Taking a deep breath, I recalled Showalter's comment on the role that nostalgia has played in recent second wave writings, noting how so much of what has been published in recent years involves retrospective narratives, and noted that this “third wave” has not yet had that luxury; that it (whatever “it” is) is currently caught in a space where it is being forced to define itself (for legitimacy's sake) as it actively attempts to resist the will to define. That

hierarchy of ‘seriousness’ and legitimacy in terms of political viability and investment among members of each of feminisms’ “waves.”

it is very much a working project within the larger context of feminist praxis. “Showalter says that we have unfinished business to attend to,” I recalled. “Yes we do,” I concluded, “but that business has little to do with defining.”

I didn’t anticipate what followed. Like the reaction to the pro-ana paper I had witnessed the day before, the comments from the audience revolved around my presentation alone, and they came fast and furious. I was accused of being a provocateur, an instigator of dissonance, an ungrateful guest. I was told that I embodied what was wrong with contemporary feminism; that my criticisms were coarse and based solely on the politics of individualism. The attacks were personal and scathing: one woman defended the list-serv condemnations of young feminists (because they, like me, truly *aren’t* feminist enough and yet they insist on keeping the title), and another dismissed me with a wave of her hand and muttered bitterly about my being an Anglophone from Québec. The anger seemed to amplify after each commentary. I sat on my hands, listening, trying to make myself as small as possible. I felt like a naughty child, chastised for being too big for my own britches.

I thought the session would end on that note; that I would skulk out of the room and try to keep a low profile until the event was over. But nearing the end of discussion period the chair motioned to a hand in the very back of the room. A young woman stood up and looked directly at me. “I just want to thank you for saying what I’ve been feeling since I got here,” she said, “and to let you know that you’re not the only one feeling this way.” I looked at her blankly, shocked. Without delay, other hands shot up, and a contingent of bodies rose to my defense. A wave of relief swept over me—I had found, a day into the conference, a

contingent of like-minded people, women (not all “young”) who articulated many of the same concerns I had for the events that had taken place since their arrival (and many more that I hadn’t yet considered). They weren’t just bodies that I could share a table with over coffee or sit with at the next series of sessions; they represented a group of fresh colleagues, an expanded intellectual cohort, and a couple of very good new friends.

The remainder of the conference went far more smoothly, even with a number of really contentious presentations (with, as expected, highly charged discussion periods).⁷ Launching the last day of the proceedings, Susan Stryker’s keynote address, “Transgender Feminism: Queering the Woman Question” stood out as being unlike much of what had been presented throughout the event. Her talk—a discussion of the often difficult relationship between feminism and transsexuals—was thoughtful and kind, ending the event on a positive and important note. Taking into consideration the question “what does feminism mean to MTF transsexuals?” she replied, “it means we care about each other.”

Fiona Meredith (2003) also found Stryker’s presentation particularly poignant:

At first, I found this a rather surprising remark; it seemed quaint, old-fashioned, nostalgic, even kind of—well, *untheoretical*. But maybe it’s a reminder we need to hear. Staying connected with each other is something we can’t afford to forget in these difference-haunted, über-theorized days (129).

⁷ E. Ann Kaplan’s “Feminist Futures: Trauma, the Post-9/11 World and a Feminist Fourth Wave?” serves as a good example—her keynote predominantly read the “third wave” through an American lens and suggested that the shock and ensuing trauma of 9/11 was significant enough to launch feminism into a new theoretical understanding of itself and its role in contemporary society. She commented that “all of the preceding challenges to feminisms, and their futures, now need to be situated in the context of 9/11.” An interesting, if not troubled, idea, but one that rendered self-identified third-wave feminists in attendance invisible and—ironically—obsolete. A version of this talk was published as “Feminist Futures: Trauma, the Post-9/11 World and a Fourth Feminism,” in the *Journal of International Women’s Studies*, Volume 4, Number 2 (April 2003).

Like Meredith (and others in attendance), I read Stryker's keynote as a more optimistic (and infinitely more constructive) consideration of the broader climate of feminist divisiveness—of the “crisis in feminism”—expressed throughout the last three days, but also demonstrated in multiple spaces leading up to this event.⁸

The conference ended on a much more positive note, but I returned home with a changed perspective on my graduate research, on the relationship between feminism in the academy and at the grassroots level, and on the promise of the “third wave” of feminism. Recalling the events of the past few days with a friend shortly after I arrived, my exasperation bubbled over and I said, “That’s it. I’m done. I think I’ll pass on the whole thing.” I was weary of what seemed like an impasse in terms of my engagement (both academic and activist) with these issues; defending “third wave” identity while simultaneously attempting to reconcile it with feminism writ large felt very much like a battle no one could win. In many ways, performing my role of feminism’s “dutiful daughter”—defending feminism (my own and other versions) *to feminists* amidst the barrage of attacks by a large and vocal postfeminist contingent of members of my “generation”—no

⁸ A good number of articles cite academic meetings as locations where generational hostilities between and among feminists have played themselves out (Leveen, 1996; Detloff, 1997; and Kaplan, 1997—who describes her experience as watching the “performance of generations” play itself out in public; Newton, 1997; and Hoogland, de Vries, and Van Der Tuin, 2004). Detloff expresses her amazement at the intergenerational struggles that go on in the academy, noting that “we drag our predecessors in the dust as far as we can, then are ourselves dragged by the next generation. We are considered outside the bounds of propriety not for dragging someone in the dirt, but for breaking with a tradition that sets acceptable limits for such ill treatment. But why is this merely a question of limits? Why do we accept ill treatment as inevitable in the course of intergenerational relations?” (82)

longer felt like a sensible tactic overall.⁹ I could see that my position as a generational subject of feminism demanded further analysis, that the work I had already conducted needed to be revisited, and that my latest endeavour—initially conceived as an ambitious inquiry into the intergenerational hostility that seemed to plague generations of feminists in the contemporary Canadian context—desperately needed to be rethought.

A couple of years later, I began work on this dissertation. As I started to do my research and to conceptualize this project, the notion of “passing on” kept creeping into the forefront of my mind. Fuelled in part by my experiences at the Third Wave Feminisms conference in Exeter (and elsewhere) and sustained to some extent by my own deepening ambivalence about generational frames and identities, the idea of *passing* on feminism—as in skipping it entirely, leaving it aside—strongly influenced my reading and considerations of the multiple meanings that emerged from an exploration of ‘feminist generations’ at this particular historical juncture. At the same time, I also started teaching a course entitled “Feminist Generations” in the department of Women’s Studies. Drawn from my doctoral research, the course began with an echo of what had already become very familiar questions, asking: “Is feminism drawing its last breaths? Is the women’s movement obsolete? Where have all the (young) feminists gone?”

⁹ See Astrid Henry, *Not my Mother’s Sister: Generational Conflict and Third Wave Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004): 2. Henry locates herself early on in her book in opposition to self-proclaimed feminist “dissidents” like Katie Roiphe; those writers who, throughout the 1990s, published diatribes on how feminism had gone “too far,” that it was outmoded and out-of-touch, and that we were now in a “post-feminist” (as in *after* feminism) moment. See Katie Roiphe’s *The Morning After: Sex, Fear & Feminism* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1993), and see also Kate Fillion’s *Lip Service: The Truth About Women’s Darker Side in Love, Sex and Friendships*, Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995. Donna Laframboise’s *The Princess in the Window: A New Gender Morality* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1996) serves as a comparable Canadian example.

Utilizing another recognizable element of the discourses surrounding feminism's "problem" of generations (that of feminism's imminent, or actual, death), I hoped to tackle some of the more colloquial understandings of the contemporary status of feminism early on, interrogate them, and move on to more complex analyses as the course progressed.

In many ways, the course utilized both commonly-heard notions of feminism's "passing on" (manifest in debates over the current state and future of feminism—among feminists inside the academy and out, and also by the mainstream media) as a point of departure; as a way of getting to some of the core elements invested in (and troubled by) generational frameworks. It also worked as an equalizer of classroom dynamics, as all of the students—Women's Studies majors and newcomers to the discipline—started with a relatively equal footing in the more popular understandings of these debates, even when their experiences and their critiques varied widely. Pedagogically it worked well, engaging students who were already participating in feminist projects to think critically of the ways in which we "frame" feminism and feminist history, and simultaneously providing an entry point for others who were wary of the very concept of "feminism" and, by extension, of "Women's Studies" as a field of study. Interestingly, using "generations" and the supposed "crisis" in and of feminism in recent years as a base attracted those students for which "I'm not a feminist, but..." was a common identifier, and provided an entryway into feminist discourses that simultaneously validated and moved to situate and interrogate

those experiences in a more complex way.¹⁰ While the content shifted each time the course was redesigned for a new group (as did the demographics of the student body),¹¹ those preliminary questions remained the same, largely because the rhetoric surrounding feminism's "identity crisis" had not changed a bit.¹²

In the current historical context, that "crisis" manifests as one of the most discernible (and popular) examples of feminism's *passing on*: the present-day reconfiguration of the postfeminist.¹³ The contemporary materialization of the

¹⁰ The "I'm not a feminist, but..." phenomenon involves an active 'passing on' the feminist label and a disavowal of feminism as a political identification. The best variation of it I have heard to date came from a student in the most recent incarnation of the "Feminist Generations" class: "I'm not a feminist, yet..." Many investigations into this phenomenon have been conducted over the years; some, like Susan Faludi's "I'm Not a Feminist, But I Play One on TV," *Ms.* (March/April 1995): 30-40, are more observational, while others take a more empirical approach. See Rachel Williams and Michele Andrisin Wittig, "I'm not a feminist, but...: Factors Contributing to the Discrepancy between Pro-Feminist Orientation and Feminist Social Identity," *Sex Roles*, Volume 37, Number 11/12 (1997):885- 902; Gloria Cowan, *et al*, "Predictors of Feminist Self-Labeling," *Sex Roles*, Volume 27, Numbers 7/8 (1992): 321-330; and Chilla Bulbeck, "Articulating Structure and Agency: How Women's Studies Students Express their Relationships with Feminism," *Women's Studies International Forum*, Volume 24, Number 2 (March 2001): 141-156. Many more can be found in Psychology, see, for instance, Alyssa N. Zucker, "Disavowing Social Identities: What it Means when Women Say, 'I'm Not a Feminist, But...'" *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Volume 28, Number 4 (December 2004): 423-435, and Miriam Liss, *et al*, "What Makes a Feminist? Predictors and Correlates of Feminist Social Identity in College Women," *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Volume 25, Number 2 (June 2001): 124-133. Lisa Maria Hogeland's "Fear of Feminism: Why Young Women Get the Willies," *Ms.* (Nov/Dec 1994): 18-21, is probably the most reprinted of these types of observations.

¹¹ "Feminist Generations" was offered three times at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at Concordia University between 2002 and 2007.

¹² I've used the anecdote above to provide a bit of background that led to this inquiry. I have grounded the initial questions that helped shape this inquiry while pointing, implicitly, to the oft-forgotten fact that thinking and theorizing, even in the academy, are lived experiences with affective components. This thesis, then, emerges from my experiences as an academic, a feminist, an activist, a teacher, and a mum.

¹³The "postfeminist" tag is certainly not novel. Roberta Hamilton (1996) notes that mass media proclamations of feminism's demise are not unique to the current period, and cites the Canadian *Weekend Magazine* who announced feminism's death in a feature entitled "Beyond Sisterhood," in 1977 (43). Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards have noted that "*TIME* [magazine] has claimed feminism was dead at least 119 times since 1969." See *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000): 93. Susan Bordo looked further back in time, noting that the term was originally used in 1919 by a Greenwich Village female literary group to describe the glamorous "new woman" of the

postfeminist “announced” the arrival—predominantly in the mainstream news media and across popular culture—of a young, independent, confident, sexually aggressive generation of women who simultaneously proclaimed the victory of women’s liberation while also heralding feminism’s imminent demise. Emerging *en masse* in the mid to late 1990s, the impact of these postfeminists is perhaps best exemplified by the publication and subsequent critique of *TIME* magazine’s infamous (but now outdated) June 1998 cover story featuring the disembodied heads of Susan B. Anthony, Gloria Steinem, and—to illustrate feminism’s “new face”—the fictional television character, Ally McBeal.¹⁴ Under McBeal, in bold lettering, lay the question “Is Feminism Dead?” and its accompanying story exclaimed, “Feminism: It’s All About Me!”¹⁵ That same cover (and accompanying story) also appeared in the Canadian edition of the magazine. McBeal, the twentysomething obsessive, neurotic, waif-thin single lawyer, was viewed “as a sign that feminism was no longer relevant to today’s young women,” and the series “entered public consciousness as a ‘statement’ about feminism,

1920s. See *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 241.

¹⁴ Created by David E. Kelley for the FOX television network in 1997, “Ally McBeal” (the show’s title and the character) has been meticulously examined by feminist scholars since its debut. The show has been interrogated for its problematic representation of feminism, and the character, portrayed by Calista Flockhart, has become an icon of postfeminism in popular culture. See, for instance, Mary Douglas Vavrus, “Putting Ally on Trial: Contesting Postfeminism in Popular Culture,” *Women’s Studies in Communication*, Volume 23, Number 3 (2000): 413-428; Rachel Moseley and Jacinda Read, “Having it Ally: Popular Television (Post)Feminism,” *Feminist Media Studies*, Volume 2, Number 2 (2002): 231-249; Laurie Ouellette, “Victims no More: Postfeminism, Television and Ally McBeal,” *The Communication Review*, Volume 5, Number 4 (2002): 315-335; and Michele L. Hammers, “Cautionary Tales of Liberation and Female Professionalism: The Case Against Ally McBeal,” *Western Journal of Communication*, Volume 69, Number 2 (2005): 167-182, to name only a handful. The series lasted for five seasons, concluding in 2002.

¹⁵ See Ginia Bellafante, “Feminism: It’s All About Me!” *TIME*, Vol. 151, No. 25, (29 June 1998). It should be noted that the Canadian edition of this issue was essentially a reprint of the American, with the same figureheads on the cover and the same feature story.

postfeminism, and women, combining the iconography of the presumably achieved feminist revolution with a new manifestation of the antipathy and doubt frequently ascribed to postfeminist media representations” (Ouellette, 2002: 315).¹⁶

Offscreen, the figure(head)s of these postfeminists emerged as “dissident feminists” with women’s studies degrees. Across North America, their mass-market paperbacks—denouncing feminism as having “gone too far” and the women’s movement as outmoded—exploded onto the bestseller lists. Mainstream news items employed their media-savvy one-liners to fill in the blanks on stories only peripherally related to feminism (often around issues of sexuality, relationships, marriage, work and motherhood) to help confirm feminism’s obsolescence in their conclusions. As Nan Bauer Maglin and Donna Perry noted, “while their individual messages vary...the overall effect of their work is to suggest that because some women have prospered, the systematic inequalities facing all women have vanished into history” (1996: xiv).

The “crisis” embodied by the postfeminist and her proclamations of feminism’s “*passing on*” seems to many (myself included) at times to be an overstated phenomena, especially since “obituaries’ for feminism appear so

¹⁶ While television is certainly not the only medium through which the figure of the postfeminist has circulated, a notable amount of work has revolved around (and continues to examine) her circulation in the medium. See, for instance, Elspeth Probyn, “New Traditionalism and Post-Feminism: TV Does the Home,” *Screen*. Volume 31, Number 2 (1990): 147-59; Bonnie J. Dow’s *Prime-Time Feminism: Television, Media Culture and the Women’s Movement Since 1970*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996; Judith Mayne, “L.A. Law and Prime-Time Feminism,” in Charlotte Brunson, Julie D’Acci and Lynn Spigel, Eds., *Feminist Television Criticism: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997): 84-97; and Amanda D. Lotz, “Postfeminist Television Criticism: Rehabilitating Critical Terms and Identifying Postfeminist Attributes,” *Feminist Media Studies*, Volume 1, Number 1 (2001): 105-121.

regularly that they have come to constitute a specific genre.”¹⁷ “Nevertheless,” as Imogen Tyler (2005) reminds us, “however tired this ‘politics by caricature’ feels, it has had a profound effect on the way feminism is perceived” (26). As illustrated in the narrative that began this chapter, that characterization certainly mattered at the Third Wave Feminism conference in Exeter, and it absolutely mattered to my students in the classroom. Angela McRobbie (2004) argues that for postfeminism to work, feminism must first be conjured and engaged with before “a whole repertoire of new meanings which emphasize that it is no longer needed” can be put into play. In her view, “for feminism to be ‘taken into account’ it has to be understood as having already *passed away*” (255, emphasis mine). In her formulation, most contemporary engagements with or conversations about feminism (outside the realms of the academy and feminist activism) actually start with an understanding of feminism having already *passed on*.

Passing On evokes a number of other associations worthy of mention specifically because they help reorient the discussion of feminist generations in more nuanced ways. These have to do with acts of *transmission*: “passing on” as an act, a process, or an instance of conveyance from one to another; to pass on by inheritance or legacy (usually in generational succession); or to disseminate. “Passing on” in this conception suggests transference: of knowledge, of skills, of information, and indeed, of history. It is in this regard, of course, that the familial comes into play; addressing some of the more pervasive tendencies to use what

¹⁷ Joan Smith, paraphrased by Imogen Tyler in “Who put the ‘Me’ in Feminism? The Sexual Politics of Narcissism,” *Feminist Theory*, Volume 6, Number 1 (2005): 25-44. See also Joan Smith, “I’m a Feminist, so I Suppose I Must be Dead,” *Independent*, (6 July, 2003). Available online at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/joan-smith/im-a-feminist-so-i-suppose-i-must-be-dead-585886.html>.

Astrid Henry (2003) calls the 'mother-daughter trope' to define the relationship between the waves of feminism in the current era.¹⁸ According to Judith Roof,

Generation's reproductive familial narrative assumes a linear, chronological time where the elements that come first appear to cause elements that come later. This results in a very reproductive (and almost automatically familial) understanding of change through time; the past produces the future as parents produce children. Conceived as unidirectional, the linear logic of a temporally bound cause-effect narrative creates a perpetual debt to the past (1997: 71).

Psychoanalysts, following Freud, assert that "intergenerational struggles are rooted in the oedipal dilemma," and a great majority of the discussions concerning feminist generations fit within this framework (Whittier, 1997: 762). Henry (2003) goes so far as to suggest that "the mother-daughter relation seems to be *the* central trope in depicting the relationship between the second and third waves of U.S. feminism" (211). Lisa Adkins (2004) observes that this complex has become inflected within whole histories of feminism, "where feminism is positioned as a kind of familial property, a form of inheritance and legacy which is transmitted through generations." "Thus," she writes, "feminism and its history have been imagined as following a familial mode of social reproduction (427).¹⁹ Henry has argued that the prevalence of a contemporary Oedipal complex (which

¹⁸ In her monograph *Not My Mother's Sister: Generational Conflict and Third-Wave Feminism* (2004), Henry interrogates the problems inherent in defining feminism (and specifically the conflict between and among feminists) in familial terms. Borrowing Adrienne Rich's notion of "matrophobia" ("the fear not of one's mother or of motherhood but of *becoming one's mother*"), she argues that young feminists differentiate themselves from their mothers by committing a sort of 'psychological matricide' that necessitates a rejection. The book is thorough in her engagement of the processes involved in this relationship, and has been very well-received.

¹⁹ Not surprisingly, this model has been heavily criticized, particularly because of its reliance upon teleological notions of history (see, for instance, Judith Roof (1997), who argues that these kinds of reproductive metaphors must be avoided; not least because of their often unacknowledged heterosexism).

she calls a “matrophor”) “suggests that there is something to be gained from turning feminism (and thus often second wave feminists) into ‘a mother.’”²⁰ Her presumption is that familial relationships embolden the ‘daughters,’ “granting them authority and a generational location from which to speak” (Henry, 2003: 211).

Adkins also notes that “[i]n addressing the issue of the passing on of feminism one is immediately confronted by issues of temporality and historicity—both of which are increasingly contested, more open and contingent.” (2004: 427). While the next chapter takes this on in more detail, suffice it to say here that the generational model that has enveloped feminism’s recent past evokes all of these elements of *passing on*, and its links to the production of feminism’s contemporary histories emerges as perhaps *the* fundamental point of contestation for most scholars grappling with these issues. To Adkins, this is illustrated by a very basic—yet deeply troubling—assumption that underlies the vast majority of both generational frameworks and the critiques of them: “that the past should both determine the present and the future and that this causality gives feminism and feminist history a dynamic and force” (2004: 429). Utilized in this way, generational frameworks can—and have—participated in the construction of a static ‘past’ feminism against which a ‘fresh’ and ‘new’ feminism

²⁰ It should also be noted while the oedipal dilemma is commonly evoked in discussions of feminism and generations, few actually employ the methods or theory of psychoanalysis. For the vast majority, the mother-daughter dichotomy was a more knee-jerk, reactionary response...often leading to a proclamation of (or at least a concern for) feminism’s demise. The lone exception is Detloff (1997), who remarks that this complex has a Darwinian sensibility: “In Kristevan logic, either I kill the mother or she will kill me. Hence the highly charged atmosphere of debates between second and third wavers, because survival—escape from oblivion—rests on an either-or structure. In this pervasive dialectical system, where individuation necessitates the negation of the other, a sense of dialogue and generous interplay between the two generations is impaired. (85).

can be measured, adding fuel not only to the discursive fires that proclaim happily that feminism has *passed on*, but also to those that smolder in the many accounts (admittedly, mine included) of intergenerational hostilities and conflict.

Feminisms' *passing on*—in all its incarnations—is an important one, in that it provides much of the foundation through which generational debates around and about feminism in the contemporary Western context have circulated to date.²¹ To Mary Hawkesworth (2004), it is an interesting occurrence, particularly because it “has accompanied the unprecedented growth of feminist activism around the globe” (962). Illuminated by generational constructions of feminism and the women’s movement, it has multiple manifestations (emerging from the experiential, the scholarly and the popular) and with multiple resonances (personal, political, cultural, and historical). It is at this juncture, I believe, that many of the current assumptions about the ontology of feminism circulate, and it is at this particular assemblage of investments (some affective, some not) that this work begins. The perpetuation and maintenance—indeed, the extraordinary resilience—of *passing on feminism* (and, particularly, its circulation within debates around and about feminist generations) is what makes it salient to this dissertation.

Critics have argued that as an analytical tool, “generations” has tended to

²¹ By “Western” I certainly mean to imply “The West,” but arguing that it is largely an Anglophone phenomenon would be misleading. These debates have certainly come to the fore in the French Canadian context in recent years (see Maria Nengeh Mensah’s (2005) *Dialogues sur la 3ième vague féministe*, Anna Kruzynski (2004), Melissa Blais, *et al* (2007). See also the work of Cheryl Gosselin, particularly “Remaking Waves: The Québec Women’s Movement in the 1950s and 1960s.” *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme*. Volume 25, Number ¾ (Summer/Fall 2006): 34-39, and *Vers l’Avenir. Quebec Women’s Politics Between 1945 and 1967: Feminist, Maternalist and Nationalist Links*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Montreal, 2003, as evidence of this).

be “a vague, ambiguous, and stretchable concept to the explanation of past events,” and contend that these frameworks perpetuate simplistic dichotomies—pitting old against young, outmoded against fresh (Spitzer, 1973: 1353; Beh, 1996: 2).²² And, following Acland, I agree that “all generational delineations incorporate a degree of imprecision” (2000: 32). But I am still drawn to the question of whether or not “feminist generations” can serve as a valuable explanatory tool. Despite very direct calls to eliminate the frame from feminist historicizing altogether, I am compelled to want to keep it, or to at least try to cull it for its productive potential.

Investigating the “Problem of Generations”: Outlining the Thesis

Because discourse about generations is embedded in feminist historiography, any attempt to critique the concept and assess its potential value must therefore take history into account. Accordingly, after a brief consideration of the concept and processes of history and historiography, Chapter Two examines feminist history as a context for generational discourse and as a complex and sometimes self-contradictory set of narratives that rely on metaphors for shape and continuity. In Chapter Three, I discuss the over-used metaphor of the “wave” that implicitly addresses or encapsulates discussion of generations and examine the shift from what was once considered a relatively innocuous wave metaphor to a more familial, generational model. I outline the breadth of these frameworks (and the debates that have ensued) in an effort to illuminate how these discourses simultaneously engage with and reinforce the

²² Beh calls this “the ugliness of generations” (1996: 1).

notion of a feminism in crisis; of one almost perpetually at risk of (if it hasn't already) *passing on*.

The final two chapters, Four and Five, work in tandem to explore the ways in which “feminist generations” circulate in print media; a realm that I use as an archival source of knowledge that helps to track and make sense of the overarching generational story of feminism and the women’s movement. These two chapters also function as a way to investigate the Canadian context of these debates more closely; a significant commission, especially given the promulgation of American perspectives on this topic and the tendency to conflate the American experience with ones outside its borders. Coupled with Acland’s (2000) observation that “the concept of generation is especially important for cultural studies if only for the reason that it has not been explored with the same vigour and intensity as other terms related to youth cultures,” and my own suspicion that “age” definitions get “massively overplayed” in mainstream accounts (34), Chapter Four tackles the role of the media in the perpetuation and maintenance of generational narratives about and around feminism.

In contemporary feminist research (much of which alludes to the existence of a “generation gap” as a conceptual assumption from which their investigations of other problems can emerge), the media is often positioned as a perpetrator—or at the very least an accomplice—of the production, maintenance and reproduction of “feminist generations.” While numerous articles suggest that feminism’s “problem of generations” is partly a crisis in mainstream representation, none have actually conducted in-depth analyses of these popular

discourses.²³ I attempt this in Chapters Four and Five by examining two discrete corpuses: one aimed at mainstream adults (four decades of Canada's most widely read newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*) and the other, a selection of more marginal, mostly Canadian magazines with feminist sensibilities geared towards a younger audience. This direction helps move my line of inquiry away from the production of the solely academic debates and acknowledges that feminist knowledge is indeed affected by, produced, and reproduced outside the walls of the ivory tower, in public sites often disengaged with (and sometimes hostile to) feminism as a social movement and political praxis. This line of inquiry also seeks a clearer vision of the role that the popular media actually plays in their constructions.

Through the lenses and perspectives taken up in the chapters, the use-value of “feminist generations” moves beyond its predictable role as either an ambiguous but divisive marker or perpetrator of simplistic reproductive imperatives and instead turns to issues of feminist knowledge production, its relationship to (indeed, its entrenchment within) cultural memory, and perhaps even to a higher pedagogical calling. While examinations and exchanges on the past, present and future of feminism—in academic texts, at scholarly meetings, in print media and in conversation—have a tendency to become mired by acrimony when “generations” are evoked, the affective force (and popular appeal) of generational frameworks is what simultaneously lends it its potency and makes it

²³ Vavrus (2000) reminds us that analyses of the depiction of feminism and feminists in the media have increased exponentially in the last fifteen years, corresponding to the rise of overall media examinations of the everyday lives of women (413). However, none have yet cast a critical eye at generational representations.

vulnerable to charges. It is this conjuncture that I find fascinating and worthy of further investigation.

Chapter Two

History and the *Passing On* of Feminisms

[W]hen a macrocosm is coaxed into place to frame and explain events, actions, and beliefs, we must ask how it is defined, discovered, or constructed. (Postlewait, 2000: 97).

Learning how to historicize our feminist pasts, even while we live such a rich and confusing variety of feminisms in the present, is a challenging project with enormous stakes—not just for feminist historians, but for all manner of feminist theories as well. It may in fact be a precondition for developing anything like a set of feminist historical methods (Burton, 1992: 33).

This thesis investigates, situates and critiques “generations” within feminist discourses (and discourses about feminisms) past, present and future. If it is to be useful, any serious discussion that “*passing on* feminism” entails needs first to be situated within the broader historical and cultural contexts in which feminist discourses operate. The tensions and debates implicit to this consideration seep outside of feminist borders and speak to a broader apprehension over the production of history and historiography proper. This chapter begins with an examination of “history” in the broader sense before proceeding with an analysis of “feminist history” (as fraught as that designation is). The concept, and indeed the lived realities of *passing on* cannot be adequately assessed critically without first understanding some of the complexities and dynamics of attempts to historicize feminism(s).

History: An illusive trickster?

“History” has been traditionally defined as a tale, a story, “a chronological record of significant events (as affecting a nation or institution) often including an explanation of their causes,” “the branch of knowledge that records and analyzes past events,” “a treatise presenting systematically related natural phenomena,” “an established record,” “one that is finished or done for,” and “that which is not of current concern” (Morris, 1982: 625).¹ While current dictionaries tend to reproduce similar (narrow) definitions suggesting that history exists solely as something finished (or the record of something past), others have expressed their frustration with the lack of decisiveness with which the word is “overemployed,” especially “in the vocabulary of literary-critical and cultural analysis” (Simpson, 1992: 9).² Others still have nuanced their characterizations to describe history as a more fluid, organic process. Antoinette Burton (1992) uses ‘history’ to mean

the production of knowledges about the past, ‘a mode of writing’ which is in itself not just a function, but also a process continually contingent on its location in the academic discipline of history and the cultural moment in which it is produced (34, ft. 2).

While Burton likens ‘history’ to method, Raymond Williams (1983) offers an explication that extends both from myriad ways in which “history” has been understood as well as from the process of its production:

In its earliest uses history was a narrative account of events. [...] It

¹ See also “History,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=41480.

² Simpson notes, “[W]e return to history, work toward history and espouse a historical method, but few of us can say exactly what we mean by history, except in the most gestural way” (1992: 9).

can be said that this established general sense of history has lasted into contemporary English as the predominant meaning. But it is necessary to distinguish an important sense of history which is more than, though it includes, organized knowledge of the past...One way of expressing this new sense is to say that past events are seen not as specific histories but as continuous and connected process. Various systematizations and interpretations of this continuous and connected process then become history in a new general and eventually abstract sense. [G]iven the stress on human *self-development*, history in many of these loses its exclusive association with the past and becomes connected not only to the present but also to the future (119).³

More concisely, he suggests that

[h]istory itself retains its whole range [of meanings], and still, in different hands, *teaches* or *shows* us most kinds of knowable past and almost every kind of imaginable future” (120).

In (re-)reading the work of Williams, David Simpson (1992) notes that “the urgency of history” in the contemporary moment could, and perhaps should, be read not “in its wholeness or totality but in its immediate applicability to a range of options for reading the past and projecting the future” (9). In this way, as Williams himself suggested, history becomes pedagogue: “it instructs and points out.” In this way, history is understood—significantly, I think—as a fundamental “part of the present” (Simpson, 1992: 10).

Dialogues around and chronicles of the practice of writing history—particularly in the latter half of the twentieth century up to the present time—have emerged as perhaps more interesting (and more valuable here) than simple

³ Williams says that this conceptualization of history relies on “several kinds of intellectual system[s]”: “the Enlightenment sense of the progress and development of civilization,” the Hegelian “idealist sense” of world-historical process, and—ala Marx—a political sense that includes “products of the past which are active in the present and which will shape the future in knowable ways.” These are not harmonious systems, by any stretch; but it also opens up discussions around nostalgia, historicism (as process) and futurism (1983: 120).

descriptions of the term have been to date.⁴ Christopher Kent's (1995) review of Michael Roth's *Rediscovering History*, for instance, speaks to a shift in status among whole 'types' of histories and history-making; one that is particularly relevant to the North American context:

The peculiarly American marriage between aloof, austere, theory-oriented intellectual history, and passionate, gregarious, activist social history broke down in the 1960s as social history, long the junior partner, "found itself." Its popularity blossomed, while that of intellectual history dwindled. The suddenly diminished ex-partner took to agonized self-scrutiny in articles in which "crisis" and "Whither?" figured prominently. As for cultural history, it had long languished under the care of these awkward parents. Introspective, somewhat gloomy and with strong aesthetic tastes, it sought consolation and companionship outside the discipline, consorting extensively with art, literature, music, and Freudian-ism (186).

In lamenting the lack of respect garnered on cultural history mid-century and noting the increased popularity of social history in the 1960s (and mobilizing a particularly salient generational metaphor in the process) Kent also pinpoints a redirection in the way in which histories are conceptualized and—most particularly—towards a concern over *whose* histories get written.⁵

And it is precisely this kind of concern that permeates conceptualizations of the "history of feminism": an interest not necessarily for longevity (feminism

⁴ See, for instance, Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 1975. Trans. By Tom Conley. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Peter Burke, Ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991); Eric Hobsbawm, *On History* (New York, New Press, 1997), and Nancy Partner, "Making Up Lost Time: Writing on the Writing of History," *Speculum* 61 (1986) 90-117; to name just a few. Partner describes "history" as "the definitive human audacity imposed on formless time and meaningless event with the human meaning-maker: language," and calls history writing "the silent shared conspiracy of all historians (who otherwise agree on nothing these days)," who "talk about the past as though it were really 'there'" (97).

⁵ Interestingly (and surprisingly), Kent's account did not address the specifics of the shifts that occurred at around the same time; particularly the massive increase in social history volumes writing women and race into those stories.

has long since established itself as a practical theoretical field) but for a resolute deliberation of reconsideration and reassessment. The arrival of the millennium has encouraged feminist thinkers to become more self-referential; to step back, take stock, and ask themselves: What will/can/should “the feminist future” look like? Implied in that question, of course, are others: How did “feminism” get here? What does “the feminist past” look like? Who wrote it, for whom, how, and in what context? How has that past contributed to the way feminists saw themselves, see themselves, do feminism, and—indeed—continue to write it?

Taking stock of the “collective” feminist past in this particular instance necessitated a re-examination and interrogation of the construction of Western feminist history and historiographical writing about women and gender that occurred prior to the emergence of these latest (inward-looking and often generational) concerns. Interestingly, those historiographies—in the Canadian context especially—emerged during the post-Second World War era when historical writing (as a discipline) was already well on its way to being re-imagined by scholars.⁶ In response to what many historians understood as limited “national” foci in their accounts of the past (concentrations that almost inevitably led to hegemonic representations and articulations of identities “of region, class and ethnicity”), longstanding traditions of regional historical

⁶ Harold Innis, whose work was influential in moving the concentration of Canadian historians away from political and constitutional accounts to a focus on political economy (see particularly, *The Fur Trade in Canada*, 1930) was one such scholar. His staples theory forced historians to consider the impact of Canada as a country on the construction of Canadian history, and his work “inspired other historians in their search for made-in-Canada interpretations of Canadian history” (Boyd, 1999: 173). The work of Donald Creighton, for instance, illustrates this trajectory. However, that turn led to another re-turn to nationalist and biographical histories after WWII.

writings began to gain the attention of history scholars, as did the stories of the less-iconic, more “ordinary” people and communities (Boyd, 1999: 173).⁷ I would add gender to the list of previously-limited identities and note, as Kelly Boyd (1999) does, that from the late 1960s to the late 1990s social history became significantly more central to both English (and French) Canadian writing, and that this twenty-year span also marked an important expansion of historiographies to include increased attention paid to both gender and class as important categories (173; 172).

Boyd (173) argues that addressing the role of gender in the Canadian past was slow in coming, yet archives illustrate that the momentous increase in writing in this field paralleled not only the turn towards social history among historians throughout the discipline, but also the rise of the women’s movement’s “second wave” in the North American context. Indeed, that writing honed both my own interest in and learning about gender, feminism and political organizing in the Canadian context, and it certainly seemed (to me, as an undergraduate desperate to read gendered analyses of the past) to be an abundant field in English Canadian historical research.⁸ Importantly, many of those publications

⁷ The establishment of a number of journals—*Acadiensis* (1971), *BC Studies* (1969), and *Prairie Forum* (1983), to name a few—testify to the legitimacy granted to regional and local histories in at this time. All three have online presence and are all still in publication.

⁸ Alison Prentice, Paula Bourne, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Beth Light, Wendy Mitchinson, and Naomi Black’s (1988) compilation entitled *Canadian Women: A History* provides a really good archive of some of the amazing work that was recovered and recorded during this time. See also Ruth Roach Pierson, Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Paula Bourne and Philinda Masters’s (1993) collection, *Canadian Women’s Issues*. Volume 1: Strong Voices, Twenty-five Years of Women’s Activism in English Canada. French Canadian historiography emerging from the province of Québec since the turn to social history also showed a marked increase in women’s history as a sub-field. See, for instance, the Clio Collective’s (1992) collection documenting this surge of writing, *L’Histoire des femmes au Québec depuis quatre siècles*.

sought “to recover the experiences of women in Canada’s past and to show their contributions,” while simultaneously attempting to make a case for the development of a “women’s culture” that was distinct and rooted in women’s “shared” experiences of patriarchy (Boyd, 173).⁹

As important as this work remains, its exclusive focus on women in history was both troubled and troubling. While room had indeed opened up for previously suppressed experiences and voices and the ways in which histories could be written stretched to include them, accounts remained limited largely to white women. As Joan Sangster recalls,

Certainly, past research and praxis were never unproblematic; there were weaknesses we saw at the time, and those we recognized in retrospect. Class and gender analyses sometimes chafed uneasily against each other; race and colonialism were inadequately addressed (Sangster, 2000: 128).

In other words, even as the histories doing the (still) much-needed work of “recovery” of women’s experiences were making up and filling in their exclusions within the realm of a masculine-laden history proper, they were participating in exclusionary practices themselves. This, as Sandoval (2000) notes, is one of the ways in which hegemonic feminism came to be established as “the” feminism.¹⁰

⁹ Australian historian Gerda Lerner has written at length of her intentions underlying the struggle to recover and record women’s history, particularly in the early years preceding the institutionalization of women’s studies as a discipline and prior to the legitimization of “women’s history” as a legitimate sub-field of history proper. Her accounts (documented first in 1981’s *The Majority Finds its Past* and again in 2009’s *Living with History/Making Social Change*) began with her own experiences as a woman constantly playing multiple roles—“unskilled and later semi-skilled worker, a housewife, a mother, a community activist”—and quickly swelled to include similar experiences of women she encountered, those who worked “quietly and without public recognition” and whose work had an impact on political organizations and politics, despite being ignored by historians and the media (2009: 29).

¹⁰ Himani Bannerji calls this—in the vein of Antonio Gramsci (1971) and Errol Lawrence (1982)—“common sense racism,” in that the category of gender “woman” ends up, inevitably,

As early as 1995, the editors of the anthology *Feminism Beside Itself* began asking some telling questions about feminist writing about feminist pasts. As scholars who “find feminist gestures toward unity, collective and otherwise, more politically problematic than they often appear,” Diane Elam and Robyn Wiegman address and articulate feminisms’ contemporary troubles and concerns by interrogating its roots (1). In the introduction to their volume, they ask, “Under what assumptions about history, narrative, feminism and political purpose” has ‘feminism as a history’ been written? (6).¹¹

Feminism: A brief and oversimplified history of turmoil and debate

Any attempts to historicize feminism(s) inevitably struggle with the relationships that emerge from multiple fractious debates over hot-button issues, political turmoil (from both inside the movement, among its membership and outside its parameters), and sensationalist reporting in the popular press that characterize narratives about feminist movements.

Debates about, within and around the present state and future of contemporary [English (North) American] feminism have become commonplace—predictable, even—in recent years. Beginning in the 1980s and

standing in for “women,” which results in the utter erasure of individual subjectivities and in the reinforcement and support of white middle class hegemony. She writes that “in both its omissions and commissions racism is an essential organizing discourse of European (white) feminist discourse...” (1995: 47).

¹¹ Susan Stanford Friedman asked similar questions and attempted to answer them within the context of the academy in her chapter of Elam and Weigman’s *Feminism Beside Itself* entitled “Making History: Reflections on Feminism, Narrative, and Desire.” A more focused version of that item (concentrating on how her framing of these need to assess and possibly recapitulate feminism and feminist work comes directly from how, “at this particular historical moment, feminism in general and academic feminism in particular are under great threat” [Available at <http://www.pum.umontreal.ca/revues/surfaces/vol7/friedman.html>].

fueled, in part, by the mainstreaming of feminist ideology, a series of strong political successes for women and the firm establishment of women's studies as a legitimate academic discipline alongside increased conservatism and a strong anti-feminist backlash, "the women's movement" supposedly fragmented and feminism became known as the definitive "f-word." Within feminist movements themselves, the sex wars, the politics of representation, the complexities of identity politics, and the privileging of some voices over others (often via the erasure of race) were disputes heatedly argued both in person and in text. By the 1990s, charges of binary thinking and the promotion of a woman-as-victim mentality hit the newsstands, and self-proclaimed "feminist dissidents" emerged as a now-familiar anti-feminist counter-narrative to some of the more popular feminists and their work.¹² In the process, (post)feminist rhetoric permeated popular media and its advertising, disagreements over gender generally and the category "woman" specifically (continue to) abound, and many feminists concerned about the relationship between the past, present and potential futures of feminism—both within academic disciplines and outside their walls—have found themselves in a position of reflection; rethinking and reconstituting themselves, their 'colleagues,' and their collective accomplishments and contributions to date.

While many historians would (and probably should) cringe over my loose

¹² See particularly Roiphe (1993); Christina Hoff Sommers, *Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994); Rene Denfeld, *The New Victorians* (New York: Warner Books, 1995); and Meredith Maran, *Notes From An Incomplete Revolution* (New York: Bantam Books, 1997). In Canada, these narratives emerged via Laframboise (1996); Amy Friedman's *Nothing Sacred: A Conversation With Feminism* (Oberon Press, 1992); and Kate Fillion's *Lip Service*, (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1995).

chronicling of internal and external feminist conflicts over the past three decades (all of which continue to be tremendously complex), they and countless others have served to not only stimulate debates over the ways in which feminism is defined, but have also led to critiques of the way feminisms are practiced and the ways in which “feminism” is and has been transmitted. Devoney Looser (2002) has noted that “because recent years have seen such widespread disagreements among feminists, trying to come to terms with the field of feminist studies today presents a daunting task,” adding that any attempt to navigate the current terrain ultimately leads to confusion, particularly as more and more “authoritative versions” of (largely American, “second wave”) feminist achievements and challenges are produced and published (61). She asserts that “there is more at stake in these versions than simply providing neophytes with much-needed summary” (Looser, 2002: 61). “At issue in these classificatory negotiations,” she continues, borrowing from Jane Gallop (1990), is exactly “whose version of [feminist] history is going to be told to the next generation” (Looser, 2002: 61; Gallop, Hirsch and Keller, 362).¹³

¹³ Bishopsgate Institute, Department of Politics at Goldsmiths, University of London held a one-day conference on 15 November 2008 that addressed a good number of these concerns, and raised questions so strikingly similar to those asked by Elam and Weigmen (1995), Susan Stanford Friedman (1997) and Looser (2002) that it is worthy of mention here. The event, entitled “Feminism and History: Rethinking Women’s Movements Since 1800” aimed to “explore the relationship between writing feminist history and the history of feminism” while simultaneously seeking to open up spaces where new approaches to the history of feminism could be discussed and developed. The cfp asked some very pointed questions, many of which are acknowledged as pressing here: “How do we define the ‘feminist’ past when we write its history and who can we legitimately identify as ‘feminists’? Is a commitment to feminist politics still necessary in order to write the history of women and their struggles? How has entry into the academic mainstream shaped feminist history? How might women today go about recording and writing the histories of their own movements and struggles for liberation?” The event closed with a roundtable discussion around the question: “Is there a future for feminist history?”

Historicizing Feminist Discourse(s)

“Stages” of feminist thought

In 1994, Ann Ferguson, ruminating on twenty-five years of feminist philosophy and arguing that “feminist theory and feminist philosophy is presently at a crossroads,” provided “a historical perspective on the present situation” (199).

Ferguson argues that this temporal moment—beginning in the late 1960s and occurring in spurts throughout the 1970s—marked the “first stage” of feminist philosophical theorizing as well as the first significant split between theory and practice in terms of the construction of feminism’s recorded history.¹⁴ Educated women with ‘raised’ consciousness developed feminist criticism from their (seemingly) collective experiences, and brought feminism into the academy in a broad array of disciplines.¹⁵ This, in turn, had an enormous effect on the construction of feminist theory, language and of historical writing (as well as on the readership of such work). Women working within the academy attempted to integrate grassroots politics and (often-anarcho-socialist) ideologies utilized by independent women’s organizations in their teaching and their scholarship, and

¹⁴ She states that “[m]any of us were in the process of developing a philosophical world view based on Marxism and the critique of bourgeois thought and practice that it implied. Others were moving in an anarchist direction...” (197-215). Hence the division of ‘strains’ of feminist thought into socialist, Marxist, liberal, radical, etc. camps. Ferguson, however, makes no mention of women of colour, their issues with feminist knowledge production or their ‘split’ with mainstream white feminism.

¹⁵ See, for instance, the work of Gerda Lerner, Carol Gilligan, Gayle Rubin, Angela Davis, Sherry Ortner, and many, many others. Ferguson adds Kathy Addelson, Alison Jaggar, Iris Young, Linda Nicholson, Nancy Fraser and herself to this list of what she calls “first-generation feminist philosophers in the academy” and notes that they borrowed ideas from radical feminists such as Shulamith Firestone, Charlotte Bunch, Mary Daly, Andrea Dworkin, Monique Wittig, and Catherine MacKinnon, to name a few (200-201).

infiltrated the borders of traditional disciplines with new strains of thought.¹⁶

Within disciplines of history and philosophy, “the universality of male-devised scripts” was undercut, and paradigms of thought—revealed as exclusionary to half of the population—were “reinvented...to account for the uniqueness of women’s cultural situation” (Gubar, 1998: 882). As well, a feminist critique of the male canon—again, across disciplines—began, predominantly grounded in de Beauvoir’s naming of the category “woman” as “Other.” Feminist re-readings of ‘the classics’ of literature emerged and gendered re-interpretations of narratives followed closely thereafter, alongside “a recovery of female literary traditions (Gubar, 1998: 882).¹⁷ Concern over the ‘lost voices’ in literature inevitably led to investigations of historical narratives, and countless books—using “the methodology of recovery”¹⁸ were published on and about the specificities of women’s cultural, social, political, economic and personal experiences of the past.¹⁹ Also interesting to note is that this era has since, in

¹⁶ Ferguson admits that while the major political tendency of ‘women like her’ was “anarcho-socialist,” feminist academics (again, ‘like her’) often stressed Marxist ideas: “more perhaps because they were intellectually respectable among Left men in the academy and also had a more historically interesting ‘grand narrative’ explanation of how social domination is reproduced” (1994: 197-215).

¹⁷ See, for instance, Kate Millet’s (1968) *Sexual Politics*.

¹⁸ Gubar acknowledges that “the methodologies of recovery continue to produce major publications” to this day (883). I would argue that they’ve actually accelerated over the last decade.

¹⁹ This phenomenon holds true for the Canadian context of this historical moment. See, for example, Eliane Leslau Silverman, “Writing Canadian Women’s History, 1970-82: An Historiographical Analysis,” *Canadian Historical Review* 63 (1982): 513-33. Throughout the 1980s, in fact, a plethora of bibliographies were published in an attempt to capture and track the overwhelming volume of texts that participated in Gubar’s “methodology of recovery” (and they still form the bulk of the reference texts of most university libraries on the subject as well). A sample: Susan Jackel, “Canadian Prairie Women’s History: A Bibliographic Survey,” *Papers*, CRIAW (1987): 1-22; Denise Lemieux et Lucie Mercier, *La recherche sur les femmes au Québec: bilan et bibliographie* (1982); Kathryn McPherson, *A ‘Round the Clock Job’: Selected Bibliography on Women’s Work at Home in Canada* (1983); Veronica Strong-

retrospect, come to be known as the marker of the burgeoning of the second wave women's movement across North America.²⁰

Ferguson posits that as the first stage settled—as student movements and new left activism did in the late 1970s and early 1980s—a second began: that of “gender difference” or what Susan Gubar has called “the engendering of differences.” In many ways, the documents of this particular era speak to two stages occurring simultaneously: one which focused on a “Reverse the Discourse” and “Revalue the Feminine” theoretical strategy,” and another (charging the former of essentialist thinking) stressing the politics of identity and accentuating differences between and among women and men. In this categorization, the link between theory and practice, of the academy and the streets, has severed almost completely.

The third “stage” (or, more accurately, “stages”) in Ferguson’s

Boag, “The Fugitive Female: An Introduction to the Bibliography of Canadian Women’s Studies,” (1982). These bibliographies are also interesting and valuable for pointing out particular trends in the writing of Canadian women’s/feminist history and historiography at certain times. See, for instance, Bettina Bradbury, “Women’s History and Working-Class History,” *Labour/Le Travail*, 19 (Spring 1987): 23-43; Yolande Cohen, “Femmes et Histoire,” *Recherches Sociographiques* 25 (1984): 467-77; Gail Campbell, “Canadian Women’s History: A View from Atlantic Canada,” *Acadiensis* 20 (1990): 184-99; Margaret Conrad, “The Re-Birth of Canada’s Past: A Decade of Women’s History,” *Acadiensis* 12 (1983): 140-62; Andrée Levesque, “Historiography: History of Women in Quebec since 1985,” *Québec Studies* 12 (1991): 83-91; Joy Parr, “Nature and Hierarchy: Reflections on Writing the History of Women and Children,” *Atlantis* 11 (fall 1985): 39-44; Ruth Roach Pierson, “The History of Women and Paid Work” (1985); Ruth Pierson and Alison Prentice, “Feminism and the Writing and Teaching of History” *Atlantis* 7 (1982): 37-46; Veronica Strong-Boag, “Writing about Women” (1990); and, importantly, Ursula Franklin’s “What has the Feminist Perspective Done for Canadian History?” in her own edited volume *Knowledge Reconsidered: A Feminist Overview* (Ottawa: 1984): 46-58.

²⁰ In the conclusion to her edited volume on tensions and controversies in feminism, Evelyn Fox Keller, argued that “a focus on the supposed coherence of seventies feminism obscures the fact that, from its earliest days, feminist theory was in fact characterized by a marked multiplicity in its goals, and in its stated functions.” See Hirsch & Keller, “Conclusion: Practicing Conflict in Feminist Theory,” *Conflicts in Feminism*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1990) 382.

retrospective have to do with some of the more deep-rooted fissure-makers of feminist praxis in years prior: those challenges brought forth by thinkers and activists with vested interest in underscoring the contradictions embedded within the category “woman” and the very idea of “gender” as a fixed category (particularly as they were (often “romantically”) expressed in the second “stage”). Specifically, the promulgation of critical literature that emerged during this moment called those historical narratives out for their overt race and class generalizations that fundamentally worked to render race and class privilege (and, of course, marginalization) invisible.²¹ In many ways, Ferguson’s third “stage” speaks to a body of engaged feminist thinkers who interacted with—and attempted to rewrite—the concept of “gender” as it intersected with sex, race, class, age, ability, religion and the like. She locates this stage of feminist theoretical development firmly within the right-wing backlash of Reagan-era politics, and makes the link to what she identified, at the time of her writing, as the “current” stage. As such, she pinpoints the creation and assertion of postmodernist critiques and strategies for deconstructing history, the publication of new and “newly-found” writings by women of colour, postcolonial, poststructuralist, and “queer” theorists, as a foundation for contemporary (as in 1994) alterations of the ways in which feminism is documented and how feminist histories are read and recorded.

²¹ The writings of Gaytri Spivak, Cherrie Moraga, Gloria Anzaldua, Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Maria Lugones and Elizabeth V. Spelman have been cited as particularly significant critiques. She also points out that the “sex debates” of the 1980s (including, but not limited to feminist polarization around issues like porn, s/m, sex work and also around the performance of sexuality and gender roles’ embeddedness within them) also played themselves out during this time, but notes that in the context of the “sex wars” especially, the dichotomies that emerged have long outlived their usefulness on her “theoretical grid.”

Directly linked to postmodern theory and social construction, critiques of gender threw a loop to traditional feminist theorizing and the making of feminist histories. Judith Butler's (1990) and Judith Lorber's (1994) work on gender epitomize the controversial challenges that the seemingly simple concept "woman" posed (and continues to pose) for feminist epistemologies. Utilizing psychoanalytic theory to reconceptualize gender, Butler questioned the category "woman" and the notion that a person is male or female, masculine or feminine. As a rule, feminist theory had determined that "woman" was indeed a universal concept that demonstrated an unquestionable commonality among women, often one that pre-empted race, class or sexuality. Butler discarded the universal category and argued instead that it gave "a false sense of legitimacy and universality to a culturally specific and, in some cases, culturally oppressive version of gender identity."²² She argued that grand narratives privilege specific stories and create fictionalized versions of 'the way things are' and fail to account for variations, fragmentations, discontinuous or provisional understandings of who we are.

While Butler explained that gender constituted far more than simply a social construct (but more of a performance), Judith Lorber viewed gender as "wholly constructed," and sought to make "the pervasiveness of the institution of gender and its social construction" explicit; to revitalize the category as a viable centre for feminist analyses.²³ Lorber argued that gender constituted "all social

²² Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. (New York: Routledge, 1990) 329.

²³ Judith Lorber, *Paradoxes of Gender*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press,

relations that separate people into differentiated gendered statuses”; that it is “a process of social construction, a system of social stratification, and an institution that structures every aspect of our lives.”²⁴ Like Butler, her work aimed to question the validity (and, in effect, the necessity) of gender, and challenged the idea that gender is based on “procreation and sexuality.”²⁵ Contrasting Butler’s method, however, Lorber aligned herself with poststructuralist discourses on gender that strive to dismantle the relationship between what constitutes “sex” and “gender.”

The work of both Butler and Lorber raised very serious questions of the very foundation of the vast majority of feminist analyses up to that point. Specifically, they interrogated the notion that gender should be at the core of feminist research.²⁶ Their work begged the question: If there is no “woman,” can “feminism” work? What followed was a reconstitution of “feminism” into “feminisms,” although the actual reconceptualizing of woman—and of feminism—as fragmentations, or multiples has only just begun. Susan Gubar (1998) agrees with Ferguson’s assumptions in this case, noting that,

1994) 10.

²⁴ Lorber, 5.

²⁵ Lorber, 285.

²⁶ Lorber’s work is perhaps most useful in the current historical moment, particularly given the variety of texts on trans-identities that have emerged in recent years. As well, Lorber’s analysis provides a very concrete method of critiquing some of the more specifically ‘gendered’ controversies that have plagued feminist organizations—specifically the contentious ‘woman-born-woman’ regulations of the Michigan Women’s Festival and ‘woman-only’ spaces such as women’s centres. See also Cat Pyne, “A Question for Feminism,” in Mitchell, Rundle, Karaian, Eds., *Turbo Chicks*, (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2001) 111-118. (photo essay); Lisa Voldeng & Laura Kloppenberg, “Metagender & the Slow Decline of the Either/Or,” *BITCH*, 3/1 (1998) 33-34; and Betsy Lucal, “What it means To Be Gendered Me: Life on the Boundaries of a Dichotomous Gender System,” *Gender & Society*. Volume 13, No. 6 (Dec 1999) 781-797.

importantly—and despite their tendency to disagree with each other on issue after issue—“together their words combined to make women an invalid word” (2).²⁷ In many ways, these voices and methods forced all feminist scholars to think, read and write in an unprecedented hyper-critical and self-reflexive manner; in a way that undermined much of what feminist historical practice (and the reading of texts that have since become “historical”) had come to rely on as ‘sound’ method.²⁸ Gubar has also noted that these ‘fourth’ stage methods have led to both claims to and critiques of “authenticity,” and expressed concern for what that could mean for feminism’s future in terms of the written text (ie. who could say what of whose experience), and used race as an example. She goes on to say that “The brouhaha this essay immediately roused as a talk—causing me to be labeled an anti-intellectual racist, much to my shock and dismay—testifies to the ways in which critical election, abjection, and obscurantism have contributed to an atmosphere of censorship that silences or polices our feminist debates” (1998: 2).

Ferguson’s fourth stage of feminist theorizing,²⁹ writing, introspection and retrospection attests to the fact that thinking about the feminist past—indeed, about *all* histories—has changed significantly over the past three decades. They also serve as evidence for the claim, mentioned here already, that the function of feminist writing about itself (past, present, and future as well) has shifted as well

²⁷ I should also mention that Gubar appears to be critical (and a bit nostalgic) over the loss of the word. I, however, am not.

²⁸ See note above.

²⁹ Again, it should be made clear that Ferguson herself doesn’t call this stage the “fourth”—this is my label.

in recent years, particularly as the content has become more and more “mainstreamed.” Ferguson, for one, fears that what I am labeling here as the “fourth stage” is indicative of a serious crisis; that feminist praxis is in danger “of ignoring or co-opting the original feminist project of challenging social domination systems in order to empower women” (197-215). In other words, she fears that the transformation, while academically interesting, deactivated the very politics that initially fuelled it. Outside of feminist circles, the debates around the future of history have been similar. Gubar (1998) suggests that the multiple ways in which feminists have deconstructed, examined and reconstructed their own methods and the historical strategies of others—particularly through the processes of critique and recovery—led to a stalemate of sorts. Perhaps, she proposes, intellectuals have begun to take them for granted, for “while many scholars still pursue work in all three phases, the methodological moves they make might now seem somewhat predictable.”³⁰

Gubar’s (and, to a lesser extent, Ferguson’s) apprehensive reaction to the transformations that the writing of feminism’s past have experienced speak also to the mainstream unease—and sometimes contempt—expressed towards the *f*-word. Of relevance here (and especially to the chapter that follows), Gubar speculates whether “dissension [within and outside feminist ranks] has functioned as a purgative period in a much needed (though painful) process of growth.”³¹ Cleansed of some of the more patriarchal historical and theoretical

³⁰ Gubar, 2. I read “predictable” (optimistically) as “ambivalent” and (less so) as “apolitical” within the context of her essay.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

practices and purged of some of the more glaring mechanisms of privilege, feminist theorists and historians could perhaps approach the millennium fresh; free of methodological trappings yet vividly aware of some of the limits to the scope of their own past writings and research. In what follows, I will examine and trace one specific route that followed this stage, and illustrate the transformations (and regressions) of feminist discourse more particularly, drawing as much as possible on the Canadian context.

Feminisms in Progress: Turmoil, crises and epic narratives

Over the past fifteen years, countless feminist academic conferences and meetings have been held seeking dialogue over the current state of feminism and its seemingly shaky future. In the United States, alongside annual meetings for feminist academic associations with themes that examine “the future of feminism(s)” and/or women’s studies (or both), other organizations have called for the gathering of diverse constituencies of feminists to discuss feminism’s aims, goals and its history. 1995’s *Feminism Beside Itself: A Conference* held at the University of Indiana is a perfect example of this. Premised on the idea of “nam[ing] a certain anxiety within feminism, an anxiety brought on by feminism’s very success and public visibility,” scholars were invited to have a conversation around six challenges: “The Future of Women’s Studies,” “The Identities of Feminism,” “Generational Anxieties,” “Body Stuff,” “Erotic Politics,” and, generally, “The Futures of Feminism.” Five years later, “Feminist Expo 2000,” organized by the Feminist Majority Foundation in Maryland, attempted a similar event with dialogues around “the cutting-edge issues of our time” at its

core.³² *The Future of Feminist Critique: Ethics, Agency, Politics* was held at Rice University in Texas in November of 2000 (with Angela Davis headlining). *Back to the Future: Generations of Feminism* was held at the University of Chicago in March of 2004. As Jean Albright (2004) of the *Windy City Times* reports, the event featured keynotes included Dorothy Allison, Judith Halberstam (who “spoke of forgetfulness as an opportunity to create wholly new insights”) and Kate Millet (who “spoke of forgetfulness and disconnection as the current state of feminism”). In January 2007, MoMA (New York) hosted a symposium on *The Feminist Future: Theory and Practice in the Visual Arts*, addressing the relationship between art and gender “after the activism of the 1960s and ’70s, and the revisionist critiques of the 1980s and ’90s.” The same month, the Association of College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL) Women’s Studies Section (WSS) celebrated its 25th anniversary (“a time of introspection and commemoration”) and held a discussion entitled “Whither Women’s Studies?: Feminism, (Inter)Disciplinarity, and the Future.”³³

Comparable events have been held in Canada, similarly grounded in assumptions suggesting that feminism, the women’s movement and/or women’s studies scholarship has been approaching a crossroads (or, is in “crisis,”) and that providing a space for the exchange of varied ideas on the past, present and future

³² For more on this event, see Diane Elam, “Introduction: Feminism Beside Itself Again,” *Surfaces*, Volume VII, 101 (v.1.0A) (22 June 1997) 5/6.

³³ The ACRL newsletter reports that the dialogue addressed “current trends”: the rise of interdisciplinary foci in women’s studies, as well as “a return to ephemeral materials and a focus on cultural microcosms (ex. girls’ studies, third wave feminism, and motherhood). These new areas of study incorporate blogs, comics, and zines in a very intellectually stimulating yet pedagogically challenging approach to teaching” (Tucker, 2007: 1).

of feminism would provide space for dialogue around contemporary anxieties, lead to a renewed enthusiasm for feminist ideology and potentially new directions within the broader scheme of theory, method, and practice. In 2002, two conferences fit this bill. The first was held at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax in March of that year, entitled *Young Women and the Future of Feminism*. The other took place at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon two months later, cheekily called *From Bra-Burners to Buffy: Conversations among Generations of Feminists*.³⁴ Additionally, all of the Canadian Women's Studies' Association's (CWSA/ACEF) annual conferences have included options with some variation on these themes on their call for papers since 2001.

International events have been held as well; partly celebratory and partly guarded conferences that sought to simultaneously reflect on and envision more inclusive, dynamic and "global" futures for feminism. "Beyond Sex and Gender: The Future of Women's Studies?" was held at Queen's University in Belfast in September 2002. It "encourage[d] forward-looking articulation of the issues raised by the construction of identities and the apparent loss of faith (amongst some) in the continued utility of identities, such as sex and gender," and invited speakers from all disciplines to critically examine topics like postfeminism, transgender issues, masculinities, and postcolonial theory. In July that same year, the International Third Wave Feminism Conference was held at the Crossmead Conference Centre at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom.

³⁴ It should be noted that the bra-burner conference was an engaging event that was relatively successful in building networks among women with diverse theoretical backgrounds who otherwise wouldn't have had the opportunity to converse.

In June of 2007, Umeå University in Sweden held “Past, Present, Future—From Women’s Studies to Post-Gender Research” (in an effort to “build bridges between generations of researchers in Gender Studies”).³⁵ It appears as though these issues have a particular salience for European scholars: The London School of Economics hosted *Between Past and Future: Feminist Debates in International Relations* in January of 2008. In March, *The Future of European Feminism* conference was held as a component of the European Feminist Summit on “New European Feminism: Crossing Borders, Across Genders—Feminist Issues in the 2000s” in London. November 2008 marks the first event organized by the History of Feminism Network at the Bishopsgate Institute in London: “Feminism & History: Rethinking Women’s Movements since 1800.” Established by postgraduates with a shared interest in the telling of feminisms’ past, the conference programme mirrors many of the same concerns outlined here. The newest comes from Utrecht, the Netherlands, for the 7th European Feminist Research Conference (held June 4-7, 2009). Under the theme of “Gendered Cultures at the Crossroads of Imagination, Knowledge and Politics,” two sub-themes illustrate that these preoccupations are far from over: “Generations in Feminism: Women’s Movements of Past, Present & Future,” and “Stories to Tell: Fiction, History & Memory.” The latest incarnations of these gatherings seem to press for a more nuanced approach to feminisms’ past, present and futures; moving beyond “legacy” and “canon” to try to come to terms with a multiplicity of interlocking phenomenon linking history and the current era.

³⁵ Interestingly, this event placed particular emphasis on the work of PhD students and post-doctoral researchers in Nordic countries.

While broad in terms of overarching thematic, each and every event was based on the same assumptions: that feminism as praxis had witnessed remarkable achievements since the 1970s, but that cracks had emerged in the relationships between and among feminists (as well as in theory and grassroots practice). Those fissures, manifest as anxieties about the state and future of feminism, were not only being voiced among the ranks of its subscribers, but had seemingly progressed to the point of debilitating both its ideological promise and its name. As Nancy Gibbs (1992) reminds us, “the idea that progress produces a backlash is hardly new,” but that “when the issue is the status of American womanhood, this line of argument follows a swollen stream of trend stories that declare feminism shuddered and died sometime during the Reagan era.”

In the American context—especially in the early years of the contemporary “crisis”—the cracks and fissures were frequently given names: Katie Roiphe (1993, 1997), Christina Hoff Sommers (1994) and Rene Denfeld (1995); young(er) women who felt that feminism had wed itself to a “cult of victimhood” that left it hopelessly passé and out of touch. “The feminists” targeted by Roiphe and her colleagues were of a very particular ilk, and they soon came to stand—in the popular press’ eyes, at least—as the faces of the purported feminist monolith.³⁶ At these events and in subsequent scholarly publications, those same young “feminist dissidents” often came to stand not only as the unappreciative

³⁶ Roiphe (1993, 1997) in particular focused predominantly on the feminism purported by Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin; contentious radical feminists who have been critiqued (and criticized) by feminists of many flavours. Riding the wave of the “Generation X versus the Baby Boom” phenomenon of the mid-1990s (and corresponding, not coincidentally, in age, race and class as well), the generational debates had seemingly begun, dividing feminists in two: third waves versus The Second Wave, Feminist versus post-feminist. For more, see Chapter 2.

recipients of their struggles, but for all young women of their generation. And they also came to simultaneously embody, represent and underscore the exigency of the “crisis” as feminisms of all kinds approached the millennium.

Postfeminist Critiques: The Canadian Context

Nan Bauer Maglin and Donna Perry’s (1996) edited volume *“Bad Girls/Good Girls”: Love, Sex and Power in the 1990s* draws on many of the political, economic and social shifts that had moved feminism and feminist thought into the pre-millennial decade, and the collection speaks first to the various challenges that sparked critical shifts in feminist thought, action, and theory. In their introduction, Maglin and Perry write,

We feel a similar urgency today, as we watch the feminist enterprise that has transformed our lives being distorted, commodified, and/or vilified—and not just by right-wing legislators and talk show hosts or conservative anti-feminist journals like *Commentary* and *National Review*. Those calling themselves feminists have joined the backlash against women (1996: xiii).

The climate that permitted (indeed, welcomed) the contemporary appearance of post (as in after) feminism was largely one initially established (at least in text) via the American experience, but this turn affected Canadian feminisms in the last two decades in many of the same ways.³⁷ A strong anti-feminist backlash fuelled innumerable headlines proclaiming feminism “the great experiment that failed,” and a women’s movement that has had to struggle against that

³⁷ “Postfeminism” is a highly contested term. See the chapter that follows for more detail.

commanding and rhetorically persuasive pull.³⁸ Anti-feminist sentiment certainly didn't originate in the 1980s, surfacing when the climate permitted in the decade that followed. But as Susan Faludi (1991) has shown, the backlash against feminism became particularly insidious during this decade and—perhaps more significantly—it fuelled anti-feminist sentiment in the popular media in an unprecedented capacity.³⁹ By the 1990s, charges of binary thinking and the promotion of a woman-as-victim mentality hit newsstands North of the 49th parallel, and the now-familiar (postfeminist/antifeminist) counter-narrative to some of the more mainstream feminists and their work had taken hold.

As early as 1993, Manon Tremblay noted that the women's movement in Canada had already spent years fighting to “preserve” women's successes instead of concentrating on strengthening its ranks:

...over the course of the last few years, the feminist movement has devoted itself primarily to fighting to maintain what women have gained in a climate of political conservatism, of financial austerity, and of the affirmation of a neo-conservative right wing. In addition, the antifeminist undercurrent which is currently developing in the West has led to the belief that the feminist movement has lost its *raison d'être* with women now having achieved equality with men (Tremblay, 1993: 276).

By mid-decade, Tremblay's “undercurrent” became a commonly heard reproach of feminism and its proponents. The “diversified, multifaceted and enriched” nature of feminist activity in Canada was rapidly reinterpreted by oppositional

³⁸ See particularly Kay Ebeling's (1990) *Newsweek* article entitled “The Failure of Feminism.” Carolyn Kitch's *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: The Origins of Visual Stereotypes in the American Mass Media* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001) illustrates that the current backlash against feminism is a remarkably persistent strand of rhetoric that has survived with astonishing strength—not from the 1980s, but from the 1920s (184).

³⁹ For a wonderful summary of how such sentiment played out in the Canadian press, see Goddu, 1999.

forces as demonstrative of an antiquated, ineffectual, “splintered and fragmented” women’s movement (Hamilton, 1996: 80). And, like our southern neighbours, the evidence supporting the charges came in the form of a handful of young, white “feminist” iconoclasts; dissidents heralding the last gasps of feminism, inciting reports of a “new generation” of feminists in their wake.

The first wave of postfeminist bestsellers hit bookstands in 1992. Amy Friedman (who based her work on her own experiences at Queen’s University’s Women’s Studies program), argued that the feminism of the 1960s and 1970s had mutated, that academic feminism was imbued with “sloppy, inaccurate, lazy language,” and that during the course of the previous three decades, feminism had retained “the personal” only as “fodder for a statistical mill” (Friedman, 1992: 42). Three years later, print journalists Kate Fillion and Donna LaFramboise published *Lip Service: The Truth about Women’s Darker Side in Love, Sex, and Friendship* and *The Princess at the Window: A New Gender Morality*, respectively.⁴⁰ Both books were based on personal interviews and on the authors’ own experiences in Canadian Women’s Studies programs, arguing that feminism perpetuated dangerous dichotomies that were “predicated on women’s passivity and oppression” (Fillion, 1995: 223). While framed in Canadian geographical and institutional contexts, content analyses of American feminist magazines (particularly *Ms.*) and critiques of “establishment feminism”

⁴⁰ LaFramboise maintained a personal web site outlining her own “dissident feminist vision” and providing counter-arguments to the barrage of negative reviews that her book—and selected articles written for *The National Post*—received (<http://www.razberry.com/>). While it’s no longer online (it is now www.tripodgirl.com, featuring her digital photography), her writing is still widely available.

(that group of “people who are recognized by society at large as legitimate feminist spokespersons”) constituted the bulk of their data (LaFramboise, 1995: 8).⁴¹ Consistently, their voices (in their own publications, quoted in mainstream newspapers across the country, and in short televised snippets on a variety of talk shows) argued that what were once simply “questionable ideas” (read: “radical”) in the 1970s had been elevated to feminist dogma, and that by century’s end that “establishment” had become extremist and arrogant; hell-bent on maintaining whatever fictions necessary to ensure its own survival. Playing off of (or as the antidote to) the stereotype of “the feminist” with skilled manipulation of celebrity, power, and the authority to speak publicly, postfeminism had (and continues to enjoy) chic, inoffensive, commercial qualities, and both their bodily presence (as white, educated, heterosexual, “reasonable” young women) and their words (“feminism has gone too far”) effectively—and rapidly—came to characterize postfeminism.⁴² It became another easy, quasi-political, painless product to buy.⁴³ In no time at all, politically charged feminist language

⁴¹ The work of Marilyn French and Catherine MacKinnon were most often cited as representative of “the feminist movement.”

⁴² Dawn Currie (1999) effectively illustrates how postfeminism has been pre-packaged and sold by the media via an antiperspirant ad (138). The ad implies that the magazine reader could enjoy what feminists want and have made possible, “without the feminist rejection of patriarchal heterosexuality” (139). Elaine Batcher (1990), decoded the messages of Virginia Slims cigarette ads (“You’ve come a long way, Baby”), and argued that such images give us the “truth” that “teenage girls living in a postfeminist era have the world of possibilities before them and are no longer limited by the restrictions placed on previous generations.” That the authors (and their proponents) applied sweeping generalizations based on American resources to an unspecified notion of “North American feminism” is understandable, as simple ideas and all-encompassing narratives have always been easier to package and sell (and to stir controversy) in the mainstream.

⁴³ Alex Kuczynski (1999) noted this turn in the realm of mainstream women’s magazines, even those that once loosely called themselves “feminist” (and, even when they didn’t, published articles on “feminist” issues like day care, gender inequities in the workplace, and female sexual pleasure) changed their focus in the mid to late 1990s. Magazines like

permeated marketing rhetoric and—in its “new,” watered-down form—was put to use plugging everything from tampons to pop music to mini-vans,⁴⁴ leading many to ask: Is this the legacy of feminism? Where have all the young feminists gone?

TIME magazine attempted to answer that question in the summer of 1998. In what has now become a heavily-cited and much criticized article (one that appeared verbatim in the Canadian edition of the magazine), Ginia Bellefonte argued that while 1970s feminism was intellectually provocative, the insurgence of texts written by young “feminists” of late amounted to little more than stylish fluff. According to Bellefonte,

...feminism at the very end of the century seems to be an intellectual undertaking in which the complicated, often mundane issues of modern life get little attention and the narcissistic ramblings of a few new media-anointed spokeswomen get far too much...What a comedown for the movement...But if feminism of the 60s and 70s was steeped in research and obsessed with social change, feminism today is wed to the culture of celebrity and self-obsession” (1998: 55).

In many ways, Bellefonte mirrored the very representations of feminism and feminists she was trying to critique, creating a simplified dichotomy based solely on the publications of a handful of self-proclaimed feminist dissidents, spectacular news headlines and pop music superstars. In the process, “the feminists” were systematically relegated to the past, and post-feminists became a synecdoche for its present. If postfeminist characterizations such as Bellefonte’s are taken seriously, feminism’s future looks far from bright.⁴⁵

Glamour, *Cosmo*, and *MarieClaire*, “by virtue of the articles they choose to publish...seem to argue that their reader doesn’t want or need feminism” (4).

⁴⁴ Tampax’s “Being a girl rocks!” campaign stands out as one of the clearest examples of this.

⁴⁵ As bell hooks (1996) commented, “Like any other ‘hot’ marketable topic, feminism has

The attention that these postfeminist (or “dissident-feminist”) authors garnered was significant and, weak analysis aside, their work proved to be astonishingly influential. Headlines emphatically proclaimed the final demise of feminism and the failure of the women’s movement. In reaction, feminists of all brand retaliated: one reviewer attacked the “highly selective, blinkered vision” of the authors, stating that their texts were little more than “in-your-face rant[s]” supported by “extraordinarily inflated ideas” regarding the prevalence and influence of feminism in Canada (Hurley, 1996: np). Myrna Kostash (1996) attacked Fillion’s work directly for presenting second wave feminism as “a monolithic movement reducible to a single tendency” (13).

As problematic (and historically inaccurate) as they have been, postfeminist texts served four auspicious purposes. First, they (albeit unintentionally) publicly announced the ‘coming of age’ of feminism’s daughters; those women who grew up with feminism as their birthright and came to feminism (or feminist activism, or feminist theory) in a different manner than their predecessors. Second, they illustrated that the landscape for feminist activism and theorizing *had* mutated over the course of the last three decades, and that some women were indeed reaping the benefits of second wave feminism’s labour. Third, and unwittingly again, they sparked a necessary dialogue on generational (and inter-generational) feminisms and on the women’s movement’s future directions, one that has just begun to take shape (See

become an issue that can be opportunistically pimped by feminists and non-feminists alike” (58).

Steenbergen, 2001a: 9).⁴⁶ Finally, their fixation on the “success” of the sexual revolution and the assumed failure of feminists to recognize it prompted a much-needed reexamination of feminism’s engagement with sexual politics and the body. In a somewhat ironic twist, the disputes that raged between so-called “postfeminists” and “feminists” live and in person and the energy expended on publications that featured ideological one-upmanship and petty name-calling (on both sides) inadvertently created spaces in which these issues could be discussed.

The popular media’s tendency to blame feminism for all that ails women (a trend that has continued to this day) also played a role, and simplified versions of both sides were (mis)represented:

News about women is often saturated with commentary about harried mothers who have discovered that parenting and working for pay are realms whose demands are mutually exclusive (though similarly draining)—an opposition that has provoked various anti-feminist tracts suggesting feminists are to blame. By suggesting that women could work for pay and be good parents, feminists have created unrealistic and unrealizable expectations for women, they say. In such discourse, “balance” is to be found only when women capitulate to their essential natures: procreating and then caring for their progeny as their first and most gratifying priority.⁴⁷

In many ways, popular media utilized feminism (write large) as a catch-all scapegoat; as the extreme perspective that has grown antiquated and counter-productive to “real world” issues. Propagated throughout the 1990s by the positive media coverage of postfeminism (and the presentation of them as

⁴⁶ Also, their fixation on the successes of the sexual revolution and the assumed failure of feminists to recognize them helped prompt a much-needed reexamination of feminism’s engagement with sexual politics and the body (Steenbergen, 2001: 9). Ann Braithwaite (2002) has also pointed out the “overlap” between feminism and postfeminism that emerges from these writings, even when an attempt to distinguish them is one of the primary goals of the texts (341).

⁴⁷ Mary Douglas Vavrus, “Putting Ally on Trial: Contesting Postfeminism in Popular Culture,” *Women’s Studies in Communication*. Volume 23, Number 3 (Fall 2000) 413.

rational “alternative” female voices to the absurd “feminist” stance), feminism became a social movement on the extreme left that was accountable for each and every issue related—even remotely—to women.

Given that feminism’s present has been plagued at the turn of the millennium by a seemingly dangerous divide between theory and practice, intergenerational hostility, an unrelenting backlash (aping “feminism”) and charges of racism, elitism and tokenism in its own documentation of itself, it’s no wonder that calls for “reassessment” have been underway. One might say (indeed, many have gestured towards it already) that feminism is in crisis (but perhaps “crisis” has always fuelled these fires). The proliferation of the apolitical use of feminist rhetoric in the corporate world (a regular occurrence in very recent years) only adds to the turmoil.⁴⁸ In reaction to all of this, and reflecting on perhaps the zeitgeist of the millennium, feminist thinkers have felt the need to become more self-referential; to step back, take stock and ask themselves: What will/can/should the feminist future look like?

The anxiety experienced by feminism, especially given the aforementioned challenges, is certainly warranted. While external debates have indicated time and time again that feminism has been in an almost perpetual state of disorder for the last decade (some would argue for the last four decades)—because of the widening gulf between the academic and the political, the seemingly disinterested stance of younger women, and the promulgation of negative press—the challenges within the community of feminist thinkers have been just as

⁴⁸ This isn’t necessarily wholly a negative—having feminist rhetoric present in public advertising, for instance, still results in feminism being *present* in public spaces.

contentious if not as public.

Feminist History: The past as imperative

...histories, reconstructions of the past, are in fact illuminations of a present that would not be possible without this past. The time of the historian is strangely dislocated, somewhere between past and present, but not entirely occupying either. For the feminist historian, these paradoxes are particularly exacerbated: the task of the feminist historian...must be, in part at least, the forging of relations between the sexes, and among members of each sex, along lines that diverge drastically from the present. The past, a past no longer understood as inert or given, may help engender a productive future, a future beyond patriarchy...The future is the domain of what ensues (Grosz, 2000: 1018).⁴⁹

Charges that “the world is now full of post-feminists” and that an entire generation of young people think Betty Friedan single-handedly launched the feminist movement by writing ‘some book’ in the 1950s triggered heated and non-productive intergenerational tension and hostility.⁵⁰ As a result, recovering the feminist past was deemed a worthwhile venture, to reclaim it for those who

⁴⁹ See also the work of Trinh T. Minh-ha, particularly *Woman, Native, Other*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p.20). Her version of “history” constitutes ‘a mode of writing’ which is not solely about process, but about her location in an academic discipline grounded historically and produced in a particular cultural moment. In many ways, she writes as Walter Benjamin imagined: “Writing: an on-going practice concerned not with inserting a “me” into language, but with creating an opening where the “me” disappears while “I” endlessly come and go” 31; “Words, fragments, and lines that I love for no sound reason; blanks, lapses, and silences that settle in like gaps of fresh air as soon as the inked space smells stuffy” (25).

⁵⁰ Linda Gordon, as quoted in Kerber, 90; Kerber, 93. For more on the often hostile relationship between feminist ‘generations,’ see E. Ann Kaplan and Devoney Looser, Eds. *Generations: Academic Feminists in Dialogue*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), Nan Bauer Maglin and Donna Perry, Eds. *“Bad Girls”/“Good Girls”: Women, Sex & Power in the Nineties*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1996), Tania Modelski, *Feminism without Women: Culture and Criticism in a “Postfeminist” Age*, (New York: Routledge, 1991), Ann Oakley and Juliet Mitchell, Eds. *Who’s Afraid of Feminism?* (New York: The New Press, 1997), and Imelda Whelehan, *Modern Feminist Thought: From the Second Wave to ‘Post-Feminism’*, (New York: New York University Press, 1995), to name just a few.

“do not know that they need to know their own history.”⁵¹ Assertions of white bias and the privileging of particular stories in ‘traditional’ feminist historical research and history-making also account for the contemporary focus on what came before. While regrouping, revisiting, and rewriting feminist histories can only be a positive endeavour for the movement at large, even more problems have arisen in the process, and some argue that “insufficient account [has been] taken of the extent to which standardized versions of ‘the feminist past’ have been invoked to represent a wide variety of feminist experiences and an equally heterogeneous set of historical circumstances and cultural contexts.”⁵²

Susan Stanford Friedman takes this idea one step further, and suggests that the ‘problem’ of feminist history—especially when it comes to *writing* feminist histories—stems from contradictory desires within contemporary feminism itself:

On the one hand, a pressing urgency to reclaim and hold on to a newly reconstituted history of women has fueled the development of the field of women’s history, as well as the archaeological, archival, and oral history activities in other areas of women’s studies outside the discipline of history, inside and outside the academy. On the other hand, there has been a palpable anxiety within the feminist movement about the possibility that our activities as feminists—including the productions of our own history—run the risk of repeating the same patterns of thought and action that excluded, distorted, muted, or erased women from the master narratives in the first place.⁵³

Elizabeth Grosz would suggest that feminist historians continue their search; that

⁵¹ Kerber, 91.

⁵² Burton, 25.

⁵³ Susan Stanford Friedman, “Making History: Reflections on Feminism, Narrative, and Desire,” in Diane Elam and Robyn Wiegman, Eds. *Feminism Beside Itself*. (New York: Routledge, 1995, 11-54) 11-12.

the struggle itself—to rekindle the revolutionary possibilities underlying feminist language—is worthy of the exercise:

There is another way of undertaking history—even feminist history—or another way of undertaking any activity or discipline than that which is presently available. The past cannot be exhausted through its transcription in the present because it is also the ongoing possibility (or virtuality) that makes *future* histories, the continuous writing of histories, necessary. History is made an inexhaustible enterprise only because of...the multiplicity of positions from which this writing can and will occur.⁵⁴

As I will discuss in the concluding section of this chapter, some of the most interesting recent articulations of feminisms—those that emerged at the turn of the century during the internal “crisis” of identity and anxieties over the relationship between the past, present and futures of feminism—have, unfortunately for the most part, slipped below the radar of established historians. They are not, I argue, adequately recognized as legitimate fragmentations of feminism as a broad movement for social change. This point recurs in my investigation of feminisms’ *passing on* here and in chapters that follow.

Looking Past the “Post”: Divergent feminist sensibilities in the 1990s

It is unfortunate that the visibility of postfeminists (as well as the heated discussions and media attention that followed their emergence), largely overshadowed the emergence of *other* feminist women (predominantly, but not exclusively, young) who, despite what the initial criticism directed towards them as a “group” implied, were far from homogenous. Leslie Heywood (2006) notes

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Grosz, “Histories of a Feminist Future” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. Volume 25, Issue 4 (2000) 1021.

that during the early to mid-1990s, there was a striking increase in feminist exchanges and in the development of feminist networks (online and off) as well as a discernable swell in the production of cultural texts with explicitly feminist activist agendas during the early to mid-1990s. As evidence for her claim, she cites DIY (Do-It-Yourself) 'zine production,⁵⁵ the Riot Grrrl movement,⁵⁶ and “the race and gender activism of hip-hop, rap, and R&B artists”⁵⁷ as examples of emergent networks and the articulation of previously unheard perspectives that were taking issue with various aspects of past feminist politics and even with the feminist label itself (Heywood, 2006: xviii).⁵⁸ As rapid-fire commercial appropriation (and the consequent branding) of “girl power”—a phrase attributed

⁵⁵ Short for “fanzines,” ‘zines are generally self-published, small-scale publications, made (and sold) cheaply and often distributed by hand, mail, or word-of-mouth (but that definition has expanded significantly since the advent of the Internet). While much of the writing about ‘zines tends to focus on the early 1990s and the riot grrrls (*BUST* and *BITCH* magazines began as hand-photocopied and stapled ‘zines, for instance), current understandings of ‘zines find their roots in the 1970s punk scene (although they have been in circulation since the 1930s). Guzzetti and Gamboa (2004) note that “the international movement of zining today is most popular among adolescent females, particularly those of the middle class or those with the resources (e.g., time, money) to produce them...As a result, zines have become ‘influential tools for expression by adolescent girls’” (Wagner, 1998: 12 qtd. in Guzzetti and Gamboa, 2004: 408). There are too many items written on feminism and ‘zine production (both online and hardcopy) to provide anything close to a comprehensive list here. But for a fairly representative sample, see Richardson, 1996; Green & Taormino, 1997; Bayerl, 2000; Cresser, *et al*, 2001; Fraser, 2002; Piano, 2002; Bleyer, 2004; Armstrong, 2004; For solid Canadian examples, see particularly Bell, 2001; 2002; and Scott-Dixon, 1999; 2001.

⁵⁶ Wagg (2003) defines Riot Grrrl as “a revolution—“girl style now”—calling to action the loose-knit community of punk women to reclaim a feminist voice for young women and to retaliate against the misogynist, sexist, and racist attitudes that dominated punk from the 1970s to the present time” (20). Riot Grrrl (and its media ‘blackout,’ and its ‘revival’) has been extensively documented. For a taste, see White, 1992; Gottlieb & Wald, 1994; Raphael, 1994; Kearney, 1997; Wald, 1998; Rosenberg & Garofalo, 1998; Soccio, 1999; Driscoll, 1999; Wagg, 2003; and Feigenbaum, 2007. Alison Piepmeier’s *Girl Zines: Making Media, Doing Feminism* is also due out this year.

⁵⁷ I’m guessing that Heywood is speaking of the work of Tricia Rose (1994; 1994), Joan Morgan (1999), Radford-Hill (2000), Kimberly Springer (2002), and Pough (2004) and others, but she doesn’t elaborate. Nor does she provide a discussion of the connections and disjunctures of all of these “cultural texts.”

⁵⁸ They’ve also, at various times, taken issue with the “third wave” tag.

to the Riot Grrrls of the early 1990s—mobilized a simplistic version of a feminist lexicon as marketing strategy (and pilfered legitimate critiques of feminism by feminists in their tactics as well),⁵⁹ those outside the movement(s) were most likely to hear about feminism’s *passing on* (as in its demise, or at least its failure) than about the growing pains it could potentially have been *passing through*.

Heywood notes that the approach of the millennium was “a time of heightened interest in feminism both in the United States and worldwide,” but that cultural mainstreaming quelled the revolutionary potential of the interstitial initiatives, leading to charges that feminism had transformed into little more than a lifestyle choice (2006: xvii; xviii, xix). On this point, Heywood’s perspective aligns with Ann Ferguson’s (1994) assertion that “the professionalization of feminist theory that has occurred through the mainstreaming of feminist philosophy creates a danger of a gap between theory and practice that creates a danger of co-optation” (197). However, while Ferguson suggests that this may have occurred as a result of the professionalization of feminist methods of analysis and the academic mainstreaming of feminism (insofar as “we now have our own contributions to the philosophical canon”). She writes,

This is a mixed blessing, for the canonization of feminist texts also indicates that feminist philosophy has become—the work of a professional elite and that it is in danger of losing its roots in a grassroots political struggle for social change that will empower women. Indeed, for the most part, we older-generation academic feminist philosophers have tenure, and many of us no longer

⁵⁹ Much has been written on this phenomenon, but I would argue that this remains one of the more under-theorized and under-researched phenomena. Feminists would do well to examine corporate influences—and branding, specifically—in the future.

engage in any sustained way in grassroots political practice. Does this make a difference in how we conceptualize the problems of feminist philosophy and where we put our emphases in our disputes with each other as well as with those "doubting Thomases," non-feminist male philosophers? I argue that it does (1994).

And, I would additionally question how these forms of "mainstreaming"—cultural, academic and otherwise—of feminist concerns alongside the now-common adaptation of the feminist lexicon in everyday vernacular has affected the stories that we tell ourselves about our contemporary feminist moment. Will the "official" story of "millennial feminisms" (that of postfeminism and the rise of self-proclaimed feminist dissidents) stand as the history already written? Or will the diversity of feminist perspectives that emerged in conjunction with those enter into the narratives?

An impressive number of other ("new," "young"⁶⁰) feminist texts were published throughout the 1990s, adding yet another layer of public discourse to circulating sentiments around the state and future of feminism and the women's movement (Hausbeck, 1997: 1). Rebecca Walker, daughter of novelist Alice Walker, emerged first in 1992 as a contributing intern to *Ms. Magazine*,⁶¹ then as

⁶⁰ "Young" is in parentheses here because the women being discussed hardly count as "young women"—most of them are finished graduate school and are professionals over the age of 30. In that sense, there is a strange dose of infantilization embedded in these debates worthy of further investigation. Rose Glickman identified "young feminists" as women between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five as early as 1993. Those women would currently be (as I am) between the ages of thirty-three and fifty years old (xvii). The "newness" of these positions could also be reconsidered in light of longstanding positions located outside of the dominant political frames.

⁶¹ Her now infamous item for the magazine, in which she declared "I am not a post-feminist feminist. I am the third wave," is widely considered to be the genesis of the widespread adoption of the term "third wave feminism" as well as a gauge of a definitive generational split among feminists in North America (41).

the founder of the Third Wave Foundation.⁶² Her 1995 edited collection, *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism* made the first big splash in 1995 alongside Barbara Findlen's *Listen Up: Voices from the Next Feminist Generation*. Published and distributed by popular presses, both books were, as Catherine Orr notes,

filled with autobiographical accounts of young feminists attempting to fit the legacies of and lessons from the women's movement of the 1970s into their own lived experiences. Most important for feminist scholars, however, both offer insights into how feminist discourses are interpreted and shaped by a generation that has always regarded the women's movement as a piece of history (1997: 30).

Other publications followed swiftly; many borrowing from semi-autobiographical or narrative styles.⁶³ Notable American contributions included Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake's more theory-driven (1997) compilation, *Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism*, Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richard's (2000) *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism and the Future*, Daisy Hernández and Bushra Rehman's (2002) *Colonize This! Young Women of Color*

⁶² The Third Wave Foundation (founded with Amy Richards) was, and remains, an explicitly youth-oriented, feminist activist organization that "works nationally to support young women and transgender youth ages 15 to 30." Operated by a board of young women, men and transgender activists "striving to combat inequalities that we ourselves face as a result of our age, gender, race, sexual orientation, economic status, or level of education," the foundation supports groups and individuals working on social justice initiatives. <http://thirdwavefoundation.org>.

⁶³ The Canadian journal *Fireweed* published a special issue entitled "Revolution Grrl-Style" in Fall/Winter 1997. Paula Kamen, who edited *Feminist Fatale: Voices from the "Twenty Something" Generation* in 1991, published *Her Way: Young Women Remake the Sexual Revolution* in 2000, dealing (again) with the pressing issue of sexuality that emerged as an important talking-point for this "new" generation of feminists. Virginia Trioli's (1996) *Generation F: Sex Power and the Young Feminist* and Rosamund Else-Mitchell and Naomi Flutter's (1998) *Talking Up: Young Women's Take on Feminism* peppered the Australian context, and Natasha Walter's (1998) *The New Feminism* and (1999) *On the Move: Feminism for a New Generation* marked narratives from the United Kingdom. Interestingly, two books on the "new" Jewish feminism also emerged at this time as well: see Schiffman (2000) and Rutenbery (2001). Both were national bestsellers.

on *Today's Feminism*, and Rory Dicker and Alison Piepmeier's (2003) *Catching a Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the 21st Century*.⁶⁴ Two publications from Canada joined the conversation at this time: *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers des femmes (CWS/cf)* released a special double issue entitled "Young Women: Feminists, Activists, Grrrls" in early 2001, and Allyson Mitchell, Lisa Bryn Rundle and Lara Karaian's edited collection, *Turbo Chicks: Talking Young Feminisms* was published shortly thereafter.

The Canadian inclusions to this list enjoyed (and continue to benefit from) noteworthy success. For example, the *CWS/cf* issue sold out rapidly and is now out of print. *Turbo Chicks* has been lauded for filling in some of the gaps in the (largely American) discussions around youth and feminism with content north of the border, and as an exciting "arena for young Canadian feminists to articulate their views" (Byers, 2002: 268). Essays and articles in both collections have been widely referenced, have landed on current Women's Studies syllabi, and have enjoyed multiple reprints. Of course, the dangers of conflating Canadian and American incarnations of these phenomena should be flagged here (and in this thesis as a whole). As Myrna Kostash (1980) notes, there has consistently been a dearth of readily-accessible Canadian records on social movements and activism (particular during the burgeoning years of "flower power") of the past. Most accounts, she argued, present the Canadian experience as simply a northern

⁶⁴ Works that addressed the anxieties surrounding the assumed scarcity of young feminist activists also emerged at this time. See Labaton and Martin (2004); Baumgardner and Richards (2005), and Valenti (2007).

reflection of the American event (251).⁶⁵ However, as Constance Backhouse (1992) reminds us, “certain political and theoretical issues transcend international borders, ebbing and flowing between the two countries in symbiotic fashion” (3).⁶⁶ I would argue that anxieties around the state and future of feminism in North America (and the “crises” that emerge from them) are certainly issues of this ilk.

On the whole, however, reviews of these “other” kinds of (not postfeminist, but not quite conventionally feminist) feminist publications have been mixed. Most of the critiques of these works point to an anxiety around their contribution to—and reproduction of—troubling generational narratives. Chapter Two will examine that discourse in more detail, but the noteworthy theme that emerges from feminist appraisals of this “new” feminist writing of relevance here has to do with the past; specifically how these texts do or do not grapple with the feminisms that have come before (or the multiple ways in which those pasts are ‘mishandled’). The bulk of these publications articulate a desire on the part of the authors to differentiate themselves from the figure of the post-feminist, and all of them nod towards a need to address and re-imagine the configuration of

⁶⁵ Kostash asserted that “the sixties” in Canada was significantly different from the movement in the United States, but that the mythology surrounding the decade has had a distinctly American flavour. The same holds true for historical accounts of the women’s movement, of course, as well as its generational descant—but the similarities (particularly once popular culture expressions of them are taken into account) cannot be underestimated nor overlooked.

⁶⁶ Tremblay (1993) noted that “feminism in Quebec has become a mode of expression which is very different from that found elsewhere in Canada, particularly because of its historical evolution and its ties to Catholicism and nationalism...In fact, these two branches of the Canadian movement remain distinct; we recall the positions taken by francophone and anglophone feminists in the 1980 referendum...or during the Meech Lake Constitutional talks.” (292). I would argue, as I have earlier, that the current debates concerning the contemporary status of feminism in many ways transcends this historical divide.

feminism itself in the present. They are important because they trouble the theories and practices of past feminisms and, in various ways, they attempt to write themselves into the ongoing histories of the women's movement.

As the creation of texts written by, for and about women has multiplied, one of the most pressing questions to arise was about its roots: "Under what assumptions about history, narrative, feminism and political purpose" has 'feminism as a history' been written?" (Elam & Weigman, 1995: 6). As well, *whose* history is it, and *who's* been writing it? Assertions of white bias and the privileging of particular, individual stories in 'traditional' feminist historical research and history-making also account for the contemporary focus on what came before. Critics argued frankly that "insufficient account [has been] taken of the extent to which standardized versions of feminist history have been invoked to represent a wide variety of feminist experiences and an equally heterogeneous set of historical circumstances and cultural contexts" (Burton, 1992: 25).

While attempts to incorporate the voices and stories of those previously excluded from the history of women have been made, debates over *how* to include them in feminist history continue, and possible solutions have been difficult to find. If anything, feminist thinkers have grown skilled "in offering the generalization that race, class, and gender are made in dynamic relationship to each other, but find it more difficult to provide succinct, persuasive examples of this interaction" (Kerber, 2002: 95). As Tom Postlewait (2000) asks in "Writing History Today,"

If we no longer define eras in terms of the "history of ideas," climates of opinion, or the zeitgeist, why should we now embrace grand, and perhaps hazy, ideas of mentality, hegemony, or the structures of

feeling? We have great difficulty, apparently, in resisting period concepts that have a singular identity, just as we continue to treat imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, and western culture as singular entities. As we move from events to paradigms, we are often seduced by grand, singular ideas which we tend to reify as organizing principles for interpretation. How, then, can we do justice to the several contexts that operate for all events? And how do we do justice to the often contradictory conditions that operate at any time or place?

While feminist writing about itself has shifted direction, particularly as the content has become more and more mainstreamed, some fear that it lost its revolutionary promise in the process. Ferguson, for one, feared that feminist history could potentially be “ignoring or co-opting the original feminist project of challenging social domination systems in order to empower women.”⁶⁷ Others have argued that recent trends in the writing of feminist thought have led to a more severe and obvious gulf dividing theory and practice, noting that academic women—those who do the vast majority of the actual research and writing—hold “disproportionate power in defining the movement,” but have little to no accountability to it. The emergence of feminist elites comes directly from unequal access to resources, and the result is the theory/practice schism (Ferguson, 1994: 211).⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Outlining the effects of the ‘professionalization of feminism,’ Ferguson states that the success that feminist theory has had as a viable framework both in and outside of philosophical circles has been, at once, an advantage and a hindrance to practitioners. She writes, “we now have...a feminist philosophy canon. But this is a mixed blessing, for the canonization of feminist texts also indicates that feminist philosophy has become the work of a professional elite and that it is in danger of losing its roots in a grassroots political struggle for social change that will empower women.”⁶⁷ She argues that academic disengagement with activism, something she herself is ‘guilty’ of, affects how feminist philosophy and its problems are conceptualized, and that too much energy is expended in “disputes with each other as well as with those ‘doubting Thomases,’ non-feminist male philosophers” (200).

⁶⁸ Kathryn Pyne Addelson, “Feminist Philosophy and the Women’s Movement,” *Hypatia*, Volume 9, Issue 3 (Summer 1994) 223. Kerber also noted that “accessibility is what is most

While the criticism of these texts has been multifarious, my interest in them here is threefold. One concerns the ways in which semi-autobiographical, narrative styles have been charged with distorting 'the feminist past' (when, that is, they address them at all), and how the feminist past has been configured through present lenses (and lenses that were 'present' in the past). Another has to do with the timing of these publications; for, as Elizabeth Grosz (2000) states,

The marking of the millennium is clearly an arbitrary, and ambivalent, designation: two thousand years since the nominal birth of Christ may not prove the most apt occasion for feminist reflections on pasts and futures; nevertheless, social rituals, those marked by a calendar date, by an anniversary, provide as good an excuse as any for engaging in reflections on the past and speculations about the future (2000: 1017).

Finally, I am interested in the ways in which condemnations of these current writings often pivot around the authors' collective engagement with popular media, a curious phenomenon that points to reluctance on the part of feminism writ large to engage in any thorough way with the (dialogic) relationship between feminism, feminists and mainstream articulations of both. As I will posit later, media (in this case print media) acts often as the engine that drives—and sometimes derails—attempts to historicize feminism with a view to *passing it on*.

needed...we are doing no more than has been done for decades for men whose names are familiar: presidents, politicians, writers, poets, and artists" (2002:92).

Chapter Three

Tracing Waves, Interrogating Generations, Making Feminist History

There IS something lovely about a wave. Gently swelling, rising and then crashing, waves evoke images of both beauty and power. As feminists, we could do much worse than be associated with this phenomenon (Bailey, 1997: 17).

Waves—which by definition, curve alternately in opposite directions—embody contradiction (delombard, 1995: 21).

The wave is a trope that is troubling to me (Sawchuk, 2009: 58).

The “history of feminism”—or the demarcation of certain feminist historical trajectories of the women’s movement—is often described via the metaphor of waves. In the United States in particular, this model traditionally frames the ‘first wave’ according to its ‘emergence’ in 1848 (with Elizabeth Cady Stanton *et al*’s “Declaration of Sentiments” at the women’s right’s convention in Seneca Falls, New York) and its climax in 1920 with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment (Dicker and Pipemeier, 2003: 9). The ‘second wave,’ this narrative conveys, was prompted by the civil rights movement and the publication of a number of ‘seminal’ texts (Simone de Beauvoir’s (1952) *Second Sex* and Betty Friedan’s (1962) *The Feminine Mystique* are most often cited in this regard; the former for planting a seed, the latter for igniting it); sparking a snowball effect of feminist awareness and activism in the 1960s that mobilized women into political action well through the next decade (Dicker and Pipemeier, 2003: 9; see also

Bulbeck, 1999). Sometimes articulated as “stages” (by Gillis, Howie, and Mumford (2004) for instance, but also by Friedan herself), the accounts share similar plots: the ‘first’ responded to white women’s exclusion from public life, with an ambition to gain legal identities and civil rights (including the achievement of suffrage), and the ‘second’ is marked by “a clear, self-defined feminist movement,” focusing on gaining “full human rights for women” and solidified into ‘contemporary feminism’ with demands of equal opportunity, the abolition of violence against women, access to health and child care, and the entrenchment of the Equal Rights Amendment (Gillis, Howie and Mumford, 2004: 1; Dicker and Pipemeier, 2004:8).¹

The English Canadian feminist origin story looks strikingly similar. Diana Pederson’s (1996) assemblage of Canadian feminist/women’s movement historical publications notes that

With a mixture of admiration and condescension, feminists in the early 1970s sought to document the accomplishments of their predecessors and learn from their mistakes. The early scholarship focused on what some scholars christened the “first-wave” of feminist organizing from the 1880s to the 1920s, and on the most prominent (1996: 61).

While the tale isn’t told as vehemently or as often, suffrage most often marks the beginning of the “end” of the women’s movement’s ‘first wave’ north of the border; with the notable exception of the “Person’s Case” in 1929, in which the Albertan “Famous Five” (Nellie McClung, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney and Emily Murphy) made legal history by demanding that the

¹ Although I’ve only named three, a good number of the texts in the bibliography turn to that very same history as either a foundation for their arguments or as a jumping point to interrogating and critiquing these kinds of grand narratives, as I do here.

Supreme Court (and then appealing to the British Privy Council) to declare women “persons” under the *BNA Act*.² The next surge of feminist movement—or so (one version of) the story goes—didn’t really begin until the 1960s, with the establishment of Voice of Women (with over 5000 members from across the country) in 1960:

VOW’s members had much in common politically with first-wave feminists, who had fought for women’s suffrage and believed that having more women in public life would create a more just and more peaceful society (Rebick, 2005: 3).

While some Canadian activists and scholars point to the establishment of Voice of Women as “the seedbed for the second wave of feminism,” (Ursula Franklin, as qtd. in Rebick, 2005: 3), others argue that “Voice of Women was ahead of its time,” largely because of widespread agreement that Friedan had indeed ‘summed up’ the then contemporary “problem with no name” by 1963, receiving widespread recognition (Rebick, 2005: 5; 6).³ Regardless, this narrative serves to uphold Pederson’s observation that studies of “second-wave” feminism since 1960 have also focused on major national organizations (1996: 61).⁴

The Canadian “second wave” in this configuration, is also—like its southern counterpart—marked by “revolutionary fervour” (Rebick, 2005: 17):

Legalized abortion, resistance to male violence, pay equity and

² The successful appeal not only named women “persons” under Canadian law, but also granted women eligibility for appointment to the Canadian Senate.

³ And this despite the fact that *Chatelaine* magazine, headed up by Doris Anderson since 1957 had been consistently dealing with these “women’s issues” for a decade prior. See Rebick, 2005; Sylvia Fraser’s edited collection on *Chatelaine* magazine entitled *A Woman’s Place: Seventy Years in the Lives of Canadian Women* (1997); as well as Anderson’s own *Rebel Daughter: An Autobiography*.

⁴ Pederson also notes that “early organizations such as the YWCA remained active during the “trough” from the 1920s to the 1960s, and new organizations such as the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs came to prominence over the issue of married women’s right to work” (62).

employment equity, legal equality through the Charter, pornography, anti-racism, action against poverty, rights for Aboriginal women and child care: these are the issues that rallied Canadian women to activism from the 1960s through the 1990s, the second wave of feminism (back matter, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 2005).

Pederson indicates that historians have become aware of the troubled uses of the wave metaphor (what she calls “the problematic “first-wave” and “second-wave” model), largely because of “its strong implication of discontinuity in the history of twentieth-century Canadian feminism” and suggests that by the mid-1990s, writers of feminist pasts had begun to move beyond them (1996: 62). However, such narratives remain commonplace and, in the end, the overall ‘timing’ of the waves in the Canadian context very much parallels its American counterparts. In both of its mainstream English North American configurations, the model inescapably reinforces the influence of the wave metaphor by emphasizing its ebb and flow. Indeed, the rise and fall of the tide is deeply embedded in the “watery metaphor” (Sawchuk, 2009).

When superimposed onto feminist historical narratives, the wave imagery subscribes effortlessly to the notion that feminism entered a “dormant period” after the entrenchment of the (albeit limited) franchise and was “revived” with the arrival of the 1960s.⁵ In the face of this so-called dormancy, the task of many social historians has been to dig up and flush out the social justice work conducted by women in this supposedly politically “latent” period. Yet although

⁵ Interestingly, sociological analyses of social movements have noted that “lulls” are a ‘natural’ part of a movement’s life-cycle, and that they “occur often during abeyance periods (Taylor, 1989) and result in sharper collective identity differences between one cluster of micro-cohorts that makes up one political generation and a second cluster of micro-cohorts that constitutes a new political generation” (Whittier, 1997:771)—a perspective that supports the potency and resilience of the wave metaphor as a historical model.

their extensive research and writing has produced a series of accounts that illustrate remarkable continuity bridging the two “waves,” their labour has not seemed to quell the continual use of these wave descriptors.⁶ Instead, as Sawchuk (2009) notes, “what remains consistent is the image of a wave as a wall of water that gathers momentum, peaks and dissipates” (58). In so doing, she continues, the metaphor “reduces the complexity of a variegated social movement to a teleological cycle of accelerated momentum, followed by a brief spectacular climax and an inevitable decline” (59).

With the notable exception of a small number of publications that “question the performativity of the metaphor itself (Bailey, 1997; Garrison, 2000; Purvis, 2004; Spigel, 2004)” (Sawchuk, 2009: 59), consensus over accuracy of the borderlines appears to be relatively consistent, evident particularly in the reminiscences of movement newcomers of the ‘second wave’:

In retrospect, from the perspective of the 1960s, the passage of suffrage must have seemed the crowning achievement, the crest of the wave toward which much previous feminist energy had been spent and after which, little else remained to be accomplished. While this assumes a misleadingly narrow view of the range of first wave feminist interests, there is some agreement that the victory of 1920 was a climactic moment...Thus, while it is clearly an oversimplification to say that the first wave ended in 1920, it is not

⁶ A really strong example of this kind of writing can be found in the work of Nancy Christie, whose (2000) book, *Engendering the State: Family, Work and Welfare In Canada* presents a detailed account of the development and history of the social welfare state in Canada. Christie explores the multiple roles gender played in the rise of the welfare state in the early part of the century to its establishment, providing a comprehensive study of women’s relationship to and with social policy. Other Canadian publications of this ilk include Together, those examinations certify that women were indeed active participants in the political realm after federal enfranchisement and confirm that the years leading up to the second wave “revival” were anything *but* dormant in terms of women’s mobilizing and organizing. That research, coupled with current political analyses of ever-devolving social services here in Canada, sparked and continues to fuel an ongoing reevaluation of the concept of “politics,” of “work,” of “activism,” and of the Canadian social welfare state—including women’s role in its construction.

an arbitrary point at which to draw that line (Bailey, 1997: 20)

Catherine Bailey argues that any meaningful discussion of the uses and abuses of the wave metaphor must insist on an understanding of what constitutes the boundaries of each. “‘Wave,’ she writes, “just doesn’t sound like the right word for the lone occurrence of something,” particularly because those that flow in social and political oceans “become defined only in context, relative to the waves that have come and gone before” (Bailey, 1997: 18). She also notes that the metaphor encompasses the idea of “some sort of succession,” one that illustrates both continuity and difference from that which came before.

Others, like Barbara Arneil, have sustained the metaphor—and the usual timeframe (from the beginning of the first to the ‘end’ of the second) it encompasses—but utilize it to delineate ‘waves’ of feminist thought and illustrate how the ‘evolution’ of political theory—and the dualisms embedded within it—coincides with (and influenced) the progression of feminist knowledge production. In her formulation, the ‘first wave’ “largely argued from a position completely contained within liberalism,” while the ‘second wave’ grew and fractured into multiple feminisms—hyphenated feminisms—with “different theoretical frameworks but united by a commitment to sameness, equality, universality and scientific understanding” (1999: 153-154).⁷ While both the ‘first’ and the ‘second’ waves accepted traditional political frameworks, the latter “broadened the arena to which women should gain access” and critiqued biological essentialism, while leaving the dualisms generally unchallenged, but

⁷ She suggests de Beauvoir as the first hyphenation: “existential-feminist.” Arneil also notes that the “feminist” part of the ‘marriage’ always, inevitably, came second (Arneil, 1999: 153).

slightly modified (Arneil, 1999: 154). That shift in premise, Arneil asserts, marked an evolutionary shift in the feminist movement. Her breakdown also effectively dodges the issue of inactive 'ebbs' in the wave, suggesting instead that theoretical production is a continuous process.

The chronological historicizing that coincides with the wave metaphor has been utilized as an explanatory tool in other ways as well. Deborah Seigel, for instance, points to the difference in time (and 'progress') that separates the 'first' and 'second' waves; noting that "if waves travel in a circular pattern through space, the chronological wave-ing of feminist movement also implies a forward motion in time" to underscore their historical validity (1997:18). Sociologists like Nancy Whittier have applied the model to locate their sample populations according to shared attributes among groups in a contained history as well as to distinguish changes in those characteristics over time (Whittier, 1997: 771). Still others have employed the metaphor with hesitance. Amanda Lotz suggests that "in some ways, second-wave feminism is best understood with an emphasis on chronology," but notes the metaphor relies on shared social, cultural, and economic histories (with "similar histories of sex-based struggle") in particular countries and in specific contexts (Lotz, 2003:3). Amber Kinser also points to its use as an organizing mechanism in her work, but operationalizes it to suit her specific purposes, "with the understanding that the metaphor of waves is limited in what it can illuminate about feminism's evolutions," and a recognition that it holds knotty implications that must be kept at the forefront at all times (Kinser, 2004: 133).

While many commentators continue to use—and undoubtedly will carry

on using—the wave metaphor, proposals for its revision have emerged in recent years. Kinser points to Daisy Hernandez and Bushra Rehman’s (2002) anthology *Colonize This!* as an example of the imprecision of the metaphor, noting that the book marks “a continuation and further development, rather than an introduction, of women-of-color feminism” (Kinser, 2004: 133). To her, its publication marks an overlap—not a ‘newness’—with feminists that preceded them.

The wave metaphor has been hotly contested for its perpetuation of historical inaccuracy and the exclusion of feminist activities that fall outside the realm of white, bourgeois North American (but mostly American) feminist “success stories.” Kimberly Springer (2002), for instance, asks who gets to be counted in the metaphor, noting that “[t]he wave model perpetuates the exclusion of women of color from women’s movement history and feminist theorizing” and warns that if the metaphor is to be useful it must include women of colour and, particularly, their active “resistance to gender violence” in both the past and in present times if it is to serve a broad scope of women’s needs (Springer, 2002: 1064-1065; see also Radford-Hill, 2002). Agnieszka Graff reminds us that the wave metaphor is an American construction that creates a paradox in the Polish feminist context (“from the point of view of the movement’s history as it is written in the West”) necessitating a kind of “cultural borrowing” in order to participate in the discourse at all (Graff, 2003:102-103). Jane Spencer expresses her sheer impatience with the trope:

The talk of waves, in fact, can obscure our recognition of how far we are engaged in a long-standing argument. The debate between the advocates of making feminist gains within the current system and

those who argue that radical change is needed has been going on for a long time...Stacy Gillis and Rebecca Mumford have argued that we need to break the wave paradigm altogether...[but] talking and writing about third wave feminism is wholly beneficial, fostering a recovering sense of feminist urgency. Never mind which number we're on, we need to be making waves (Spencer, 2004: 11-12).

Interestingly, all of the above notwithstanding, a good number of thinkers still find some value—or at least *potential*—in the application of the wave metaphor to feminist histories. Kinser proposes that we “mentally place quotation marks” around ‘wave’ references (particular with regard to the Hernandez and Rehman text, but the idea has wide-ranging uses), “allowing us to participate in the current larger dialogue about feminism while recognizing that the metaphor is imprecise” (2004:133). Graff struggles to make it work in her national context, and Springer suggests that the expansion of the metaphor to envelop the histories of women of colour would certainly result in making the ‘wave’ “a much bigger swell” (2002: 1063). While in agreement that the metaphor itself is far too static, there is also a resounding (but certainly not universal) accord that “since all models have their limitations, we should not throw the proverbial baby out with the bath water but instead construct more theoretical paradigms” (Jacob and Licona, 2005:203).

The wave metaphor has been sustained and perpetuated as an explanatory tool; a simple chronological narrative that allows for the marking of evolutionary shifts in feminist theory and practice and that works as a handy foundation for further explorations. Barbara Arneil, for instance, utilizes the metaphor to illustrate how the ‘evolution’ of political theory—and the dualisms embedded within it—coincides with (and influenced) the progression of feminist knowledge

production. In her formulation, outlined in great detail in her (1999) book *Politics and Feminism*, the 'first wave' "argued from a position completely contained within liberalism," while the 'second wave' grew and fractured into hyphenated feminisms with "different theoretical frameworks but united by a commitment to sameness, equality, universality and scientific understanding" (153-154). While both the 'first' and the 'second' waves accepted traditional political frameworks, the latter "broadened the arena to which women should gain access" and critiqued biological essentialism, while leaving the dualisms generally unchallenged, but modified (Arneil, 1999: 154).

Utilized in this way, the metaphor works as a framework denoting the difference in time (and 'progress') that separates the 'first' from the 'second' to underscore their historical locations (1997:18). Catherine Bailey also upholds the metaphor on this basis. To her, the waves symbolize the idea of succession, encompassing both continuity and difference from that which came before, evoking for me, at least, some of the challenges of *passing feminism on* (1997: 20).⁸

The 'Third Wave,' Or, Feminism's 'Generation' Problem

There is something seductive about the number three. Third time lucky. Thesis, antithesis, synthesis. And all we want is progress (Spencer, 2004: 9).

Catherine Orr notes that the term 'third wave' landed in feminist discourse for

⁸ Sociologists like Nancy Whittier have applied the model to locate their sample populations according to shared attributes among groups in a contained history as well as to distinguish changes in those characteristics over time (Whittier, 1997: 771). In this way, the metaphor becomes method and, I would argue, that it's very effective in this regard.

the first time in the mid-1980s, when an anthology entitled *The Third Wave: Feminist Perspectives on Racism* was produced emphasizing “multiracial alliances among women that grew out of the political and theoretical discussions of the early eighties on race and sexuality” (1997: 30). While the dissemination of that text’s ideas remains unknown,⁹ its production was followed by a much-quoted (and reprinted) response article to the Thomas-Hill hearings by Rebecca Walker (daughter of Alice Walker, goddaughter of Gloria Steinem) in *Ms.* magazine. She concluded with a call to action:

So I write this as a plea to all women, especially women of my generation: Let Thomas’ confirmation serve to remind you, as it did me, that the fight is far from over. Let this dismissal of a woman’s experience move you to anger. Turn that outrage into political power. Do not vote for them unless they work for us. Do not have sex with them, do not break bread with them, do not nurture them if they don’t prioritize our freedom to control our bodies and our lives. I am not a post-feminist feminist. I am the Third Wave (1992).

Shortly thereafter, the move to establish The Third Wave Foundation—a national (American) network for young feminists—had been made, and the term entered public consciousness. As Orr notes, “in this incarnation, the third wave emphasis was on organizing young feminists, and this is the emphasis that stuck” (1997:30). Seigel takes this notion one step further, suggesting that Walker’s “mobilization of the adjective ‘third’ bec[ame] an act of strategic defiance” (Seigel, 1997: 53).

⁹ At the time Orr’s article was published in 1997, the book (spearheaded by M. Jacqui Alexander) had still not hit the shelves. According to some sources (including amazon.com), it was published the following year by Kitchen Table Press, but I have not been able to locate a copy. Since I began work in this area it has been universally labelled “out of print” and “unavailable,” and some have suggested that it was actually never published at all. It should be noted that others have pointed to Chela Sandoval’s call for a new feminist subjectivity that honours race as the impetus for the new wave.

The publication of Walker's anthology of 'third wave' perspectives in 1995 sent feminist commentators to their laptops in droves. Is this a movement? Is the second wave over? Is there an age limit? What does this mean for the movement? Unfortunately (or perhaps inevitably), the 'arrival' of the 'third wave' coincided almost perfectly with the emergence of self-proclaimed "feminist dissenters" in the mainstream—straight, white, able-bodied, well-educated (often schooled in women's studies), financially successful, independent and aggressive 'young' women—who received an enormous amount of print space and air time for their assertions that women in the 1990s have "made it" and that it was time for feminism to move on. Their rants, featured in mass-market books, in works of fiction, in glossy magazines, and on television, touted the arrival of the heirs of the sexual revolution and, more often than not, the 'new faces of feminism.' Sometimes called 'postfeminists,'¹⁰ their texts present the women's movement as the mastermind behind stringent sexual and moral codes, as the promoter of a villain-versus-victim mythology, and as the antiquated protector of "political correctness." Feminists (on the whole) are portrayed as anti-men, anti-sex, and obsessed with notions of women as hapless victims. The postfeminist herself, however, is the antithesis of the second wave stereotype; she is "successful and independent, and less likely to espouse 'dangerous' feminist ideals" (Steenbergen, 2001).

¹⁰ "Postfeminist" (as illustrated in Chapter 2) has since become a highly contested term. Ann Braithwaite (2002; 2004) has noted that the label's definition shifts depending on who is doing the describing, and an entire body of literature (reviewed by Braithwaite and dealt with by me elsewhere) actually use the word to mean 'third wave feminist.' Others suggest that 'postfeminist' is just one facet of the diverse "new wave." That designation is also nation-specific; as British feminist scholars commonly employ it in this way, while Americans and Canadians tend to employ it more haphazardly (see, for instance, Seigel, 1997; Arneil, 1999, and Rebick, 2005).

The 'timing' of the 'third wave's' proclamation of existence—whether real or assumed—had (and continues to have) immediate repercussions for the traditional historical framing of feminism's history via the wave metaphor, as well as for the relational climate between and among feminists. As Kinser notes,

In the more recent transition, the social fabric was already interwoven with feminist ideals, though admittedly only superficially sometimes. Leaders of the previous wave and their causes had not been pushed out of public and mass-mediated space when the leaders of the next wave emerged. Revolutionary and massive social movement and change was not the spirit of the day. And perhaps the most critical point differentiating the political climate of early second wave from that of early third wave is that the latter emerged simultaneously with and in contention with a widespread and well-articulated postfeminist climate 2004: 132).

Delineations of 'third wave feminisms' are well underway. Lotz (2003) has argued that at this particular historical moment, three 'third wave' feminist "camps"—"with a variety of continuities and disjunctures among them" (just like in the range of 'second wave' feminisms)—have emerged (3). She identifies feminist-dissenters as proponents of "reactionary third wave feminism" who actively criticize a monolithic 'second wave,' "Women-Of-Color-Third Wave-Third World Feminists" who work from theory and activism that existed "prior to the idea of a third-wave gaining currency in more popular arenas," and "postfeminism" as an uneven category with an unstable trajectory (3-5; see footnote 6, herein). Colleen Mack-Canty (2004) also identifies a number of foci within the 'third wave' in a piece that grapples with what she sees as "uneven movement" from the 'second' to the 'third.' She delineates "youth feminism," "postcolonial feminism," and "ecofeminism" as significant themes in 'third wave' thought, suggesting that they have begun the work of "reweaving the

nature/culture duality” via the reclaiming of theories of embodiment; more so, she argues, than other feminisms (155).

The impact of ‘third wave’ discourse—to date generally discussed in bodies of literature that either identify as or with ‘third wave’ or explicitly dealing with such texts—has also been felt outside those realms as well. There has indeed been recent surge of interest in feminism’s past, present(s), and futures and in revisionary feminist scholarship that either attempts to ‘capture’ the ‘second wave,’ document individual life stories, or ruminate on what’s to come. Judith Newton speculates that

[t]here is, among feminist veterans of twenty-five years or so, an understandable desire to construct historical memory, to tell our stories from our own perspectives before less sympathetic accounts are generated from the Packard Bells of those who were barely “there” when we first wrote second-wave feminist scholarship on our Smith-Coronas. This narration of the past, however, while it serves to give voice to our versions of our histories and to press the claims of our historical significance, may have less defensive purposes as well. It may serve as an exercise in constructing the history not only of our achievements and our losses but also of our failings and our errors. It may serve not only as a means of rethinking the past but as a preparation for, and a means of entry into, a different future (1997: 330).

Elizabeth Grosz, for a special millennial issue of *Signs* raises some interesting questions about the timing of the questions that are being asked about feminism, and admits that while the turn of the century is an arbitrary marker, it’s “as good an excuse as any for engaging in reflections on the past and speculations about the future” (2000: 1017). In addition, *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*, was the first anthology of its kind to engage with the “third wave” to (in the words of its editors) “bridge the cultural economies of third wave feminism...and the epistemologies of contemporary academic feminism” (Gillis,

Howie and Mumford, 2004: 3).

Gillis, Howie and Mumford (2004) suggest that the undercurrents of third wave feminism emerged from a series of internal ideological disputes that could not be resolved without distance:

Despite the political intensity of peace camps, anti-racist activities and 'reclaim the night' marches, this concentration on 'woman,' as both the object and subject of discourse, resulted in a shift within the movement. The concept 'woman' seemed too *fragile* to bear the weight of all contents and meanings ascribed to it. The elusiveness of this category of 'woman' raised questions about the nature of identity, unity and collectivity. Appearing to undercut the women's movement, fundamental principles of the feminist project were hotly contested. What we now understand as the 'third wave' emerges from these contestations – and the responses to them. (2004: 1)

"To speak about a 'third wave' of feminism," says the trio, "is to name a moment in feminist theory and practice" (2004: 1).

Historicizing the Third Wave: The "Women's Movement Today"

The introduction to Leslie Heywood's two-volume compilation, *The Women's Movement Today: An Encyclopedia of Third Wave Feminism* walks readers through a fifteen-year chronology of feminism's "third wave." Her retrospective is short and ambitious: she lays the foundation for the bulk of her collection—more than two hundred encyclopedia entries and a lengthy list of primary documents—in seven pages; establishing the context for an anthology "meant to be the essential reference work on the current movement as it charts, describes, and clarifies what has been a much debated and misunderstood phenomenon" (2006: xi).

Heywood self-identifies as a third waver,¹¹ and her periodization begins with her own experience of coming to feminism as a young woman in the late 1980s and early 1990s.¹² Delineating the wave's very recent activist and academic past (gleaned solely from the English-speaking movements active in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia), she describes its emergence and evolution in three stages. The "early third wave," Heywood writes, surfaced during "the early to mid 1990s...a time of heightened interest in feminism both in the United States and worldwide" (xvii). Characterized by struggles of and for definition, proponents of the wave's "formative period (roughly 1991-1995)" articulated hybridity as an identity category and vehemently opposed simplistic binary oppositions. "Marked by a debate about whether or not 'third wave' and 'postfeminist' were synonymous," she observes that while "Postfeminism" means "literally 'after feminism,' [...] 'third wave' implied a continuation of feminism with a difference" (xv). The predicament of the "third wave" (in this configuration) lay in articulating that distinction.¹³

The "second stage" of Heywood's third wave feminist history emerges directly from those struggles over meaning and identity, particularly in light of

¹¹ She co-edited, with Jennifer Drake, *Third Wave Feminism: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism* in 1997, one of the first American anthologies on feminism's "third wave" and the very first to do so using feminist theory and popular-culture as overarching frameworks.

¹² This periodization is not unique to Heywood. Heywood and Drake (1997) make a similar estimation in the introduction to *Third Wave Agenda*, marking the years 1963-1974 as the "birth" of current members of the "third wave." Interestingly, Jennifer Drake positions herself "between feminist generations" (see Drake, 1997: 97).

¹³ My own work during this period echoes Heywood's sentiment here. I tend to try to resist concrete divisions between "postfeminism" and "third wave" frames, in part because they contribute to much of the uncertainty (generational and historical) that is discussed throughout this thesis, and also because I view the emergence of "postfeminist" bodies in the mainstream as fundamentally productive for the dissemination of feminist ideas in the mainstream. See Steenbergen, 2001a; 2001b.

the rapid-fire commercial appropriation (and consequent branding) of “girl power” that mobilized a simplistic version of a feminist vocabulary (as well as bastardized versions of some feminist slogans) as marketing strategy.¹⁴ She argues that cultural mainstreaming quelled the revolutionary potential of some “third wave” initiatives and led to charges that the new wave amounted to little more than a lifestyle choice (xviii, xix).¹⁵ Despite this, an impressive number of “third wave” feminist texts were published at this time, establishing a more public discourse around “third wave” sensibilities, and developing, as Heywood notes, “a recognizable identity and set of goals and ideals” (xix).¹⁶ It should also be noted that this stage was also marked by the emergence of two “highly successful third-wave magazines” which “gained a large audience in this period” (xix): *BUST* (“for women with something to get off their chests”) and *BITCH: A Feminist Response to Pop Culture*. Both magazines remain in circulation today.¹⁷ While Chapter Five deals with feminist periodical publishing more thoroughly,

¹⁴ Much has been written on this phenomenon, but two edited volumes stand out (both published after Heywood’s *Encyclopedia*): Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra’s *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007) and Joanne Hollows & Rachel Moseley’s *Feminism in Popular Culture* (New York: Berg, 2006).

¹⁵ Also interesting to note (and worthy of further exploration) is the narrative that emerged alongside this one in the mainstream media and the academy: “girls” became both an object and subject of interest as “third wave” sensibilities received more attention.

¹⁶ The impressive list is worth a refresher: Rebecca Walker’s *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism* (1995); Barbara Findlen’s *Listen Up: Voices from the Next Feminist Generation* (1995); Heywood and Drake’s own *Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism* (1997); The (1997) special issue of *Hypatia* on “Third Wave Feminisms” and Devoney Looser and E. Ann Kaplan’s (1997) *Generations: Academic Feminists in Dialogue* are all worthy of mentioning again here, as is Canada’s special issue of *Fireweed*: “Revolution Girl Style!”

¹⁷ *BITCH* ran in to some serious financial difficulties in late 2008/early 2009, and the last two issues have been shorter in length and featuring overall less text. They seem to have made it over this particular economic hump, but it does make vivid the very real precariousness of feminist publishing (see Chapter Five for a more complete history and analysis).

suffice it to say here that their emergence forced scholars to struggle to ‘make sense’ of its presence within a broader context of feminism and the women’s movement—particularly to its relationship with the waves that preceded it (xix). “The third wave today” concludes Heywood’s summation with a suggestion that perhaps the “third wave” moniker has exhausted its usefulness altogether. “Like other social movements,” she writes, “third-wave feminism has developed and changed in response to world events and to debates within the movement itself” (Heywood, 2006: xv).¹⁸ And according to her chronicle, many third-wavers are in agreement that the time has come for feminists—of all waves—to move on.¹⁹

I was involved in Heywood’s project: she posted a call for contributors to the encyclopedic volume on a popular feminist list-serv and I responded, agreeing to submit a number of definitions (and two biographies) to the collection. When the encyclopedias arrived in my mailbox, hot off the press, I flipped open the A-Z looking for my contributions and caught sight of my name in the table of contents: “Talkin’ ‘Bout *Whose* Generation?!”, a chapter first published in the (2001) Canadian anthology *Turbo Chicks: Talking Young Feminisms*, had been reprinted as one of the “primary documents” alongside sixty-four others in the second volume of the compilation.²⁰ Heywood’s preface explains that she “chose to include pieces that were definitional in some way, that

¹⁸ The “third stage” in Heywood’s chronology also re-emphasizes the third wave’s resistance to “a monolithically identifiable single-issue agenda that distinguishes it from other movements for social justices” and its adherence to multiplicity (xx).

¹⁹ Specifically, Heywood notes that many self-proclaimed “third wavers” (herself included) have suggested that “distinguishing third wave from second wave is counterproductive in the current political climate” (xxi).

²⁰ *Turbo Chicks: Talking Young Feminisms* (edited by Lara Karaian, Lisa Rundle and Alison Mitchell, Sumach Press, 2001) was one of the first collections to document third-wave sentiment in the Canadian context. Fireweed’s special issue could be included here as the “first.”

represented fundamental aspects of third-wave feminist thinking, and that articulated the broad parameters of the many ideas that contribute to what has come to be termed ‘third wave’ (xii).” I was in excellent company alongside feminist writers—scholarly and otherwise—that I had read and used in my own work, but Heywood’s narrative (and my corroboration within its construction) made me uneasy.²¹

My initial response was a knee-jerk reaction to Heywood’s tidy book-ending of a term and a movement associated with significant tension, anxiety and hostility since its outset. Her tale was too simple, its trajectory too clean, its ending too pat for a term fraught with so much intellectual and emotional investment. Also, her chronology seemed to render obsolete an identity marker (“third wave feminist”) that many women—of all ages—still very much adhere to, and it seemed to signify a devaluing of the work—scholarly and otherwise—that emerged (and is still being produced) via a “third-wave” lens. Relegating them to the past in 2006—when the movement could very well still be in the process of becoming—seemed remarkably premature.²²

My dismay eventually refocused on how Heywood’s account utilizes the very framework that she seeks to ultimately undo. Employing three “stages” to a wave of which two waves have come before, her concurrent delineation and disavowal stands as a clever and telling scaffold for a movement (both the “third

²¹ My chapter was included in the first section under the heading “Third Wave Feminism: Definitions and Debates.” It was also one of few Canadian pieces included in the collection. Indeed, echoes of the Third Wave Feminisms conference in Exeter were felt as well.

²² The irony of this statement is not lost on me: self-proclaimed second-wavers said the very same thing when a mass of “third wave” discourses began to emerge, and the reactionary responses to them played a very strong role in how the hostilities that inflected the discourses around feminist generations have played themselves out since.

wave” variant as well as the broader “feminist movement”) that has proved to be anything but tractable. In a way, her breakdown mirrors the troubled and troubling (yet remarkably durable) relationship that feminism has had with the wave metaphor and the generational discourses that emerged alongside its telling: frameworks that have been heavily criticized as wholly deficient for telling comprehensive stories about feminism and the women’s movement’s contemporary history, yet narratives that are easily and often repeated.

Jo Reger (2005) offers a critique of this sort of periodization that speaks directly to the inaccuracy of Heywood’s delineation of the “third wave” of feminism’s “origin story” that is long, but worthy of reproduction here. “Even if we hold on to the concept of a third wave as different and delineated from the second wave,” she writes, “another challenge to the third wave is establishing its origins”:

Multiple stories exist of the beginning of the third wave. In 1991, Lynn Chancer called for a “third wave” feminism to signify a turn from the defensive posture of 1980s feminism and its backlash. Some scholars credit the idea of the third wave to Rebecca Walker when she called herself “third wave” in the introduction to her anthology *To Be Real* in 1995. For others, the Riot Grrrl uprising in the Northwest in the 1990s signaled the reconceptualization of a new, punk-infused, generationally -defined form of feminism. Finally, many credit the rise of the third wave as having its origins in the challenges made by women of color to the second wave for its lack of racial-ethnic inclusivity...While the reality is that each of the sources has contributed to the feminism experienced today, it is up to third wavers to understand the many sources of contemporary feminism and how each source adds an important dimension to the movement’s goals and strategies (Reger, 2005: xxiii).

Instead, Heywood truncates the complex realities of third wave feminisms to fit a very simple historical trajectory, feeding easily to some of the more problematic aspects of the wave metaphor in the process (largely, rendering “second wave”

discourse and practice as monolithic and of the past). However, lest my critique be misunderstood as a dismissal of an important, informative, and often insightful work, I hasten to point out that the encyclopedia also serves to illuminate and bring much needed attention to many of the issues surrounding the persistence of the rhetorical wave trope, and tells us quite a bit about the ‘timing’ of these issues.

Beginning her third-wave origin story in 1991 was not random; Heywood’s selection was based on a perceptible turn in the ongoing history of the women’s movement,²³ a moment when a critical combination of events converged to throw the neat compartmentalizing of feminism’s history (and the feminists of both waves, by extension) into a veritable tailspin.²⁴ The ‘timing’ of the ‘third wave’s’

²³ Angela McRobbie has noted that “1990 (or thereabouts) marks a turning point, the moment of definitive self-critique in feminist theory” (2004: 256). She argues further that “[i]n feminist cultural studies the early 1990s also marks a moment of feminist reflexivity” (256). 1991 marked a seminal moment for me as well, which probably explains my resistance to criticisms of third wave feminist work and my investment in this topic. While pronouncements of feminism’s demise are not unique to this era, many of these examinations engaged directly with the popular query, “Is feminism dead?” (See, Tania Modelski’s *Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a “Postfeminist” Age*. She explored “texts that, in proclaiming or assuming the advent of postfeminism, are actually engaged in negating the critiques and undermining the goals of feminism—in effect, delivering us back into a prefeminist world” (1991: 3).)

²⁴ 1991 marked a seminal moment for me as well: I had just begun my undergraduate degree, Douglas Coupland’s *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Generation* had just been published, concerns over “population aging” (or the “graying” of Canada) were increasing in mainstream news, and academic engagement with the term “postfeminism” (with its anxieties over “the future of feminism”) had increased exponentially.²⁴ Naomi Wolf’s *The Beauty Myth* and Susan Faludi’s *Backlash* were also published in 1991. The former dealt with commercial beauty culture’s role in constructing idealized female beauty and, in effect, an idealized notion of women’s roles that work to keep women in their place. The latter, responding to a 1986 Newsweek article that labeled feminism “the great experiment that failed,” exposed the myths of women’s improved economic and social lives (and the spurious evidence supporting such claims) and concluded that the powerful counter-assaults to women’s liberation—the backlash—proved only that the feminist struggle was not yet over. While both were bestsellers, they received intense criticism from feminists who tsk-tsk’d the arrival of “professional feminists” and the rise of “power feminism.” However, their impact cannot be denied. One reviewer (See Nicoll, 1992) went as far as beginning her review of

proclamation of existence has had immediate repercussions for the traditional historical framing of feminism's history, as well as for the relational climate between and among feminists.

From Feminism's Waves to Feminist Generations

The widely-acknowledged arrival of a 'third wave' of feminism had a significant impact on the ways in which conceptual paradigms seeking to frame feminism's history are imagined and subsequently drawn, and has simultaneously altered the wave metaphor while troubling its use further. In some cases, the metaphor has been expanded to include the next swell in the movement's narrative of progression.²⁵ Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Mumford, editors of *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration* (2004), for instance, suggest that the undercurrents of the third wave emerged from a series of internal ideological disputes that could not be resolved without distance (2004: 1). "To speak about a 'third wave' of feminism," says the trio, "is to name a moment in feminist theory and practice" (2004: 1). Bailey would agree. "Wave," she writes, "just doesn't sound like the right word for the lone occurrence of something," particularly because those that flow in social and political oceans "become defined only in context, relative to the waves that have come and gone before" (1997: 18).

Backlash by saying "For women now entering midlife, this book may be what Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* (1963) was to an earlier generation."

²⁵ The idea of "dormancy" has not exactly escaped these discourses. While comments suggesting that the 'second wave' had hit a period of abeyance have been few and far between, Rory Dicker and Alison Pipemeier do fall into that trap when they argue that "[t]hird wave feminism represents a *reinvigorated* feminist movement emerging from a late twentieth-century world" (2003: 10, emphasis mine).

For the purposes of this thesis, I am not interested in participating in the debates (still very much underway) over whether or not a ‘third wave’ or indeed, even a fourth, has indeed emerged. The category itself—as a signifier of feminist identity, historical marker and/or generational affiliation—has been in regular circulation in Western feminist discourses for over a full decade, and far too many people have adhered to the tag to call it into question in any just way. As well, the realities of historical time have not yet afforded us the luxury of hindsight; the ability to view the ‘third wave’ in retrospect and interrogate both its form and function. However, the emergence of a ‘third wave’—and particularly, the generational rhetoric that has exploded around it since—has also created a new, interesting and potentially very intellectually rewarding object for study that can be developed in hopes of proliferating new trajectories for the study of feminisms in historical, cultural, national, and global contexts. I am referring here to the concept of ‘feminist generations.’

Discourses: Troubling Waves and Re-Framing Generations

...any two generations following one another always fight different opponents, both within and without (Mannheim, 1952: 298-299).

All generations change simultaneously in response to historical and political shifts” (Whittier, 1997:762).

In discourses that employ the “wave,” the metaphor is sometimes conflated with or complicated by the notion of “generations,” a problem (perhaps more of a question than a problem?) that has begun to attract serious attention. While the ‘first wave’ consisted of women of varying age working towards common—and

easily articulated—goals (or so the story goes), the ‘second wave’ had established a non-familial relationship with their predecessors. “Given the easy mapping of ‘mother’ and ‘daughter’ onto ‘second wave’ and ‘third wave,’” Astrid Henry (2003) writes, “the wave metaphor and the mother-daughter relation increasingly have become synonymous with recent feminist discourse” (214). Previously, the wave metaphor could be utilized to tell the tale of a feminism that has endured for a century and evolved accordingly as its political environment shifted and changed. But the arrival of a third wave “is easily read as the start of a new feminist generation precisely because it adheres to this thirty-year model of generational birth: the second wave came of age in the 1960s, the third wave in the 1990s” (214). In effect, it significantly transforms the ways in which the metaphor has been and can be employed: the debates become generational; and the discourse becomes far more complex.

Critics have argued that as an analytical tool, “generations” has tended to be “a vague, ambiguous, and stretchable concept to the explanation of past events,” and contend that these frameworks perpetuate simplistic dichotomies—pitting old against young, outmoded against fresh (Spitzer, 1973: 1353; Beh, 1996: 2). Andrew Beh (1996) calls this “the ugliness of generations.” If the shift of metaphors from wave to generation can be marked by any overarching sentiment, I would argue that the articulation of tensions and hostilities between and among feminists that surfaced—and very quickly came to be understood as “intergenerational conflict”—would be it. Academic conference meetings have been cited often as locations where generational hostilities between and among feminists have played themselves out (Leveen, 1996; Detloff, 1997; Kaplan,

1997;²⁶ Newton, 1997; and Hoogland, de Vries, and Van Der Tuin, 2004). Indeed, my own experience at the Third Wave Feminisms conference in Exeter stands as a clear illustration of this phenomenon. Detloff, too, writes of her astonishment at the intergenerational struggles that go on in the academy, noting that

we drag our predecessors in the dust as far as we can, then are ourselves dragged by the next generation. We are considered outside the bounds of propriety not for dragging someone in the dirt, but for breaking with a tradition that sets acceptable limits for such ill treatment. But why is this merely a question of limits? Why do we accept ill treatment as inevitable in the course of intergenerational relations? (1997: 82)²⁷

These intergenerational tensions speak to the confusion embedded within generational discourses and also to the difficulties in positioning oneself in relation to vague, under-defined, and shifting boundaries. As Dana Heller (1997) explains when she attempted to position herself as a “generational subject of feminism”:

To my mind, you see, the term *generation* implies a body of beings who occupy a common step in a line of descent, a body organized by a loose combination of experiences, material practices, and social relationships that animate a generational *geist*, a shared sense of history’s ineluctable hold on us. But if my engagements with feminist, lesbian, and queer studies have taught me anything over the years, it’s that no such coherent “bodies” exist, at least not independently of the interests that flesh them out and mobilize them for the construction of a generational identity (309).

Heller’s attempt to locate herself exposes the lack of precision that generational frameworks often demonstrate, and also reveals the difficulties faced by those who want to participate in the discussion but fall outside the established or

²⁶ Kaplan (1997) describes her experience as watching the “performance of generations” play itself out.

²⁷ I have been a participant in a number of such conferences—both as an agitator and a recipient of hostility. A paper is begging to be written about the academy, conferencing, and these debates.

assumed parameters of a 'generation.' "I am the Mid-Wave" is the first line of Kinser's (2004) attempt to negotiate space for and through generational discourses, and this kind of "tweaked" identification has become much more common of late. Susanne Luhmann (2001: 34), for instance, calls herself a member of "the sandwich generation," and Madelyn Detloff admits that she feels "caught up on both sides of the conflict" (1997: 79).²⁸ Kinser comments that she "work[s] to negotiate some room of my own between second-wave and third-wave thought" (125); and Jennifer Purvis (2004) chooses the label as a rejection of the generational dividing lines that have emerged, stating that "those who recognize the political stakes and detect the destructive potential of such dividing lines often assert claims such as, 'I think I am a 2.5'" (95). Catherine Stimpson made this connection as early as 1996, when she describes a young woman as "chronologically a Third Waver using Second Wave legal theory to achieve a First Wave goal." Krista Jacob comments that "I think...we...all share Kinser and Purvis's positionality as midwavers" (2005: 202).²⁹

The question of 'who gets counted' in these frameworks also exposes a colonizing impulse embedded in the vast majority of feminist generational models that should be flagged here. To date—and despite the attempt at "internationalizing" the discourse at the Third Wave Feminisms conference in Exeter, and elsewhere—the debates have predominantly taken place in the Anglo-

²⁸ Kinser comments that she "work[s] to negotiate some room of my own between second-wave and third-wave thought" (125).

²⁹ And Nancy Whittier (1997) has noted that mid-wavers (those who 'join' a cohort during a moment of low levels of recruits) play an important role in social movement change; that they often act as conduits for continuity of collective identity (1997: 775; see also Mannheim, 1952: 301).

Western world, and the bulk of the discourse has emerged from an American context, and as such, they tend to reflect a particular epistemological tradition that can, and often does, work to erase race, class, and nation.³⁰ The assumption of causality embedded in these chronologies naturalizes another aspect of *passing on*: “that Western historiographical traditions are desirable and transferable” (Long, 2004: np). Further, as Jane Long (2004) asks: “If the course of feminist historiography is imaged as ‘necessary stages’ in a ‘growing up’ process, then who are the ‘children’ in that configuration?”³¹ This institutionalization of ‘desirable’ historical traditions is built by simplicity and marked with exclusions, working explicitly against feminist aims for constructing dynamic, inclusive histories and historiographies.

Making Sense of “Feminist Generations”

Nancy Whittier (1995) hones in on what appears to be strikingly absent from the majority of analyses that utilize generational frames—whether it is to critique or support the models themselves. Namely, her work examines feminism as a social movement and, in effect, interrogates feminist generations as *political* generations. ³² Karl Mannheim’s seminal 1928 essay, “The Problem of

³⁰ Winnie Woodhull (2003) argues that “if anything can be said with certainty about third wave feminism, it is that it is mainly a first world phenomenon generated by women who, like their second wave counterparts, have limited interest in women’s struggles elsewhere on the planet” (76).

³¹ This question works on a more individual level as well. Recently, a thirtysomething friend of mine expressed exasperation over questions revolving around “the feminism of the next generation” and exclaimed, “I am not the ‘feminism of the future, I am the feminism of right now!”

³² Social movements are defined here in much the same way that Whittier (1997) utilizes the term: as “clusters of organizations, overlapping networks, and individuals that share goals and are bound together by a collective identity and cultural events.” She finds this definition

Generations,” continues to inform much contemporary work on the subject, and may be useful in this context as well. Differentiating between a generation-unit (a group of people born in a shared historical moment) and generation as an “identity of location” (“embracing related ‘age groups’ embedded in a historical-social process”), Mannheim asserts that while generation may denote affiliation by birth, it also involves a political commitment to and an active identification with its unique historical moment (Mannheim, 1952: 292). In this way, political generational affiliation requires will. As Henry (2003) notes, “Political generations, unlike familial ones, require *intentional* identification” (215, emphasis mine).³³

Key to Mannheim’s argument is that political generations are constructed “socially rather than temporally” and that a generation-unit’s initial encounter with—and experience of—its active participation with their particular historical moment will continue throughout their lives (Whittier, 1997:761; Mannheim, 1952: 298).³⁴ He writes:

“particularly useful for understanding change in a decentralized, informally structured movement such as radical feminism, in which the establishment of new groups is a relatively low-cost way to introduce new tactics, expand goals, or revise ideology” (761). With the notable exception of Lotz, who “considers how third-wave feminist ideas may be understood as distinctive of new social movement organization,” none of the texts examined herein do so (Lotz, 2003: 2).

³³ Interestingly, Henry herself chooses to affiliate with the familial generational model of feminism. She writes: “My feelings about feminism, I came to realize, were those of a dutiful daughter. Feminism was a mother figure to me as well—but an encouraging one, one that had given me much support over the years...Yes, feminism was a kind of mother figure to me...but one that I needed and loved (2003: 210). Her analysis of feminist generations as political generations does not expand beyond this point in this text, nor in her full-length book on the subject, *Not My Mother’s Sister: Generational Conflict and Third Wave Feminism*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004). See particularly, pp. 4-6.

³⁴ The *kinds* of participation may change over the course of a generation’s life span, but Mannheim—and Whittier, but to a lesser extent—insists that the perspective remains the same.

Mere contemporaneity becomes socially significant only when it also involves participation in the same historical and social circumstances [...]. Some older generation groups experience certain historical processes together with the young generation and yet we cannot say that they have the same generation location. The fact that their location is a different one, however, can be explained primarily by the different 'stratification' of their lives (298).

To Mannheim, then, the formative (or 'transformative') years—when each generation-unit enters social life—form loosely-cohesive groups based on ideologies around social circumstance. As such, “the generational perspectives and the units dividing a given generation endure over time, and...members of different political generations possess different perspectives” (Whittier, 1997: 761). Additionally, Whittier notes that this is a common sentiment among contemporary generational theorists who purport that these kinds of political ties persist “even as members age, social movement mobilization declines, and external conditions change,” and—perhaps more significantly—that “social movement continuity is affected by how strongly a cohort's collective identity persists throughout later life” (1997: 762). E. Ann Kaplan also frames her feminist politics in this way, noting that “my experiences in the 1960s were constitutive of who I am today. And mark me as different from people, like my daughter, who was born as feminism was coming into fruition for my age group (ie. 1968) and being institutionalized” (Kaplan and Looser, 1997: 3).

Susan McDaniel's study of the multiple connections between shifting 'gendered generations' over time (both historical and biographical) and what she calls “generational webs of entitlements and responsibilities” provides an interesting example of Mannheim's views of political generations (McDaniel, 2001: 194). Using a sample of British studies on lesbian motherhood (particularly

the work of Gillian Dunne) as an example of the contextual nature of generational affinity, McDaniel argues that

Generation is thus theorized as a self-reflexive achieved status for lesbian women [in this study] with that achievement intersecting with their being born at the right time to achieve it in social terms, and their clear invention of a process...whereby gendered generation can work” (McDaniel, 1997:204-205).

In this way, generation becomes understood as ‘distinctly’ established and socially formed within specific historical moments, and “layers of shifting risks, entitlements and responsibilities among women of different generations which when overlaid, tell stories of gendered generations different than those typically told” (McDaniel, 1997: 200-201).³⁵

McDaniel’s analysis also points to another aspect of Mannheim’s construction of political generations. He notes that “within any generation there can exist a number of differentiated, antagonistic generation-units,” and that “[t]ogether, they constitute an ‘actual’ generation precisely because they are oriented toward each other, even though only in the sense of fighting one another” (1952: 306-307). McDaniel differentiates the various “constraints, entitlements and responsibilities” (the disparities she’s pinpointed among cohorts, as well as between) of gendered generations by what she calls “main life sectors”—family, work and the public sphere—and argues that these variables provide a dynamic enough framework through which to simultaneously capture variations on individual and social levels. While neither Mannheim nor McDaniel were writing directly about feminist generational frameworks per se, viewing

³⁵ Among the “typical” generational narratives told, McDaniel cites “the Cinderella tale” of the 20th century, noting the increased and ever-growing opportunities for generations of younger women.

generations as political and dynamic (especially in terms of family work and public spheres) could be useful in attempts to make sense of the competing and often diametrically opposed perspectives put forth by anti-feminist/backlash proponents, postfeminists, and third wave feminists—all categories predominantly classified as belonging to the same biological generation. Add the intricacies and different experiences of race, class, ability, sexuality, geographic location, and education, and an understanding of feminist political generations emerges as far more complex—and more interesting.³⁶

Nancy Whittier's Feminist Generations

Nancy Whittier's 1995 book, *Feminist Generations: The Persistence of the Radical Feminist Movement*, stands as the only longitudinal study of the transformations that one contingent of the “contemporary” women's movement has undergone. Specifically, her analysis encapsulates the activism of the 1960s and the 1970s and travels to the 1980s and 1990s, when anti-feminist backlash emerged in full force. Drawing on documents from liberal and radical women's organizations and interviews with feminist veterans and movement newcomers—all in Columbus, Ohio—she follows the multiple ways that the very definition of feminism has shifted as the movement itself changed over time, documenting nuanced variations of feminist identities and analyzing both the tension and support that exists between long-time and newer activists. Tracing grassroots radical feminist activism over a forty-year span, she provides a remarkable

³⁶ McDaniel also suggests that “generation is not equivalent to birth cohort, but actually orthogonal to it,” another conceptual route that could prove interesting and potentially useful to further analyses of feminist ‘generations.’ (1997: 207).

historical account showing how different periods of activism shaped how feminism has been defined, how activist strategies have changed, and how difference (and persistence) have both affected and transformed the feminist movement. While her work examined a relatively small microcosm of feminist movement (notably, a group outside of a major urban centre), the book does provide an understanding of generational cohorts that can be, as Susan Roche notes, “generalizable to the national level because of Whittier’s movement from the lived experiences of the women who were interviewed to her articulation of theory that connects the interviews and the supporting literature” (1996: 242). Additionally, and important to my own understanding of generational models in the current historical moment, Whittier “also provides a well-argued counter to the popular culture’s claims that this is the postfeminist era” (242).

Using Mannheim’s formulation of political generations (and the cohort replacement theories that have followed from it)³⁷ as a constructive starting point, Nancy Whittier proposes a generational model of ‘continuity and change’ in social movements based on a case-study of the women’s movement (specifically the “radical feminist” contingent of the movement) from 1969 to

³⁷ In terms of social movement theory and analysis there are two predominant schools of thought regarding the degree to which ‘commitment’ to a social movement can be measured. The first, the one to which she herself subscribes is Mannheim’s cohort replacement approach, which posits that members of a particular generational cohort have ‘unique’ characteristics “that are shaped by historically specific formative experiences and that endure throughout members’ life cycle (Whittier, 1997: 762). The second incorporates three sub-approaches: life cycle, psycho-analytic, and period perspectives. Interestingly, virtually all of the varying discourses on ‘feminist generations’ conducted to date can be slotted into one of the five; although the vast majority fit neatly within the last three. Also interesting is that these theories have, according to Whittier, been “tested extensively, most commonly as they apply to the social movements of the 1960s’ (1997: 762).

1992.³⁸ Her method moves from Mannheim's by adding a consideration of the internal dynamics of "recruitment" and "collective identity" to the mix, and she puts forward three propositions about generational processes in social movements that help delineate feminist generations as political generations. Her first and second propositions follow Mannheim, arguing that "the collective identity of a given cohort of social movement participants remains consistent over time" (763), and that "cohorts construct different collective identities based on the external contexts and internal conditions of the movement at the time they enter," thereby mobilizing each "wave of protest" and illuminating differences between and among generation-units (760, 764).³⁹ Whittier's third proposition asserts that "cohort replacement contributes to change in social movements," and that when recruitment and/or turnover rates are high, levels of change in its organizations and 'collective identity' correspond accordingly (764). She writes

The endurance of each political generation's collective identity is a thread that connects a movement from one wave to the next. Yet because collective identity is shaped by the changing contexts that prevail when activists first commit to the cause, long-lived social movements contain cohorts with potentially disparate definitions of the movement. As recruits enter, their redefinitions of themselves and the cause can reshape the movement (775).

Perhaps most significant to this discussion is that Whittier's framework does not rest on the assumption (held not only by Mannheim, but by many—if not most—proponents of generational approaches) that youth is "the sole formative period

³⁸ This analysis is pulled from a paper that represents a micro-version of her book-length study entitled *Feminist Generations: The Persistence of the Radical Feminist Movement*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995). That book continues to stand as the most in-depth examination of 'feminist generations' to date.

³⁹ Whittier uses the term "micro-cohort" to denote what Mannheim calls "generation-units." They can even denote groups who 'joined' social movements within years of each other. She argues that this illustrates the complexity of micro-mobilization, and the "brevity of the period that defines the cohort" (762). They may differ, but have overlapping perspectives.

in individual's lives" (Whittier, 1997: 762). Instead, she suggests that political generations are composed of people of *any* age who intentionally join a social movement "during a given wave of protest" (762).

On first gloss, Whittier's propositions appear to be more of the same: traditional sociological classifications with only slight variation from the analyses that preceded hers. However, her conceptualization of political generations, and feminist political generations in particular, is actually far more nuanced, and adds a useful complexity to current discourses on feminist 'generations'. Her suggestion that social movement 'membership' includes both the 'old guard' (who ensure the movement's persistence) and 'rookies' (who provide what Mannheim (1952: 294) calls "fresh contact") in any given 'wave' is an important one, in that she addresses the dynamics of interaction as well as the resilience of collective identity; even as (or perhaps because) that identity shifts and changes over time (Whittier, 1997: 761). She also effectively uses her case study—a microcosm of the broader women's movement in the United States—to critique and expose the limits of life cycle, psychoanalytic and period perspectives on generational continuity, commitment and change (generally as being "too simplistic"), and to illustrate that "a generation unit's political commitments endure over the years" (769, 762). Her perspective adds some much-needed optimism to the debates around the direction (and, in effect, the future) of the women's movement in the current historical moment.

While Whittier admits that her study has limited generalizability, her analysis does provide support for many perspectives circulating about feminist generations. Her work also offers a number of fruitful directions for further

study. Her radical feminist respondents from Columbus, Ohio—admittedly, “atypical”—not only demonstrate that more detailed investigations on social movement transformations (and even slight modifications) are needed, but also that change is a fundamental aspect of the resilience of commitment to the movement itself (Whittier, 1997: 765). Her discussion about the differences between and among ‘micro-cohorts’—internal tensions and hostility arising from differing points of view over movement strategies, new initiatives, ideology and even concerning contrary conceptions of feminism itself—illustrate that conflict can give rise to change within the movement, and to the contours of feminism itself (771). “Cohort turnover,” she argues in the case of the Ohio study, “promoted innovation in feminist strategy, tactics, organizational structure and composition, and collective identity,” suggesting that perhaps anxieties over the future (or lack thereof) of feminism—or of a feminism in ‘crisis’—are not only overblown and reactionary, but entirely premature (776).

While Mannheim’s approach to the concept of “generations” remains in academic circulation (and has become “pervasive and scholarly popular points of reference”), critics note that

the main problem with the study of generations has been that the collective identity of any birth cohort is crosscut and shaped by multiple factors, thus greatly complicating empirical research and generalization. Sustained interest in some of these factors—above all class, race, ethnicity, gender, and the body—among social scientists, historians, literary scholars, and cultural anthropologists has not encouraged substantial new theoretical or empirical work on generations. Further, in the last decades of the twentieth century the influence of postmodern cultural theory, which challenged the validity of sweeping explanatory models or “metanarratives” that claim to explain social change—such as “generations”—contributed to the decline in scholarly work on the subject (Remy, 2009: np).

Whittier's adoption and tweaking of the concept—and of Mannheim's approach—updates it considerably, adding gender and aspects of collective identity into the equation. Additionally (and importantly), Whittier's work also speaks to the intellectual value of longitudinal studies.⁴⁰

Life cycle approaches, according to Whittier, suggest that changes in political perspective, affinity, attachment to the 'cause' and the like are all the result of reasonably predictable experiences of moving through different life stages. This could include education, career and family, retirement—all of the markers of growing up and aging in a particular society (1997: 762). What's interesting about this perspective is that it also asserts that members of a cohort will retain their political perspectives throughout their lives, even as the circumstances of their lives shift. Leila Rupp (2000) tells a story of how, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, she and Verta Taylor were working on a book on feminist activism in America in the so-called "dormant period" of the movement; they

...took pains to explain to audiences that it was women in their fifties, sixties, seventies, and even eighties who kept the flame burning in the inhospitable climate of the 1950s. From the perspective of second wave feminism, we felt we had to account for such an anomaly. Despite feminist Jo Freeman's depiction of both an "older" and "younger" branch of the women's movement that blossomed in the late 1960s, we, like the media, tended to think of feminists as young women (165).

⁴⁰ While hers was of a sample population, the same could be said for similarly scoped analyses of texts, representations, and images. It should also be noted that Whittier is not the only scholar to attempt to mobilize and work with Mannheim's conceptualization of "generations." Jose Ortega y Gasset (1933) and his student Julian Marias (1979) both worked to extend Mannheim's ideas, but neither successfully proposed a theory of generations that could be sustained. Together, their work stands largely as critique that warn scholars employing Mannheim to heed the nuances of interpretation and to strive for more complex understandings of generational affiliation, hostility and social groupings (including, in the case of Marias, the need to take gender into account).

Her research since that time has led her to speculate that their assumptions were flawed; that “women have come to feminist causes as middle-aged, rather than young, women and then stuck with the movement (or at least its issues) into old age” (2000: 165). Conversely, Whittier’s study found that while her radical feminists remained feminists as they aged, “what it meant to be a feminist changed somewhat” (768). Although the shift was slight, Whittier argued that they had an impact on whether or not the ‘collective identity’ of the generation was maintained or if that would shift accordingly.

Not surprisingly, Whittier’s argument has been heavily criticized, particularly because of its reliance upon teleological notions of history.⁴¹ And, I would argue, there is no one school of thought that thoroughly and adequately responds to the most recent generational permutations in feminism—or the intergenerational tensions that have risen from them. Nor do any of the approaches Whittier reviews provide much in the way of a framework to assist in the process of revisioning or rethinking feminist history-making. Perhaps this is because most theories were largely tested with the generations of the 1960s as their pre-eminent sample. Whittier is quick to note that “models that posit the persistence of a fixed perspective are too simplistic,” and that life cycle and period approaches (she ignores the Oedipal dilemma entirely in her summation, suggesting that she deems it of little value) should be understood as working in tandem with the cohort replacement approach she adheres to.

⁴¹ See, for instance, Roof’s (1997) critique that argues that these kinds of reproductive metaphors must be avoided; not least because of their often unacknowledged heterosexism.

Thinking Again about Generational Approaches: What about the Media?

“Waves” and “generations” have been utilized, in varying degrees and with varying success, as discursive devices that simultaneously facilitate certain understandings of what constitutes feminism, feminisms, the women’s movement and feminists (and indeed postfeminists and postfeminism) while limiting, silencing, ignoring or erasing others. While many argue that generational frameworks are insufficient to tell the full “story” of the women’s movement and that the wave has grown inadequate as an overarching trope of the movement and of feminism more broadly, engagement with and analysis of both are important—necessary, even—because of their persistent prevalence. As this chapter has shown, the uses—and abuses—of both (and the conflation of one with the other with the rise of the third wave and the coinciding of chronological time with what was once more fluid, more oceanic time) in the construction, rewriting, and re-visioning of feminist pasts are nonetheless interesting and valuable because they wrestle with the complexity of feminist pasts, presents and futures. Uncovering where, when and how they both succeed and fail is illuminating.

What is most striking to me when reviewing the large body of work on generations, however, is that while breaking down the intricacies of social movement ebbs and flows, articulating the gradations and implications of identities and affiliations, and working to understand how political generations emerge and are maintained and then change and morph again, these approaches fall short of engaging in any way with the impact of the (specifically mainstream,

but also “alternative”) media in their classifications. This gap registers as a glaring oversight; particularly given the impact technology has had on feminist knowledge production and dissemination, and especially given how much of the more recent generational rhetoric has been voiced in a mediated context. The flagging of media as a perpetrator—or at least an accomplice—in the production, maintenance and reproduction of ‘generational feminisms’ needs to be interrogated in some significant way—particularly in conjunction with contemporary understandings (and configurations) of feminisms’ *passing on*. While suggestions that feminisms’ generational “crisis” is partly a crisis in mainstream representation continue, no one has actually tried to verify or critique that assumption by conducting an analyses of those representations, especially in the Canadian context. Accordingly, the remainder of this inquiry is devoted to a close reading of selected examples of how feminist generational discourse circulates in two instances of Canadian media.

Chapter Four

“Feminist Generations” and *The Globe and Mail*, 1970-2008

“feminism has always seemed visionary” (*The Globe and Mail*, 1970).

“Amnesia, not a lack of history, is feminism's worst enemy today. Let us then refresh our memory” (Offen, 2000: 17).

My introduction to the knotty relationship between feminism, generations, and the Canadian news media began in the fall of 1998, when one of my graduate studies professors distributed photocopies of a clipping from the spring edition of *The Toronto Star* to our class on feminism in Canada. “Is the Feminist Fight Over?” queried the headline, followed by a deck that read: “Unlike the revolutionary feminists of the 1960s, young women today seem less interested in the role of feminism.” Written by nineteen year-old Amy Carmichael of the *Young People's Press*¹ and printed in the “Life/Fashion/Family” section of the newspaper, the item used interviews with a variety of women—of varying age—as an entry point to exploring inter- and intra-generational tensions that had seemingly emerged within the women's movement at that time. Some gems:

“When you call yourself a feminist, you're automatically setting up camps and burning bras” (Leanne Ritchie, 19).

¹ Based in Toronto, Ontario, *The Young People's Press* was a youth-based, not-for-profit media and multimedia agency showcasing items written by youth and providing mentorship and support for youth-driven media-based projects. Their web site, www.ypp.net, is now defunct, but TakingITGlobal (www.takingitglobal.org) continues to list it as an active organization.

“The whole concept of feminism is fabulous. But I think feminists have achieved the equality they were looking for, and now they are risking everyone else’s” (Geoff Dennis, 20).

“I think young women don’t understand feminism...they take a lot of things for granted and don’t realize how hard the women who came before them had to fight” (Nina Herman, the *Older Women’s Network*).

“I find that a lot of older women do not understand young women, which is a big part of the problem. A lot of the issues women were fighting for/against when the women’s movement began, are not really comparable to the issues that young women deal with today...I think some older women have that inherent inner competitiveness that makes them less likely to act as mentors” (Lynette Bondarchuk, 28).

“When I tell people I’m majoring in women’s studies they say, ‘What’s that? What are you going to do with that? You’re brave,’ or ‘I’ve never heard of that.’ It’s pretty discouraging” (Jessica Tomlin, age 19).

“Welcome to the backlash generation,” Carmichael writes; moving on to discuss the aging of the women’s movement in Canada via the “sea of grey heads” that had come to occupy the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), the amplification of abstraction and complexity in what constitutes contemporary feminist debates, and the overarching sentiment of alienation on the part of younger would-be feminists from a broader movement. While acknowledging that NAC’s struggles around recruitment and retention were exacerbated by massive cuts to the organization’s federal funding, the article ends with an admonishment of the media’s role in feminism’s “generation problem”: “Some people think the backlash against feminism was largely created through trend journalism,” Carmichael writes. “Editors ran articles with headlines such as ‘Feminism is dead,’ based on the opinions of a handful of people. The more this

material was published the deeper it became ingrained into the public psyche” (1998: F3).

The item struck an immediate chord not only with me, but also with my colleagues—a group of women who varied as dramatically in age and generational affiliation as they did in their wide-ranging feminist sensibilities. I likened Carmichael’s breakdown to my own budding sense that “feminist generations” as a frame had become an increasingly popular way to denounce feminism and feminists in the public sphere, and expressed my irritation that this often seemed to be at the expense of—or worse, endorsed by—the younger factions of those groups. My classmates’ responses were even more telling: the room was incensed and the conversation that ensued followed multiple trajectories ranging from personal anecdotes, to demography, to psycho-social stages of development, to social movement theories on what can and will incite individuals to collective action—all of which either buttressed or condemned Carmichael’s assessment outright. The room splintered into multiple groups (that morphed and changed as the exchange shifted around different themes), but the exchange was fiery and exhilarating.

While launching a chapter that touts *The Globe and Mail* as its corpus with an item from *The Toronto Star* may seem peculiar, the relationship between the highly charged nature of “feminist generations” as a concept and the print news media as a vehicle of transmission—as well as the affective power of their (often fraught) affiliation—is certainly not relegated to this particular item in that particular class. On the contrary, the role that the media plays—and has played—in the construction, perpetuation and establishment of generational discourses

around and about feminism and the women's movement has occupied considerable space in recent considerations of the contemporary state of feminism and anxieties over its future. As well, the configuration of those debates has often, as Ednie Kaeh Garrison (2004) notes, "hinged upon a series of simplifications and mis-conceptions about the object 'feminism' that circulate in the national, popular imaginary" (24). Those "simplifications" and "mis-conceptions" have, to some extent, fuelled the proliferation of blame-the-media discourse that has permeated academic treatises on feminism's *passing on*. Despite the now-familiar suggestions that feminism's "generational crisis" is to some extent a crisis in and of mainstream representation, those representations have received surprisingly little scholarly attention to date. While Vavrus (2000) reminds us that analyses of the depiction of feminism and feminists in the media have increased exponentially in the last fifteen years, corresponding to the rise of overall media examinations of the everyday lives of women (413), none have yet cast a critical eye at generational representations.

Deborah Rhodes (1995) chronicles this past in "Media Images, Feminist Issues," noting that

The basic story is one of partial progress. Over the last quarter century, much has improved in press portraits of feminism, feminists, and gender-related issues. Yet much still needs improvement...At issue is what the media choose to present (or not to present) as news about women and how they characterize (or caricature) the women's movement. This issue deserves greater attention from those interested in social movements in general and the women's movement in particular...For any social movement, the media play a crucial role in shaping public consciousness and public policy (685).

Following Rhodes, Garrison (2004) also expresses concern over how feminism has taken on—and has been ascribed—multiple meanings in recent years, particularly over the ways in which “different cohorts and individuals contest for the power to determine its meaning,” particularly with regard to debates over the emergence of a “third wave” of feminism. She notes that “both reactions are the strongest when I have examined the intersections between feminist knowledge production and popular knowledge of feminism” (33). Like Garrison, I have also “been both delighted and distressed by what I have seen” in terms of the multiple, often contradictory ways in which generational configurations have been employed and deployed by feminists and non-feminists alike, (33) and this chapter heeds her call to “consider more fully the significance of the media as a central site of consciousness formation and knowledge production” (24). Agreeing that the media do indeed “play a more important role in cultural knowledge production of feminist consciousness than feminist thinkers have acknowledged” to date (25), it is clear that this avenue has emerged as an important orientation in the examination of feminist generations.² In particular, the assumptions underlying popular understandings of the media as the root cause of generational configurations need to be interrogated in some significant way.

² It should be noted that Garrison’s (2004) work focuses primarily on the shifts of meanings around and about feminism via the emergence and deployment of “third wave feminist” identities in contemporary popular consciousness in the United States, and while her work speaks to generational configurations of these representations, she does not examine the concept of “generations” in any way. Carolyn Bronstein (2005) has conducted an analysis of the representation of “third wave” feminists in the mainstream news media in the American context, noting that “news accounts of the third wave have yet to receive scholarly attention,” but again, her work only peripherally takes generational frames into account (785).

Hilary Hinds and Jackie Stacey (2001) have also been concerned with the ways in which “the figure of the feminist” has circulated in mainstream newspapers. Using the United Kingdom’s print media landscape as their site, they reviewed changing images of feminism in the British press beginning in the early 1990s, when a perceptible shift in how feminists were portrayed was discerned by them both (they cite an article on a self-proclaimed “feminist” Playboy bunny, complete with “bobtail corset” that coincided with the publication of Naomi Wolf’s *Fire with Fire*, a text that also provoked an article in the *Times*’ weekend edition. What followed? An editorial entitled “Feminists Didn’t Used to Look Like This” (153)). Popular depictions of “the feminist” have become commonplace enough in the UK press that they have gained symbolic currency “in the contemporary political landscape and cultural imagination” (153). Referencing a number of texts that have evaluated those representations they write,

Whilst the mainstream press continues to circulate the stock-in-trade clichés of bra-burners and ruthless career-driven superwomen, these stereotypes increasingly operate in tension with a broader media discourse about a potential compatibility between the previously polarised categories of feminism and femininity (Hinds and Stacey, 2001: 153).

Their work in this paper (a microcosm of a much broader research project that examines “the imaging of feminism” from 1968 to the present time) attempts to evaluate the ways in which “the feminist political subject is constituted” in media representations, with an overarching goal of teasing out and addressing the complexities of the relationship—steeped in cultural constructions—of feminisms and femininities (155). Importantly, they note that

the history of the representation of feminism in the British press during the last 30 years might be characterized as being marked by a shift from the *monstrous outsiders* of the 1960s and 1970s to the *incorporated Ms.* of the 1990s. However, such a linear account of the move towards reconciliation leaves little room for the uneven and multiple significations of media imaging of feminism during this time (Hinds and Stacey, 2001: 155).

It is their concern for “multiple and uneven” understandings of feminisms that stands as both a warning and a guide to my own reading of representations of feminisms and generations here.

With these foundations in mind, this chapter draws on the theoretical construct of news framing and the methodology of feminist critical discourse as articulated by Michelle Lazar (2005) in order to arrive at a clearer, more informed understanding of the role that the popular media have actually played in the production and maintenance of feminist generational frames. Understood simultaneously as a “research perspective” (van Dijk, 1994) or a “research programme” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), critical discourse analysis “is known for its overtly political stance and is concerned with all forms of social inequity and injustice” (Lazar, 2005: 2). More specifically, critical discourse analysis is

...a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. (van Dijk, 2001: 352).

In other words, critical discourse analysis understands that “discourse is shaped by and helps to shape how social structures and relations are instantiated in the fine detail of daily social practice” and emerges as a particularly useful tool in an examination of “feminist generations” in the media, where the

interconnectedness of scholarly inquiry and the vernacular are particularly salient (Fairclough, 1988: 136; but see also 1989; 1992; 1995; 2003; and Widdowson, 2004: 89).

As Bromstein (2005) notes, numerous analyses that have investigated the ways in which feminists and feminism have been represented in the media have drawn on “news framing” as their method of choice (785). A concept and methodology derived from Gitlin (1980), Entman (1993), Entman and Rojecki (1993) and adapted more recently by Jiwani (2006) and employed throughout this chapter, “media frames” work in this regard as an organizing agent; a mechanism that assists both journalists and their readers make sense of issues deemed to be of contemporary concern.³ According to Goffman (1974), frames provide a guideline for organizing issues or events within a social context to enable us to ground them in a particular reality. To him, these “schemata of interpretation” (frames) enable analyses “to locate, perceive, identify and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms,” providing “a first answer to the question, ‘What is it that’s going on here?’” (Goffman, 1974: 21; 25). In so doing, they work to make visible “what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful” (21). Moy and Scheufele (2004), elaborating on Gitlin (1980), add

³ “Frame analysis” in this sense was originally put forth by Erving Goffman (1974) who utilized it for his work on small group interaction. It has since become one of the predominant foundations for analysis attempting to interpret media representations of social phenomenon. See Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (London: Harper & Row, 1974). Yasmin Jiwani’s broad body of work involving the mapping and analysis of representations of racialized women in the Canadian news media (including *The Vancouver Sun*, *The Montreal Gazette*, *The Globe and Mail* and *the National Post*) has had a strong impact on the formulation of my analysis here. (See Jiwani, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, and 2006).

that media or news frames also provide journalists with “working routines” that allow them to “quickly identify and classify information and to package it for efficient use by audience members” (28; see also Gitlin, 1980: 7).

Understood in this way, frames become, as Todd Gitlin (1980) notes, “principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (6). Robert M. Entman (1993) clarifies further, explaining that

Framing entails *selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution*. The words and images that make up the frame can be distinguished from the rest of the news by their capacity to stimulate support or opposition to the sides in a political conflict...Those frames that employ more culturally resonant terms have the greatest potential for influence. They use words and images highly salient in the culture, which is to say *noticeable, understandable, memorable, and emotionally charged*. Magnitude taps the *prominence and repetition* of the framing words and images. The more resonance and magnitude, the more likely the framing is to evoke similar thoughts and feelings in large portions of the audience (417).

Drawing from this work on news frames, this chapter presents and reflects on a longitudinal analysis of some of the ways in which the mainstream print news media has represented—and *represented*—feminism and its generational configurations over time. More specifically, I analysed articles drawn strategically from thirty-eight years of generational discourses around and about feminism as articulated via Canada’s oldest national English-language daily newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*—from its first citation of “feminist generations” (1970) to the present (2008)—to explore the more dominant rumblings about feminism and feminists through the lens of “generation.” This track shifts this dissertation’s line of inquiry away from its previous focus on the production of these debates in the

realm of the academy, and acknowledges that feminist knowledge is indeed affected by, produced and reproduced outside—and sometimes in conjunction with—the walls of the ivory tower, in public sites often disengaged with (and oftentimes hostile to) feminism as an identity, a social movement and as political praxis. It also attempts to bring English Canadian feminism's past in to the present in a more critical, self-conscious manner. Two central research questions initially guided my data collection process and this frame analysis: How is English Canadian news media discourse on feminism and feminists framed via generational lenses? How does English Canadian news media discourse further construct generational configurations of feminism?

This chapter inserts the Canadian women's movement and the Canadian feminist landscape into discussions of media representations of feminism and its generational concerns, and employs *The Globe and Mail* as one vehicle for unearthing the salience of these debates to feminists north of the American border. To date, sources from the United States—both mainstream and scholarly—have been the preeminent purveyors for generational analyses of feminism, and Canadian feminist generational discourses—as few in number as they are—have often been charged with reproducing (albeit mostly unintentionally) American treatises on the subject.⁴ While American work (and those representations and accompanying discourses) certainly circulate the most widely—and have the highest (global) currency—they are produced within a specific national context that cannot (and indeed, should probably not) be

⁴ See particularly Robbin's (200?) review of Braithwaite, Heald, Luhmann and Rosenberg's *Troubling Women's Studies*.

reproduced outside its particular locale. Mainstream American representations of feminisms' "family problem" convey a limited range of feminisms and feminists, and do not offer space for the articulation of what Grant and Wood (2004) describe as "a distinctly Canadian voice," even though they circulate widely in Canada (16). And while Canadian contributions have appeared in American collections (particularly anthologies and special issues of academic journals), the national context of the whole remains a central characteristic of the kind of content—and the overarching sentiment—that work on feminist generations contains (as well as what examples are provided, what issues they tackle, and the individuals and organizations that they feature). This chapter, then, not only examines the ways in which 'feminist generations' have been and are represented in the Canadian print news media, but also doubles as a way of examining the Canadian context of feminist generational debates more closely—a significant task, especially given the promulgation of American perspectives on this topic and the tendency to conflate the American context with ones outside its borders.⁵

Given the tendency among contemporary feminist activists to mobilize different forms of media—like, for instance, online spaces, live performance art, graphic novels and comics, 'zines and the like—in their organizing and dissemination of information (including, but not limited to, scholarly publications and even the distribution of feminist news) why choose *The Globe and Mail* to seek out a broader understanding of the notion of *passing on*

⁵ It is also important to note, as Linda Kealey has, how "...it is quite clear that Canadian women's history has been substantially shaped by developments in American women's history," and that "[c]onceptualizations and approaches developed in the United States have strongly influenced how we have written our history" (1992: 280).

feminism, in all its incarnations? First and foremost, *The Globe and Mail* is Canada's widest read English daily newspaper, and has been for decades. Nowhere else (in print) can we speak of an ongoing national dialogue, and given the enormous physical distances separating Canadians, "our" investment in nation-spanning media is substantial (if not limited by the "mirror" it presents—one whose reflection reveals a particular tint and warp in its glass that looks suspiciously similar to editorial boards).⁶ In the Canadian context, *The Globe and Mail* stands as the only decade-spanning English-language news media publication that would allow me to search—and find—what I was looking for. Perhaps the most significant outcome of this corpus is the fact that it provides data that upholds the idea that these ideas (*passing on* feminism) are not new, that they have not been created by a sudden explosion of media, by the influx of postfeminist ideals in the mainstream popular culture, or by the arrival of feminisms' "third wave." Instead, as will be shown here, they are part of a systemic, formulaic framing of feminism that seems to always—across the span of almost forty years—return to the same tired old dominant sense-making explanatory frameworks time and time again.

Feminism, Generations, and The Globe and Mail

⁶ For the purposes of this inquiry, I require a news media text that actually spanned the time needed to conduct an adequate longitudinal study; to see, in the same vein as the work of Katie King (1994), how "generation" as a concept entangled in feminism has "traveled" in time. Practically, I needed to locate a tangible, searchable data collection that told the story of multiple waves and multiple generations simultaneously. Hinds and Stacey (2001) chose a remarkably similar body of data for their research project as well, of which the article "Imaging Feminism, Imaging Femininity," is only a preliminary "first take" at dealing with the volumes of data they collected. I feel very much the same way, as I am now in the possession of a seemingly unlimited database worthy of much, much future culling.

Alongside *The National Post*, *The Globe and Mail* is one of two national dailies located within a Canadian media milieu dominated by three large corporations: CTVglobemedia Publishing, Inc., CanWest Global Corporation, and Torstar (Jiwani, 2005b: 51).⁷ Owned by the former, *The Globe and Mail* holds the status of being Canada's longest-running daily newspaper (founded in 1844 as *The Globe*) and was virtually unrivalled as the lone national daily until the launch of *The National Post* in 1998.⁸ Yasmin Jiwani (2005a) notes that "because of its burden of reaching across a vast geographic space and encapsulating diverse regional interests and concerns, [*The Globe and Mail*] tends to echo more of a pan-Canadian, though Toronto-centric (based as it is in Toronto, Ontario) perspective" (15-16). Boasting a cumulative (six-day) readership total of nearly three million, the paper understands its constituency to be "Canada's thought leaders and taste-setters who strongly identify with everything our brand stands for."⁹ Frances Henry and Carol Tator (2002: 93) note that "*The Globe* uses a form of argumentation that draws on democratic liberal values and principles," reinforcing Jiwani's (2005) observations that while "*The Globe and Mail* has the reputation of being positioned at the center and right of center in the political

⁷ Jiwani (2005b, citing Hackett et al., 2000 and Winter, 1997; 2002) notes further that "the Canadian landscape is also marked by intense media concentration, wherein news stories (and entertainment media) are provided by a few conglomerates, and where local stories are often refracted through the lens of the monopoly that governs that local subsidiary" (51).

⁸ Jiwani also notes that *The Globe and Mail* is only one of CTVglobemedia Publishing Inc's (formerly Bell Globemedia Corporation) media outlets: it also owns CTV, the Discovery Channel, TSN.ca, robtv.com, and RDS, and other stations and online portals. "More important," she continues, "the corporation has established news bureaus across the country and in numerous other sites worldwide, including Los Angeles, New York, Washington, and in countries such as India, China, Russia, Uganda and Israel" (51).

⁹ GlobeLink, "About Our Newspaper." <http://www.globelink.ca/newspaper/about/>. The *Globe's* own numbers were pulled from data collected by the Print Measurement Bureau (PMB) 2008, total Canadians 12 and older.

spectrum” ideologically, it “also sees itself more of a centrist paper as compared to its national competitor, *The National Post*” (Jiwani, 2005b: 51).

In order to construct a representative corpus for analysis, newspaper articles were gathered in two stages, using two distinct digital databases of *The Globe and Mail*. The first stage collected articles from *The Globe and Mail: Canada’s Heritage from 1844* (a digitized, full-page (PDF) searchable archive accessed through MicroMedia ProQuest’s Web portal) by utilizing the Boolean query “feminis* AND generation.” “Feminis*” was selected to ensure that every intersection of “generation” with “feminism,” “feminisms,” “feminist,” and “feminists” would be captured and logged.¹⁰ As previously mentioned, this process led to a slew of articles dating from 1970, when the first intersection of “feminism” and “generation” occurred in the archives. Articles were collected in this manner for the entire collection, up to the point that its availability ceased (in 2003).¹¹ Using similar search terms but adding “Publication: *The Globe and Mail*” (“Feminis* AND generation AND *The Globe and Mail*”), the second stage of retrieval queried Canadian Newsstand on Proquest from January 2003 to December 2007 to collect articles, and then used the same archive to double-check the reliability of my initial inquiry and to retrieve any items that may have

¹⁰ In a review of *The Globe and Mail: Canada’s Heritage from 1844*, Donna Millard (2003) flags a number of technical issues that limit the archives’ functionality for comprehensive research. The most relevant to my inquiry concerns the quality of the reproductions: although the archive uses “the latest in newspaper archive technology,” (beginning with the highest quality microfiche available digitized with Archive Publisher using optical character recognition to render them searchable via a variety of query methods), the PDFs retrieved “were not the most gratifying search results” (68). My experience working with this archive was not quite as dissatisfying as Millard’s, but I did double-check the results of my query with Canadian Newsstand on ProQuest to ensure my collection was complete.

¹¹ The database did not cease to publish, but at the time of my query it only provided access to articles printed up to 2003.

slipped through the cracks.¹²

My database search intentionally cast a wide net in an effort to grasp a richer sense of the role “generations” have played in print news media representations of feminism and feminists over time. The intent was also to encapsulate what have come to be known as the “second” and “third” waves of feminism, and to try to gauge the extent to which “generation” as a concept has framed feminisms in the contemporary Canadian context. In all, 414 applicable articles were found: the first in August, 1970 and the last in late December, 2007.¹³

I set to work coding; developing a thematic analysis that allowed me to examine both the dominant frames and counterframes that emerged in *The Globe and Mail's* delineation of feminism and feminists in generational terms, and to examine the ways in which “feminist generations” has been rendered intelligible to the newspaper’s readership over time.¹⁴ Admittedly, I initially envisioned uncovering a familiar series of narratives, largely based on my own experiences and assumptions as an avid newspaper reader of upwards of fifteen years: one that outlined a progression of sorts; marking changes in feminist movement, peppered with postfeminism but inflected with counter-discourses of persistent activism and resistance set within an unrelenting climate of backlash and subtle

¹² Despite the criticisms (see note 9, above) of my first archive as a reliable source, “double-checking” found only two articles that weren’t captured via my first stage of data collection.

¹³ I consciously flagged and discarded items containing both search terms (feminis* and generation) when they were not used in direct relation to each other.

¹⁴ See Appendix B for an example of my coding style. Utilizing a method developed by Yasmin Jiwani, items were numbered, dated, and the headline, by-line and lead (as well as the author’s name, the page number and section in which the item appeared) were charted. From there, dominant themes of the item were listed as was the relevant text from the article itself. Those themes, while illuminated here, provide innumerable branches for further inquiry that I look forward to following in the future.

hostility to feminism and feminist concerns. My presumptions were also fed by an understanding that, as Joanna Everitt (2005) has noted, “news values have always combined with political priorities to determine what is important, [and] women’s issues have traditionally not been viewed as important enough to be considered newsworthy” (390-391).¹⁵

As the remainder of this chapter will make evident, while my foreshadowing wasn’t necessarily misguided, it wasn’t entirely accurate either. What emerged in the process of coding and reading and sifting through thirty-eight years was a complex network of overlapping generational narratives with multiple plotlines, sensational personalities, and oftentimes contradictory accounts of feminism, feminists and the women’s movement.¹⁶ Fascinating cycles of stories unfolded through the years, as did a more troubling, broader narrative that required interrogation: all of which chronicled a series of what seemed to be very startling similarities and interesting differences.

Instead of engaging directly with the 417 news items that make up the entire archive (a process that would, by necessity, result in the creation of multiple catalogues rather than an analysis of narrative development, framing and change), I sifted and sorted through them all, slowly selecting articles that exemplified some of the more dominant sense-making explanatory frames that recurred time and time again in the pages of *The Globe and Mail* over the

¹⁵ I was quite surprised when my searches gleaned as many articles as they did.

¹⁶ I realize that I am (and have been) distinguishing these three—feminisms, feminists and the women’s movement—as separate and distinct bodies/phenomena throughout this dissertation. While I haven’t gone into detail here, I feel as though the demarcation should be made, perhaps to ensure that there isn’t an easy conflation of one for the other (or an easy use of a single word to describe them all). My sentiment here should absolutely be reflected upon and dissected, as it is peculiar and seems to speak to important underlying issues that speak to broader concerns.

years under investigation here. The news items were coded for the recurrence of the following thematic frames: the familial (mothers/daughters/sisters/grand-); past/present/future (history, historicity); the discourse of the “new” and of “youth” (including, but not limited to the terms “young” and “old”); sex and sexuality; the word “feminist” and, of course, “generations” and “waves” used in accordance with it; the use of iconic figures (Betty Freidan, Judy Rebick, Susan Brownmiller, Gloria Steinem emerged as big names); “death” and/or the use of the analogy to describe a state of feminism and, related, “postfeminism” or the presence of “postfeminists”; “crisis” or the articulation of the language of anxiety; concerns voiced over (and even nods to) the legacy/inheritance of feminisms by feminists (and vice-versa); the expression of the now-familiar axiom “I’m not a feminist, but...” (which surfaces less than I had originally expected throughout the thirty-eight years); and any and all nods to a “gap” in feminism and/or between and among feminists.

What resulted was a list of forty-two articles that span the thirty-eight years and that speak, as exemplars of dozens like them in the overall database, to the reiteration and repetition of particular themes; themes that are easily understood as the prevailing news frames used to discuss feminism in generational terms in the Canadian mainstream print news media. What is striking about this list—what I have termed “Exemplary Items”—is the resilience of some of these frames from 1970 to the present time (see Appendix A for the list and Appendix B for examples of how those items were coded).¹⁷

¹⁷ While beyond the scope of my work here, I look forward particularly to pursuing the mobilization of age as a recurring factor in these debates in the future—especially with regard

Although reducing the larger corpus to a smaller, more manageable collection of “exemplary items” was a useful part of the analysis, the methodological problem still remaining was how to proceed in terms of presenting the rather daunting mountain of material and my analysis of it. How could I present an accurate and useful picture of the forest without having to point out each and every tree? And, following Hinds and Stacey (2001), how do I do so as objectively as possible, without inadvertently charting an already well-worn narrative?

The first glimmer of an answer presented itself on January 26th 2008, a couple of weeks after completing my coding and establishing a preliminary list of frames and counter-frames for potential analysis. I rather fortuitously read the Saturday edition of *The Globe and Mail*, flipped to the “Lifestyle” section, and found this headline: “It’s official: Feminism is out of style.”¹⁸ While the caption was certainly not innovative given the promulgation of headlines pronouncing feminisms’ demise in recent years¹⁹ (a persistent trend, as my collection demonstrates, throughout the last thirty-eight as well),²⁰ Karen Von Hahn’s reiteration in this particular item struck a different kind of chord: a strikingly familiar one; one that simultaneously drew me back to the very first article in my

to the multiple ways in which it intersects with the language of “crisis and anxiety” here (for instance, the word “young” appears 126 times in the 46 “Exemplary Items” alone, and the word “old” appears 100 times).

¹⁸ The placement of this particular item within the body of the newspaper—in the “lifestyles” section—should be noted...particularly the location of it within the “soft news” and the market of the female reader...

¹⁹ Media headlines have termed feminism “The Great Experiment That Failed” (Gibbs, 1992: 38), and queried “Why Women Aren’t Hot Anymore” (Riley, 1998), and letters to the editor have been printed with headings that read “Is Male Bashing What Women Have Fought For?” (Turner, 1998: A12).

²⁰ Yet another paper begging to be written...

Globe and Mail archive and had me frantically digging through old boxes of papers to find the *Toronto Star* item that began this chapter. Von Hahn's article (punctuated further by two "Letters to the Editor" that *The Globe and Mail* published the following week in response to it) not only added three more items to my collection (increasing the corpus to 417, and the list of exemplars to forty-six), but also provided a bookend that—in conjunction with the very first item in the collection (labelled from here on in as "bookend #1)—allows me to navigate and frame thirty-eight years of the newspaper's reporting on feminism in generational terms.

Bookend #1: The first (earliest) article that bookends my collection is an American news service reprint (author anonymous) that was published in the news section of *the Globe and Mail* in 1970. It sets a complex stage for feminism's popular entanglement with generation, speaking simultaneously to suffragettes, the "new" women's libbers, and "real" women—revealing an origin story of generational frames that simultaneously mirrors and diverges from feminisms' contemporary representations in the mainstream print media. *Bookend #2:* The second bookend, the one capping my collection, is Von Hahn's 2008 piece (combined with two accompanying published responses to her article) which mobilizes the death of an American pop icon as a metaphor for the demise of feminism and the women's movement among young women (suggesting that they suffer from incomprehensible political apathy and historical ignorance). Providing the most contemporary lens of the collection, Von Hahn offers a personal, experience-based "Canadian" perspective explicitly meant for *The Globe and Mail's* readership. The two short but heated responses to her piece not

only “cap” the archive of data in an efficient manner, but they also help to flesh out the complicated nature of generational debates at the current historical moment by providing a counter-narrative to Von Hahn’s story, supplying an effective bookend to the collection.

As separate items, each of the two pieces provide important, historically grounded insight into some of the ways in which the concept of “generation” has worked to make sense of the tension, dissonance, hostility and change that have become standard elements of the ways in which feminist thought and action (and “the women’s movement” more generally) have been articulated via the mainstream print news media over time. Together, they offer bookends to some of the more exceptional dominant sense-making explanatory frameworks that have persisted over thirty-eight years of *The Globe and Mail’s* reporting on feminism in generational terms—frameworks worthy of further investigation and analysis. The nearly four decades of generational discourses around and about feminism, feminists and the women’s movement that falls between these first and final articles of my corpus can thus be efficiently presented though an in-depth analysis (close reading) of these specific bookends. Accordingly, this chapter section will proceed with an extensive analysis of each.

Bookend 1: 1970

(See Appendix C for full article)

“In feminism’s swing from revolution to reaction and back, fighting words have all been said before.”

The very first article in my collection, representing the first intersection of feminism with generation in *The Globe and Mail*, is a rather convoluted half-page

item (without authorship) gleaned from the New York Times Service on 26 August 1970 and located on page nine of the newspaper.²¹ The article, written “on the eve of the 50th anniversary of women’s suffrage” spans the top one-third of a page devoted entirely to “women’s issues” with four other, much smaller news stories below, flanked by advertising for patent leather pumps and synthetic and human hair wigs by Holt Renfrew and furs by Stanley Walkers. Together, the articles on that one page address the significance of the golden anniversary of the final ratification of the 19th amendment (which gave some women in the United States the right to vote) and provide a little space for a couple of reflections and critiques—from a number of perspectives—on feminism and the women’s movement, on the political actions happening across America (and the Canadian resistance to some of them)²² and to briefly consider the past, present and future of women’s organizing in (North) America.

The item of central interest here is the largest and most prominent article

²¹ That this item appeared in the front pages is noteworthy—it sits among local, national and international news stories and other items deemed of broad import to the bulk of *The Globe and Mail’s* readership and not, as most of the items in this archive are located, within the “lifestyle” or “entertainment” sections—the “soft news” that have traditionally translated into “news-lite” with women as the primary readers of its pages.

²² The only item on page nine with a Canadian frame revolves around American events. It speaks to the split response among women’s groups in Toronto to the Women’s Strike for Equality events planned for that day across the United States. “Metro women’s groups don’t back U.S. action, plan City Hall rally,” outlines some of the actions, including: marches, demonstrations and rallies across the country in major urban centers, boycotting certain products and their advertisers based on sexist imagery or language, and urging women to “not perform household chores they consider menial.” Two Toronto women’s groups (The New Feminists and the Women’s Liberation Movement) clashed on whether they should support their American counterparts’ actions, particularly the call by some to boycott sex in heterosexual relationships. Bonnie Kreps, founder of The New Feminists, stated that the American actions were well organized and very public, illustrating their overall power, noting that Canadian feminists couldn’t really do the same because they weren’t as well organized, and “besides,” she said, “the day is in memory of the 50th anniversary of when U.S. women got the vote. If Canadians held such a day, it would commemorate Canadian women getting the vote.”

on the page. Seeming at first glance to be celebratory, the article appears to be commemorating not just the enfranchisement of white, moneyed women in the United States, but also venerating the enterprising women (and their tactics) who helped make that happen:

The suffragettes won their victory by making a scene as one male political writer said on Aug. 26, 1920. They paraded and picketed, lit liberty bonfires, had their fingers broken by the police, were arrested, went to jail and held hunger strikes. Perhaps only in retrospect, it seems, they protested in style...The suffragettes marched under banners of purple, gold and scarlet that bore such incendiary messages as Resistance to Tyrants is Obedience to God.

The headline announces: “In feminism’s swing from revolution to reaction and back, fighting words have all been said before.” The lead, “Suffragette grandmothers revered; generation gap between mothers, daughters,” recasts the framing of feminism in generational terms (it is important to keep in mind that this happened over thirty-eight years ago), and—at once—gives lie to the notion that feminism’s “family problem” is solely a contemporary phenomenon instigated by the emergence of a “third wave” in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It also reveals the underpinnings of a discursive formation (generations) that was to follow the framing of feminism in the mainstream print media well into the new millennium. These formations not only illustrate a sort of sedimentation of a particular mythological origin story of feminism within the pages of *The Globe and Mail*, but also offers a conceptual framing of feminisms’ *passing on* that provides multiple ways into thinking—and perhaps, rethinking—common conceptualizations of feminists and feminisms via generational lines (as well as through the wave metaphor).

The framework for the article’s narrative is provided by quotes from

personal interviews with a sample of remarkable women active during the turn-of-the-century suffrage movements, four of whom were still, at the time of the article's writing, very professionally and politically active "suffragettes": Dorothy Kenyon, "a former municipal court judge and still a practicing lawyer at the age of 82," Jeannette Rankin, 90, "a pacifist who was the first woman to be elected as a U.S. representative and who voted against U.S. entry into both world wars," Mrs. Arthur Schlesinger, "a widow and mother of historians,"²³ and Alice Paul, 85, "the brilliant organizer who founded the National Woman's Party, the militant wing of the suffrage movement."²⁴ These are the women who were interviewed for the piece, and these are the women whose voices pepper the articles overall account.

And here is where the celebratory tone of the article tarnishes slightly, divulging more than a slight hint of concern over the legacy that the successful political acts and interventions executed (with "our skirts...to the ankles" and with lines and banners "as beautiful as we could make them") by these remarkable women were actually leaving behind. In so doing, the article reveals a series of fault lines in feminism's chronological history that is expressed—by our anonymous author in cooperation with the item's interviewees—as one rooted in ideological differences, punctuated by age, and steeped in animosity for what is ultimately framed as the emergence of an inelegant, over-sexed, brash, radical

²³ The article points out that "Radcliffe women's archives are named after her and her husband."

²⁴ There is a long and interesting history of contestation revolving around the use of the word "suffragette" (and also "suffragist") over time and in different locales—specifically in the United Kingdom, the United States, and in Canada. See, for instance, Katja Thieme's (2006: 279) note on the subject in "Uptake and genre: The Canadian reception of suffrage militancy," in the *Women's Studies International Forum*. She points out that most of the discussions about suffrage in the Canadian media tended to revolve around the movement as it evolved and changed in the British context—in part because they were militant and made for more spectacular news.

and ultimately ineffectual movement of women who seem to be reinventing their wheels.

One other significant “voice” is included in the narrative in counterpoint, a voice that seems meant to be one of so-called reason, and a figure who contrasts markedly from the untamed “women’s libbers.” Thus, we see the article flank—on both sides—a large photograph of June Conlan, “a mother of seven,” hard at work at a construction site:



SHE DIGS AND LIKES IT

—AP Wirephoto

June Conlan, the mother of seven, is too busy working on a construction project to take part in today's Women's Strike for Equality activities across the United States. She is the only woman in laborers' Local 106, New Rochelle, N.Y., winning admission to the union two years ago after a 10-year fight. Mrs. Conlan is married to a construction worker; she doesn't belong to any women's liberation group but has definite opinions about women's rights. She says "every person should be given the chance to do what she wants . . . no discrimination . . ."

Too busy to participate in the political activities of the Women's Liberation movement, Conlon simultaneously embodies a kind of nostalgia for a wave long ebbed and a call for the continued veneration of the type of women who

(supposedly) occupied its membership: the 'real' woman; the average woman; the modest woman fighting the good fight with style, substance and fortitude. Ultimately, she epitomizes the "right kind" of woman and, in effect, the right kind of feminist—the *good* feminist (*girl*). She represents a contemporary woman of that era, one who exists in opposition to the emergence of other "young" women in the early 1970s who have come to call themselves feminists—much to the chagrin of their (first wave) predecessors.

Conlon's appearance within this article's frame is unusual in another way as well. In terms of socio-economic status and class, her narrative is one that differs quite radically from the stories of the "feminists" presented in the text (indeed, in *most* representations of "feminists" in the print news media—regardless of the era): they are all upper-class, educated, "ladies," and present themselves as such; she is very much a working-class mother whose everyday reality doesn't have time for ruminations over feminism, activism or the women's movement. In that sense, her inclusion—while not mentioned in this way—tells another tale and adds yet another layer to the salience of this bookend. What version of feminism does/did June Conlon *pass on* to her seven children? How would we learn that history?²⁵ That discussions about the past, present and future state of feminism have seriously classed—and classist—connotations is worthwhile noting, and is worthy of further consideration.

So how does this bookend "speak" to current discourse? What frames is this early article setting up? Perhaps the most striking thing is the realization that

²⁵ Joan Sangster's prolific work on working-class women and political activism in Canada would be a useful starting point in this regard.

the very same discursive framework for talking about generational divisions between and among feminists that rage through contemporary media reports—and indeed, in academic writing as well—was already well-entrenched back in 1970. The language of the present was at hand when “suffragettes” began lamenting the rise of a younger generation of unappreciative, wild women who, to their mind, were doing a disservice to the image of feminism and to their legacy. A close reading of this article has several important implications for reconceptualizing feminism’s *passing on*. Specifically, it makes the link between and articulates the divisions among feminists in generational terms. In so doing, it lays the scaffolding upon which forty years of generational discourse can and has been laid. This scaffolding is built around a series of interconnected and overlapping themes (or discursive frames), all of which emerge from an initial intersection between feminism and generations and speak to multiple views of *passing on* that are highly salient.

The Analysis

“Everything they talk about we talked about before 1914,” says Jeannette Rankin. By “they,” she is referring to

the Women’s Liberation Movement, the latest regiment of feminists whose exploits from topless swimming and barroom sit-ins to vociferous demands for equal treatment with men has kept them in the headlines and on the television and cocktail chatter circuit.

Both the sentiment and substance of the criticisms being vociferously levelled today against feminism’s “third wave” are in so many ways identical to the lamentations voiced in the bookend by first wavers against the “women’s libbers”

of the 1970's. Among the charges laid against them was their brash behaviour and radical language. To them, according to this article, "man is a male chauvinist, a sexist and an oppressor," and—in reaction—"some feminists deny any man's name including their father's" (for the record, these are deemed to fall in the realm of "extreme"). In addition to bold assertions of their "radical" convictions, the "libbers" are described as aggressive and brazen in both dress and demeanour, and, as far as Dorothy Kenyon is concerned, "they make too much about sex." It wasn't so much sexuality per se that offended the sensibilities of these first wave women; it was its articulation via the public display of private acts of rebellion. As Kenyon admits,

We did all those things. I went swimming nude and worse things than that. But we did them privately. They do them publicly, and I think that's a mistake.

Clearly, a link had been fused between long-held expectations of the appropriate public performance of normative womanhood and the proper public feminist persona; one that limited the scope of "new" feminist behaviour to narrowly-defined and predetermined gender roles and subsequently sanctioned the open condemnation of women who could have been (indeed, should have been) considered their feminist allies.

The first wave representatives in this article seem vehement not only about appropriate codes of conduct for women (and especially for feminist women), but also about how those women expressed and exhibited their feminist acts and agendas. As Alice Paul recalled,

We never did anything but make speeches, beautiful speeches, but we never got to finish them because as soon as a person opened her mouth she got arrested.

What is ironic and very telling in this instance is that Alice Paul was also, sixty years prior, the same radical reformer who “broke a window of a banquet hall to gain the attention of British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith,” and who was “arrested seven times in the United States and in England, once for demonstrating across from the White House as part of her strategy to keep the cause alive in front of President Woodrow Wilson and the nation.” Irrespective of how “radical” their acts may have been, when it came to telling the tale, the “proper” language to use was, like Alice Paul’s, one of understatement, modesty, civility and style. A kind of covering over was *de rigueur*. It was certainly acceptable or even expected that one would take action—even violent action, like breaking a window—when the moment called for it, but safeguarding their persona as “ladies” was paramount as well.

This moral certainty imparted by being a member of an older (supposedly wiser) generation positioned the women interviewed as the voices of experience and legitimated their disapproval and criticism of the seemingly brash “newcomers” to feminism and feminist activism. The way these first wavers voiced their disappointment becomes part of the normalized discourse of *passing on* feminism. In this way, individual tales told from the perspectives of individual feminists from the first wave sets out a script, a narrative model, that has been shaping how feminist histories (both popular and scholarly) have been told ever since:

If there is a generation gap in feminism, as there is among students and blacks, it exists between the young cadres of 20 and 30 and their mothers, who have been accused of letting the revolution lapse. The takeover generation of female activists on the whole

revere the founding grandmothers and maiden grand-aunts who have languished for nearly half a century in the historical garret reserved for eccentrics and those who arrived too early or late on the battlefields (Bookend 1, 1970).

The link between experiential, academic, and historical feminist pasts at the turn of the twentieth century and the way we understand that history through twenty-first century eyes seems to be constructed through the very retelling of their stories—then, in retrospect—in 1970 (and our contemporary reading reiterates the resonance of that connection once again).

Uncannily similar to the current discourse about postfeminism is the implied use of the wave metaphor, despair at the ebb and flow of feminist movement and political change, and accusations that an irresponsible younger generation was heralding a period of dormancy. The article notes that “the suffrage triumph was a landmark for decline. Many feminists, old and new, acknowledge that counterrevolution followed.” However, Dorothy Kenyan (one of the ‘first wave’ representatives of bookend 1) admits that

We got sidetracked and discovered to our astonishment that when you got the vote you were not thereby made a full-fledged citizen. It was a horrible discovery...After 1920, a genuine wave of reaction set in.

This article demonstrates that the myth of the “dormant period” floating between the ebb and flow of the waves—the gaps that feminist social historians have been struggling to debunk for years—were already well-established within news frames in the 1970s (with roots that run much deeper, stemming from turn-of-the-twentieth-century discourse). In the words of the article’s author, feminism “has always swung from revolution to reaction, propelled on spasmodic bursts of energy toward astonishing achievement before subsiding into compromise and

indifference.” And, in effect, the imagery of a wave’s ebb and flow becomes concretized as an almost natural framework for telling the (very specific, highly regulated and surveilled) tale of feminist movement.

However, and importantly, while the animosity expressed by these particular suffragettes accuses “women’s libbers” of inappropriate public behaviour, the actual target of their criticism should be the mothers of these “young” women.²⁶ Although the discourse often reads as if it is one generation talking to another, the fact is that there are three generations of women, but only two generations of feminists present in this particular narrative: both existing at the crest of their waves, sandwiching the “dormant” women who were the daughters of the first and mothers/aunts of the second. In this news item however, the “story” of contemporary feminism is one that moves simply and smoothly from an unmitigated suffrage triumph to dormancy to the Second World War (and the arrival of “Rosie the Riveter”) to the retrenchment of women “to domesticity and compulsive motherhood.” In this account (and, as we’ve seen in Chapter Two as well as in the barrage of popular histories on North American feminisms and women’s movements), Betty Freidan and her (1963) *Feminine Mystique* surface as the ultimate feminist heroine; saving women from “the problem that has no name” and rescuing feminism from its not-so-restful slumber. She becomes the iconic figure for the “right kind” of feminist to follow in the wake of the first wavers represented in this article, not the “more radical

²⁶ Again, “young” is in parenthesis because the actual ages of this feminist “generation” varied dramatically—the “youth” factor seems to be highlighted because of the seniority of the first wave representatives and because of the “newness” of their politics, language, dress, issues and political tactics.

women” who, in the years that followed Freidan’s book, “began to form in groups under such striking titles as Red Stockings, Bitch and Witch (Women’s International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell).” And it is here, in this article’s rhetoric, that waves become conflated with generation with regard to feminism and feminists; and it is here perhaps where the contemporary concerns over feminisms’ “family problems” should initially point their fingers and target their accusations.

Another interesting feature of this article speaks more directly to the persistent issue of who gets counted (as a feminist). At the same time as the article sets up and focuses on generations as distinct entities on either side of a widening gap, it also explicitly raises the issue of diversity and difference (in terms of ideologies, political orientations, activist tactics and actual bodies) within generations that has “always” characterized political movements:

...feminism has always been faction-prone. It always had its separatists, starting with Lucy Stone, who kept her name after marrying Henry Blackwell in 1855 in a remarkable ceremony that contravened all of the legal obligations of the nuptial rite...

[...]

There were always the militants and the conservatives, the radicals and the reformers, the single-minded suffragists and broad-gauge social reconstructionists.

There was a naming—and therefore not ignoring or silencing—of the factions that existed among feminists that is not often articulated in the contemporary generational descant revolving around feminisms, and so it appears (at first) as though there was at least a nod to the suggestion that it is not only permissible, but even possibly desirable to entertain the notion that internal diversity can co-

exist within the notion of generational shifts and change. Another snippet from this bookend speaks to this phenomenon:

In its latest phase, the Women's Liberation Movement has criticized itself for being too white, middle-class and intellectual as were its ancestor feminists. Actually, the early 20th-century movement was an amalgam of such social leaders as Anne Morgan and Mrs. Oliver H.P. Belmont, such social workers as Jane Addams and Frances Perkins and such working women as Rose Schniederman, president of the Women's Trade Union League.

Here, the deeply embedded race and class privileges—as well as the hyper-intellectualism—of the women's movement gets mentioned by the article, articulated as a self-reflexive criticism by the “young libbers” of the movement itself. This rarity (even in contemporary times) was engaged by the first wave representatives in a slightly apologetic and “corrective” manner, one that distinguishes “them” from the “them” of the 1970s: a reactionary “we weren't racist...see? It's all you...” and then dismissed by those who were called out as inaccurate (and thus not a problem). Reaching forward through thirty-eight years of feminism exposes the limitations of the potential for such nuance in the grander scheme of feminisms' history. As Chapter 2 illustrated, those “nuances,” potentially read (optimistically) as overlapping feminist strategies working concurrently towards social change (and providing internal checks and balances along the way), tend to become understood solely as fissures, cracks and fractures in “the sisterhood,” further upholding the generational metaphor.

Bookend 2: 2008

“It's official: Feminism is out of style.”

The final article in my collection, representing the last and most current intersection of feminism with generation in my *Globe and Mail* archive, is a short (less than one thousand words) anecdotal item written by one of the paper's in-house columnists, Karen Von Hahn on January 26th, 2008.²⁷ Located on page L1 of the newspaper—as the cover story in the “Lifestyle/Style” section²⁸—Von Hahn declares feminism hopelessly, utterly, officially, “out of style.” While the column's headline certainly caught my attention through its identification of the issues at stake here in this chapter (and indeed, in this entire dissertation in terms of its recurring concern for feminisms' *passing on*), sparks of recognition flew the moment I skimmed the item's opening paragraphs, sending me digging through my personal papers to find the *Toronto Star* item and sifting back through the electronic archive of *The Globe and Mail* I had assembled for my research here. Von Hahn's piece was indeed a “mirror” of the over-four hundred items that I had coded; illustrating some astonishing similarities with thematic frames established in the first item I had located (from 1970, the initial bookend); frames that were reiterated time and time again throughout the thirty-eight year archive.

²⁷ It was archived online on 8 April, 2009: on *The Globe and Mail's* official website. Available at <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/style/article17583.ece>.

²⁸ That this article (among many, many others in my database) appeared in the “lifestyle” section of the newspaper is not that surprising. The “lifestyle” section is actually, as Dustin Harp (2003) has noted, a remnant of the “women's pages” that were once a staple in North American newspapers, when “a clear border was drawn around news content meant for women” (np). It follows, then, that items with even a glint of feminist content would find themselves in this section as opposed to the usual editorials and news stories. It also illustrates how marginal feminist perspectives/issues/debates and “women's issues” are within the structure of the newspaper as a whole. Interestingly (and as an aside), Harp (2003) also notes that “during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, several U.S. metropolitan daily newspaper editors reintroduced women's pages to their readers. This re-emergence of women's sections is especially interesting within a feminist context since it was during the late 1960s and early 1970s, during a particularly active period of feminism, that newspapers first eliminated these gendered sections and started producing lifestyle pages” (np).

Not only did she explicitly evoke the most common version of feminism's "passing on"—that of its death, imminent demise or, at the very least, its veritable obsolescence—but her framing of feminism in generational terms exposes the continued construction and mobilization of the very same dominant sense-making explanatory frameworks for speaking of and about feminism and its generational problems that were established by her anonymous counterpart in 1970 (frames that work as simple but sturdy scaffolding for news stories).

"Proof" of feminisms' outmodedness, the cause of Von Hahn's feeling that she "should be stuffed and put on display in some sort of museum of women's liberation," seems to come from a number of places. First, it's the realization that her own 18 year-old daughter and 26 year-old niece do not recognize the name "Gloria Steinem" when it is plucked from a card during their turn at a board game. That moment, coupled with the death of one of her favourite television icons from her youth stimulates her own preoccupations with the current state and future of feminism and launches her into a narrative that replicates many of the assumptions articulated in the anonymous article from 1970 and demonstrates the resonance of some of these issues thirty-eight years later.

That "evidence" she uses to advance her critique includes her perception of the American feminist monthly magazine *Ms.* as being so out of touch that its own 35th Anniversary was, in Von Hahn's words, hopelessly "old school" and "tired"—much like the movement it represents; so much so that "they had to resort to a comic-book heroine (Wonder Woman) who appeared more than a half a century ago" for that issue's cover. She also substantiates her claims that feminism has fallen out of fashion based on what she views as a fractured

“sisterhood”, exemplified by the overall lack of support expressed by women for then-presidential candidate Hilary Clinton, asserting that “like mean girls in the playground, we started feeling all warm and fuzzy toward Clinton only after our claws and barbs drew tears.”

Von Hahn does participate in the very same articulation of what constitutes “legitimate” feminist opinion and action that was evident in the first bookend, expressed by members of the “first wave.” In this current conceptualization of feminism, the “good feminist” apparently unconditionally supports Hillary Clinton in alignment with an unsubstantiated notion of what constitutes “sisterhood,” doesn’t turn her back on “conventional feminism and its grinding focus on women’s oppression,” and, of course, knows who Gloria Steinem (who is currently, it should be said, seventy-five years old) is. Von Hahn—simultaneously located in the position of author and representative of the older (supposedly wiser and more experienced) feminist generation—effectively establishes herself in a position of moral authority over the younger cohort of women, the daughters who embraced “the more upbeat Girl Power movement,” “Spice Girls tunes, pink-feathered purses and *Sex and the City*.” She writes:

the girls of this generation, who consider it “lame” to align themselves with a woman candidate on the sole ground of sisterhood, are more likely to tune in to the new CosmoTV digital channel (sample program: *Dirty Cows*: ‘Take 10 stylin’ British babes, add one cold and lofty barn and a young, rich, handsome farmer looking for love and you’ve got a recipe for mayhem, because to win his heart they’re going to have to fight like dirty cows’) than flip open the 35th anniversary issue of *Ms.* magazine.

In this configuration, the younger generation—“girls”—are constructed (in caricature) as ignorant and disinterested non-feminist figures who are then

positioned into a narrative that enables the moral certainty of feminist authority to declare feminism, *officially*, “out of style,” or (better off) dead.

And it is in this configuration that the contemporary enunciation of feminisms’ generation gap rears its ugly head. In contrast to its 1970s counterpart, Von Hahn establishes a relationship between two generations of women AND two generations of feminists that simultaneously transforms the wave metaphor into a generational affiliation laden with conventional familial positions of power and authority: “real” feminism belongs to the generation of Von Hahn herself, and its botched facsimile is the one that follows immediately behind, represented by Von Hahn’s own daughter and niece. Their “failure,” in her eyes, is an historical amnesia of feminism’s second wave (an extremely unfair charge, given that the young women are Canadian, for one thing, and 18 and 26 years old, respectively), and seemingly a betrayal of the figure of “the feminist.” In a way, she harkens back to the tsk tsking expressed by the suffragettes over the failure of second wavers to adequately portray the appropriate role of “young feminist” back in 1970. Von Hahn’s disappointment with her progeny automatically becomes conflated with (indeed, indicative of) feminism’s ultimate failure, the succumbing to the postfeminist.

Framing her narrative in this (oh so familiar) manner, Von Hahn harkens back to the ebbs and flows of feminisms’ waves so often repeated in the stories told about feminism’s health and welfare. This is ironic given that it’s almost impossible to position Von Hahn as part of a specific wave. Whereas in the first bookend, it was one wave of feminists criticizing the subsequent wave (overlooking the trough, their “daughters”) for not carrying the feminist torch

that was passed on to them with the requisite grace and style, in this bookend, it is one generation who doesn't neatly fit into any wave berating, not another wave, but the next generation down in the trough, for even seeing the torch in the first place. She notes that

[w]e sold them a bill of goods: that women are as free and unencumbered as men, that they can achieve any goal that they might dream of—even that the odds are in their favour.

While she admits that her generation may have played a role in the production of the crisis in *passing on* that upsets her so, she seems to have taken on as her mission the protection of the legacy of old school (American) feminists like Steinem and Freidan who are *not* her contemporaries by any stretch of the imagination (in fact, Von Hahn could potentially be their biological granddaughter). The hard truth, she says, “is that we have failed to impress upon our own daughters that women’s issues still matter.” What is interesting here is that while she is mobilizing the trope of the wave, despairing at what she sees as the huge trough that makes the movement look, in her words, “tired” (a sin that she lays partially at her daughter’s feet), it is really generations that she is talking about. Here, the conflation of “wave” and “generation” is complete.

Von Hahn frames the fundamental difference between her generation and her daughter’s within simple observations of loyalty; and in so doing, she replicates (or rather re-iterates) a longstanding (feminist) hierarchy of oppressions that pits race against gender. However, while the first bookend expressed this phenomenon as a recurring and troubling problem within the organization of the feminist movement itself (alongside the promulgation of class privilege and intellectualism), Von Hahn presents it as a relatively cut-and-dry

issue of “allegiance”:

Whether it's because we've all fallen asleep at our tasks like *Snow White*, or whether we've been outplayed in a subtle and long-standing culture war, what is clear is that we are living in a new era of post-feminism. That the young women I know see no great victory in Hillary Clinton's run for the U.S. presidency is proof enough. That they also see Barack Obama as the one candidate who represents "change" is nothing less than astounding.

Using language—or at least a tone—remarkably like that spoken by the veteran feminists in the first bookend from 1970, Von Hahn demands uniformity in a way that even more harshly discounts the contemporary (and not so contemporary) research, writing and speeches of anti-racist, anti-colonial feminists, and hammers home a frame for hegemonic feminism that has been in existence (and has been strongly criticized as lacking nuance, and as racist and exclusionary for just as long—often to closed ears) since the movement began.²⁹ To Von Hahn, gender and race exist in opposition to each other, and she makes it strikingly clear that a “good feminist” votes with an adherence to the former, not the latter.

It is only in her last paragraph that Von Hahn reveals her deepest concern for feminism and the women's movement's present and future. “Worst of all,” she writes, “is feminism's failure to create true ‘sisterhood.’” Her column's final words follow suit:

Because if there is one thing that blacks and women share, apart from their oppression from the white male corridors of power, it is their enduring lack of faith in their own community.

²⁹ See particularly the (2000) work of Chela Sandoval on hegemonic feminism (*Methodology of the Oppressed*), and the work of Himani Bannerji (specifically the much reprinted article “Introducing Racism: Notes Towards and Anti-Racist Feminism” originally published in *Resources for Feminist Research/Documentation* in 1987, and included in Bannerji's (1995) *Thinking Through: Essays on Feminism, Marxism and Anti-Racism* (Toronto: Women's Press).

If the two letters to the editor (written in response to Von Hahn's column) that I will present in their entirety below are anything to go by, the style and substance of her article exuded neither sisterhood nor faith. The first letter, written by Alexis Hamilton and published two days after Von Hahn's column appeared in *The Globe*, sustains the generational model of feminism in a different manner:

As a 27-year-old woman, I found it rather insulting to be grouped into Karen von Hahn's description of women of "my generation" (It's Official: Feminism Is Out Of Style - *Globe Life Style*, Jan. 26), as preferring CosmoTV to Ms. Magazine, and seeing "no great victory" in Hillary Clinton's run for the presidency.

Being brought up in a family with strong women who enjoy successful careers didn't deter me from reading Gloria Steinem at 13 or choosing women's studies as my minor at McGill University. Nor did *Sex & the City* blind me to how difficult it was, is and will be for women to reach a point where our salaries and status in the workplace parallel those of men. Ms. Clinton is still being asked to "iron the shirts" of male hecklers.

Perhaps Ms. von Hahn should try, as she advises, having some faith in her own community of women, and not write off an entire generation because we have different experiences.

The second response, penned by Stacey May Fowles, editor of the feminist magazine *Shameless*, was printed four days after Von Hahn's. In it, Fowles eloquently and explicitly calls out Von Hahn for her narrow, simplified version of what constitutes "legitimate feminism" in the contemporary context and attacks her homogenizing of all young women:

As the publisher of a feminist magazine for teenage girls, and as a proud 28-year-old feminist, I'm truly astounded by Karen von Hahn's article It's Official: Feminism Is Out Of Style (Jan. 26). It's official? Whether or not your 26-year-old niece or 18-year-old daughter happens to know who Gloria Steinem is doesn't qualify as "research" on my generation's belief systems on gender equality.

Perhaps you don't recognize feminism in its current form because it's constantly evolving to fit the ever-changing landscape of

women's lives, growing to be more inclusive and accessible to women of colour, queer women, women living in poverty, women living with disability, all women and their allies. Just because you don't recognize it any more doesn't mean it isn't "in style"—and to say so is patronizing.

Depicting young women as giggling, vapid, pop-culture junkies who are more likely to kneel at the altar of Cosmo than read Ms. Magazine is pretty sexist. Because all young women are the same? Isn't that a theory feminism aimed to dismantle? Accusing us of "giggling" and taking our reproductive rights for granted is also misinformed. A quick look at the feminist blogosphere will reveal that young women are the most vocal about the issues. This kind of simplistic way of looking at feminism does a grand disservice to all the vital activist work that so many young women perform across the country.³⁰

Together, and in fewer words than the already-short diatribe written by Von Hahn, Hamilton and Fowles effectively and persuasively articulate a multifaceted retort not only of this column's narrow mindedness, but a critique of a good number of the news frames that emerged—and re-emerged—over the course of thirty-eight years of *The Globe and Mail*.

Between the Bookends: the “Exemplary Items”

So, what about the nearly four decades of articles falling between the bookends? As I explained at the beginning of this chapter, in discussing the bookends I am presenting the more noteworthy news frames that emerged over thirty-eight years of generational discourses around and about feminisms and feminists in *The Globe and Mail* to examine in-depth how “generations” as a

³⁰ The full-length (pre-edited) version of Fowles' letter appears as its own column entry for “Media Savvy” on *Shameless* magazine's blog, as an item entitled, “Your feminism doesn't go with your shoes.” Available online at: <http://www.shamelessmag.com/blog/2008/01/your-feminism-doesnt-go-with-your-shoes/>, and worth the read (as well as the comments that follow).

concept has traveled, circulated, and stayed put over the course of these years. These frames surfaced most vividly in the forty-six articles that I have called “exemplary items” (Appendix A) through a feminist critical discourse analysis illustrated—via coding—by Appendix B (and discussed throughout this chapter). This analysis pinpoints the establishment of what would become a set discursive formation for talking about feminism in generational terms, and illuminates the dominant sense-making explanatory frameworks of feminism’s *passing on*. Even a cursory glance at the headlines of some of these articles support and illustrate this discursive pattern quite well:

“In Feminism’s swing from revolution to reaction and back, fighting words have all been said before” (August 1970).

“Post-Liberation: Now that the party’s over, who’s cleaning up?” (November 1978).

“New women disillusioned by feminism” (December 1979).

“Feminists worried about who will carry the torch” (October 1985).

“Friedan keeps up the battle” (November 1985).

“Our Daughters, Ourselves” (December 1990).

“Feminism’s lost generation” (May 1993).

“You’ve come a long way, baby...And for what?” (26 July 1997).

“NAC fights to attract new blood” (June 1998)

“Girls just wanna have fun” (February 1999)

“Rebick’s Legacy” (August 2000).

“From the torch to the wet T-shirt” (17 June 2003).

“We’ve come part way, baby” (March 2004)

“It’s Official: Feminism is Out of Style” (January 2008).

“Feminist Generation Gap” (January 2008).

“Thanks for Patronizing Us” (30 January 2008).

Well-illustrated by these titles are issues of historicity and temporality. This list illustrates a discursive formation that outlines a perpetual, recurring, narrative of partial progress, one in which the relationship between past, present and future is almost chronically fraught with concerns about feminism’s legacy (and certain feminists’ legacies in particular), anxieties about maintaining and retaining a particular public presence and relevance, and concerns about the recruitment and retention of younger members for the cause (peppered, of course, with back-handed remarks about feminism’s overall lack of contemporary relevancy). These issues are thematics that recur systematically throughout the 38 years of generational discourses of feminism’s *passing on*. What becomes clear is that some of feminism’s contemporary anxieties were not only present and visible in the news media of the 1970s, they were articulated, in some respects, along very similar lines and reiterated, almost *ad nauseum*, in the decades that followed.

In addition to striking similarities between the articles, however, there were also some interesting differences in the ways in which the concept of “feminist generations” has been employed and deployed over time. The overlap between the two—between the similarities and the differences—complicate simple, often reductionist wave metaphors and generational tropes, and render more fascinating the minutiae of feminisms’ *passing on*. For example, throughout the corpus, there is a consistent mobilization of the familial (specifically the maternal) to talk about feminism and generations. However, even though the use of family ties is consistent over time, demonstrated by the

application of labels like “grandmothers,” “grand-aunts,” “mothers” (with its variations, including “godmothers” and “foremothers”), “daughters” and, of course, “sisters” to women of varying ages and feminist (ideological) affiliation, these “generation gaps” differ in many ways. While all mobilize the familial, the earlier versions from the 1970s tend to involve three easily distinguishable generations (as in they fall within the 30 year life-cycle). These are constituted by grandmothers (“first wave” reformers), mothers (dormancy—the post-feminists of that era), and the granddaughters (radical ‘women’s libbers”). The contemporary versions, however, are based on something much more muddled: the use of the familial frame, the mother-daughter trope, is literal and blatant, but—as the indignant voice of an “old school” feminist that Von Hahn uses speaks not to her granddaughter but rather to her daughter—omits a generation entirely. Here we see that contemporary discourse has now become structured around generational, not wave, frames, and (importantly) each articulation now seems wholly dependant on the personal and historical moment in which it is voiced. In this way, “*passing on*” becomes remarkably context-specific, leading to the use of a series of slippery demarcations based loosely on youth and age and altogether constructed through the viewpoint of the describer.

And I hear Goffman again, asking, “So...what is it that’s going on here?” And, at this juncture, I would venture that based on the multiple “schemata of interpretation,” of the various frames that emerged over and over throughout the course of thirty-eight years of *The Globe and Mail*, that there has been a sort of ‘lumping together’ of a broad range of feminists with mixed ideologies and strategies that has worked to construct a vision of the past that has remained

firmly entrenched as time has passed; a static “feminism” against which (any) new contingents can be compared, and one that nostalgia can readily and easily wrap itself around. As well, at this stage, it appears that part of the “problem of generations”—of feminism’s *passing on*—seems to lie in the fact that how “feminism” is understood, its basic definition, has not changed at all since 1970. And so it appears as though the constant re-articulation of this narrow and fixed narrative structure (over, as we’ve seen, more than a century of feminism in the Canadian and American contexts) has succeeded in setting in stone the story of feminism and the women’s movement, one rife with silences, omissions and exclusions. The chapter that follows seeks out some of those voices that haven’t been included in the mainstream print news framing of feminism in generational terms—voices that constitute (with the exception of the Letter to the Editor written in response to Von Hahn’s article) the object, but not the author/subject of those discourses. This final turn brings the focus of this dissertation back to the experiential, to history, to “generations” as discourse, and glimpses the present and peers into the future of what feminisms’ are in the process of *passing on*.

Chapter Five

Outside the Frames: *Passing On Feminism and Feminist Publishing*

Feminism needs better P.R. (Shanly Dixon, 2008).

By analyzing the articles on feminism and generation that appeared between the pages of the major player in English Canada's print news media, *The Globe and Mail* from 1970-2008, the preceding chapter demonstrates the ways in which the application of a series of particular generational frames have served to help construct a particular narrative around feminisms (as well as the women's movement) that focuses on the relationships between and among feminists over the course of thirty-eight years. While many of the articles that appeared during that period were written by journalists (a rare few of whom self-identified as feminist), others were written by those who identified strongly with the feminist label and, in both cases, the articles often included quotes from interviews with or from writings by feminist scholars and/or feminist activists. Regardless of authorship, one of the basic structures often used to frame generational discourse—structures that remained remarkably consistent over time—centred around the failures, ineptitudes and/or apathy of the next feminist “wave” or “generation” (categories often meant to be understood as “young women”). It is important to note that almost without exception, each and every one of these print media representations was written from the perspective of a member of an

already-established (and recognized as “legitimate”) feminist generation (generally the one with voice and access and a platform of authority from which to speak—one sometimes granted by age and the requisite “experience” and “wisdom” that coincides with it). This one-sided rhetoric is only very rarely disturbed, as Bookend #2 in Chapter Four illustrates, by an occasional letter to the editor by someone outside the prescribed codes of conduct for feminist behaviour (or, as Chapter Three demonstrates, bolstered by a postfeminist, a figure that helps uphold the normative discourse simply by providing its antithesis and/or nemesis).

While this arrangement of feminist authority (via voice and opinion) in the mainstream news media is often read as one of the most common manifestations of feminisms’ *passing on*—that of death, demise, or at the very least, its relegation to something long past its relevance and usefulness—a more probable explanation lies in the rather intentional *passing over* of those other “feminist” voices and opinions (“feminist” in scare quotes because of the common ambivalence that many people have with the tag itself, despite their political persuasions or activism). While I am certain that these omissions say more about the strength of the dominant sense-making explanatory frameworks used to frame and discuss feminism and feminists than to any intentional maliciousness on the part of the mainstream news media, the absence of those voices in the framing of feminism (via generational discourses) speaks loudly. So, how do we expand the frames? Where does one turn to hear some of the perspectives of those who are missing or excluded? One fruitful option can be to look outside the realm of mainstream publications to sites of feminist knowledge

production itself: the magazines they've created and the articles they've written (often for each other, outside of—or, at any rate, beside—the more common popular conversations); texts that have been for the most part either ignored or disparaged by the mainstream print news media. One such site is *good girl magazine*.

Deeply embedded in the circulation of feminist generational discourses that have been the focus of this thesis and rooted in a larger tradition of feminist cultural production in Canada, *good girl magazine*—a nationally distributed 'alternative' (to the standard fare of fashion and celebrity magazines) targeting women between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five—provides a useful counter text to the generational frames constructed within and popularized by the print media. Juxtaposing personal reflections and experiences as a writer for and co-editor of *good girl magazine* against my analysis of thirty-eight years of *The Globe and Mail*, this concluding chapter will not only reexamine generational frames, but will also revisit the interconnectedness of feminist theory and history, the language of the everyday, personal experience and the politics (not always of identity) deeply embedded in them all. In so doing, it will also ruminate on the contemporary resonance of "generations" and consider its salience in the current historical moment. What 'use-value' does "generation" as a concept hold for feminisms, feminists and the women's movement now?

The *Passing On* of good girl

In the late spring of 2004, I sat in front of this computer, staring at a blank screen, unable to find the words. Attempting to write the copy for the last page of

the final issue of *good girl magazine* was proving to be much harder than expected. In less than a thousand words, I was to bookend my editor and publisher's last editorial—a “messy, painful yet hopeful historical account of what has been a messy, painful yet hopeful project: *good girl magazine* (2001-2004)”—in a way that simultaneously corroborated and countered her rather glum assessment of the magazine's short but dynamic life (Snyder, 2004: 1).¹ This, for sure, was a meaningful exercise. While concluding the magazine on a positive note, the “epilogue” would also mark the end of *good girl* and relegate it to the past. It would signify a halt in the flow of submissions from writers from across the country, and end the utopic dream: publishing a successful national feminist magazine produced by and for “young women” in Canada. It also meant a return to sole concentration on my doctoral work—a project intimately, if not explicitly, bound with the magazine's life and death. Both a heartbreaking and cathartic gesture.

Issue 6, appropriately themed “manias,” hit the newsstands by summer's end, and *good girl magazine* was formally laid to rest.² Reading my epilogue now, it appears less like the eulogy I felt I was writing then and more like a familiar artefact; one that speaks directly to a very particular historical context in which *good girl* emerged and grew:

In so many ways, *good girl* illustrated the pressing need for and the overwhelming benefits of discussion, collaboration and mentoring. She came so far in just 6 issues; it's hard not to envision where she

¹ Her editorial focused largely on the seemingly irreconcilable paradox of running a financially profitable national women's magazine in Canada with an explicitly “feminist” agenda.

² The “manias” theme was chosen long before the decision to fold the publication was made. The footer on each page of the issue revealed a second, related theme: “farewell.”

could have ended up. To me, *good girl* stood against everyone who ever said that young women in Canada were not political enough, not engaged enough, or not feminist enough. She was the manifestation of utopic imagining, idealism, and optimism rooted in a whole whack of feminisms. I've loved being a part of *good girl*, and I'm sad to see her go (Steenbergen, 2004: 32).

In many ways, *good girl* was born and grew from the shared sentiments of not only its founder, but also from the shared sentiments of a large group of young women who felt that the mainstream representations of their "generation" were completely off the mark. Those collective sensibilities—some calling themselves "feminist," others not—helped produce not only the text of the magazine itself (via its contributors and topics), but also helped form its readership. As Chapter One demonstrated and as alluded to throughout this dissertation, my interest in the multiple associations between feminism, history, the concept of "generations" (including, albeit untidily, the metaphor of the "wave") and media representations of all three is longstanding (and in many ways, personal), and has been sustained by a strong sense that the widespread application of the concept of "generations" to feminisms has more to offer than simply fissures, cracks and divides. In this final chapter, I use feminist magazine publishing—including, but not limited to *good girl*—as one significant example of a broader, richer entanglement of feminisms and generations; one that leads to a more constructive understanding of the relationships between the two and, importantly, one that illustrates the overall use-value of "generational" frames for thinking about feminism, feminists and the women's movement.

Mixing Fashion & Feminism: a niche emerges

good girl certainly wasn't the first of her kind. In fact, her roots—like those

of third wave feminism as discussed in Chapter Three—can be found in the burgeoning feminist sensibilities of a large group of women in the late 1980s. Mirah Kirshner describes her “discovery” of *Sassy* magazine in a way that mirrors vividly my own. She writes,

I remember wandering down to the basement level local bookshop every month to buy my fill of shiny, loud, teen magazines. I had the distribution dates down to a science; I knew just which day each magazine would arrive to the shop. Back in my bedroom, I'd pore over those 'get-that-boy-lose-that-baby-fat' pages for hours. Later, an American magazine called *Sassy*, slipped into the stack. It was glossy and was filled with make-up ads, but some-how it didn't convey the same 'too-bad-you're-a-girl-here's-how-to-make-it-better' echo in its pages. It offered me something different. I was hooked (Kirshner, 2002: 3).

In 1987, the unprecedented happened in 'teen' magazine publishing: a new young women's magazine found its way to mainstream newsstands alongside *Seventeen*,³ *TEEN*, and *YM*.⁴ On the surface, *Sassy* looked virtually identical to its counterparts; complete with models and/or celebrities on its glossy full-colour covers.⁵ But its feature stories were markedly different: “Losing Your Virginity” (March 1998); “Beauty Pageants are a Lot like the Army” (February 1990); “Popular People are as Insecure as You” (September 1991); “How My Brother

³ *Seventeen* was the first major magazine in the United States published expressly for teenage girls. It was founded in 1940. For an excellent analysis of magazine publishing for the “teenage girl,” see Dawn Currie, *Girl Talk: Adolescent Magazines and their Readers*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999). Interesting to note is that *Sassy* appealed to multiple variations on the identity “girl”—young girls, young women, and not-so-young women in their 30s.

⁴ During the 1980s, *YM* was called by its full name: “*Young Miss*.” It was my first “girlie” magazine subscription (my first ever was *Owl*).

⁵ An archive of material from *Sassy* can now be found online at <http://www.sassy-magazine.com/>. Its homepage reads: “In Memorium. *Sassy* Magazine: March 1988–November 1994.” Hundreds of personal web pages and blogs are either dedicated to the magazine or lament its loss. *Sassy*'s founder, Jane Pratt, now edits *Jane* magazine. While remnants of the feisty feminism of *Sassy* can be found within its pages, it is largely watered down remains of the distinctly early-1990s flavour. A history of *Sassy* magazine is currently in the works, with *Teen Vogue*'s beauty and health director Kara Jesella and freelance writer Marisa Meltzer at the helm of the project.

Came Out” (July 1993); and “Who Here’s A Feminist?” (June 1992).⁶ While other magazines of this sort targeted a seemingly homogenous group called “girls” (white, heterosexual, sexually innocent, always potentially in danger or at risk) who had similar “interests” (predominantly beauty and dating tips), *Sassy* dealt explicitly with a range of issues for the “young woman,” including the ins and outs of sexuality, body politics, and world issues. While its frank discussions about sex and use of ironic humour increased its success, they also precipitated a surge of angry letters from the religious right and angry parents, and the magazine was sold in 1994, its staff disintegrated, re-staffed and repackaged with a new, more mainstream and “appropriate” image.⁷ It disappeared from the shelves shortly thereafter.

But the short-lived *Sassy* had an impact.⁸ In less than a decade’s time, a distinctively different form of ‘popular’ magazine emerged, challenging the apolitical and totalizing content of the mainstream women’s media and targeting the demographic of “young women” anew.⁹ Shaped by a range of often contradictory influences and independently established by young women

⁶ The answer: “Everyone at *Sassy*, even though we get dissed plenty for being “bad” ones. But what the heck does that mean? A bunch of us ponder the nuances of this loaded topic—call it a roundtable.” Interestingly, the *good girl* editorial board had a very similar (albeit longer and more heated) conversations at several meetings.

⁷ The post-1994 incarnation of the magazine has since been called “Evil *Sassy*” by its former fans.

⁸ *Sassy* certainly didn’t single-handedly launch a new genre of magazine publications. The timing here is of import as well: the Riot Grrrls of the early 1990s, with their grrrl-with-a-growl approach to music, politics, and feminism also had a significant impact on feminist cultural production, particularly with regard to music-making, independent zine-making, guerrilla stickering and DIY mantras and lifestyles.

⁹ The magazine industry requires that a publication have a clearly defined demographic. For this purpose, “young women” in this context generally constitutes 18-35 year-olds. Actual readership, however, is far more diverse, and the content (i.e. political perspective, themes, and feature topics) of a text often draws a more varied base than its supposed market sector.

themselves, these texts actively sought out the seemingly taboo; embracing the complexities and ‘messiness’ of youth, gender, sex, sexuality, consumption, and feminism.¹⁰ In the United States, two such publications stand as bigger-than-life representatives: *BUST* and *Bitch* magazines.

BUST (“for women with something to get off their chests”) was spawned in 1993 as a quarterly independent zine by Debbie Stoller, Marcelle Karp, and Laurie Henzel in New York City. Its premiere issue was a thin, stapled, black and white zine. Its official mandate made it clear from the beginning that it was different from the rest of the post-*Sassy* panaceas out there: “*BUST* is the original grrl zine, written for women who know that *Glamour* is garbage, *Vogue* is vapid, and *Cosmo* is clueless” (Karp and Stoller, 1999: back cover). It was the magazine that would tackle the issues and publish the writing that *MS* wouldn’t, while still managing to remain true to a feminist politic, however problematic. As Karp stated, in an interview by www.womenrock.com, “women need to know that there is a better women’s magazine out there, one that isn’t full of fantasy and fluff and palaver, one that won’t demonstrate ten quick solutions to better thighs, that won’t stifle your need to express yourself; that will encourage your desire to your pleasure.”¹¹

BUST has not been without its critics. From debates over advertising to scathing criticisms of its overly-explicit articles on sexuality, *BUST* has had its share of battles. One of the harshest condemnations came from “within” the

¹⁰ Not all of these magazines were of the glossy newsstand variety. Many emerged as tiny photocopied zines, others as full-fledged websites (or e-zines). Both kept overhead costs low and could be circulated and disseminated to a particular target market.

¹¹ www.womenrock.com has since gone offline.

movement itself, and charges that its hyper-focus on sex, its promotion of material consumption, and too-cutesy use of language discredits its credibility as a “feminist” publication flew.¹² In 1999, *MS* magazine reviewed the first anthology assembling a ‘Best Of’ articles worth anthologizing: *the BUST Guide to the New Girl Order*.¹³ The book, claimed the reviewer, contained “mundane subject matter,” whose writers adopted “overly kitschy pseudonyms,” and was, overall, “unpleasantly glib” (Reaves, 1999: 92). With the exception of the editor’s introductions and one lone article, the reviewer dismissed *BUST* for both its content and style:

The overriding sentiment in this anthology—a collection of pieces from *BUST* magazine—is best described as a big wet kiss to seventies coifs, the dubious achievements of Courtney Love, and the state of pop culture in general (Reaves, 1999:92).¹⁴

Despite her critics, *BUST* still managed to grow. And grow. By August 2000 they were purchased by Razorfish Studios, who planned to re-launch with an expanded staff and increased publication frequency (from 4 to 10 per year). A publicity tour ensued, and founding editors Karp and Stollar were featured in venues throughout North America. It appeared as though a feminist publication would actually break into the mainstream.

However, the events of September 11 forced Razorfish (located in New York) to pull the plug on the project. At the same time, founder Karp withdrew

¹² *BUST* has been remarkably successful in terms of establishing a recognizable “brand name,” receiving high traffic on its website (www.bust.com) and the creation of a profitable and aptly titled “Boobtique.” Its products are almost exclusively produced by small businesses in the United States run by women.

¹³ Marcelle Karp and Debbie Stoller, eds. (NY: Penguin, 1999).

¹⁴ Also interesting to note is that *MS* founder, Gloria Steinem, appeared on the cover of *BUST*’s Winter 2000 issue: “Feminism: The F-Word.” The accompanying article faced Steinem off with *Le Tigre*’s Kathleen Hanna: very explicitly pitting “Second Wave feminist” against “Third Wave feminist.”

from the project and the magazine ceased production altogether. Its readership took to the net in despair and outrage. Listservs and message boards were crowded with comments, concerns, and advice from fans devastated by the demise of their favorite read. Astonished by the support (especially in light of its very vocal opponents), Stoller (this time with the help of Laurie Henzel) scrambled to recover the *BUST* name, and set to work struggling to stabilize their financial situation and strengthen the editorial content of the magazine. The magazine returned to the newsstands in June 2002, and is still in monthly circulation today.¹⁵

Like *BUST*, *Bitch* magazine (feminist response to pop culture) also emerged as an independently-produced zine—its debut issue was hand-copied (300 times) by former *Sassy* magazine interns Lisa Jervis and Andi Zeisler. Its mandate (available on its website) is clear:

Bitch: Feminist Response to Pop Culture is a print magazine devoted to incisive commentary on our media-driven world. We feature critiques of TV, movies, magazines, advertising, and more—plus interviews with and profiles of cool, smart women in all areas of pop culture.

Contrasting *BUST*, *Bitch* is text-heavy, has few advertisements, and publishes long, in-depth feature articles intersecting current mainstream (and not-so-mainstream) media with gender, sexuality, race, ability, and world politics. Although most articles and reviews are playfully written and engaged, its pages

¹⁵ *BUST* was the first contemporary women's magazine to grow from tiny "zine" origins into a nationally distributed magazine, and it has continued to lead the niche, currently controlling nearly 40% of the North American market. It is currently a glossy, full-colour quarterly with a paid circulation of approximately 60,000 per issue, distributed primarily in North America. It has also, shockingly, moved from the bottom shelves of magazine shops (with the "alternative lifestyle" magazines—read "queer," "feminist," or "anti-capitalist" periodicals) higher, and it has also been sighted in pharmacies and depanneurs: a significant improvement in terms of mainstream distribution and availability.

hold far heavier content than its counterpart. Its politics are overt and its articles are usually extensively researched.¹⁶ As a result, its readership tends to be self-defined feminists with a working knowledge of the feminist lexicon and of the complexities of feminist praxis, and therefore has a smaller target market and a much more limited distribution.¹⁷

Tending toward a 'heavier' (and headier) overall tone than *BUST*, *Bitch* is geared towards women who are both self-defined feminists and have academic knowledge and experience of feminism. While these characteristics make for a more politically charged magazine than *BUST*, it also makes it more exclusive and limits its potential readership. With lower production values and less focus on product sales and entertainment, *Bitch* can focus more on its content, explore themes in detail, and share large reviews section incorporating multiple media types. While it attempts to skirt the boundaries of academic journal and mainstream glossy magazine (and has considerable success doing so), it is unlikely that *Bitch* will ever share the prime newsstand space with other popular women's magazines. However, it has also managed to effectively avoid the eyes of critics—both inside the feminist movement and out.¹⁸

Together, *BUST* and *Bitch* magazines provide narratives and perspectives that differ from those of the plethora of mainstream women's magazines

¹⁶ *Bitch* is often utilized as an academic resource in Women's Studies, Cultural Studies, and Media Studies programs.

¹⁷ *Bitch* has continued to grow, and currently has a print run of approximate 42,000, controlling approximately 23% of the North American market. It is assumed that each copy of *Bitch* is "read by an average of 3.5 people, bringing readership to more than 140,000." See Market Data, www.bitchmagazine.com for more.

¹⁸ While *Sassy* marks a unique moment in young women's magazine publishing, *BUST* and *Bitch* are certainly not the only young women's magazines that emerged after *Sassy's* demise. They do, however, represent the "success stories," providing templates of sorts for a magazine like *good girl*, which is why I've focused on them here.

currently available on the newsstand,¹⁹ and add diversity to a market that has become saturated with remarkably similar looking and sounding texts. The women who flocked to save *BUST* (as well as the distribution figures of both magazines) clearly demonstrate the need and desire for critical feminist media. Whether or not they self-define as explicitly “political” or “feminist” (*BUST*’s editors speak feminism in their own writing and during interviews, but the quarterly no longer has the word expressly written in its mandate), there exists a readership that is ready and willing to consume, and a wealth of writers who are more than happy to contribute. As well, both magazines attempt to co-exist with other established mainstream women’s publications.²⁰

Traditionally, “alternatives” to mainstream women’s media have existed in the realm of subculture. Those who don’t (like *BUST*, for instance) walk the line between mainstream and subculture—a strategy that poses unique challenges. Visually “fitting in” while maintaining editorial content with a political edge becomes an important facet of the process, and the balance can be easily unsettled. Dick Hebdige, speaking on style in subculture, notes that its use is a transformation, that

offends the ‘silent majority,’ which challenges the principle of unity and cohesion, which contradicts the myth of consensus...[and that our task becomes] to discern the hidden messages inscribed in code on the glossy surfaces of style, to trace them out as ‘maps of meaning’ which obscurely re-present the very contradictions they are designed to resolve or conceal (1979: 18).

¹⁹ It should be noted that explicitly feminist magazines—of any political flavour and targeting any market at all—remain few and far between.

²⁰ With the exception of *Ms. Magazine*, founded in 1972 and still publishing regularly, there are no other instances of this occurrence in the contemporary context. For a thorough look at the history of *Ms.*, see Amy Erdman Farrell’s 1998 *Yours in Sisterhood: Ms. Magazine and the Promise of Popular Feminism* and Mary Thom’s 1997 *Inside Ms: 25 Years of the Magazine and the Feminist Movement*.

BUST seeks to do the opposite: to represent the “majority,” to “fit in” and to conceal the contradictions between its pages. *good girl* attempted to do the same, but realized quickly that “fitting-in-but-being-different” was harder than it seemed.

Following Suit North of the Border: *good girl* magazine

Single-handedly launched in 2001 by then 23-year-old Torontonion Nikko Snyder as a response to the lack of independent, progressive, playful feminist voices in the English Canadian women’s media, *good girl magazine* was informed by *Sassy* and inspired by the success of both *BUST* and *Bitch*.²¹ Snyder had no experience in journalism, printing, editing, distribution, postage, subscriptions, layout, or design, and knew little about the industry proper, but knew what she liked, wanted and had a keen sense of what was missing in the market.²² Its mandate, revised and expanded multiple times over the course of *good girl’s* life, read:

good girl is ...

...a quarterly magazine dedicated to publishing ideas that challenge, critique, and break the rules of the status quo. Showcasing young writers and artists of all genders, colours, dimensions, persuasions, and abilities, *good girl magazine’s* intelligent, thought-provoking content explores perspectives on youth, genders, politics, fads, pop culture, and feminisms.

²¹ “Success” should really be operationalized. *Bitch* scrapes by from issue to issue, hoping to glean enough from newsstand sales and subscriptions to print the next. In 2009 it had to launch an emergency fundraiser to keep afloat, and—while still publishing fairly regularly—its content and length will take a while to recover. *BUST* has become self-sustaining, but the publishers still earn poverty-line salaries. Both, as far as I am aware, are still unable to pay their contributors.

²² Snyder now admits that “if I’d known what was involved with publishing a magazine, I never would have started *good girl*.”

...an independent publication, collaboratively produced by women and men committed to social equality. *good girl* is a forum for progressive, challenging and engaging ideas. We challenge the status quo in all of our processes, from editing to advertising, and provide an ethical alternative to the mainstream women's media.

...based in Canada. As an independent media source produced outside the United States, *good girl* offers diverse alternative perspectives not sufficiently available in the current North American women's media.

...committed to social justice for all women and men. *good girl* is a public media space where people come together across different experiences and backgrounds to communicate, build community, develop skills and work together for social change.

...committed to sustainable, ethical and non-oppressive business practices. *good girl* magazine survives and thrives outside the standard business paradigm and offers an alternative that is not readily available in the women's media.

above all, *good girl* ...

...emphasizes the importance of play, humour and irony as effective ways to challenge stereotypes and affect change...²³

A call for contributors was sent out to listservs and message boards across the country in January 2001 with a stated goal "to build a community of amazing young Canadian women!" and the response was overwhelming. Its first issue arrived in April 2001: a black and white, stapled zine published by Snyder "out of [her] house and out of [her] pocket" (Snyder, 2004: 3).²⁴ The full print run of 500 copies were given away free. The second followed in November that same year. Still in zine form, it was themed "all things sexual" and had a print run of 750 copies. In early 2002, Snyder decided to seek out more bodies to help, and put a

²³ See www.goodgirl.ca.

²⁴ It should be noted that Snyder's investment was deep and multivariate: each and every issue, to some extent, came out of her pocket, the layout was done by her on her own computer, and the administration of the magazine ran out of her apartment.

call out for volunteers to fill spots on an Editorial Board “in an attempt to make *good girl* a more inclusive, collective project with shared accountability” (2004: 3). Thirty interviews later, a volunteer board was established: with twelve young women from Victoria, British Columbia to St. John’s, Newfoundland with varied interests, styles and skills. I was interviewed in February.

July marked a number of firsts for *good girl*. Issue 3, published with a print run of 1000, was the first issue edited collectively, was the first issue to have a glossy, 4-colour cover, was the first issue with a registered ISBN, and was the first to be distributed nationally.²⁵ While Snyder decided to relocate herself and the magazine to Montréal, *good girl* was nominated for an *Utne Reader* Independent Press Award for Best New Title. We took advantage of our shared geography and expanded my role on the board, and I undertook developing a reviews section and acting as first contact for queries and contributors. In January of 2003, with a publisher still living out of cardboard boxes, Issue 4 (the “isms” issue) hits the newsstands with a run of 1000 copies. In June that same year, 1000 copies of *good girl* Issue 5 (the “phobias” issue) were printed and released with full colour glossy covers. The strongest issue in terms of both content and aesthetic to date, it appeared as though the magazine had found itself: the imagery throughout was varied and unique, the writing was solid, and the text boasted innovative and unique takes on a wide variety of issues.

Despite the strength of the issue and its content (and the increase in yearly subscriptions that paralleled its release), the year that followed would be a

²⁵ While coordinating board members across the country was deliciously fun, the editorial process—when done from afar and via electronic communication—was chaotic and time-consuming, at best.

tumultuous one for the magazine: potential writers demanded a definition of “young,” arguing they were “young at heart,” regardless of their age. Self-identified feminists insisted the label be used explicitly on the website and in the magazine’s pages, while those who didn’t identify with (or were uncomfortable having their reading identified with) “feminism” also expressed their concerns.²⁶ As well, the geographically scattered editorial board caused more strain than relief for the publisher in Montréal.²⁷ Money was, by far, the most troubling and troublesome issue. The effects of government cutbacks to women’s organizations—most of them voluntary organizations working in the “third sector”—in Canada throughout the 1990s made financial assistance (through donations, advertising or even subscriptions) slim.²⁸ Feminist institutions—including women’s centres both on and off university campuses and shelters—simply cannot afford subscriptions, and so issues are sent for free. Applications for Federal government assistance get overlooked, particularly because *good girl*

²⁶ These concerns were not voiced solely within the readership alone. At one of the first editorial board meetings (in person), the discussion of whether or not to attach the feminist “label” to *good girl* was raised and debated at length. Some wanted “third wave feminism,” others just “feminism,” and still others arguing against the tag altogether. “Anti-oppression” was also considered as a viable political identity for the magazine. A little work has been done in this regard. See particularly S. Staggenborg, “Can Feminist Organizations be Effective?” and J. Thomas’ “Everything about us is feminist’.”

²⁷ This, unfortunately, was one of the by-products of technology. The board was too large (and it was too expensive) to convene via telephone, was too widely dispersed (and it was too expensive) to meet in person, and online meetings were difficult to coordinate and often canceled because of software and connectivity issues.

²⁸ A boatload of publications have dealt with the struggles of running a non-profit organization in in the Canadian context within an era of downsizing and restructuring. See, for instance, Tyyska’s (1998) “Insiders and Outsiders: Women’s Movements and Organizational Effectiveness,” and also the important work on restructuring done by Janine Brodie throughout the 1990s, particularly: 1994’s “Shifting Public Spaces: A Reconsideration of Women and the State in the Era of Global Restructuring” 1995’s *Politics on the Margin: Restructuring and the Canadian Women’s Movement*; and 1996’s *Women and Public Policy in Canada*. *good girl* was fortunate that the Canadian Women’s Health Network was able to purchase full page (and once, a full-colour back cover) ‘advertisements’ for almost every issue.

didn't "fit" their funding eligibility requirements or *good girl's* needs didn't match what fell under the purview of the allocation.

Barbara Godard (2002) has noted that this situation is not new—that lack of funding has been endemic to small periodicals, causing even many of the more established feminist journals to close their doors or seek alternate sources of revenue. She writes, "Gov't grants provided a shelter from the storms of the marketplace that enabled many feminist periodicals to flourish in Canada." However, "there has been a marked shift in government priorities to defend the rights of capital rather than to invest in the social economy...withdrawing monies from a variety of social services, health, education, and culture...Funds to the Women's Programme were slashed first in 1990. Funding to [grassroots women's organizations and frontline services]...decreased throughout the decade and was targeted more to services for specific projects for which repeated individual applications were needed..." (209-223, 217). In an economic and political climate such as this, it's perhaps more surprising that the few feminist publications that survive, do.

Once Issue 5 hit the newsstands, *good girl's* production hit a standstill. With contributors continuing to submit items on a regular basis (enough for multiple issues, in fact), our inboxes brimming with inquiries from new and interested writers requesting forthcoming themes, and subscriber queries at an absolute high, burnout finally hit. The editorial board had fallen almost completely silent, Snyder went on to complete her graduate thesis, and the formal business plan for *good girl* projected a net loss in the hundreds of thousands of dollars by the end of 2005 with little possibility for recuperation in the years that

followed (Snyder, 2003).²⁹ Despite the success of her sister publications south of the border, *good girl* was not going to match (or even come close) the sustainability of either *BUST* or *BITCH* magazines anytime in the near future. In March of 2004, Snyder decided put *good girl* to bed.

Subtitled “Farewell,” the last issue hit the newsstands in September. *good girl magazine*, after four years and six issues, was over. I, for one, felt utterly despondent—and deeply relieved.

On Feminisms & Feminist Magazine Publishing: the fore“mothers”

The “new wave” of feminist magazines, such as those described above, certainly did not emerge in a vacuum.³⁰ On 28 December 1971, *the Globe and Mail* printed what would be the first mention of feminist magazines in the mainstream Canadian press.³¹ This news item, written by Russell Baker, introduced Canadian newspaper readers to an upcoming addition to their newsstands: *MS—The New Magazine for Women*, for “women who feel aggrieved by the present organization of society.” The next item appeared a full year later:

It was in 1970 when Gloria Steinem decided that the media distort and trivialize the women’s movement and so they needed a magazine of their own to put women in touch with the great changes going on; one in which they could print things they could

²⁹ This was absolutely not because of infighting, disinterest or apathy. Many members were graduating (graduate, undergraduate and professional degrees), beginning families, and starting their careers.

³⁰ In fact, since the late 1960s, there have been more than 300 feminist publications in Canada—including news-letters, newspapers, periodicals, and magazines. See Godard, 2002, 212.

³¹ Feminist journals, flyers, newspapers and other “alternative” magazines notwithstanding.

not write or publish anywhere else: to make money for the movement (Cherry, 1972: 9).³²

Described as “too blunt, too aggressive” by the *Globe* less than a year later, the magazine was also criticized by feminists—even those who believed the magazine provided a useful and much-needed resource for the movement—who “voiced skepticism and outright anger about the project” and the commercialism embedded within it (Erdman Farrell, 1998: 1).

Despite its detractors, *Ms.* magazine sits as one of the best and most vibrant examples of successful feminist magazine publishing in the mainstream. It literally smashed onto newsstands in the United States in 1972 with a print-run of 300 000 copies,³³ and promptly sold out (Erdman Farrell, 1998: 1).³⁴ Fifteen years before *Sassy*, *Ms.* sought to “reclaim and revise” the institution of the mainstream women’s magazine (1); twenty-one years before *BUST*, *Ms.* boasted its status as “the first commercial magazine in the United States to unambiguously claim a feminist perspective” (44). However, the magazine’s “golden age” (claiming over 500 000 subscribers and a readership of approximately three million) didn’t last the decade, and by 1979, financial woes forced the editorial team to reorganize “under the umbrella of the Ms. Foundation, a non-profit originally founded to benefit from profits from the magazine” (Mitchell, 2001): 193. Without its big-ticket corporate advertisers, *Ms.*

³² The same author goes on to criticize the magazine’s name, saying “I agree with certain Women’s Lib demands such as equal wages for equal pay [sic], and abortion on request. But I find some of the exponents unattractive and perhaps that’s a good word for this Ms.”

³³ It should also be noted that *Ms.* was launched with a million dollar investment by the then-new conglomerate, Warner Communications. “For Warner, yoking itself to a movement as apparently unstoppable as feminism (some 500 smaller feminist publications predated *Ms.*) was sterling p.r.” See Rick Perlstein’s 2001 “Ms. Magazine: Feminist Fighter,” for more.

³⁴ The magazine was snapped up by consumers in eight days.

was forced to revamp, and—while it still sits on the newsstands (incidentally, right next to *BUST* and *BITCH*) as part of the “mainstream” press, its subscriber base remains substantially lower. In 2005, *The Guardian* called *Ms.* “the grand old lady of alternative women’s magazines” (Katbamna, 2005).

It is worth back peddling in time a bit here to remind ourselves that before *Sassy* was even in its burgeoning stages of building an alternative to mainstream women’s magazines, the gears of what Manon Tremblay (1993) has called the “institutionalization” of the women’s movement in the 1970s was already in full motion (275). In the Canadian context, the decade marked the establishment of state organizations like the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (and its numerous provincial branches) (275). Starting as consciousness-raising groups and turning quickly to concrete action, women’s organizations and associations emerged and theatre groups, health and crisis centres, shelters and other groups were established across the country, and “feminism” became both a familiar household term and a powerful lobbying strategy for political change. The production of feminist publications (like magazines), generally on a local level and with small production scales, increased exponentially as the movement itself increased in both size and momentum.³⁵

Starting as a regional newspaper in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1979, *Herizons*

³⁵ Philomena Hauck’s 1979 *Sourcebook on Canadian Women* lists all of the feminist periodicals to emerge in Canada before 1979. Of them, 12 were sporadic newsletters from women’s associations, four were feminist newspapers (including *kinesis*, which became more “magazine-like” over time), two were annual calendars, six were interdisciplinary feminist journals (including the still-publishing *Atlantis*), four were “occasional papers,” and only three were magazines. Of those, only one has survived: *Chatelaine*. Established in 1928, the magazine was described as a “traditional women’s magazine [that] has broadened its coverage to include some material of feminist appeal” (85).

transformed itself into a glossy print magazine in 1982 and began its national distribution as an English language quarterly in 1985.³⁶ In 1987, the magazine went on what they describe as a “hiatus,” re-emerging in the spring of 1992 after a substantial direct-mail re-launch campaign on the part of Penni Mitchell and Patricia Rawson to secure paying subscribers, and the strategy worked: “and on the day the first magazine came back from the printers,” Mitchell recalls, “we got our 3,000th subscriber” (Kirshner, 39).³⁷ Now boasting over 7 000 readers, the official mandate—displayed on their website—of “Canada’s Most Popular Feminist Magazine” reads:

...to publish an inspiring feminist magazine that fosters a state of wellness that enriches women’s lives; expands the boundaries of feminism; builds awareness of current issues as they affect women, and broadens the influence of feminist principles. *HERIZONS* aims to reflect a philosophy that is diverse, and one that is relevant to women’s daily lives.

Suffering from the lack of government assistance for feminist publications and with advertising coming largely from other feminist associations and businesses, *Herizons* (a non-profit organization) relies on subscriptions, product sales, newsstand sales and donations for sustenance. In an interview for an article in the fall 2002 issue of *Herizons*, managing editor Penni Mitchell admitted that “[in] the five years that *Herizons* stopped publishing (1987-1992), no national feminist magazine emerged to take its place.” However, as the interviewer noted, “even with this happy ending, a keen board and a dedicated core of volunteers

³⁶ www.herizons.com/about.htm.

³⁷ Godard (2002) notes that *Herizons*’ need for a ‘hiatus’ was a direct consequence of the magazine’s visibility in the public sphere. She suggests that “*Herizons* was too successful in reaching readers. It attracted the ire of right-wing women who sought the support of the dominant institution to silence this challenging voice, a move with direct economic impact.” (214).

who continue to help select articles and have even pitched in with layout, the magazine's finances are precarious after 10 years" (Kirshner, 39). As Mitchell notes, "It's hand-to-mouth. Always. Chronically." With the exception of having the word "feminist" explicitly within its statement of purpose, *Herizons'* back story is remarkably similar to that of *BUST*, *BITCH*, and indeed, *good girl* magazine: it was inspired by a void in the market (one that was virtually non-existent in Canada), perpetually runs on a shoestring, and relies heavily upon a dedicated group of regular volunteers to meet its deadlines and actually make its way to the newsstand.

Turning now, for a moment at least, to the Québec context, *La vie en rose* was launched in 1980 as a free insert in the subversive magazine *Le Temps fou* (1978-1983), which had already established itself as a feminist-friendly French-language publication (predominantly with its critiques of modern masculine identity). Autonomous as of its fifth issue, *La vie en rose* moved to a thrice-yearly schedule and resembled a stapled, black and white independent 'zine, even though it had a circulation rate of approximately 10,000 copies.³⁸ In July, 1983, it adopted a slick glossy look, and by 1984 its publication rate increased to eight issues per year. By 1986, it had moved to a monthly schedule and seemed poised to break into the mainstream (Bibliothèque National du Quebec). Intentionally moving away from the militant language of radical feminist publications of the 1970s, *La vie en rose* refracted popular culture through an explicitly feminist lens, without allying itself with any particular political movement or party. As the debut editorial read:

³⁸ (compared to *Le Temps fou*, which sold 6,000 copies at its peak).

Nous ne prétendons pas cerner la réalité ou lui faire suivre une ligne, nous nous contenterons de regarder et de commenter le monde qui nous entoure sans chercher refuge derrière les paravents sacrés de l'objectivité et de la représentativité (1980: 4).

The magazine concerned itself exclusively with subjects intimately related to women and women's lives: "*La Vie en rose* existe précisément pour, entre autres, dénoncer ce qui reste d'intolérable dans la vie des femmes" (1983: 5). While Catholicism held fast in Québec, *La Vie en rose* critically and unabashedly explored religious issues. Interviews with local and foreign "feminist celebrities" were common: Simone de Beauvoir, Clémence Desrochers, Diane Dufresne, Lise Payette and Christiane Rochefort were all featured within the magazine's pages (Bibliothèque National du Québec). Moreover, *La vie en rose* prioritized humour; recognizing the revolutionary potential of clever satire and even outright ridicule. Caricatures and cartoons were a well-loved part of each issue and writers often adopted an ironic, mocking tone. The magazine also printed straightforward fiction, but with a subversive goal: the pieces selected were those that attempted to present traditional genres (true crime or murder-mystery) through a feminist lens. Godard (2002) notes that

In the case of *La vie en rose*, failure was a great surprise, though, paradoxically, a result of the magazine's 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...While they had been rich in ideas, they had been poor in economic capital (214).

Like its English sister, financial difficulties and activist burnout forced *La vie en*

rose to cease publishing in 1987, but it hasn't been fully reincarnated—yet.³⁹

Looking Outside Dominant Frames: Making new (generational) connections

Contemporary discourses—when examined via the particular mode of feminist cultural production (magazines and other periodicals) in the Canadian context—say as much about how Canadian feminist histories are written and reproduced and about the tumultuous inter/generational relationships within the Canadian women's movement as they do about the limitations of magazine publishing in this country. Upon reflection, it becomes clear that the brief history provided in this chapter offers us a glimpse into how truly imprecise the wave metaphor (especially the “ebbs” associated with its recession) is to describe the rise and fall of feminist organizing and activism. The production of feminist-leaning magazines—unfortunately ignored by the corpus I analyzed in *The Globe and Mail*—shows how the wave metaphor leads to an inaccurate, misleading image of historical periods in which interest in feminism—especially on the part of young women—is erroneously thought to wane, forming a trough of dormancy. Yet, as I shall re-iterate and discuss further, the movement of feminism's waves and the construction of feminist generations often have more to do with the historical moment in which they occur than with crests of success and the receding of interest, something that many of the recent incarnations of feminist

³⁹ On 1 April 2005, 300 people gathered on in Montréal to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the magazine's original launch. Featuring local celebrities as well as luminaries from the Québec Women's movement, the event was a huge success and the optimistic tone convinced the original founders that one last issue was due: in October 2005, a final, double-sized post-scriptum issue #0 was published. It exists as both a nostalgic “best of” collection of memorable favourites from the magazine's original run, as well as a contemporary snapshot critique of current women's issues here, nationally and abroad. See WomenNet online:

<http://www.womennet.ca/news.php?show&2946>.

magazine publishing have had to keep in mind as they struggle to buck the trends.

Barbara Godard (2002) examined a series of specific feminist periodicals that emerged in Canada after 1960, noting that “a high point in the recognition of feminist culture in Canada appears now to have been 1985-1986” (209). Citing a series of selected periodicals (newsletters, newspapers, academic journals, and magazines including *La vie en rose* and *Herizons*), she marks the indexing of them in the *Canadian Women’s Periodical Index* in 1985 as the pinnacle of feminist print publishing in Canada.⁴⁰ From that point on, Godard argues, the shift in government and subsequent political turn towards retrenchment and restructuring had a direct impact on the scope and direction of feminist periodical publishing in the country; simultaneously illustrating the “complex and contradictory dependency of the feminist movement on the State, on whose economic aid it relies while trying to change its policies” as well as the development of feminist theory (Godard, 2002: 209-210, 216).

Godard’s overview of feminist print publications established during this era revealed an alarming but consistent trend. The “upsurge of energy” that prefaced their initial conceptualization and eventual launch was thwarted by the bottom line: “Once the first flush of enthusiasm passed, editors find themselves wrestling with the problem of capital to finance their publication and, consequently, become tangled within the coils of the market economy” (2002:

⁴⁰ She notes that the periodicals (as various as they were many) were deemed important enough to be indexed and that this era marked a moment in Canadian history when “women were perceived to have enough political and economic capital to warrant a glossy free-distribution magazine with a feminist slant, *City Woman* (1977–1985).” 209.

212). Given that subscribers consist predominantly of feminists working in social justice spaces (and are not wealthy) and other feminist organizations make up the bulk of their advertising (and are not wealthy either), the paradox persists that feminist publications always inevitably become financially dependent upon the very system they critique.⁴¹ In turn, editors—strapped by attempts to self-finance—are forced to move to a not-for-profit model (like *Herizons*), subsisting hand-to-mouth via grants and donations, or to close up shop entirely (like *La vie en rose*).

good girl magazine (like *BUST*) attempted to usurp this trend by situating itself firmly within a for-profit business model. As a publisher, Snyder wanted to pay her writers, illustrators, and eventually, herself. She wanted *good girl* to be autonomous. However:

It didn't take me long to realize that the idea of "feminist business" is a contentious one. Instinctively, I had always wanted *good girl* to be a self-sustaining, profitable enterprise, and though I couldn't articulate why, something in my gut railed against the perception of social justice as charity and the common judgement that feminist work that operates within a "for-profit" structure is somehow "not feminist enough." In my mind, feminist business was nothing short of a necessity. If feminist can't exist and thrive in the real world along with racism and fundamentalism (which seemed to be doing just fine), what good is it? (Snyder, 2004: 1)⁴²

Snyder's frustration stemmed not only from what Godard calls chronic "under-capitalization," but also from the presumptions of what constitutes a legitimately

⁴¹ This phenomena is even more true of feminist magazine publishing in the Canadian context, especially given the smaller overall size of the readership (compared to the US and the UK) and since "fully 80% of periodicals available on Canadian newsstands are imported, primarily from the United States" (Godard, 2002, 210).

⁴² Interesting to note was the response to this strategy by volunteers of the magazine: one stopped contributing altogether because she felt Snyder was "exploiting unpaid labour to 'get [her] business off the ground,'" while others simply looked down their noses and called her a "Capitalist."

“feminist” endeavour. As Godard (2002) notes, “Under-capitalization has been the consequence for these magazines that operate under the conflicting codes of feminist ideology and the dominant publishing industry's imperative to address large audiences. These have resulted in publishing practices which make feminist publications financially vulnerable” (215). As Elena Basile (1997) notes, “labours of love”—like *good girl* and countless others before her—subsist as a “culture of the unpayable,” relying heavily on shared visions, goals and politics among unpaid colleagues (58). Godard agrees:

Feminist periodicals show that anti-economic behaviour does not necessarily translate into symbolic recognition in the public sphere. Producing ‘a labour of love,’ feminist editorial collectives participate in an economy of the gift rather than one of accumulation. In the present triumph of exchange value, feminist labour risks foundering in a more strongly entrenched private sphere rather than participating in the collective as citizens (2002: 209).⁴³

In other words, the anti-hierarchical tendency among feminist organizations yet again relegates women’s work to that of amateur; “outside the public sphere and, consequently, without the prestige of symbolic recognition” (Godard, 2002: 215).

Mainstream women’s magazines on Canadian newsstands—predominantly American, with excessive advertising, consumption-based content, and singular representations of women—have flourished in an industry that is highly volatile and risk-laden. Even with assistance from the Department of Canadian Heritage (which funds projects for Canadian titles), it’s a wonder any modestly-sized Canadian magazines survive at all—let alone those with political (or feminist)

⁴³ She says, “It all comes back to money...In contrast to this lament over lack of public resources is the conventional feminine praise for work well done which is its own reward.” (218). Snyder’s comments in *good girl*’s farewell issue belie this convention.

sensibilities.⁴⁴ And while alternatives continue to emerge time and time again, they consistently remain ghettoized and fragile; constantly struggling with the same questions: How do we keep our heads above water *and* remain editorially responsible? How do we pay the bills *without* jeopardizing content and unsettling our readership? How do we increase circulation without any money? How do we expand our appeal and our sales *without* sacrificing our Canadianness? How do we keep our writers, editors, copyeditors, designers, readers, the larger feminist communities *and* ourselves, happy? While examining the histories of specific instances of feminist publishing in Canada—their relative successes and supposed failures in addition to their seemingly irresolvable financial woes—Godard (borrowing from—and gendering—Bourdieu) also makes a very strong statement about the location of feminist publications within a larger, and heavily institutionalized, discourse of cultural value:

Undertaking the work of producing a periodical in order to contest the very assumptions of what constitutes ‘politics’ and ‘culture,’ feminists bring with them no accumulation of capital, either economic or symbolic, which might be reconverted into support for their cultural productions. Nor through their labour are feminist producers brought into the cycle of consecration, so that the investment of their work accumulates the ‘authority’ and convertibility of a recognized name. This apparent unprofitability challenges the very concepts and practices of social production and social circulation of goods based on a static opposition between use and exchange value, in which relations are reduced to those of possession and consumption (Godard, 2002: 211).

With her volunteer editorial board spread across the country, unpaid and

⁴⁴ The CMF has ducked cutbacks to date, but it is perpetually in danger of being the next to go. The CMF was established in 1999, as a “\$150-million olive branch extended to magazine publishers to lessen the competitive blow from U.S.-based publications” See Kim Honey, “The \$150-million prescription: Ottawa is about to hand out some serious money in a bid to defend Canada’s magazine industry against American imports.” *The Globe and Mail* (4 October 2000) R3. SSHRC and the Canada Council for the Arts have also funded periodicals, but in terms of specific content: ‘academic’ and artistic/literary, respectively.

symbolically insignificant, *good girl* was seemingly lousy at Feminism and Capitalism; and she never made a cent (Snyder, 2004: 1).⁴⁵

good girl and her cohort, as well as her “older sisters” in print, have all emerged and existed and disappeared within a much larger and complex system of periodical publishing in Canada; one that values certain kinds of texts over others, and one fraught with its own problems of legitimacy and survival. As Imre Szeman (2000) reminds us, “Magazines are complicated bearers of national culture and of cultural difference...[and] of course, not all content is equal.”⁴⁶ In many ways, the experiences of feminist magazines can be viewed as a microcosm of the larger experience of Canadian periodical publishing more generally,⁴⁷ and, taken in this light, publications with feminism at its core (and feminists as their core audience) have always been located at the bottom of the rung: *La vie en rose* fails, and it’s a shame because of the economic climate. *Sassy* fails and it’s because of the rise of postfeminism. *good girl* fails and hardly any one notices.

And yet, taken together—with or without a feminist label—what these magazines DO illustrate is that the 1990s can hardly be characterized, as it is in a good deal of generation and wave discourse, as the latest ebb in the waves; as

⁴⁵ Of course, money would have trumped geography in *good girl*’s case.

⁴⁶ Szeman also reminds us that Federal financial assistance has its own mandate, intrinsically linked with a monolithic conceptualization of Canadian identity in the shadow of the American market, and that it is consistently “magazines like *Flare* and *Maclean’s*, rather than small-circulation periodicals like *Matrix* and *Brick*, the federal government was hoping to help” with the establishment of the CMF. In the sense of a ‘hierarchy of value’ on the more global scene in terms of national cultural production, feminist periodicals really never stood a chance. Of course, the fact that “the legitimation of feminist cultural production occurred only within the sub-field of feminist publishing, perpetuating the doctrine of separate spheres, and so was unable to displace the symbolic power in order to permanently transform the relations of ruling,” should not be underestimated—particularly here (Godard, 1999, as paraphrased in Godard 2002: 213).

⁴⁷ This is a fascinating and fruitful comparison—one that should be examined in the future.

postfeminist, as women wallowing in the trough of dormancy. The feminist movement was/is alive and well...and women were/are engaged. The authors of mainstream newspaper articles, however, seem not to have noticed, as we have seen throughout this thesis. Nor have most academics.

Shameless, Strategies, And Other Possible Imaginings

Today, there is an unfortunate revision of the feminist past secured through a rather slippery historical construction (in both academic and popular culture) of the “waves.” With both its oceanic and avant-garde connotations, the waves thesis works to place old feminists on the beach washed up like fish on the shore. Meanwhile, as in all teleological narratives, the “new” feminist (regardless of her age) is somehow taken to be an immersive body, fully refreshed by the sea change and outfitted in new feminist swimsuit styles. Having been there and done that, the third-waver rolls past the past, and while she might pay her respect to the waves before her, somehow prior feminisms are represented as something we have “overcome” (Spigel, 2004).

In the 1980s—the era in which Godard locates the fall of the “golden age” of feminist periodicals—many of the battles fought by the mainstream women’s movement in Canada concentrated on institutional policy and political change.⁴⁸ The strategies adopted by the contemporary women’s movement through the decades were employed in reaction to the political and cultural conditions of their struggles. However, they were also the result of constant internal checks and balances performed by and among women of strikingly different political

⁴⁸ The 1980s witnessed significant political victories for women in Canada, including: the inclusion of a gender equality clause in the Canadian Constitution (adopted in 1981, in effect by 1985), changes to the Criminal Code regarding the interrogation of sexual assault victims (1983), the Employment Equity Act (1986), expanded rights for native women (section 12(1)(b) of the Indian Act repealed in 1985, women on reserves granted the vote in 1986), and the Morgentaler decision (1988). It’s no surprise then that feminist print publications also gleaned major successes at this time.

persuasions (Hamilton, 1996: 54).⁴⁹ “Feminism” itself altered and evolved over time as the intricacies of women’s positions in society changed (Wine and Ristock, 1991: 4; Adamson, Briskin and McPhail, 1988: 9).

Godard acknowledges these fundamental shifts in theory and ideology, particularly with regard to issues of difference. She notes that “at the end of the 1980s, “identity politics” emerged as a critical site of feminist discourse in Canada” and that those politics effectively destabilized feminist publishing and its circulation by fragmenting the already narrow readership even further (Godard, 2002: 216). She’s speaking here of race, and specifically of publications produced by those who had been marginalized, silenced or completely ignored within the content and the staffing of existing feminist publications: particularly disabled women, First Nations women, and “women of colour.” What is truly interesting is that she doesn’t include them within the broader context of “feminist periodicals in the Canadian context,” and rather conflates them with an ideological shift that fragmented the representation of explicitly Canadian feminist content on the newsstands.

Interestingly, Godard also notes that even fewer feminist print publications have been established since the late 1990s, and suggests that the tide has turned once again:

These periodicals differ markedly from the general news bulletin keeping feminists informed of policy changes and cultural events in particular geo-graphical locations which was common in the 1970s and 1980s...Current orientations in feminist periodical publishing address smaller gender-specific constituencies grouped on the basis

⁴⁹ Writing on contemporary feminism’s recent past, Hamilton noted that “feminists disagreed not only on the explanations for women’s inequality, oppression, and subordination, but also on the means to transform their situation.”

of occupations or lifestyles....Most new periodicals are addressed to a more popular, though equally specialized audience, targeted by life-style rather than political orientation...The newspaper format quarterly, *Woman*, is perhaps a more accurate forecaster of present political (and economic) realities, with its corporate cast and conservative social agenda...(Godard, 2002: 216-217).⁵⁰

In addition to more specialized publications, the late 1990s marked the arrival of other periodicals (many in magazine format) to Canadian newsstands, also marked by “identity” and “lifestyle,”: *Canada Wyde*, a publication for large women, and *Reluctant Hero*, a magazine launched by Sharlene Azam to create a printed space written by and for Canadian teens, both established in 1997.⁵¹ Regardless of their attempts to gear their content towards the articulation of a feminist framework, these magazines have still been framed as somehow “outside” of “feminist periodical publishing” more generally. While Godard’s analysis of the past, present and potential future of feminist publishing in Canada is thorough and tremendously comprehensive in terms of positioning the texts within a larger discourse of the Canadian State, the economic imperatives of the current era, and the undeniable persistence of the feminization of poverty, her notion of what the landscape—as one deeply embedded within “the presumption of equality informing [the] entrepreneurial model of citizenship”—actually looks like cannot stand alone (Godard, 2002: 217). In many ways, she ends up reproducing frames—dominant, sense making -explanatory frameworks—very similar to those produced and reproduced, over and over, in *The Globe and Mail*. It’s almost no wonder that so much of the same old, same old, keeps repeating.

⁵⁰ *Woman* is no longer publishing.

⁵¹ The latter, Godard (2002: 217) notes, was successful enough to inspire the publication of *GirlsCan magazine*, a British Columbian initiative, in 1999 (which has since gone out of print).

The content and scope of feminist magazine publishing certainly did change post-1980s. As feminism divided into feminisms and previously marginalized voices began to take up space and produce their own publications with their own agendas and target audiences (which were either beyond the parameters or between the cracks of the feminist magazines before them), the feminist face on the newsstand shifted accordingly. In examining the politics of Canadian magazine publishing in an era of globalization and federal defensiveness of Canadian culture writ large, Szeman (2000) acknowledges that “magazines are exemplary mass cultural commodities whose form and content both express the consumerist values of contemporary capitalism” (1). However, he suggests that “worries about Canadian content are often articulated at the expense of a more general examination of the function of culture within capitalism and of the implicit politics of the forms of mass culture” (1) In other words, Szeman implies that perhaps the importance that is often placed on the publication of magazines (in his case, “popular” Canadian magazines like *Maclean’s*, for instance, as purveyors of national identity in a global realm) has had a tendency to distract us from the “real issues” (1). What I’m suggesting is that perhaps the underlying assumptions around what constitutes legitimate “feminism” and “feminist publishing” in these sorts of discussions should become part of the overarching analyses of both. It is through an analysis of these debates that we can better understand that there is not just one version or approach to feminisms’ *passing on*.

Adamson, Briskin, and McPhail acknowledged as early as 1988 that the women’s movement in Canada has always had a “diverse, complex, and shifting

reality,” and added that feminists have never followed a unified political ideology (9). Perhaps if the latest series of ideological shifts were recast in different terms, not only would the ways in which such changes were discussed within the feminist “sub-field” be different, but the larger feminist discourses in Canada would alter as well. As Amy Erdman Farrell notes, mainstream popular culture “is the most powerful arena in which ideas are created and circulated. To abdicate this space means that feminists will not have acquired access to this important terrain” (Erdman Farrell, 197). Godard (2002) agreed, noting that

In light of the increasing threats to the periodicals and organizations that have developed and disseminated feminist critical discourse in the last 25 years, it is crucial for feminists to find new forums for their social activism and to reaffirm their rights as citizens to share in the collective wealth. Otherwise feminist publications run the risk of vanishing into the widening gap that is being entrenched between the private and public spheres (222).

If, however, the generational fissures that have been drawn—by feminists and non-feminists alike—between what is and is not “feminist” publishing (which are strikingly similar to the century-old discourses that I’ve investigated here over what constitutes “good” and “legitimate” feminism and feminist activism) are (a)mended to include the wealth of voices that have emerged in Canada throughout the last decade (including, but not limited to: lgbtqa magazines and zines⁵²; magazines targeting non-whites,⁵³ newsletters from associations of sex-workers⁵⁴; documents produced by and for girls and/or young women⁵⁵; pro-

⁵² For instance, *Fab* (from Toronto), *Capital Xtra/Queer Capital* (from Ottawa) and *Times 10* (from Edmonton).

⁵³ For instance, *Redwire*, a Canadian native youth driven magazine, or *big boots* (<http://bigboots.shemadethis.com/>)

⁵⁴ For instance, *Stella* (www.chezstella.org) or (<http://www.lacoalitionmontreal.com/>) *The Coalition for the Rights of Sex Workers*.

women new media and technology magazines⁵⁶; online magazines and journals⁵⁷; blogs; and others less simple to classify⁵⁸) the grieving over what “young women” (again, most of whom are not-so-young at all) are or are not doing could shift direction or halt entirely. I also suspect that the use of the wave metaphor as an overarching historical frame would follow suit.

In the summer of 2004, within weeks of the printing of *good girl's* “farewell” issue, Melinda Mattos and Nicole Cohen founded *Shameless* magazine,

...Canada's independent voice for smart, strong, sassy young women. It's a fresh alternative to typical teen magazines, for girls who know there's more to life than makeup and diet tips. Packed with articles about arts, culture and current events, *Shameless* reaches out to readers who often get ignored by mainstream media: freethinkers, queer youth, young women of colour, punk rockers, feminists, intellectuals, artists, activists — people just like you! We tackle teen life with wit and wisdom. *Shameless* is not brought to you by a tampon company or a media conglomerate. Proudly independent, *Shameless* is a grassroots magazine produced by a team of volunteer staff members, with content guided by a teen advisory board.⁵⁹

Begun as a Ryerson journalism school project, the magazine is currently going strong in both its print and online incarnations. Knowing firsthand that the magazine industry in Canada offers feminist publishing little more than a lose-lose situation, I purchased my subscription in June—before their premier issue even hit the newsstands—in hope that their voices and energy (and that of their contributors) were strong enough to quell future comparisons with a now long-

⁵⁵ For instance, *Reluctant Hero*, *Girlspoken*, *Taloua* (magazine de la jeune femme), or the *Girl's Action Foundation/Filles D'Action*.

⁵⁶ For instance, *DigitalEve*.

⁵⁷ For instance, *thirdspace* (www.thirdspace.ca) or *Marigold* (<http://marigoldzine.com>) or www.coolwomen.ca.

⁵⁸ For instance, Phem™ (<http://www.phemlounge.com>), or *bloodsisters*.

⁵⁹ www.shamelessmag.com/about/.

past template for “appropriate” feminist cultural production (as well as appropriate feminist behaviour, opinion, and the like). And, perhaps more importantly, that they will survive to be read and to be seen not as evidence of a splintered and fragmented movement, but instead as the latest legitimate, authoritative voice in a constantly-evolving strategy for feminist political engagement in Canada.

Conclusion

Passing on Feminism: The Resonance of Generations

The defining moments of feminism's generational identities, and the key debates associated with generational shifts in feminist thought, are themselves constantly shifting constructions that are reworked by feminists, nonfeminists, and antifeminists alike. Our anxieties about the various shapes these constructions take may be read as symptoms of ideological collusion and/or ambiguity, flashpoints where contests about the meanings of feminism's past and the directions of its future are briefly illuminated (Heller, 1997: 310).

The concept of "generations" has permeated many domains of our everyday lives. Employed loosely, effortlessly and often in casual conversation, it is most frequently used, as Jane Pilcher notes, "to make sense of differences between age groupings in society and to locate individual selves and other persons within historical time" (1994: 481). Sometimes linked to "apocalyptic narration" (or an existential "mid-life crisis") spurred by the advancement of the millennium, generational frameworks have moved front and centre of the recent concerns over feminisms' past, present and future (Wiegman, 1995: 810; Elam, 1997: 6). Despite its "common currency," and notwithstanding the plethora of articles examining the fissures in feminism along generational lines (particular as these tensions and debates have played themselves out in the academy), in-depth investigations of the significance of "generation" within the context of feminism have been scarce (Pilcher, 1994: 481). It is easy to see why this has been the case:

generational frames are deeply embedded, ubiquitous, and are often taken-for-granted in a wide range of feminist discourses and in discourses about feminisms.

Generational frameworks have become a commonplace way of describing just about any ideological differences that concern age in some way. In feminist terms, these frameworks have become almost habitual in what appears to be rapidly escalating concerns over feminisms' past, present and future and, more specifically, about the decidedly *unfeminist* generation of young women that have begun to "inherit" the struggle. Feminist writing often focuses on the troubled nature of feminist generations through the use of familial analogies of which the mother/daughter dyad is the most common. However, as I have argued throughout this thesis, there is actually much more at work (and, perhaps, at stake) in these pre- and post-millennial tensions within feminism. Rather than concentrate on the often-hostile relationships between feminists *per se*, I have used those tensions as a starting point to examine the uses—and abuses—of "generations" as a concept in a range of overlapping (and sometimes competing) discourses, including my own.

Looking back on the years that have passed since the Third Wave Feminisms conference in Exeter (and the handful of years leading up to that event as well), I am struck by the strength of my own generational affiliation—or, perhaps more accurately, by my staunch attachment to a very particular generation-unit—during that time. For most of the 1990s and the very early part of this decade, the "third wave" tag was more than just a moniker to me: it was an identification that simultaneously signaled a particular activist (and academic) sensibility budding at an important historical moment (the turn of the

millennium) and cemented a link to a broader collective body of feminists—as loosely defined as that “collective” could be imagined. It not only felt as though I was an active part of something that was still very much in the process of being imagined, but also that that something felt *new*—no mean feat in an era of seemingly retro-everything. That novelty, initially at least, felt hopeful and emboldening. In the late 1990s, I wrote:

The third wave is still very much in the process of emerging, but it is nevertheless an active, if amorphous, group. after all, third wavers are writing zines, publishing online ezines, contributing to magazines of the mainstream and alternative varieties, guerilla stickering, posterizing, graffiti writing, boycotting, critiquing both mass media generally and popular culture specifically, negotiating and re-negotiating relation-ships, contemplating the contradictions of sexuality, challenging paradigms, questioning dogma and resisting, resisting, resisting in their own innumerable private and public ways. While there are few organizational structures surrounding them as a “wave” (outside of the National Action Committee’s Young Women’s Caucus or the Third Wave Foundation in the US), there is a shared concern for the agency, rights and status of women at this transitional moment in history...But that doesn’t make the third wave any less legitimate or any more apathetic; it simply translates into the development of a movement that looks markedly different than what has come before. A movement that is resisting both in reaction to and in conjunction with the confused and confusing world in which we currently live (2001: 263-264).

The addition of “third wave” to “feminist” signified an entry point into a number of political and theoretical frameworks (and activisms) that seemed to circumvent the tangled mess that I then understood feminism to be, and it gave me a means to (more comfortably) call myself a feminist; and a situated voice from which to speak.

In retrospect, I am struck by the potency of my emotions during that period of time. Being a “third wave” feminist in the day-to-day seemed relatively

innocuous (yet powerful and empowering), but *calling* oneself a “third wave” feminist—owning that politics of location (especially at feminist events, like conferences)—seemed always to be interpreted as a challenge of one sort or another by other, often older, feminists.¹ Rapidly, the “third wave” qualifier came to differentiate my version of feminism and feminist politics (and the feminism and feminist politics of my peers, which often differed from mine) from what had originated from the “second wave”—regardless of how problematically homogenous that binary made that generation of feminists appear to be. Just as swift was the rise in incidence of articulations of intergenerational hostility and tensions were vented at feminist gatherings and, shortly thereafter, in print as well. I remained, however—as I do now—relatively optimistic about the role that those hostile exchanges played (and continue to play) in how dialogues around the pasts, presents and futures of feminism work themselves out, as heated conversations (when followed through) sometimes led to more, less-heated, conversations, which often led to change.² While I know that my own age,

¹ Of course, my own (and my cohort’s) antagonism at the time was not acknowledged (by us) as provocative in any real way—except when it was intentional. In hindsight, my talk in Exeter (and at other feminist conferences as well) was absolutely aggressive, and undoubtedly could have articulated the same arguments, more effectively and with less ensuing tension perhaps, with less hostility in its presentation. That is not to say that my critiques were unwarranted; just that my verbalization of them may indeed have been. I could have been nicer.

² For instance, at one university organizing committee meeting where the thematic of an upcoming event was to be “generations of women’s studies” the room divided into those who wanted to frame the happening as wholly celebratory of the second wave’s legacy—the younger women around the table insisted that that was doing a disservice to the past, present and future, and demanded that “exclusions” become part of the overarching thematic. Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller articulated this sentiment as early as 1990. Their compilation, *Conflicts in Feminism*, stands as one of the first investigations of the tensions and hostility between and among women of different feminist perspectives (including generations). They argue that the divisions—serious and often paralyzing—are actually more productive than attempting to achieve any semblance of consensus among feminists, and

political sensibility and active participation in these often-hostile generational debates in the Canadian context probably added more fuel to the fires underlying feminism's supposed "generation gap," they also helped me hone and shape my own comprehension of the ways in which a "feminism in crisis" has been comprehended to date.

But back to Exeter, one last time. There is something to be said about iconic moments: those snapshots of time when everything that seemingly needs to be said is said (and in just the right way), and how a second of time (or in my case, about twenty-five minutes) can be exploded into a language for a whole period of one's life. While the intensity of the emotions I felt during the Third Wave Feminism conference in Exeter lingers, I am most surprised by the fact that that event came to mark a significant shift in my own thinking about feminism, waves, and generations.

Perhaps not surprisingly, in the course of writing this thesis, my attachment to the "third wave" qualifier has all but disappeared. However, my former steadfast adherence to a third wave feminist identity should not be undermined, ignored, or dismissed as the unsophisticated rantings of youth (and nor should anyone else's); especially given the contemporary climate rife with continued pronouncements of the era of postfeminism, replete with discourses of crisis and laden with anxieties. That connection existed—and continues to subsist—as a fiery ember that led to a lot of my own critical thinking, learning and reconceptualization of feminist politics; motivating—or at least underscoring—a

propose new strategies for how to 'practice' conflict in feminism. Audre Lorde's (1981, 1984) "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism" outlines a similar sentiment.

good number of my activist inclinations and sparking many heated, productive debates. And while I agree with scholars like Judith Roof and Leslie Heywood who argue that there are fundamental problems with the use of “generations” as an organizing framework for feminism writ large, I disagree without reservation that the “way through” what currently feels like a impasse in feminism is to put generational descant to rest once and for all. To dismiss generational affiliations and “generations” as a concept altogether not only disregards some very strong and inspiring academic research on the subject, but it slights those whose identities are enmeshed within those discourses. It also eliminates completely the possibility of learning from the very affective nature of generational location more generally.

The power of generations as a fulcrum for dialogue lies in its deceptive simplicity: there is a shared experience of being born, being a young person in an environment that doesn't necessarily value youths and youth cultures, of experiences of aging and—to one degree or another—struggles with one's own encroaching obsolescence. While this shifts and takes on different resonances given a person's life chances, ethnicity, class, education and the like, generational shifts in our physical bodies, our ideologies and our iterations of things like contemporary popular culture, are (at first glance) implicitly “understood.” This illusory simplicity is powerful because it provides a foundation for dialogue outside of the academic and activist circles in which it is usually located, particularly within feminist circles. These spaces can be incredibly intimidating to outsiders, and if “generations” as a concept works to provide a firm(ish) footing at the onset of a conversation—a way in—*even if/when* it eventually and

inevitably crumbles beneath the weight of deconstruction, then it is an invaluable for fostering inquiry, critique and debate.³

In scrutinizing the shift from what was once considered a relatively innocuous wave metaphor to a more familial, generational model, I outlined the breadth and scope of these frameworks (and the debates that have ensued) in order to illuminate how these discourses simultaneously engage with and reinforce the notion of a feminism in “crisis”; of one at risk of (always, already) *passing on*. In this regard, it is important to reiterate that *passing on* in these configurations serves as a lens; a very central metaphor that moves well beyond its common articulation of death or imminent demise, but in its multiple, overlapping meanings. I would argue that this lens emerges as the principal trope of feminisms’ present-day “problem of generations,” despite Henry’s (2004) claims to the salience of the “matrophor” as a persistent and dominant familial strand in these debates.

Ultimately, I have articulated generational debates as struggles over not only what has already been *passed down*, but also about what the association between feminisms’ past, present and future conveys; raising the question, of course, of which feminisms ultimately count and which ones get *passed over* in the process. In documenting its use (and some of the abuses), as I have done here, the role that that past plays in our present and subsequently, the future becomes more complex, multi-layered, and infinitely more interesting. After all,

³ Students especially can benefit from this frame, as they often find themselves at a crossroads: exiting one period of their lives and beginning another, the transitional span of school can bring generational differences into sharp relief, further amplifying the resonance and utility of the metaphor during in-class discussions.

this is what historiography does; it attempts to use discursive processes to make sense of the past in the present. In so doing, it necessitates a looking at its construction as something that occurs simultaneously within the academic and non-academic worlds, as well as the ways in which this concept of “generations” traveled in all of these locations. I employed a number of distinct but overlapping lenses to try to tease out the multiple ways in which feminism has been and continues to be “passed on”: the experiential (or the personal), the historical, the theoretical, and through the lens of the mainstream English Canadian news print media.

History emerged as perhaps the most literal of all “passing ons,” of course, but it is also probably the most complex, in that acts of transmission are not ever just that; they are never free from all of the other ways in which feminisms are “passed on.” Because of my vested interest in attempting to be “as Canadian as possible” within these pages, there is a rendering of this country’s feminist past that is static (the “history of feminism in Canada” that I learned in school, for instance) and one that is incomplete and riddled with untold feminist pasts that remain shadowed by hegemonic frames (and not just those cast by “generation”). However, the Canadian context also provides a unique space which must be considered alongside, though apart from, the American, Commonwealth and European experiences which continue to occupy a privileged position of their own – especially with regard to the production of scholarly discourses around feminism and generations. In this way, feminist storytelling and history making (and, by extension, archiving and teaching) become implicated as purveyors of feminisms “passing on” in all of its incarnations. Generational frameworks thus

do not have to be ahistorical. Angela McRobbie certainly nods to this in her intimation of “taking feminism into account,” for it speaks to history as a symbolic form in which society takes account of its past, evident particularly in a wide variety of acts of memorialization, some of which have been underscored here in Chapter Three.

In much the same vein, I looked at feminist theory and the language of the academy to show the employment and deployment of generational frameworks and the wave metaphor work to “pass on” feminism in particular, and often differently invested, ways. The ways we speak in the academy, the way we speak to our friends and comrades in struggle, and the ways that we speak in the public realm often use similar language with different connotations and yet how all three of these discursive locations inflect the language and ideas and iterations of the others. It also speaks loudly to a need for “us” (“we,” “the feminists,” “feminist historians,” and “feminist theorists”) to interrogate and articulate precisely what “we” means in when generational discourses are in circulation. When “we” evoke this language of community or of commonalties, who gets counted? What does the “face of feminism” ultimately end up looking like? Further, and importantly, who gets left out? Feminists themselves (and I include myself in this configuration) are deeply implicated in this impulse when it comes to the employment and deployment of generational frames, and the colonizing impulse underlying it must be unpacked, questioned, and addressed directly. What follows, then, is a necessary awareness of and concern for the ways in which ageist (including infantilizing), racist, ethnocentric, and classist frames can slip—and indeed, have in many instances already slipped—into these discourses

alongside generational ones.

Beyond and beside generations: Emerging questions

While Chapter Four focused predominantly on the ways in which *The Globe and Mail* frames the dominant generational story of feminism in the historical and contemporary contexts, an analysis of the less visible, rarely cited counter-frames that emerge alongside the prevailing narratives would be worthy of deeper inquiry.

Specifically, a number of separate potential trajectories emerged from the organization of my data (all with *passing on* as the central organizing framework) that must be followed up in the immediate future. The first is the way in which “age” as a category has circulated through feminist generational discourses in thirty-eight years of the mainstream news media. Specifically, the term “girl” surfaced in the 1970s as a particularly prominent frame and, as the years progressed, recurred time and time again to tell a complex counter-narrative of a complex and seemingly fluid term. Sometimes vilified, sometimes glorified, and often infantilized, the figure of the girl plays an important role in feminisms’ *passing on*, one that not only has relevance to the burgeoning field of girls’ studies, but one that also speaks to issues of generativity that haven’t really been dealt with herein.⁴

⁴ For instance, the figure of the girl oftentimes appears to embody much of the fear of older generations; fear at the prospect that they have not (or are not) successfully passing on what they themselves have learned, what they value. And, perhaps, as Weber (1990) notes, there is an underlying despair that they have failed in their efforts to be “generative” in the sense of contributing significantly to the world, and that their legacy (in both psychoanalytic and in concrete, everyday senses of the word) may not be of any worth.

Other topics that open up as interesting and potentially valuable future inquiries include: an analysis of the mobilization of iconic figures (especially, but not limited to, Betty Freidan and Judy Rebick) to tell the story of feminisms' *passing on* in generational terms; an investigation of the role that "novelty" plays in the recurrence of particular news stories revolving around feminisms' *passing on* (in multiple variations); an examination of "generations" as a discourse of nostalgia, one that engages with the relevance of feminism as an ongoing dilemma, harkening back to a golden, glorious past and pointing to a dark, apocalyptic future (this route is particularly interesting given that postfeminism seems to be ever-present in all of these nostalgic configurations); an inquiry into the roles that men and masculinities play in generational frameworks; an in-depth study of the relationships between Canadian, American and "Global" feminisms as implicated via colonizing impulses deeply embedded in the *passing on* of already-privileged (Western) narratives via generational frames, most often told at the expense of generations of women "elsewhere" (even when stories are rooted solely in the geography of Canada) and finally; the lingering effects—and affects—of the 1960s on contemporary understandings of what constitutes *passing on* in generational terms emerges as yet another avenue brimming with analytical potential.

My brief look at feminist periodicals existing (and dwindling) outside the mainstream in Chapter Five, illustrates that other, competing narratives emerge from an investigation of feminist generations throughout this time period—despite being largely ignored by a mainstream newspaper like *The Globe and Mail*—many of which are bogged down and limited in terms of audience because

of financial constraints. Do they become analogous to the dominant discourse—with its own myriad predicaments of identity and exclusion—or do they provide a (or multiple) path for examination? I suspect that through the groundwork established here and through the adoption of new lenses, the use-value of “feminist generations” will move beyond its predictable role as either an ambiguous but divisive marker or perpetrator of simplistic reproductive imperatives and instead (re?)turn to issues of feminist knowledge production, its relationship to (indeed, its entrenchment within) cultural memory, and perhaps even to a higher pedagogical calling.

Feminist generations re-considered

“Feminist generations” has emerged as a signifier of contestation, hazy in terms of its definition, but one that is very often assumed to be understood. While examinations and exchanges on the past, present and future of feminism—in academic texts, at scholarly meetings, in print media and in (my favourite) everyday conversation—have a tendency to become mired by acrimony when “generations” are evoked, the affective force (and popular appeal) of generational frameworks is what simultaneously lends it its potency, opens it up (and makes it vulnerable) to charges. Acland (2000) addresses this directly by articulating a “treatment of discourses of generation as vernacular forms of understanding historical specificity, and as a related form of historically specific identity” (36). Modifying an assertion by Pilcher (1994) concerning the relationship between “generation” and social change, he notes that

the notion of generations is one of the primary categories through which we think of social change. In this respect, generation operates as one organization of the dynamics of history, as it is acted upon and by a cohort. 'Generation,' importantly, plays outside the 'legitimate' debates of sociology, becoming an everyday vernacular knowledge about history (Acland, 2000: 40).

I suspect that at least part of the allure of "generations" lies in its simplicity; its ability to draw on appeals to "common knowledge" as an entry point to explanation (Long, 2004: np; see also Thurim, 1995). In this way, metaphors of generation (including *passing on*) derive at least some of their power from the universality—quite literally—of the metaphor: the creation of a future generation, the transmission of life lessons learned, and "the thrill of hearing strangers tell stories of one's own life" (2000: 32). I would add that there is often a danger in configuring the tensions between and among generations of feminists (or working on the multiple meanings of the concept of "feminist generations") of theorizing or historicizing out the realities of how people actually feel. Understanding generational claims in the vernacular—especially, I would argue, as a politics of location from which to speak with legitimacy and authority—helps circumvent that challenge.

Significantly, and directly related to an understanding of "generations" in the vernacular, is an understanding of *how* "feminism" as a concept gets *passed on* most often in the contemporary cultural, economic and political context. I am speaking here of the literally act of transmission, as Joanne Hollows and Rachel Moseley note in their (2006) edited volume, *Feminism in Popular Culture*:

...apart from women actively involved in the second-wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, most people's initial knowledge and understanding of feminism has been formed within the popular and through representation. Rather than coming to consciousness

through involvement in feminist movements, most people become conscious of feminism through the way it is represented in popular culture (Hollows and Moseley, 2006: 2).

Interestingly, the relationship between feminist pasts/presents and futures that emerge through my inquiry point time and time again to the lack of “newness” in all of the contemporary anxieties around feminism. Instead, what surfaces is the significance of feminism (as a theoretical framework, a political standpoint and an activism) and the often difficult relationships between and among feminists (of all ages and persuasions) as an *ongoing* dilemma, and NOT one that is located entirely in the contemporary historical moment. These versions of feminisms’ “passing on” often, simultaneously, hearken back to a golden, glorious past and point to a dark apocalyptic future (all through a present that is steeped in crisis and laden with anxieties). Throughout it all, postfeminism is *always*, perpetually, present. And yet, each generation – as they experience it in their own moment – feels that moment as though it were (indeed, as if it is) theirs, and theirs alone.

In conclusion, this theoretical, historical, and narrative project investigated feminism’s “problem of generations” as perhaps (to me for sure) not so much of a “problem” at all. Krista Jacob notes,

...if we use these models as a point of reference, rather than the beginning and end of the discussion, we will do much better at addressing our issues. To be sure, the tensions are real and aren't going to go away simply because we stop referring to them for what they are, some of which, I believe, are rooted in generational differences and share dynamics inherent in the mother-daughter relationship, for better or worse. (2005: 199-200).

Because it has garnered such a prominent place in the popular imaginary as well as in the realm of feminist knowledge production and the affective articulation of that experience, “generation” as a concept cannot and should not be easily

discarded.

I agree with claims that the use of generational metaphors—by academics, activists and purveyors of mainstream media—isn't going anywhere anytime soon. And, like Jacob, I agree that “since all models have their limitations, we should not throw the proverbial baby out with the bath water but instead construct more theoretical paradigms” (2005: 202). Rather than call for a halt to its use I suggest instead that we recast “generations”—particularly and especially in relationship with the central metaphor of *passing on* in all of its multiplicity—as an advantageous analytical tool. It's not a “Why fight what we can't beat?” mentality, by any means. Rather, it is a “What can we do with what we're sort of stuck with?” approach. And the answer to that, as far as I'm concerned, is *a lot*—especially in light of a complex and infinitely interesting metaphor casting a shadow on the overused familial tropes: that of *passing on*.

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Appendix A

“Exemplary” Articles

1. “In Feminism’s swing from revolution to Reaction and back, fighting words have all been said before.” Special to *The Globe and Mail* [the *New York Times Service*]. 26 August 1970: 9 (News).
2. Freeman, Adele. “WOW POWER.” *The Globe and Mail*. 26 February 1977: 31 (Entertainment).
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Appendix B

"Exemplary Texts"

Coding Sheets: *The Globe and Mail*, 1970-1990

#	DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR	PG	THEME/S	QUOTES
1	26 August 1970	"In <i>Feminism's</i> Swing from Revolution to Reaction and Back, Fighting Words have all been said Before"	@New York Times Service (NY)	9 news	<p><i>Generation gap</i></p> <p>The "new"</p> <p><i>Wave</i> metaphor</p> <p>Sex</p> <p>Past/Present v Future</p> <p>failure</p> <p>negative</p>	<p>NEW YORK—"We did all those things. I went swimming nude and worse things than that. But we did them privately. They do them publicly and I think that's a mistake, said Dorothy Kenyon, a former municipal court judge and still a practicing lawyer at the age of 82. "Everything they talk about, we talked about before 1914," says Jeannette Rankin, a pacifist who was the first woman to be elected as a U.S. representative and who voted against U.S. entry into both world wars. Miss Rankin turned 90 last June.</p> <p>"They' are the Women's Liberation Movement, the latest regiment of <i>feminists</i> whose exploits from topless swimming and barroom sit-ins to vociferous demands for equal treatment with men has kept them in the headlines and on the television and cocktail chatter circuit.</p> <p>If there is a <i>generation gap</i> in <i>feminism</i>, as there is among students and blacks, it exists between the young cadres of 20 and 30 and their mothers, who have been accused of letting the revolution lapse. The takeover <i>generation</i> of female activists on the whole revere the founding grandmothers and maiden grand-aunts who have languished for nearly half a century in the historical garret reserved for eccentrics and those who arrived too early or late on the battlefields.</p> <p>On the eve of the 50th anniversary of woman's suffrage however, a spritely octogenarian has every right to claim her laurels. The suffragettes won their victory by making a scene as one male political writer said on August 26, 1929. They paraded and picketed, lit liberty bonfires, had their fingers broken by the police, were arrested, went to jail and held hunger strikes. Perhaps only in retrospect, it seems, they protested in style."</p> <p>"Our skirts were to the ankles," said Mrs. Arthur Schlesinger, a widow and mother of historians. Radcliffe women's archives are named after her and her husband. The suffragettes marched under banners of purple, gold and scarlet that bore such incendiary messages as Resistance to Tyrants is Obedience to God.</p> <p>"We always tried to make our lines as beautiful as we could and our banners were really beautiful," maintains Alice Paul, the brilliant organizer who founded the <i>National Women's Party</i>, the <i>militant wing</i> of the suffrage movement. Her card system on legislators was credited with steamrolling the 72-year-old campaign for the women's vote through Congress.</p> <p>Miss Paul was arrested seven times in the United States and in England, once for demonstrating across from the White House as part of her strategy to keep the cause alive in front of President Woodrow Wilson and the nation.</p> <p>"We never did anything but make speeches, but we never got to finish them because as soon as a person opened her mouth she got arrested," recalled Miss Paul, who can be forgiven if at 85 and still going strong for the equal rights constitutional amendment she proposed in 1923, she forgets that 60 years ago she broke a window of a banquet hall to gain the attention of British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith.</p> <p>From Lucretia Mott to Betty Friedan, <i>feminists</i> have been indefatigably verbal. Everything said today has indeed been said and written before.</p> <p>In 1837 Susan B. Anthony, then a 17-year-old teacher, was asking for equal pay for women teachers, co-education and higher education for women.</p> <p>In 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other abolitionist women assembled at Seneca Falls, NY, and asserted in a declaration of principles that "all men and women are created equal." But, they</p>

					<p>added, man has established absolute tyranny over woman. In the 1970 vocabulary of radical <i>feminism</i>, man is a male chauvinist, a <i>sexist</i>, and an oppressor.</p> <p>Radical reform was what Miss Anthony and Mrs. Stanton expected their magazine, <i>The Revolution</i>, to further in 1868. "Educated suffrage, irrespective of sex or color; equal pay to women for equal work; eight hours labor; abolition of standing armies and party despotism. Down with politicians—up with the people!" they asked in language that seems startlingly contemporary. But <i>feminism</i> has always seemed visionary. It has always swung from revolution to reaction, propelled on spasmodic bursts of energy toward astonishing achievement before subsiding into compromise and indifference.</p> <p>The parallels between the decades and the centuries are numerous. The first 19th century <i>feminists</i> noticed their shackles while seeking emancipation for Negro slaves. But after black freedmen gained the vote, white abolitionist women isolated their cause.</p> <p>The present <i>sisterhood</i> honed its skills in the mid-20th Century movements of civil rights, peace and radical politics. Such current historians of <i>feminism</i> as Caroline Bird, whose 1968 book <i>Born Female</i> is being reissued by David McKay, emphasize the kinship between women and blacks as second-class citizens.</p> <p>But <i>feminism</i> has always been faction-prone. It always had its separatists, starting with Lucy Stone, who kept her name after marrying Henry Blackwell in 1855 in a remarkable ceremony that contravened all of the legal obligations of the nuptial rite. Today some <i>feminists</i> deny any man's name including their father's.</p> <p>There were always the militants and the conservatives, the radicals and the reformers, the single-minded suffragists and broad-gauge social reconstructionists.</p> <p>Victoria Woodhull published the first U.S. translation of <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> and was later accused of trying to sabotage the First International for <i>feminist</i> deviationism. Because of the bitter rivalry between Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt, neither witnessed the signing of the suffrage proclamation.</p> <p>The suffrage triumph was a landmark for decline. Many <i>feminists</i>, old and new, acknowledge that counterrevolution followed. 'We got sidetracked and discovered to our astonishment that when you got the vote you were not thereby made a full-fledged citizen. It was a horrible discovery.' Dorothy Kenyon admits. 'After 1929, a genuine wave of reaction set in,' she added.</p> <p>"It is harder to find 50 distinguished American women than it was 50 years ago," laments Margaret Mead, the 69-year-old anthropologist. During the half-century after suffrage, women's participation in the professions and the higher echelons of business slumped to the point where today only 1 per cent of engineers, 3 per cent of lawyers and 9 per cent of scientists are women. The average woman with a college degree earns imperceptibly more than a man without a high school education and about 40 per cent less than a male college graduate.</p> <p>Only in this latest crest of liberation ardor are women insisting on being secret service agents and bartenders and to be freed from protective legislation that keeps them in the lowest-paid rungs of the industrial ladder.</p> <p>After the Second World War and its slight advances, which brought women into the armed forces and on to the rivetter's bench, U.D. women retreated again to domesticity and compulsive <i>motherhood</i>. With her book, <i>The Feminine MYSTIQUE</i>, largely addressed to the college-educated housewife, Betty Friedan dusted off the <i>feminist</i> banners again in 1963. Two years later, Title 7, prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sex was added to the Civil Rights Act of 1864 partly as a joke, partly as a Southern obstructionist tactic.</p> <p>In 1966, Mrs. Friedan helped to organize NOW, the National Organization for Women, "the new movement for true equality for all women in America and toward a fully equal partnership of the sexes."</p> <p>During the next few years the younger and more radical women began to form in groups under such striking titles as Red Stockings, Bitch and Witch (Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from</p>
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						<p>Hell).</p> <p>In its latest phase, the Women's Liberation Movement has criticized itself for being too white, middle-class and intellectual as were its ancestor <i>feminists</i>. Actually, the early 20th century movement was an amalgam of such social leaders as Anne Morgan and Mrs. Oliver H.P. Belmont, such social workers as Jane Addams and Frances Perkins and such working women as Rose Schneiderman, president of the Women's Trade Union League.</p> <p>Even as the movement has proceeded with renewed vigor, more or less united, to celebrate today's anniversary with a strike, differences of philosophy and tactics persist.</p> <p>Not all favor the equal rights amendment. Some fear that the protective legislation it will remove will hurt more women than it will help. But Miss Kenyon, who fought it for years because she considered it redundant and also preferred to have the U.S. Supreme Court recognize female equality under the 14th amendment, now believes "we'd better have the equal rights amendment in a hurry because I'm afraid the Supreme Court is going in a backward wave for the next 20 years."</p> <p>Some of the veterans deplore some of the youthful tangents. 'I can't see how fighting to enter McSorely's is a victory,' Mrs. Schlesinger says. 'And why does being braless give you freedom? Can't they see in all this commune living they are sex objects?'</p> <p>"I think they make too much about sex," Miss Kenyon said. But as for karate, she concludes, 'Now that takes away from men the last vestige of genuine difference. They always surpassed us in horsepower. If we have karate, we have that too.'</p>
11	26 Feb 1977	"WOW POWER" She may bend iron bars with her little pinkie but today's superwoman is just Cinderella with a new twist	Adele Freeman	31	<p>the new pop culture</p> <p>old/new, past/present</p> <p>not feminist enough</p>	<p>"Somewhere between the sixties and the seventies, something happened to lady TV stars. In the beginning, they were all talk, no action...They were all sickeningly innocuous, clean-living ladies whose tongues ticked over like taxi meters and whose energies were spent at home, ranch and school. But when it came to the untidy life of the sixties, these homespun harpies simply could not adapt...They hadn't been programmed to deal with technology, space, drugs, civil rights, <i>feminism</i>. And so the winds of change have swept onto the television screen an entirely new generation of women who have no time to sit around the kitchen table kibitzing. No, these women have been let loose to houseclean the entire world.</p> <p>These women are the daughters of Vic Tanny and Mary Poppins. They have the mindless look of retired air stewardesses but they can upend transport trucks and bend prison bars with their little fingers. But not to worry. Practising old-fashioned feminine tact, they remain the flunkies of men. [Jaime Sommers' Bionic Woman, Diana Prince's Wonder Woman]</p> <p>Bionic Woman and company, those Betty Crockers in drag, are cashing in on a <i>mishmash</i> of fashionable, often <i>contradictory</i> formulas: nostalgia for the forties, family sitcoms of the fifties, women's lib—you name it. Their persistent dedication to home school and country is a mysterious carryover from more innocent times. So if one day Wonder Woman snaps her fingers and changes into Father Knows Best, don't be surprised. They have more in common than first meets the eye. Shazam!"</p>
23	15 Nov 1978	"Post-Liberation: Now that the party's over, who's cleaning up"	Sheila Wawanash (TORONTO)	F10	<p>Anti-sex</p> <p>Feminist-bashing</p> <p>Backlash</p> <p>*First mention of Post-feminism</p> <p>Ms=me generation</p> <p>"We've come how</p>	<p>Toronto, ON – Susan B. Anthony pledged that women should have not another season of silence. Almost a century later the National Organization of women - NOW - was founded. And almost exactly a decade ago radical <i>feminists</i> started coming through - loud and sometimes clear.</p> <p>Whether it's ten or a 110 years later, we might be asking ourselves (in spite of the advertising that tells us it is a done thing) just how far we've come hearing all or any of this. What has gone into print may have been the most influential force in the sexual revolution. The medium's power combines with its relative ease and cheapness to make it the first ready tool at hand to produce and distribute some vision or version of a phenomenon.</p> <p>Especially in America, the principle of government by and for the people, led to the logic of publications and films that were by and for as well as about women. Academic and alternate <i>feminist</i> presses multiplied rapidly in their small and somewhat restricted circles of taste and specialized interests, often on models provided by</p>

				far, baby?"	<p>counter-cultural papers they superceded. But as a term and as a symbol, Ms became a real issue for a massive constituency when it became a recurrent, widespread newsstand currency. At first, it might have seemed like a mere curiosity, a divergence in the mainstream of the vast women's market. Yet the Hearst corporation already had Cosmopolitan and MS was soon joined by Viva. It started to look like liberated sisterhood and its ideological kissing cousins might be around to stay, and as if the women's market would never be quite the same. In effect, the Movement had midwifed whole new markets in such magazines. Of course, it was MS that popularized a major feminist gripe and rectification in that exclusive view of women as a market: that is, as so many object-consumers happily, carelessly spending what somebody else (supposedly) earned on whatever another somebody else told them that they needed to be more attractive. From the first, MS set out to disclose all this as another plot contrived by the patriarchs. MS PRESENTED alternative images of what femalehood and female lives had been, are, and probably should be. In some ways that makes it not unlike such other post-revolution aesthetics as socialist realism. In others it brought and increasingly brings it closer to that kind of mag-cult that has long mongered Right (and Fashionable) Attitudes. Only recently, for example, has MS begun to treat much more softly on its initially anti-male line.</p> <p>But it still addresses itself to the ever-increasing number of women who want or have to provide for themselves. The issue for May, 1978, contained the results of the first MS survey, which had to do with women's incomes and use of money as well as attitudes to economic realities, problems and prospects. Now MS might be faulted these days on terms that it set, by having become rather coyly celebrity conscious. A cover that featured Valerie Harper apparently naked behind an inflated dollar is no more instructive than looking inside the wallets of women like Barbara Walters. People magazine would likely tell us as much, but it seems that women who do have a lot of it don't in fact carry much of their money around. They only worry about how to handle it like the rest of us. If you can believe that, or care, you'll likely concern yourself less than you might with the kind of political reportage MS still excels at, or in features like anti-establishment medical pieces.</p> <p>MS is the major magazine for women - by women - that really researches issues and doesn't look, reading its bylines, like alternate work for those with degrees that start with an M. In these days of obsessive psychobabbling, in the latter years of the Narcissist Seventies, it may be difficult to decide whether that puts MS ahead, behind, or simply beside the times. But it is no doubt for many the only relief of its kind if by now predictable, almost a parody of its beginning. COSMO AND VIVA, by contrast, seem pretty close to the same end of one opposite pole. Both are for those women who continue to be, as we might have said once, into men. Cosmo has seemed all along about as assymmetrically unisex as, say, Esquire. By pioneering the market in feminine, worldly sophistication (whose scruples it still protects with dashes for such dirty words as s---), it expressed and acknowledged the range, or putting it plainly the fact, of female desires: for successful sex but also for preoccupations outside the ambit of Good, better, best Houseboundkeeping or role-romantic Redbooks. Cosmo continues to exploit the trends that it captured and still hangs on to. By sheer volume there is a stupefying amount of advertising ado about features and fiction often available elsewhere. If it seems dedicated to a principle, it is the one that runs on the lines of them that has buying so much more. Furthermore, what Cosmo's subjects already have is publicity itself. Ergo Erica Jong on Erica Jong (again) and an attempt to balance fascinations with Why Sex was More Fun When it was Wicked and Couples Revealing the Joy of Trying Again. VIVA IS ALSO part of a large conglomerate that, in its Penthouse format, brings us all those debatable crotch shots. When Viva started six years ago it directly mimicked the nudity found in its big-brother magazine. What was discovered in that looking-glass experiment was what didn't readily translate across the great divide of the sexes. Viva sold, at first. To gay males. But it seemed to have little appeal for even the most lasciviously liberated women.</p>
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					<p>By this summer's Super Issue, there were only some fond regrets for back when we went for that sort of thing and instead of it Viva has started to look like Guccione's bid for risque but respectable quality. Attractively offbeat, its sense of style can be seen as coming up fast on Vogue. It may do to remind ourselves at this point that Christina McCall Newman recently called Vogue itself the grande dame of mag-cult: the opiate of the faddists.</p> <p>Modification may well be the only way to hold strong in a hectic work and leisure economy suddenly dominated by Saturday fevers. In spite of continued differences, MS and Viva are arguably pulling together toward the middle of a road where Cosmo as been all along. While neither MS nor Viva resemble it, they are more like one another than they used to be. The layout of news and reviews has been in a similar, recent tradition of patchwork confessional journalism - and by now they are also exchanging some personnel. Yet what may be more significant and the trend for new publications is the resurgence of Style. Across the border; a new magazine of fashion, beauty, lifestyle advertises itself with the big question, if the American Woman wasn't ready for a new fashion magazine, how come Ambience sold out in only 13 days? Well we might ask - and there's a magazine for Canada's contemporary woman that hopes to sell more answers. CHATTERLEY isn't new, but the priorities are being redefined now that Chatterley's publishing editor has taken the project back on himself. In his own words, the magazine has gone through various metamorphoses since its inception as a pioneer in the Canadian fashion field. From primp-filly it went to voyeurist <i>Playgirl</i>. Its newsy regular features and columns are meant to give readers something they can relate to since women are now, in publisher Ray Raet's evaluation, more emotionally liberated, more interested and knowledgeable and more demanding of treatment as individuals. He concludes that women are more comfortable now that they're getting over the over-reaction of <i>feminism</i> itself. All of which, including Chatterley's claims of more provocative content, remains to be seen.</p> <p>One way of putting in perspective trends in these publications would be to see them as aspects of backlash. Yet if we look at something like <i>New Woman</i>, a digest for the woman of the seventies, we note an incredible range of concerns. Often enough, even in the index, they add up to contradictions united by self- as their preface: Self-assertiveness, growth, discovery, love, confidence, staying single and staying married, pursuing change, having affairs and coping with jealousy. <i>New Woman</i> may simply be that traditional kind of women's magazine preying on insecurities, reprinting What to be Grateful and What to Watch Out For as brought to us by those (yes, usually male) authority figures whose MD's and MSW's authenticate their words as Deeper, Desirable Realities. WHAT DOES seem to be representative is what we might call the new women's maglore. Who are the new old wives spreading tales that have fast become the conventionalized wisdom? Well, they aren't old and they aren't, it seems, often wives anymore. What they are is that homogenous breed homogenous in its very diversity of professional possibilities, income, life and personal styles - of free, white, childless and endlessly thirty-one that predominates as this year's model of feminine impropriety. They tend to be serious and intense about their hard and recently won right not to take on the physical or the moral responsibility for other lives. In effect they are highly moral about their freedom and social mobility, often as condemnatory of other possibilities as any hide or role-bound type once was about what was hanging loose.</p> <p>The Ms and the Me generations, style, an eclectic range in which even marriage is making its comeback. A depression that won't call itself that yet. An all <i>girl</i> punk band that started out as The Curse and has now negotiated shifts to become The Curves. Anne Murray singing for her bank and suppers the rest of us probably couldn't imagine. Alcoholism displacing agoraphobia. Cross addictions. Evidence in and out of print points to various kinds of life after <i>feminism</i>. If we find it disturbing that many look and sound rather like life before it in different ways, at least there seems little danger of women again lapsing into the silence that frustrated Susan B. We will no doubt continue to ask ourselves what particular products</p>
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						have to say about our daily real lives and our ambitions. It may be time to take it easy again. But then, it might be just time to take it all over again.
29	20 Dec 1979	New Women disillusioned by feminism?	@The Washington Star Judith Weinraub	T02 news - special section	Postfeminism Mothers-daughters I was a feminist, but I fell...	<p>Washington, DC -- Their mothers were converted by The Feminine MYSTIQUE.</p> <p>Their boy friends supported the ERA. Now they were to be the New Women - the first <i>generation</i> who had come of age on the crest of the Women's Movement. They were to be living proof that you could have it all - a career, a liberated marriage and children. Life would treat them differently than it had their mothers.</p> <p>Now listen to Linda Gray Sexton, Radcliffe '75, a onetime self-described "rabid <i>feminist</i>" and the author of <i>Between Two Worlds, Young Women in Crisis</i> (William Morrow, \$9.95) "We had high-powered expectations that were simply not in keeping with reality. We were led to believe a career would just sort of happen without any planning. Most of all, we thought it would be easy. We needed to believe it, because if we realized how hard it really is, we would have given up in total defeat. There are a lot of very angry women out there." Linda Sexton almost became one of them. That she didn't is a testament to her willingness to face herself honestly - and to her determination to find out if other young women were encountering similar confusions about their own lives. ... I started having these unanticipated urges to be married and a mother. I wanted that commitment and companionship. I suddenly wasn't sure I wanted a career, and I was ashamed of it. I knew I shouldn't be feeling that way." For a woman who thought of herself as a <i>feminist</i>, and for whom wearing a bra or shaving her legs was a political issue, her questions about her own identity came as a surprise. "We were so insecure we had to stand with absolutes," she says of her earlier, more strident years. "We had no sense of humor about anything. I even felt I had to hide in the bathroom to blow-dry my hair. And what difference did shaving your legs make if you were preparing for a career, but few of us really were." As she talked to the young women she knew, Miss Sexton found that many of them also felt conflicted and ambivalent. She wanted to see if other women were experiencing the same conflicts, and with encouragement from her now-husband, John Freund, she set out to write a book about what women of her <i>generation</i> were experiencing. She limited her study to women born between 1945 and 1955, the women who were 18 or younger when Betty Friedan's groundbreaking <i>The Feminine MYSTIQUE</i> was published in 1973.</p> <p>From the women she interviewed, one message stood out: The blind acceptance of what she calls "the <i>feminist</i> MYSTIQUE" is as much an <i>unthinking adoption</i> of a new cultural more as was the acceptance of "the feminine MYSTIQUE." She found that getting it altogether is not much easier for today's New Women than it was for their mothers.</p> <p>First of all, most women had closed off their career opportunities by not studying hard-core math or science courses. With a liberal-arts education, they still had to start at the bottom. "While the men we knew were gearing up for business school or medicine or law, we hadn't made a life plan. We wanted to avoid thinking about it at all costs. And we had been allowed to be unrealistic about what work was like. We thought it was the be-all and the end-all. To us it was anything but work." But for those women who were better organized, those who did manage to get the job, the husband and even the children they planned, the effort required a superwoman that not every woman wants to be. "It all comes down to child care," admits Miss Sexton. "Primary child care still falls on the woman. "There are some people who are real marathon runners. But the point is that it's not good for everybody. The Seventies were like a 50-yard dash. The Women's Movement pushed us out and told us to run hard and fast. But some of us are more able to walk or jog or even crawl. People are getting tired of being Superwoman, even if you can manage to cram it all in. You have to consider the quality of the life you are leading. Utopia is a long way off. You have no spare time. There is a lot to be said for easy-does-it." To women growing up now, she offers this advice. "We must get women more involved in math and science, so that they can be realistic about their</p>

						careers. There is no liberal arts world out there in the marketplace. Women should keep their options open. I closed those doors, and boy, do I regret it. "I would urge people to think about what they want to do. Take the pressure off yourself. Life is built on a notion of compromise. That's what life is about. And right now there is no doubt that women have to compromise more than men." For her part, Linda Sexton is reassured by the confusion she found other women shared with her. "As I went around, I found I'm not so alone or ashamed. It opened up the door for me. It had been there all along, but I'd closed it off. The traditional part of me came out. I'm between two worlds. Writing the book helped me discover which parts of myself are really my own. And I'm more willing to stand up for who I am."
55	23 Jan 1982	New winner in the battle of the bottle	Judith Finlayson	F8	Column: Between the Sexes	If the breast has replaced the bottle as the war cry of our generation, it speaks well of our efforts to eliminate the perjorative connotations of womanhood. It's interesting to note how the public thrust of <i>feminism</i> , to ape the behavior of men, seems to have been balanced by a private drive to assert our biological identity as women. Moreover, I suspect that at some level women have sensed that the separation of maternalism and sexuality is yet another symptom of male dominance. As sociologist Alice Rossi has pointed out, although many women find the act of breast-feeding and the state of pregnancy to be intensely sexual , our society has influenced us to deny or denigrate these feelings because it has been to men's advantage to restrict women's sexual gratification to intercourse.
56	30 Jan 1982	"Advice and consent from an older woman"	Letters to Fanfare	FA8	Hostility!	Well, I have news for her. Sexual joy was not invented by her generation, nor were the joys and practical advantages of breast-feeding and, indeed, natural childbirth. So please, Judith, no more put-downs of "older women." We support you, as mothers and elder sisters. We were young once, and felt much as you do about many things. (Margaret Lawrence, Lakefield)
60	16 Oct 1982	"The Changing Voice"	Judy Steed	10		<p>BACK IN 1963, Betty Friedan wrote <i>The Feminine MYSTIQUE</i> and the floodgates opened. The nineteen sixties' reincarnation of the women's movement came to be called the most potent force for social change in the twentieth century, and such revolutionary heroines as Germaine Greer stirred up the masses and outraged men. Almost 20 years later, where is the women's movement now? Where is it going? It's an obvious question this fall because the Ontario Government has recently appointed a controversial new director to head the Ontario Status of Women Council. Sally Barnes emerged from the smoky backrooms of the Conservative Party, where she had controlled access to Ontario Premier William Davis as his press secretary for seven years. On Sept. 15, she spoke out in a manner that enraged <i>feminists</i>. She was, she said, not "a bra-burner" and that, <i>feminists</i> have been "too strident." She preferred a "moderate approach," and indicated a lack of interest in one of her Council's top priorities: equal pay for work of equal value. According to Miss Barnes, the goal - considered the sine qua non of <i>feminism</i> - was a mistaken one, a waste of time because it was unreachable and probably untenable. Her critics were not slow to point out that Miss Barnes' views on equal value reflected government policy and gave the appearance that the Council's independent status was being eroded.</p> <p>One short week later, Miss Barnes was still trying to pull both feet out of her mouth. Her attitude was that of someone who went out casting for smelts and encountered a whale. She didn't seem to know who she was up against. <i>Feminists</i> expressed outrage at what they termed her uninformed comments, and there were clearly more of them than Miss Barnes had counted on. "Strident bra-burners?" asked lawyer Mary Comish, seated in the Scandinavian chic of her Bay Street law office. "I haven't heard those terms for years, and only from stuffy old men stuck in the eighteenth century."</p> <p>In fact, <i>feminism</i> has undergone a dramatic metamorphosis, from the radical fringes to the mainstream - a transformation that worries some of its adherents. The leaders are no longer outsiders; in 1982, they come from the legal firms, corporations and universities that have traditionally produced the political movers and shakers. They are the second generation, the inheritors of the first wave that</p>

						<p>broke in the early sixties - just beginning to hit their stride, discreet, analytical, and committed to <i>feminism</i> not as a radical ideology but as natural expression of social justice. They are part of the system. Gone is the emotional rhetoric, the consciousness-raising rap sessions, the marches, the anger and tears. These women are upwardly mobile and they are occupied by legal issues, the nuts and bolts of achieving equality. Many of them are worried that the movement is becoming too middle-class and losing its radical momentum, and responded to Sally Barnes appointment and opening salvos with shades of disappointment. Certainly Miss Barnes has been far removed from women's issues, as she acknowledges. Seven years surrounded by male politicians was not, perhaps, a good preparation for her new job, and it shows. "She may know the political scene," Mary Cornish says, "but she's in Grade One in relation to the complex level at which women's issues now operate." They're talking about amendments to statutes and she's embroiled in an intense discussion over the use of the terms "spokesperson" or "chairperson." "I don't want to be introduced as Chairperson Barnes - the guys just titter," Miss Barnes says. Hence she has requested a change of title to "director" of the Council. She is definitely worried about how the Council looks to men - "and why not?" she asks. "Even if women say politicians are neanderthals on women's issues, we still have to deal with them." She felt some embarrassment at "starting off with a fight. The guys are going to love it - 'look at those women fighting among themselves.'"</p> <p>Reminded that political life usually offers an uninterrupted spectacle of men fighting among themselves, she still feels uncomfortable about public disagreements among women - no doubt responding to the pervasive attitude that men are allowed to be angry and forceful, but women merely "get hysterical." While she is determined to be "open-minded and positive," her critics fear she is simply a "Tory hack", as <i>feminist</i> Linda Ryan-Nye put it, "who will toe the party line." ... That has changed. "So far, she appears to be denigrating the real work serious <i>feminists</i> have done. In the plush, subdued ambience of Cassels Brock, a prestigious Toronto law firm, lawyer Beth Atcheson explains "the importance of having fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution." She worked in the background, advising her <i>feminist</i> colleagues, and describes with great intricacy and legal acumen the labyrinthine twists and turns that their case took. "There was a feeling among women: this is the bottom line - our legal rights. It was a watershed, a Rubicon. There was a great sense of urgency, of doing something historic, and to see the way women mobilized in such numbers . . ." It is a source of energy and power that even newcomers to the field are learning to treat with respect. "I always worked harder than guys to prove I could do it," Miss Barnes says. "I was never involved in the women's movement formally. I didn't have the time. When I was a <i>girl</i> there was nobody in my life in a position of authority who was female. Now, we're really talking about social justice. Our ace in the hole is the awakening voice of women. It's a voting block that the politicians can no longer ignore." And what of the future? <i>Feminists</i> are concentrating on four specific areas: employment strategies, including the top priority, equal pay for work of equal value; more and better day care; pensions for women; and violence against women. Mary Cornish is most concerned about broadening the movement's base. "More women are trying to get ahead, yes, but they're more individualistic. Social responsibility is the key, I think, but there are a lot of women out there who just look at <i>feminism</i> as a way of getting women into different jobs with better pay. It's more than that. Most women don't have a chance to move into glamorous jobs, they can't get out of the ghettos so we've got to work at paying them better. When we pay so-called women's jobs better, the segregation will break down. At this point, I'm not worrying about producing more women doctors and lawyers. They're such a tiny elite: not even one per cent of women earn more than \$25,000 a year. The rest are poor, they're single parents, and they need help." The other most important focus is the legal system. "We have to build on the new equality rights in the Charter of Rights," says Marilou McPhedran. Section 15, which says that "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal</p>
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73	21 July 1984	A feminist facelift?	Judith Finlayson	CL 14	Column: Between the Sexes *first mention of third wave	<p>IT IS PREDICTABLE and sad, but with the arrival of the third wave of <i>feminism</i>, some of its early warriors are succumbing to burnout. Recently, I had a call from two women who expressed concern about a particular problem: they're beginning to feel uncomfortable with calling themselves <i>feminists</i>.</p> <p>"I still am, of course," summarized one, "but I'm tired of accepting that every time I identify myself as such, I'm probably going to be attacked." Her solution was a face lift for the word <i>feminist</i>. "We need a word that describes <i>feminist</i> plus," she suggested. "A word that implies we're winning, which hasn't happened before." Herein lies the so-called third wave. In the past six months, more and more of the previously silent majority of women appear to be jumping on the <i>feminist</i> bandwagon. Their motivation is likely their growing awareness of the economics of womanhood. Statistics tell us, for instance, that one in two Canadian women will be poor at some time in her life. It's a shadow that hangs darkly over even the most fortunate female lives.</p> <p>So women who have become accustomed to getting results in the mainstream are beginning to focus their energies on "women's issues." One problem is that they have never identified themselves as <i>feminists</i>. Indeed, they are uncomfortable with the word. And yet, it represents capitulation of the worst sort. If <i>feminism</i> has become a dirty word, it's largely because the media has made it one.</p> <p>For instance, one male journalist who observed the public debut of the "third wave" at the Lunches for Leaders event with Brian Mulroney in May, couldn't resist noting rather snarkily that the audience was wearing half of Holt Renfrew and Creeds on its collective back. The difficulty is not with image, it is that women who exercise power as part of a female group are a relatively new phenomenon. But the real concern with taking a new name is that the move might be equated with a loss of identity. For the past 20 years, women scholars have devoted themselves to documenting women's history because they have recognized "the damage that can be done to creative energy by the lack of a sense of continuity, historical validation, community." <i>Feminist</i> historians have provided us with these links. Contemporary women must bear in mind that previous generations of <i>feminists</i> also suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous insults. Consider, for instance, that the now illustrious Nellie McClung was called, "conceited . . . and laboring under delusion," by the Premier of Manitoba who informed her that "nice women" weren't interested in having the vote. The current messages about <i>feminism</i> are variations on the same theme.</p> <p>Women who choose to be in the forefront of social change must learn to live with unflattering images and accept them for what they are: the anxiety reaction of those who have grown comfortable with the status quo. Denying our links with the <i>feminist</i> past destines the "third wave" to be remembered as little more than a historical hiccup. It will die, before fulfilling its promise, just as its predecessors have done.</p>
86	31 Oct 1985	"Feminists worried about who will carry the torch"	Linda Hossie	A20	Montreal <i>Girls</i> Transmission Inter-generational hostility <i>girls</i>	<p>After years of fighting a male-dominated world, a generation of <i>feminists</i> has run up against a new and puzzling problem. The young <i>girls</i> to whom <i>feminists</i> must pass the torch are bored and alienated by the fight for equality. Speakers from France and Canada at a conference on the status of <i>girls</i> are worrying that women in the future will suffer a new wave of oppression if today's <i>girls</i> do not tune in to the urgency of working for improvements in their political and social conditions.</p> <p>Benoite Groult, a French <i>feminist</i>, told the conference yesterday that though anti-<i>feminist</i> rhetoric once came from men, now it comes from women. Yet in many countries, women's status is so low they are barely considered human, she said. "Our status can be changed easily by changes in law and religion." "There is nothing linear about women's history," warned Louise Guyon, an adviser in the Quebec Ministry of Social Affairs. "We don't want <i>girls</i> to be hitting the bottom of the same barrel. We want them to be facing life</p>

						<p>with the tools that we have developed." But <i>girls</i> are facing life with age- old illusions. A study released in March by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women showed a coming generation of <i>girls</i> with very old-fashioned expectations: a loving husband, trouble-free children and international travel. But <i>girls</i> have nothing to justify complacency, Ms Groult said. The status of women is declining in the world under the pressure of a tough international economy and a tide of religious fundamentalism, both Christian and Islamic, she said.</p> <p>Speaker after speaker portrayed a reality in which <i>girls'</i> reproductive health is threatened by the confusion and conservatism of their elders, in which juvenile prostitution is a response to the lack of jobs, in which <i>girls</i> are trapped in oppressive and outmoded nuclear families. And all the while, their naive optimism discourages them from pursuing independent and satisfying careers. "Neurosis is the main component of the loving couple," said Christiane Olivier, a French psychoanalyst.</p> <p><i>Girls</i> should be told that "in a family, you simply select a man with whom you get along fairly well and the two of you go along doing your separate things," she said. "We must make children understand that there is no eternal love." Families with three parents and 12 children are "no problem," Ms Olivier said, "provided there are men and women together and they all love the children." In another workshop, Judith Nolte argued that parents who try to restrain teen-agers from sex only end up confusing them and discouraging them from using birth control.</p> <p>Teen-aged pregnancy is lowest in countries such as Sweden and Holland where birth control is given free to teen-agers, Ms Nolte said. "If we concentrate on the real problems, we can develop solutions," the Planned Parenthood spokesman said. "But if we think of sex itself as a problem, then we'll never be able to deal with it." More teen-agers are having sex at younger ages, Ms Nolte said, and the trend is here to stay. Ms Nolte recommended public awareness campaigns about birth control similar to those used for Participaction, the federal Government's fitness campaign. She also suggested that confidential free birth control be made available to teen-agers in clinics at hours convenient to students. Recent information on the labor market indicates that two out of three women will work by the 1990s, Ms Guyon said. That figure compares to one in four women who worked in the 1940s, she said. But she argued that <i>girls</i> are still choosing impractical education and they are steered away from mathematics, which is the key to many jobs, she said. In another workshop, Toronto youth worker Terry Sullivan added a chilling note to the discussion of jobs for <i>girls</i>, arguing that "prostitution is a solution for young people trying to find the good life, unskilled workers looking for good incomes."</p>
87	9 Nov 1985	"Friedan keeps up the battle"	Judith Finlayson	D20	<p>Column: Between the sexes</p> <p>Betty!</p> <p>Backlash</p> <p>Future</p> <p>Icon</p>	<p>IN 1976, BETTY Friedan lamented some of the problems of the women's movement as it chugged into its second decade. "From all sides now, they are tolling the bell to mourn the death of the women's movement in America. (If I tried to reassure you that the movement wasn't in danger) I would be lying to you and to myself." Friedan knows whereof she spoke since she has occupied a unique position in this "major movement for social change." Her book, <i>The Feminine MYSTIQUE</i>, was published in 1963 and it is credited with raising the consciousness of an entire generation of women. The success of her printed word and the corresponding hostility it evoked, convinced Friedan that it was imperative to organize for political action. In 1966 she began working toward the establishment of the National Organization For Women (NOW) which is currently the major <i>feminist</i> lobby group in the United States. Over the next 10 years, women made some serious political advances. But writing from the eye of the storm in 1976, Friedan felt pessimistic. It seemed that "the most far-reaching revolution of all time" was in serious danger of never taking place because of internal divisions.</p> <p>Friedan's concern was voiced in a collection of her writings on the women's movement which were published that year under the title, <i>It Changed My Life</i>. (The book has recently been re-issued (by Penguin in Canada) so it seemed appropriate to examine the health of the current <i>feminist</i> wave. Is the movement still threatened, or</p>

						<p>has the prognosis improved? On the telephone from Montreal Friedan told me that the most serious opposition to the women's movement is now the conservative backlash. Extremists have successfully stigmatized <i>feminism</i> by preying on people's anxieties - "Increasingly, I'm hearing that old phrase 'I'm not a <i>feminist</i>, but'," she comments. They have also used their financial clout, for instance, to chip away at the affirmative action laws and women's hard won abortion rights in the courts. "The weakening of the laws is particularly serious," says Friedan, who believes that to some extent this has paralyzed the movement. "Instead of being able to move rapidly ahead, we find ourselves devoting energy to defending rights we thought we'd already won." This disability has prevented women from advancing to what Friedan has defined as <i>feminism's</i> second stage. As she sees it, most women want to incorporate their <i>feminist</i> ideals with marriage and a career, as well as with raising a family. The problem is that political change has not kept pace with the reality of their lives. "Younger women today are pressured to have it all, but they're forced to do so without adequate support services," she comments. "So long as women still assume responsibility for running the home, they're taking on a double work load. One difficulty is that very few recognize that their problems are political, not personal. In many ways the young professional wives and mothers I see now are more isolated in their guilt than the frustrated housewives I wrote about 20 years ago." Friedan believes that this generation of women is particularly vulnerable to being victimized by sexual politics because they're so exhausted at the end of the day that they have no energy left over to defend their rights. Consequently, she feels that a new era of consciousness raising is essential. Younger women need to learn that the rights they now enjoy were won for them by <i>feminists</i> and that it was an uphill struggle all the way.</p> <p>Still, Friedan feels that the women's movement has been strengthened by its defeats. Moreover, she is "basically optimistic" about the future. She points out that <i>feminist</i> consciousness has become part of our society and that the women's movement is now a world power. "The movement is now much broader than card-carrying <i>feminists</i>. In the United States, for instance, the battle for the ERA brought mainstream volunteer organizations into the fray where they'll stay to fight for the economic issues." ... Women are now a visible political force. And that, in itself, represents a major transformation from the society in which NOW was spawned.</p>
13 2	7 Jan 1989	"Quiet Revolution"	Judy Steed	D1, D8	Features	<p>We're not anti-family. We're not anti-men.</p> <p>WOMEN HAVE become such a bore, wailing about their freedom and their alimony in the same breath," wrote novelist Lawrence Durrell, facing yet another divorce, to his colleague Henry Miller in 1978. Such superiority of the rampant male chauvinist was, 10 years ago, common among the dominant sex.</p> <p>Now, entering the last year of the eighties, it is clear that a remarkable transformation has occurred: from the lonely fringes, peopled with idiosyncratic activists and mythologized bra burners (in fact, no bras were ever burned, at least not in public), women's fight for equality has become one of the dominant forces of the twentieth century.</p> <p>But equality is a long way off. Brides are still being burned in India, <i>girls</i> are sexually mutilated in Africa, female babies abandoned in China. Even in North America, where women endure milder forms of discrimination - arts councils give more money to male writers than female, school sports dedicate more money to boys than <i>girls</i>, top jobs go to men - there is still an ever-present threat of male violence.</p> <p>In Toronto, serial rapists prey on women getting off suburban buses. A men's magazine cover displays a naked woman's body going through a meat-grinder. In the current hit film, <i>The Accused</i>, based on a real case, Jodie Foster portrays a woman gang-raped in a bar, surrounded by cheering men; a terse sentence at the end of the film states that in the United States, one rape is reported every six minutes. In Canada, before 1983, one rape was reported every 17 minutes; a 1981 Winnipeg study found that only one of 17 to 20 rape victims actually goes to the police. Then there is the sexual abuse of children, mostly perpetrated by fathers and male relatives,</p>

					<p>and wife battering, with women fleeing at ever-increasing rates to overcrowded shelters.</p> <p>But there is also progress. Although the victories may seem minor, they add up to major changes that are resulting in more economic power for women.</p> <p>Pay-equity legislation is being enacted across North America. In Canada, women cleaners with the Peel Region Board of Education recently won salary increases bringing them in line with male cleaners. A woman won a sexual harassment case in which the Supreme Court determined that employers are liable for discrimination in their workplace. And the urgent need for expanded child care has finally made it onto the nation's political agenda. Yet the <i>feminist</i> movement remains a bewildering phenomenon, frustrating historians intent on analyzing its shape and growth. In the industrialized world, the goals are equal opportunity, pay equity, reproductive choice, diversion of government spending from military to social programs, access to child care and access to power.</p> <p>In the Third World, where women often carry their societies on their backs, tilling the soil, growing the food and selling their produce as well as caring for children and feeding their families, the struggle is more basic. But as the 1985 United Nations Conference for Women in Nairobi proved - 15,000 women attended it - the struggle persists among Third- World and Western women alike, and they have more in common than not.</p> <p>The conference collected a mass of statistical data that set down "as unchallengeable fact," to quote just one report, "how much women are discriminated against, how much higher their mortality rates are, how much worldwide woman-specific violence there is, how much more specifically women are excluded from political and economic decision-making than are men."</p> <p>Yet there is no headquarters co-ordinating the movement that is dramatically reshaping human consciousness. Indeed its diversity, its sometimes invisible presence in every part of the world, in every class, is the strength of this quiet revolution.</p> <p>On the trail of the Western <i>feminist</i> movement, it's obvious that the modern struggle is vastly more diverse than at the turn of the century, when the suffragists' battle for the vote brought out the beast (so men thought) in the fairer sex. In England, those dreadful creatures (a disgrace to femininity, some said) marched into government offices and were hit in the face and spat upon by male authority figures; they cut down electricity lines and behaved in a decidedly unfragile manner, in a effort to secure women's equality through the electoral process. Once women had the right to vote, they believed, the rest would follow.</p> <p>It didn't. In 1989, Canada's Parliament, like most seats of government, is still a male-dominated institution, with only 39 women MPs out of 295.</p> <p>"Women are 53 per cent of the earth's population," said Dr. Helen Caldicott, former Harvard Medical School associate, "do two-thirds of the world's work, own 1 per cent of the property, have all the babies, and no power." Dr. Caldicott discovered the part about no power when the group she mobilized, Physicians for Social Responsibility, won the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize but the prize was given to two johnny-come-lately male doctors who excluded her from public honor.</p> <p>The fight for equality has filtered through the ranks, from the legal and medical professions - women in Canadian law and medical schools now comprise half the class - to the poorest of the poor. But "the feminization of poverty," as it's called, remains a trend. Most poor people in North America are female, despite the fact that women are moving into higher-paid professions at unprecedented rates. Among the elderly poor, 73 per cent are women. Most single-parent families are headed by females; the majority (56 per cent) live below the poverty line, defined by Statistics Canada as \$11,120 for a single person living in a city of 500,000 people or more, or \$22,616 for a family of four. CAROLE Boudrias, a mother with four children, lives in Toronto on a welfare income of \$8,400 a year. What has the <i>feminist</i> movement done for her? The surprise is that it has done something. Before Christmas, she called the police to</p>
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						<p>disenfranchized economically, racially. I'm living proof that women can do it."</p> <p>She spent eight years at home with her children, from 1955 to 1963, then went back to school for a degree in English and French literature. "I decided to save my sanity. I was a fifties bride. I was socialized so that I couldn't see myself as achieving anything in my own right. I believed in the <i>motherhood</i> role. Now I think there has to be more than the role. There's more to life than looking after kids."</p> <p>Education, she believes, is the key - and consciousness raising. She ended up at Oxford, doing a doctoral fellowship in Lockean philosophy, realizing the extent of male privilege which she saw, ironically, as also burdening men with rigid roles and responsibilities. "Women's liberation is about human liberation," she says. "That's why I teach <i>The Concepts of the Male and Female in Western Civilization</i>.' The stereotypes cripple men and women both. 'We're not anti-family. We're not anti-men. We're just saying, 'Look at the political and social structures that deny women choices.' " HENCE the need for <i>feminist</i> analysis, which she defines as "the ability to analyze traditional disciplines in a new light that is gender-specific, looking at the roles played by women and men." For instance, having studied the concept of the heroic male in literature, she decided to take a look at the heroic female, who in male literature "is a woman waiting for a man to save her." She snorts. "The heroic woman is the woman who dares to be herself."</p> <p>Daring to be herself, Mrs. Wilkinson strides into Bolton's community centre, where 15 mature women students await her. She relates an outrageous story, full of gusto, about an incident in a parking lot that ends with Mrs. Wilkinson laughingly telling an obnoxious male to "f-- off."</p> <p>The students are somewhat amazed by their teacher's outspoken glee. Then she launches into the passionate poetry of Dorothy Livesay, who was born in 1909 in Winnipeg's North End. "Livesay talks about her <i>sexuality</i>, about her body, about being old and aching and yearning and loving and potent," says Mrs. Wilkinson. "It's glorious. Men write about their <i>sexuality</i>, but when do we ever read about our own? It's still very rare. Women writers are writing us into being."</p> <p>She stirs up a discussion about "deconstructing myths." Women are seen, she says, as "the gateway to hell because of the myth of Eve, because she gave Adam the apple of the tree of knowledge." She describes the Helen of Troy archetype, a male creation that cripples women, as "the beautiful woman who has no control over her destiny and becomes the property of her owners. She gets nothing out of her beauty. She is powerless."</p> <p>Look at the culture, she's saying, see the webs that imprison women's identities in male definitions. Break out. Create your female identity. Do something with it.</p> <p>"Why are we quiet? Because Aristotle said, in the fourth century BC, that a good woman is a quiet woman." She chortles; sighs and laughter erupt from her class. "It's been handed down for centuries - you don't want to be a mouthy bitch."</p> <p>After class, Joyce Ewart, 54, describes her personal progress. "My husband was the boss. He left me with four kids.</p> <p>"He said, 'You're on your own.' I took him to court. He never paid. It happens every day to women. But I survived. I've created my own life, and I've never been happier."</p> <p>Mrs. Wilkinson's own husband remains a great supporter of <i>feminism</i>, and she is hopeful about men's capacity to change. "A few men have woken up," she grins. "They are the winners. They have the joy of their children and the privilege of sharing life, not having to dominate it. A man in one of my courses told me, 'This has changed the way I look at life.' " She positively beams. "What more could I ask for?"</p>
14 0	11 Nov 1989	"Sex wars still rage on campus"	Orland French	D01 D02	!!!	<p>MS. MAGAZINE fell ill last week, not long after the panty raids at Wilfrid Laurier University. The two events were unconnected, obviously, except that together they create the impression the women's movement is as sick as Ms. The <i>feminist</i> magazine has suspended publication because its advocacy journalism displeased big-buck advertisers. Still, Ms. had become mainstream, and there</p>

					<p>was some thought that it had effectively put itself out of business by achieving its objective; that is, forcing society to accept gender equity. The panty raids at Wilfrid Laurier in Waterloo, Ont., showed that the sex wars are still raging. It was a little like finding a dinosaur eating up the herb garden. What shocked the world off-campus was that (a) fifties-style panty raids still happened, and (b) they were such regular occurrences at WLU that there was an official handbook of rules and regulations. ... At about the same time, Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., was all aswirl over a date-rape controversy. Male students took offence at a "No means no" campaign warning women of date-rapes, claiming it made all men out to be potential rapists. Some first-year male students, maybe six, maybe 10, maybe more, placed signs such as "No means more beer" in residence windows.</p> <p>A few female students fought back. They placed harassing phone calls to the men. Some countered with a sign, "Yes means yes, no means it's too small." A shadowy group called ROFFs (an acronym for something crudely akin to Radically Obnoxious Fuddle-Duddling Feminists) wrote to the parents of some males to tell them what their sons were up to. Because of these tactics and the self-chosen name, no official organization claims any affiliation with ROFFs. The rambunctious group has shaken the serenity of Queen's, a campus renowned as a hotbed of social rest. On the road outside the engineers' pub there is a yellow speed bump that for years has borne a painted pink nipple and a vulgar command to frosh. ROFFs took credit for finally painting it over.</p> <p>Women on other campuses were amazed that these things still go on. As Joanna Boehnert, co-ordinator of women's studies at the University of Guelph, pointed out, it has been years since men at Guelph placed bags over the heads of female beauty contestants and auctioned them off. Dr. Elspeth Baugh, dean of women at Queen's and the last dean of women in Canada, is not surprised by the campus uproar. "We've been in a kind of backlash position for the past three or four years. When we start threatening the wellbeing of males, it gets to be tough slogging." She said first-year male students come into university "totally unenlightened on these issues." Are they looking for easy sex? Well, she could recall one young man a few years ago who was becoming very aggressive toward women. "He said he had been led to believe that Queen's women were easy. He had found out they weren't, and he was getting very frustrated." But young women are no more enlightened than men, she said. "Adolescent women are not captured by the feminist movement. They have the feeling that the battles are all over. The young women in residence didn't see the men's signs as violent or threatening. But as they move through the system, they will gain a heightened awareness of inequities." When young women arrive at university, they are full of dreams. "They're going to get married, have four kids, marry Prince Charming and live in a rose-covered cottage, but there's a twist now. They are going to be a criminal lawyer too, and they see no problem with that. Our fourth-year women don't talk that way." Natalie Quinton, a 21-year-old fourth-year student working at the university women's centre, describes Queen's as decidedly patriarchal. "Every dean is white and male, with the exception of the dean of nursing" and Dr. Baugh, who has no teaching responsibilities. Ms Quinton blamed familiarity with the women's movement for the complacency of young students. "Seventeen-year-olds have grown up with the women's movement and they think we don't have to fight for equality any more. Obviously we do." Nancy Adamson, sexual harassment officer at the University of Toronto, says women are still fighting for their rights, but they are doing so in less obvious ways. The bra-burning and protest parades of the sixties, the shrill feminist writers of the seventies, all seem as archaic in the modern women's movement as, well, panty raids. They were useful attention-getting devices in their time, but as the movement matures, today's campus feminists say, it becomes more subtle and more directed. Younger women are channelling their energy into more specific goals, Ms Adamson said. They are fighting for improved day care, pushing for employment equity, creating women's centres and developing women's studies programs at universities. The broader topics, such</p>
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					<p>as sexism in advertising, are being neglected or ignored because there is no clear target to focus on, she said.</p> <p>At Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, B.C., young women are putting their time and energy into particular projects such as transition houses and crisis lines, said Mary Lynn Stewart, co-ordinator of the women's studies program. "They have a less visible profile, but they are real services. Young women see a specific program and they go out and help, but they decide they can only do so much and they don't get swept into the movement." Dr. Stewart has discerned a trend to pragmatism, as female students with business administration training enroll in women's studies "because they are concerned about obstacles to career advancement. They are interested in setting up such things as a support service for female lawyers. It's a more pragmatic form of feminism."</p> <p>Like Dr. Baugh at Queen's, Dr. Stewart said she had detected a backlash. "Three years ago there was a lot of post-feminism irritation with the stridency of the older generation of feminists." "Systemic discrimination" is a polite phrase often uttered by women who are the working feminists on campus. It means the men are still in charge. "It is patently obvious there is systemic discrimination," said Kay Armatage, co-ordinator of the women's studies program at the University of Toronto. Female faculty members get paid less than 70 per cent of what men are paid, she said. At entry, women are paid on average \$2,000 less than men. "There should be some targets or goals, but the university won't accept the idea of quotas." At another university, a women's studies co-ordinator carefully described prolonged efforts to achieve employment equity. Even over the telephone, her words sounded shredded as if forced through clenched teeth. She was restraining her thoughts, she said, to avoid jeopardizing negotiations. It is the sort of subject Ms. Magazine would get outraged about, if it could.</p>
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Coding Sheets: *The Globe and Mail*, 1990-2000

#	DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR	PG	THEME/S	QUOTES
155	1 Dec 1990	"After Montreal, what's changed for women?"	Philip Johnson	8		<p>A good indication of how society, Canadian society at least, is or isn't dealing with the issue of violence toward women is given a detailed examination this week on two TVOntario programs: <i>Speaking Out</i> (Tuesday at 8 p.m.) and <i>Between The Lines</i> (Thursday at 9 p.m.). The shows' producers, Howard Bernstein of <i>Speaking Out</i> and Amanda Enright of <i>Between The Lines</i>, set out to see if the public's attitude regarding attacks on females has changed in the past year or so.</p> <p>It is no coincidence that their programs are being aired on the anniversary of the shooting deaths of 14 women students at Montreal's L'Ecole Polytechnique.</p> <p>It was last Dec. 6 that Mark Lepine, wearing army fatigues and carrying a rifle, entered the university and began shooting his victims. He was reported as saying that <i>feminists</i> were the reason for his outburst. For Bernstein, the question of any change in society's attitude today was faced head on when he first attempted to take <i>Speaking Out</i> and the subject of violence to Queen's University in Kingston. "They didn't want us there," he says, explaining that a Queen's media person said an official of the university felt the issue was too touchy, and therefore, it was "a bad idea" to do the show there. Bernstein says he personally feels it was wrong for Queen's not to approach the subject openly. But he adds he understands the university's situation. "They've had a lot of problems over the past year...sexist signs in windows, a lot of kids going to campus court, and the possibility of them being thrown out of the school." Bernstein had originally chosen Queen's because it is the university with the largest engineering (male) population in the province. "Frankly, we were going to give them (Queen's) full credit...it has probably done more to combat violence against women, and to combat sexism than any other school we know of."</p> <p>Bernstein then settled on Lakehead because of its openness and its several programs and projects aimed at curbing violence against women. For example, there is a men-only class to help males deal with aggression, a walk-safe program and a harassment program.</p> <p>"What I found was that Lakehead was very open to talk about and discuss the problem. People were willing to admit that it was a problem." He says other schools recognize there's a problem and are willing to do something about it, but are not open to talking about it. Why a university setting? "One reason, obviously, was that the Montreal massacre happened on a university campus," he says.</p> <p>"Second, the students at university today are really the first <i>post-feminist generation</i>. These are people who have grown up with the idea of equality, and yet, there is a backlash against the idea among themselves."</p> <p>As it stands, the violence continues. Murders are up in society as a whole. Some 15 women were killed by their husbands in Montreal in one month recently. Across Canada, one of every three women is sexually or physically assaulted by her partner. Enright says <i>Between The Lines</i> will utilize a broader perspective to tackle the question of whether this violence is getting worse.</p> <p>She says the Montreal massacre can't be looked at in a vacuum and she wants to take that event and show what's going on in society today.</p> <p>"We want to help people understand that what Lepine did in Montreal can be seen in context of a societal problem, that this wasn't a madman who picked up a gun and went out and shot some women, and that's all there was to it."</p> <p>Enright thinks the Lepine incident and others are not ones of random violence. "This is something we have to look at as a systemic problem, and that it does happen behind closed doors, and maybe it's time we opened those doors."</p> <p>She thinks that today men are coming forward and admitting what they've done, and that they are trying to find help. "These are not only men who have lost their jobs and have become frustrated (and then attacked their mates) - these are your Rosedale types, and it goes right across the board."</p>
15	6	"Our	Stevie	A20	*Reprint of	The following article, originally published in <i>The Globe</i> on Dec. 9,

6	Dec 1990	Daughters, Ourselves"	Cameron	<p>article she wrote same time last year, same title.</p>	<p>1989, was last month awarded the English-language Robertine Barry prize by the Ottawa-based Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women. The award is given annually for the best <i>feminist</i> article or column in the popular print media. BY STEVIE CAMERON THEY are so precious to us, our daughters. When they are born we see their futures as unlimited, and as they grow and learn we try so hard to protect them: This is how we cross the street, hold my hand, wear your boots, don't talk to strangers, run to the neighbors if a man tries to get you in his car.</p> <p>We tell our bright, shining <i>girls</i> that they can be anything: firefighters, doctors, policewomen, <i>lawyers</i>, scientists, <i>soldiers</i>, athletes, artists. What we don't tell them, yet, is how hard it will be. Maybe, we say to ourselves, by the time they're older it will be easier for them than it was for us.</p> <p>But as they grow and learn, with aching hearts we have to start dealing with their bewilderment about injustice. Why do the boys get the best gyms, the best equipment and the best times on the field? Most of the school sports budget? Why does football matter more than gymnastics? Why are most of the teachers women and most of the principals men? Why do the boys make more money at their part-time jobs than we do?</p> <p>And as they grow and learn we have to go on trying to protect them: We'll pick you up at the subway, we'll fetch you from the movie, stay with the group, make sure the parents drive you home from babysitting, don't walk across the park alone, lock the house if we're not there.</p> <p>It's not fair, they say. Boys can walk where they want, come in when they want, work where they want. Not really, we say; boys get attacked too. But boys are not targets for men the way <i>girls</i> are, so <i>girls</i> have to be more careful.</p> <p>Sometimes our <i>girls</i> don't make it. Sometimes, despite our best efforts and all our love, they go on drugs, drop out, screw up. On the whole, however, our daughters turn into interesting, delightful people. They plan for college and university, and with wonder and pride we see them competing with the boys for spaces in engineering schools, medical schools, law schools, business schools. For them we dream of Rhodes scholarships, Harvard graduate school, gold medals; sometimes, we even dare to say these words out loud and our daughters reward us with indulgent hugs. Our message is that anything is possible. We bite back the cautions that we feel we should give them; maybe by the time they've graduated, things will have changed, we say to ourselves. Probably by the time they're out, they will make partner when the men do, be asked to join the same clubs, run for political office. Perhaps they'll even be able to tee off at the same time men do at the golf club.</p> <p>But we still warn them: park close to the movie, get a deadbolt for your apartment, check your windows, tell your roommates where you are. Call me. Call me.</p> <p>And then with aching hearts we take our precious daughters to lunch and listen to them talk about their friends: the one who was beaten by her boy friend and then shunned by his friends when she asked for help from the dean; the one who was attacked in the parking lot; the one who gets obscene and threatening calls from a boy in her residence; the one who gets raped on a date; the one who was mocked by the male students in the public meeting.</p> <p>They tell us about the sexism they're discovering in the adult world at university. Women professors who can't get jobs, who can't get tenure. Male professors who cannot comprehend women's stony silence after sexist jokes. An administration that only pays lip service to women's issues and refuses to accept the reality of physical danger to women on campus.</p> <p>They tell us they're talking among themselves about how men are demanding rights over unborn children; it's not old dinosaurs who go to court to prevent a woman's abortion, it's young men. It's young men, they say with disbelief, their own <i>generation</i>, their own buddies with good education, from "nice" families, who are abusive.</p> <p>What can we say to our bright and shining daughters? How can we tell them how much we hurt to see them developing the same scars we've carried? How much we wanted it to be different for them? It's all about power, we say to them. Sharing power is not easy for anyone</p>
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						<p>and men do not find it easy to share among themselves, much less with a group of equally talented, able women. So men make all those stupid cracks about needing a sex-change operation to get a job or a promotion and they wind up believing it.</p> <p>Now our daughters have been shocked to the core, as we all have, by the violence in Montreal. They hear the women were separated from the men and meticulously slaughtered by a man who blamed <i>feminists</i> for his troubles. They ask themselves why nobody was able to help the terrified women, to somehow stop the hunter as he roamed the engineering building.</p> <p>So now our daughters are truly frightened and it makes their mothers furious that they are frightened. They survived all the childhood dangers, they were careful as we trained them to be, they worked hard. Anything was possible and our daughters proved it. And now they are more scared than they were when they were little <i>girls</i>.</p> <p>Fourteen of our bright and shining daughters won places in engineering schools, doing things we, their mothers, only dreamed of. That we lost them has broken our hearts; what is worse is that we are not surprised.</p>
16 2	18 June 1991	"Let's not lose sight of the true cause"	Patricia Bishop	A1	Patricia Bishop ...look up full text...	<p>...like the so-called current crisis in Canadian <i>feminism</i>, was framed in a specific way to elicit a specific response. This sought-after response was profoundly sexist and misogynist, but few let that get in the way of their viewing pleasure.</p> <p>In Canada recently, some black women have argued unequivocally that the women's movement is guilty of false consciousness since it has failed to focus most of its energy on racism and class struggle. They have impugned the motives of white <i>feminists</i> and suggested that the crusade for women's rights is just a ruse for the career advancement of white bourgeois women.</p> <p><i>Feminism</i> as now practiced in Canada, they claim, is one effective way to "dress for success." Here they reach ideological union with the far right, which has steadfastly maintained the pure selfishness of the women's movement, of reproductive rights, parental leave and the quest for universal...child care.</p> <p>Moreover, there was the scathing implication that white, middle-class women expect women of colour to sit in the back of the <i>feminist</i> bus...the white <i>feminist</i> is an agent of racial oppression. Class, race and gender each provide obstacles to equality in society. The debate about which factor operates most heavily for or against an individual persists unabated, even as powerful white males continue to walk away with the shop, that is, with nearly all the power, riches and status rewards our society can shower upon them.</p> <p>Women who have joined together as <i>feminists</i> have identified the oppression of women as women as the central reason for their coming together.</p> <p>One such gathering of women occurred recently in Banff. The theme of the conference was Women and Mental Health: Women in a Violent Society. Its focus was violence against women, especially battering and sexual assault. Some delegates thought a more appropriate title for the three days of meetings, workshops and presentations would be Women and Male Violence.</p> <p>The social wounds are raw enough and the statistics startling... When hit with the force of a violent husband, the jaw of a rich woman breaks pretty much the same way as the jaw of a poor woman.</p> <p>I would suggest that the rape of a <i>girl</i> or woman is emotionally and physically devastating whether that person is white or black, affluent or impoverished. The social supports may be different, the recourse to legal action or to prompt and respectful medical attention may also vary, but the damage is there, and such damage reaches a level of personal anguish that may last a lifetime.</p> <p>Therefore the focus and the action of women who come together to fight for women - for the full economic, social and political rights for women to begin to participate equally in Canadian society - must be on these fundamental rights.</p> <p>To suggest that women fighting for equality and equal power to realize their personal aspirations should first take up the gauntlet against classism, capitalism and racism is to suggest once again that women should satisfy the hunger of others (and secure others' rights and happiness) before they come to the table to eat.</p>
16	23	"NFB film	[Canadian	C11	Generation	A new documentary about the 1989 University of Montreal massacre -

6	Nov 1991	rekindles feminist debate"	Press]		gap	<p>like the grisly shooting itself - set off a stormy debate about <i>feminism</i> at its Montreal premiere yesterday. Au dela du 6 decembre (Beyond December 6) takes its title from the date Marc Lepine killed 14 women at the university's Ecole polytechnique engineering school. Catherine Fol, 26, the director of the 30-minute National Film Board production, portrays the harrowing event through the eyes of three Polytechnique students.</p> <p>"The people in my film are <i>feminists</i>, - they're super-<i>feminists</i>. It's just that they articulate their words differently," said Fol, herself a graduate of the engineering school. The concept of <i>feminism</i> "is thrown into question to some extent . . . but that's quite healthy because our <i>generation</i> has advanced the ideas of the preceding <i>generation</i>. Fol's film focuses on Nathalie Provost, a survivor of the shooting who tried to reason with Lepine moments before he opened fire on her classmates.</p> <p>When Lepine ranted that the female students were all <i>feminists</i>, Provost said: "We're not <i>feminists</i>, we've never fought against men." Lepine - who later shot himself - replied with gunfire, killing six of the nine women in the class. Provost was shot in the leg; one bullet grazed her right temple. In the movie, Provost defends her exchange with the killer, asking: "Is it wrong to want to live?"</p> <p>Her ambivalence about <i>feminism</i> runs through the intimate documentary (not available in English), which celebrates survival as much as it mourns tragedy.</p> <p>But the film - which will air Dec. 1 on the CBC's French language TV network - was blasted by some in the audience for not being sufficiently <i>feminist</i>.</p> <p>During the debate - moderated by Monique Simard, a former union leader whose name appeared on Lepine's hit list of prominent Quebec women - students in their 20s clashed with older audience members over the place of <i>feminism</i> in contemporary Quebec society. For example, several rejected special scholarships for women as demeaning crutches.</p> <p>Others said that "positive discrimination" is necessary when women are treated as an underclass.</p> <p>"Women are accepted as equals at the Polytechnique," said a male student. "The workplace is something else...but I wonder whether the problem is more of your <i>generation</i> than ours," he said addressing Simard, in her early 40s.</p> <p>"No problem? Everything has been won?" said another participant mockingly, adding that there have been 10 rapes near the University of Quebec's Montreal campus in the past year. For survivors like Nathalie Provost, says Fol, the movie means carrying the "hopeful message of the force of life."</p>
16 8	6 Dec 1991	"Lighting a candle for 14 women"	Donna Laframboise	A20	Uh-oh.	<p>IT'S happening again this year. In marking the second anniversary of the senseless killing of 14 female engineering students, we are divided by confusion, anger and resentment.</p> <p>A new film about the Montreal massacre is being criticized because the female survivors in it fail to emphasize the sexist nature of the attack. It is observed that in the aftermath, Ecole Polytechnique students have been noticeably more active in a campaign to restrict the availability of firearms than on the issue of violence against women.</p> <p>For their part, the families, the survivors and their fellow students insist on drawing their own conclusions and on grieving in their own way. For them, the incident was a personal tragedy and their resentment toward strangers intent on viewing it as nothing more or less than a political act is palpable.</p> <p>Two years later, this horrific event continues to be the focus of an ideological battle. In the name of <i>feminism</i> - an idea that has always stood for giving individual women as many options as possible - the views of women who choose not to mouth particular phrases are being publicly contested.</p> <p>I, too, feel a measure of frustration with people who ignore the bald fact that those students were killed because they were female. Yes, Marc Lepine was a lunatic. But he was a lunatic who deliberately made a hit list of and gunned down women who failed to conform to traditional female roles - women with high public profiles and those studying engineering.</p> <p>I, too, am concerned that many young women are ignorant of our</p>

						<p>collective past. The fact that our current educational opportunities, contraceptive techniques and legal rights developed only recently, after decades of struggle, seems not to interest them. While many <i>feminists</i> have moved mountains so that their daughters' lives would be improved, some of these daughters appear rather ungrateful. THAT'S life. The efforts of <i>older feminists</i> have contributed to a world in which women feel entitled to make up their own minds, to express their own opinions. It should be no surprise, therefore, that <i>younger generations</i> are doing so, or that their perspectives are often unrelated to their gender.</p> <p>Nor does it necessarily follow that women are less committed to equality. A recent survey of Canadian females found that while only one-third felt comfortable with being called a "<i>feminist</i>," fully 90 per cent of those interviewed indicated that achieving equality was important to them (with 53 per cent saying it was "very important"). There may be any number of reasons why the people most closely connected to the massacre feel the way they do. But surely they have a right to these feelings - and common decency would have us behave in a considerate manner toward them.</p> <p>Why should it be necessary to challenge survivors because they hesitate to characterize the event as being indicative of sexism or of male violence? Who says that the only legitimate response is a political one?</p> <p>However poignant a symbol the Montreal massacre has become, it is not representative of most women's experience. In Canadian terms, it is a kind of worst-case scenario, a highly atypical occurrence. For people whose primary goals are coping with the horror of the incident and putting it behind them, dwelling on its implications in terms of gender relations may not be conducive to the healing process or to their emotional well-being.</p> <p>Having been declared a national memorial day by Parliament, Dec. 6 will become, for many of us, a day to reflect not only on the deaths of those 14 young women, but on the 100-odd Canadian females who are murdered by their current or former spouses each year and on the tens of thousands more whose lives are ravaged by sexual and other assaults annually. It will be an occasion on which to reaffirm our commitment to breaking the patterns of violence which victimize so many.</p> <p>Yet for those who lost friends, sisters, daughters and lovers on that date two years ago today, the anniversary will always be, first and foremost, a day to mourn individual people. It will be a time to remember the way those young women smiled, spoke, gestured. It will be a time to shed a tear over their wasted talents and unfulfilled dreams, to reflect - in private, unarticulated ways - on how they changed the lives of those around them.</p> <p>Not because they were gunned down by a man who resented <i>feminists</i>, but because they were unique human beings who can never be replaced.</p>
17 2	10 Feb 1992		Dorothy Lipovenko	A16	Fifth Column Girls	<p>But when the camera looked each <i>girl</i> in the eye and asked her, "When you hear the word <i>feminism</i>, what does that mean to you?" I knew all would be revealed.</p> <p>Erin: "Um, I don't know. I guess anything that's kind of a female action or a way a female acts. Or the kind of thing a female is expected to do." (Asked if she's a <i>feminist</i>, Erin says no. Why not? "I don't know. I guess cuz I think everyone should be equal.") Lina: "Oh, I think . . . ough. They're a whole bunch of lesbians. I don't know why I say that . . . I'm sure men care about our rights also." (Asked what she thinks of women's rights, Lina answers "It's good.") Rhonda: "Gosh, that's a hard one. I don't get it. What do you mean by that?" (The question is rephrased: What about women's rights? "Yeah, we must have our rights; we're on this earth too, you know, not only you guys." "Yeah, it's true that men are stronger in a way but we have it here babes (Rhonda points to her head). That's where we have it." Helen: "There's certain biological things you cannot change about men and women. So I think that <i>feminism</i>, the ideal like a woman having to be totally equal, I think it's sort of wrong, because it's twisting biological things you cannot change."</p> <p>Astra: "I think there's no reason for <i>feminism</i>. No one person is equal to each other. Everybody is different but . . . why should a woman not get a job just because she doesn't have a penis?"</p>

						<p>What's this out of the mouths of babes? <i>Feminism</i>: like the principles, don't like the label. Equal pay? Absolutely. Passed over for a job because you're female? Won't stand for it. What am I hearing? The women's movement did a great job selling everything but it's name. And isn't this a social movement's worst nightmare? Win the legal battles, lose the propaganda war. Because it's winning the war of perception that will prolong the life of <i>feminism</i> more than legislation. On camera, the <i>girls</i> reminded me of how the <i>older generation</i> sounded when the women's movement burst forth in the '60s. Women's libbers, they used to call us, imagining a bunch of smart-mouthed, bra-burning radicals. But the ideas starting selling. LINA, Astra and company seem to take for granted that equal-pay laws have always been part of the scenery. In their short lifetime, I suppose they have.</p> <p>But they related to the word "<i>feminism</i>" like a slug that had crawled into their French fries. And they were typical, because with very few exceptions, the other 350 teen-agers who auditioned for Talk 16 were as clueless or negative about <i>feminism</i>, says Ms. Lundman.</p> <p>"Somehow, the women's movement is not connecting, not reaching out, to <i>young women</i>," Ms. Mitchell says. Glenda Simms, president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, knows that. That's why the council is organizing a national symposium for 15- to 19-year-olds, the first in its 19-year history. Dr. Simms is tapping <i>Girl Guides</i>, the YWCA and others to select the 100 <i>young women</i> they will want to send to the two-day Ottawa symposium in early April.</p> <p>Widening the Circle: A Gathering With <i>Young Women</i> is an ambitious agenda on employment training, political action, <i>feminism</i> and health issues. When Dr. Simms talks, as she often does on campuses, she's "distressed" to learn that <i>young women</i> "are devoid of knowledge of the women's movement, its history and development" while "struggling with the same questions we struggled with.</p> <p>"They need to know that many of the things they take for granted were put in place by other women." Right.</p>
17 3	22 Feb 1992	"Not Surprising"	Roger Burford Mason	D7	Letters to the editor	<p>Why is Dorothy Lipovenko so surprised and disappointed to find that the <i>young women</i> stars of the movie Talk 16 should be ignorant of, and in some cases hostile to, <i>feminism</i> and the women's movement" ... The women's movement has indeed done a bad job of selling itself to <i>young women</i>, but it is not alone in that... But theatre audiences, human rights activists and pigeon fanciers come from somewhere. Could it be that in the ranks of disaffected teenagers who grew up to be concerned and responsible adults? Could it be that the next generation of them will come from among the ranks of today's uninterested youth? Stranger things have happened.</p>
17 7	11 May 1992	"Feminism on two fronts"	Val Ross [TORONTO]	C1	Generational tension, cultural division Books recently published	<p>DIVERSITY, thy name is woman. A new crop of bestsellers is creating seismic excitement among <i>feminists</i> in this country. But the books also speak volumes about cultural and generational divisions. There are <i>feminists</i> who now focus on the personal and psychological, like Gloria Steinem (<i>Revolution From Within</i>). And there are those whose concerns are historic and global such as Marilyn French, in Toronto last week to talk about her new book, <i>The War Against Women</i>. There are those (such as French) who think a legal right to day care is a dubious idea and there are those, like Canada's Doris Anderson, (<i>The Unfinished Revolution</i>) who are astonished by this position. About the only thing <i>feminist</i> writers have in common is their concern with giving more autonomy to mothers, sisters, daughters and people of female persuasion.</p> <p>Right now, Canadian <i>feminists</i> are fighting for more political clout through constitutional reform, pay equity and the resurrection of a national day care policy; meanwhile, they're catching a collective breath from helping defeat Ottawa's recent move to re-criminalize abortion. If it were possible to speak of a collective mood, theirs would probably be grim satisfaction; if you could chart this mood, it would be a plateau.</p> <p>But south of the border something different is happening, something its supporters find exciting and intoxicating. For the first time in a decade, the U.S. media are taking <i>feminism</i> seriously again, thanks to televised hearings of the Clarence Thomas and William Kennedy Smith cases, and to the 750,000 pro-choice women who marched on Washington in April. People are talking about a surge of collective energy, a new generation, a "Third Wave of <i>Feminism</i>." In fact, The Third Wave is the</p>

					<p>name of the organization formed this month by young feminists in New York City, including author and Rhodes Scholar Naomi Wolf. Wolf, 29, is one of the faces that personifies the new generation. Her book <i>The Beauty Myth</i> (on this paper's bestseller list for 41 weeks) charges, "We are in the midst of a violent backlash against <i>feminism</i> that uses images of female beauty as a political weapon against women's advancement: the beauty myth." She writes of how women who already earn less than men, and who already accept more responsibility for child care, chose to spend so much of their limited time, energy and income trying to fit someone else's idea of how they should look.</p> <p>The other new face belongs to Susan Faludi, 33, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter with <i>The Wall Street Journal</i>. She'll join Wolf to speak tomorrow night at Toronto's Winter Garden Theatre; the event has been sold out for weeks.</p> <p>Faludi's <i>Backlash</i> is about the reactionary response throughout the 1980s to the women's movement in U.S. public policy and popular culture. But while she writes scathingly about economic and legal discrimination against women, the bulk of her book deals with media backlash: stories concocted from often faulty statistics, claiming that because of the women's movement, stress is up, along with infertility and divorce rates, while a 40-year-old single woman's chance of marrying is less than her chance of being killed by a terrorist. One of the best parts of Faludi's lucid book is how it exposes these stories as distortions. "The way <i>feminist</i> ideas are attacked," Faludi explained in a telephone interview, "is by cultural mouthpieces coming back and saying 'You won't like freedom, it will make you more anxious and stressed' instead of saying, 'That's natural: there are good reasons a woman should feel anxious and stressed!'" The media backlash had a profound impact.</p> <p>Both authors are obsessed by the media - advertising images, what's on the cover of <i>People</i>, who's on <i>Donohue</i>. Wolf comments, "It's not surprising that Susan's book and mine read media images with serious attention. Today women have some laws protecting their rights, but 'they' are still after our minds."</p> <p>Canadian activists are struck by the emphasis. "I like these books," says Judy Rebeck, head of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. "This represents a new energy in the U.S. women's movement after the backlash. But my impression is, there's too much focus on pop culture and not enough on economics. That can be dangerous - it can divert you from the fight for changes in social conditions."</p> <p>Doris Anderson, a former head of the NAC, takes the same position. In her latest book, <i>The Unfinished Revolution</i>, she compares the status of women in 12 nations, and rates the United States low for its lack of publicly supported day care, and lack of federal laws granting unpaid maternity leave. She's dismayed by the energy so many U.S. authors expend tilting at pop culture's windmills. "What I can't understand is why all the internal navel gazing when there are so many problems. But there's less interest by big U.S. publishers to tell women they're badly off. It's safer to rail away at image."</p> <p>Canadians are struck by other cultural differences when they encounter the U.S. authors. Take day care and maternity leave. ... Judy Rebeck comments, "The Americans concentrate on equal opportunity. We concentrate on equal results."</p> <p>Differences between the way U.S. and Canadian <i>feminists</i> analyze their subjects cannot detract from the impact a <i>Third Wave</i> or whatever you choose to call it could have on women here. "I wish Canadian <i>feminist</i> literature could have more impact," says Judy Rebeck. But she ruefully admits that the same gigantic U.S. media machine whose influence she mistrusts has made household words of Steinem, French, Wolf and Faludi.</p> <p>... And there is change. Marilyn French, 62, comments, "A younger generation came into the world and thought they'd have it all. Instead they found that every <i>feminist</i> has to reinvent <i>feminism</i>." French's book, unlike Faludi's and Wolf's, pays scant attention to pop culture - she's too busy citing shocking statistics about repression and persecution around the globe. But she smiles indulgently at the suggestion that the new generation of <i>feminist</i> writers is a soft, media-dazzled lot. "Maybe they're not as tough as we are, but they're tougher</p>
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						than we were at their age," she says. "I feel very safe leaving the world to them."
19 4	17 May 1993	"Feminism's lost generation"	Deanna Rexe	A16	"facts and arguments" generation gap nostalgia "I'm not a feminist, but..."	<p>'FEMINISTS suffer from penis envy.'</p> <p>"What's right is for us to decide for ourselves and not what is politically correct."</p> <p>"Feminism results in some bad images of women."</p> <p>"Feminist groups stand up and whine until they get what they want."</p> <p>"Feminists make a bigger deal than necessary and sometimes even sabotage their efforts for equality... They usually make a big deal about it, like holding rallies."</p> <p>"Feminism is fine to a certain extent, but some take it too far."</p> <p>You may not expect it, but these statements are from a class of second- year college students, mostly young women in traditionally male disciplines. And their views are enough to make any liberal feel like running for cover. How has this happened to <i>feminism</i>?</p> <p>In spite of the successes of the women's movement, and 30 years of popular <i>feminist</i> writing, young women today are increasingly reluctant to call themselves "<i>feminists</i>." The <i>feminist</i> movement has to take some responsibility for its lost sheep. The most visible role models are baby boomers. And the boomers are discussing issues that appear removed from the reality of the young. Two of last year's bestsellers were on menopause.</p> <p>The "<i>feminist</i> movement" has never been cohesive, nor could it possibly reflect the needs or desires of all women. However, in the past, young women could relate to a <i>feminist</i> agenda, such as demands for suffrage. Institutional inequalities were relevant to women of all ages. But today the boomers who continue to shape much of the current agenda of the popular <i>feminist</i> movement are losing an important part of their constituency: young women.</p> <p>Among these women, there is a different code of social mores and politics. Young men who are well mannered are infinitely more desirable than those who are not. Lipstick is no cause for alarm. Sexiness is not objectification. Whoever reaches a door first opens it. The person who issues the invitation for a date pays for it. Women happily dance alone or with other women.</p> <p>They find this sort of social interaction natural and those who fought for equality should applaud. However, older women should realize that the young are somewhat disdainful of the way their elders carry on about integrating femininity and political correctness; what's the big deal? The mythical bra burning occurred before they were even born. The lack of interest in many <i>feminist</i> issues can be partly accounted for by the very fact that they are young. As these women encounter difficulties in their lives, they will modify their attitudes and make their own demands, perhaps becoming more militant as their self-assurance develops.</p> <p>There are also misconceptions about what "<i>feminism</i>" means, and what it means to be a "<i>feminist</i>." This has been perpetuated in part by the media's habit of presenting ideas or issues as "<i>feminist</i>," but which in fact are ideas of some women who call themselves <i>feminists</i>. The spectrum of <i>feminist</i> ideas is so wide that to call oneself "<i>feminist</i>" is as precise in meaning as calling oneself "<i>political</i>" or "<i>spiritual</i>." It is understandable that young women hesitate to commit themselves to ideas which run the gamut from abolishing the family unit to goddess worship to pay equity.</p> <p>As well, young women react against what they see as an epidemic of <i>whining</i> from a <i>generation</i> of women who have matured during the most economically prosperous period this country has seen, had the most social advances for women, and who experienced youth much more fully and freely. Boomers could smoke and drink without guilt, and experiment sexually without fear for their lives. The envy is tangible, understandable, and colours young women's attitudes toward the old guard.</p> <p>Young women have a sort of love/hate relationship with the baby-boom <i>generation</i>, after all, the boomers are their parents. In so far as the young rebel against the ideas and conventions of the previous <i>generation</i>, this is partly understandable. However, members of "<i>Generation X</i>" quite rightly feel put out that their parents have left the world in such a mess. Few job prospects, government debt and environmental degradation are seen as a result of the shortsightedness or outright greed of the previous <i>generation</i>. As for</p>

						<p>women's rights, the social changes thus far appear to be only common sense as opposed to revolutionary.</p> <p>The current problems of the boomers are seen in a less than generous light. Stay-at-home mothers are given less respect and support than those working, and yet working mothers are generally overworked, underrewarded and frustrated by lack of support for their problems. Is this the liberated state of affairs which was deemed so desirable by their mothers? The successes of the baby boomers seem hardly unqualified.</p> <p>It is no coincidence that the mother in the popular television show Beverly Hills 90210 stays at home and devotes all her time to her children and her husband. The romance of the fifties family unit is extremely appealing to those who have grown up watching their mothers "have it all," including work-related stress, burnout and identity crises.</p> <p>It appears to young women that the problems of the baby-boom generation are problems of affluence and success, rather than serious ones. This generation of youth has grown up painfully aware of a world faced with ecological devastation, racial hatred and widespread poverty. With so much to worry about, the problems of North American women growing old gracefully seem dramatically diminished in importance.</p> <p>The baby-boom generation self-importantly determined social agendas to suit itself. And now the fortysomethings have moved on to deal with the problems of middle age without quite fixing the problems facing youth. Young women deal with low self-esteem and suffer from anorexia as much or more than their mothers, and they are doing it without the advantage of being media darlings.</p> <p>It is ironic that by virtue of a generation gap many popular feminists have become "they" instead of "us." Young women don't necessarily balk at the message, but at what they perceive as the less-than-credible messenger. Deanna Rexe is a graduate student of philosophy at York University.</p>
19 7	29 May 1993	"Notions of feminism"	Margot K. Louis	D7	Letters to the editor	<p>Victoria BC -- Deanna Rexe's article <i>Feminism's Lost Generation</i> (May 17) surprised me in two ways. First, she claimed that young women today often distrust feminism because the baby-boom generation of feminists is concerning itself with ageism and menopause, rather than with issues more relevant to the young - such as anorexia and the lack of self-esteem.</p> <p>Yet two recent bestsellers, Naomi Wolfe's <i>The Beauty Myth</i> and Gloria Steinem's <i>Revolution and Self-Esteem</i>, explore these concerns, and in my experience young women are generally aware of these books and enthusiastic about them. Much recent feminist literature explores the topic of sexuality - presumably an issue of interest to the young.</p> <p>Second, I was surprised that Ms. Rexe omitted the main reason why women, young or otherwise, often reject the label of "feminist": fear of the men around them. This fear often operates at an unconscious level; women are very anxious not to be perceived as "man haters" (and even now the media too often equate feminism, falsely, with hatred of men), so they may refuse to see themselves as feminists even when they are working for feminist ends, i.e. for the freedom and dignity of women.</p> <p>Young women have also been affected by the backlash against feminism orchestrated by major purveyors of popular culture. Yet it has always been true that women become more radical with age and experience, as Ms. Rexe rightly points out. If young women are not feminists yet, a few years in the workplace and in assorted relationships will very likely make them feminists.</p>
20 3	28 Sept 1993	"From the 20something trenches"		A01	Announcement	<p>A new weekly column starts today on the Facts and Arguments page. Titled <i>Under 30</i>, it is written by Elizabeth Renzetti and will examine issues and events of concern to a generation of young adults whose voices are sometimes drowned out by the cacophony of the baby-boomers. Today, Ms. Renzetti talks to a radical young author who is challenging conventional wisdom about feminism and raising a few hackles in the process. Page A28</p>
23 5	29 Dec 1995	"Great course, great teacher, needs eyeliner"	Sally Cooper	A16		<p>AT 29, I have mastered the art of being a feminist without admitting it. As a child, I was outraged at the chore divisions in my household, but fortunately, so eventually was my mother and we fought our way out of it together. We are lucky. We live in a time when the parameters of society allow us to do that.</p>

						<p>As a result, I, like many of my friends, have grown into a young woman who has no need of marriage or the career of a man to support her. In fact, my friends and I are as likely to find ourselves supporting an unemployed partner as they are us.</p> <p>I have taken it for granted that I can do this. But I have become greedy. Without wanting to align myself with a group of older women often perceived as shrill, angry, man-hating bitches, I expected an education, a career and respect for my intelligence. And I expected that with a job that doesn't require me to have teased blond hair and coffee-fetching abilities, I would be treated as an equal in other respects.</p> <p>I expected a lot. Maybe too much.</p> <p>The surprising part is that the source of the sexism is the <i>generation</i> behind me. <i>Generation Next</i>. A group that has been treated to fathers who spend quality time with them and mothers who don't need to take endless ceramic and macramé classes to express their frustrated creativity. And yet, members of this group feel that their college-level classes would be more interesting if their well-educated and articulate instructor had pinker cheeks and wore eyeliner.</p> <p>Frankly, I'm insulted. And disappointed – in myself, mostly. For when I received the survey results, and read the rotten comments, I was unable to draw on the strength that <i>feminism</i> has fought to instill in women my age. I fell back on my instinctive adolescent response.</p> <p>In a way, my <i>generation</i> of women has failed. We have taken the perks for granted; we've been too lucky. Yet, there are too many tail ends of sexism lurking around, and it's time for us to yank them out. As a General Education teacher, I'm in a fortunate position. I am able to raise issues of gender roles and stereotyping in the classroom. My students will have the opportunity to explore their values while reading about the experiences of our foremothers.</p> <p>One thing is for certain: When I show up in the classroom next term, with my copy of <i>The Beauty Myth</i> tucked under my arm, I'll be bare-faced and proud of it.</p>
23 8	6 Feb 1996	"Feminist Expo mixes old warriors, new soldiers "	Karen De Witt [The New York Times Service] WASHINGTON	A11	Internat'l News	<p>The old warriors were present, among them Gloria Steinem, blond braid silvered with grey, and Molly Yard, the fiery past president of the National Organization for Women, now in her 80s. But it was a new generation of women in their 20s and 30s whom the organizers of the first Feminist Expo wanted in a new fight, to preserve affirmative action.</p> <p>Judging from the scores of young women locked in intense, energetic conversations during meetings and marching spontaneously afterward to promote women's causes, those organizers got what they were after from the weekend-long event. The three-day gathering of 3,000 at the Sheraton Washington Hotel, which ended Sunday, was sponsored by the <i>Feminist Majority Foundation</i>, a nonprofit foundation, and 299 other organizations. Its immediate aim was to organize against efforts to roll back affirmative-action programs and sexual discrimination laws in California and several other states.</p> <p>...And in a call to arms reminiscent of the Freedom Summer of 1964, the civil rights movement's campaign to register black voters in Mississippi, one flyer read "Freedom Summer '96." It urged college women to "spend your summer saving women's rights and civil rights" by helping to double voter registration among 18-to 24-year-olds.</p> <p>Alternately moribund, fractious and parochial, the <i>feminist</i> movement was slow to see the attack on affirmative action as an invigorating issue that could help it appeal to a younger generation. But this weekend's event provided strong evidence that the connection has been made.</p> <p>"Don't just talk to the oldies but goodies - the pre-affirmative-action generation," Kathy Rodgers, executive director of the National Organization for Women's Legal Defense Fund, chided reporters at a news conference. "Talk to the young women who've lived in the affirmative-action era without knowing anything else, but know all too well that girls and women still don't get a fair shake at school or on the job."</p> <p>Highlighting the cross-generational nature of the gathering, participants at the opening session were serenaded by Helen Reddy singing I Am Woman. The 1972 hit became a <i>feminist</i> anthem, but few of the younger women in the audience were familiar with it.</p> <p>Young women were not only recognized as important foot soldiers in</p>

						<p>the movement, but they were also included on panels and in seminars with older feminists in what organizers said was an effort to bridge the <i>generational gap</i> and show the diversity and appeal of the movement. For while many young women share the aims of the women's movement, some have been put off by the stridency of elders. "This conference is something I've been wanting to do for a long time," said Eleanor Smeal, the president of the <i>Feminist Majority Foundation</i>, whose 27-year-old daughter, Lori, attended the event. "We wanted to showcase as much of the rich diversity of the movement as possible with real people doing real work, across racial and cross-generational lines."</p> <p>Racial parity remains elusive - the conference participants were overwhelmingly white - but the <i>generational</i> diversity of the event was undeniable. So many young women participated that the halls of the hotel often resembled a college dormitory. Young women, many from elite schools, lounged against walls or sprawled on the floor, waiting for friends and debating whether they should go to the seminar on A <i>Feminist Federal Budget</i>, <i>Creating Feminist Enterprises</i>, or <i>Working With Communities of Colour</i>. Even at panels where participants were middle-aged or older, there was an effort to find common ground between <i>generations</i>...The <i>generational gap</i> was on the mind of Mount Holyoke College senior Sarita Gupta, 21, the youngest member of a panel on mobilizing women. "Unfortunately, there are a lot of myths and baggage around <i>feminism</i> for younger women," said Ms. Gupta, a co-chairwoman of the National Women's Student Coalition of the U.S. Student Association. "But in order to continue the progress that earlier <i>feminists</i> made, we need them and they need us. It's a two-way street." "One of the speakers, an <i>old-school feminist</i>, said that young women just assume that they can do what they want to do," Ms. Billies said. "That's true, at least for white and middle-class women. We do feel that the world is open to us. But we find out that it's not the clear, straight path we may think it is."</p>
26 9	26 July 1997	"You've come a long way, baby...And for what?"	Donna LaFramboise	D1	!*	<p>Toronto - A YEAR after her 1963 <i>feminist</i> manifesto <i>The Feminine MYSTIQUE</i> was published, Betty Friedan was invited to a business lunch at a New York City hotel. Because she arrived early, she said she would wait for her colleague at the bar - only to be told women weren't permitted to do so.</p> <p>Thirty years later, the North American gender landscape has been utterly transformed. Although establishments that refuse to serve women used to be commonplace, they are now rare. Today, professors wouldn't dream of declaring some essay topics too difficult for female students - as Canadian <i>feminist</i> Susan Crean remembers her history instructor at the University of Toronto doing in the 1960s. It's now unthinkable for a book reviewer to remark that an author "writes like a housewife," as someone said about Margaret Atwood early in her career. People would be appalled if birth-control information were illegal - even though disseminating it was a Criminal Code offence until 1969.</p> <p>Women have indeed come as far in the past three decades as they have in the past three centuries. Long-held convictions about female inferiority have all but evaporated during our lifetime. The belief that women are equal to men and deserve the same opportunities now dominates the way our society thinks about gender. <i>Feminism</i> has triumphed.</p> <p>But someone forgot to hold the victory parade. Despite everything it has accomplished, there is little good humour in the North American women's movement in the late 1990s. Begrudging the fact that widespread cooperation from men has enabled women to travel this far this fast, the movement is more likely to express dissatisfaction than to celebrate its successes. Undermined by intolerance and extremism, and guilty of propagating dubious statistics, its credibility and relevance are now in question.</p> <p>While the vast majority of women regularly tell pollsters they support female equality, only a third are willing to call themselves <i>feminists</i> - and fewer still want anything to do with the organized movement that claims to speak for them. As Rene Denfeld points out in her 1995 book <i>The New Victorians: A Young Woman's Challenge to the Old Feminist Order</i>, there are more than 100 million females in the United States, yet the National Organization for Women "can only muster a paltry 270,000 members" willing to pay annual dues. By comparison, the</p>

					<p>National Rifle Association claims a membership of three million people. Ms. Denfeld says this discrepancy is "baffling when you consider that women's rights have far more popular appeal than defending the sale of semiautomatic weapons."</p> <p>One suspects Canada's own National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) would fold its tents overnight if it had to depend on dues from individual women. Long supported by government grants, in 1994, for example, NAC received \$275,000 from Ottawa and another \$250,000 from the Ontario government. NAC has described itself as "an umbrella organization of 550 member groups representing three million Canadian women." But dozens of those groups are union locals whose members may never have heard of NAC. Also included are people who belong to the Anglican and United churches, the YWCA and the Women Teachers' Federation.</p> <p>NAC claims that in 1996 its fee-paying member groups – including rape-crisis centres and university women's groups – swelled to 670. But only 173 of these groups (a mere 26 per cent) sent delegates to last year's annual convention.</p> <p>Attendance at locally organized International Women's Day events is another way of measuring support for the movement. In the 1980s, between 5,000 and 8,000 people participated in Toronto's annual women's day march held in early March. In the 1990s, those numbers have dwindled to a couple of thousand. The city's annual Lesbian and Gay Pride Day parade, by comparison, draws up to half a million participants and spectators each year.</p> <p>Just as Roman Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses and fundamentalists all identify themselves as Christians, many people who call themselves <i>feminists</i> have little in common with one another. There have long been many kinds of <i>feminisms</i> – ecological, existential, lesbian-separatist, liberal, Marxist, postmodern, psychoanalytical, radical, socialist and so forth. This would be a sign of healthy diversity if it weren't for the dogmatism and political infighting that divides the various factions. <i>Feminists</i> who insist their views are the only correct ones routinely attempt to silence other perspectives by claiming that those who hold them aren't "real" <i>feminists</i>. Internal power struggles tend to be destructive and remarkably vicious.</p> <p>Intolerance of dissent isn't new in the women's movement. When anti-pornography <i>feminists</i> such as Ms. editor Robin Morgan declared that "pornography is the theory and rape is the practice" in the 1970s, and when the National Film Board's 1981 documentary Not a Love Story linked pornography to Nazism, all <i>feminists</i> were expected to condemn pornography rather than debate the issue.</p> <p>In 1983, when <i>feminist</i> sociologist Thelma McCormack concluded that she "could not establish any reliable statistical association between pornography and acts of sexual violence," in a report commissioned by Toronto's Metropolitan Task Force on Violence Against Women, her findings were suppressed. Ten years later, <i>feminists</i> on the federally funded Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women did not acknowledge that some <i>feminists</i> disagree with their contention that pornography is a form of violence against women. (The report did note, however, that "civil libertarians and some arts groups" are concerned about censorship.)</p> <p>An editorial in Ms. magazine once declared that Madonna is not a <i>feminist</i> and that any "attempt to characterize her as such . . . reveals a lack of understanding about <i>feminism</i>." Gloria Steinem has insisted that critic Camille Paglia isn't a <i>feminist</i> – even though Ms. Paglia helped establish sexual-harassment guidelines at the college where she teaches. When <i>Who Stole Feminism?</i> author Christina Hoff Sommers was interviewed by Connie Chung for CBS television in 1994, Ms. Steinem contacted Ms. Chung personally in an attempt to prevent the taped show from being aired. Susan Faludi, the author of <i>Backlash</i>, says the growing number of dissident <i>feminists</i> – such as author Karen Lehman, Ms. Denfeld, Ms. Paglia and Ms. Hoff Sommers, who object to excesses and distortions by the movement – are merely "pseudo" or "faux" <i>feminists</i> pretending to care about women's issues in order to secure their 15 minutes of fame.</p> <p>The notion that there is only one acceptable <i>feminist</i> position often seeps into the mainstream. When Canadian Senator Anne Cools threatened to vote against amendments to the Divorce Act in February because she felt they did nothing to promote ongoing relationships</p>
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					<p>social order that considers our destruction insignificant. We should identify it as Jews identify the death camps." As Ms. Hoff Sommers reveals in <i>Who Stole Feminism?</i>, however, Ms. Wolf's numbers are simply wrong. Fewer than 200 American women die of this disease each year.</p> <p>Copies of Susan Faludi's <i>Backlash</i> also flew off bookstore shelves in the early 1990s, contributing another batch of questionable statistics that supposedly proved that the most privileged group of women in the history of the world was still oppressed. But those who have bothered to doublecheck Ms. Faludi's sources argue that <i>Backlash</i> contains not a handful of minor errors, but numerous ones that significantly undermine its overall premise that women lost ground in the 1980s due to a concerted counterattack by the patriarchy. It's now clear Ms. Faludi misled readers about the increased risk of birth defects associated with pregnancies later in life, misrepresented the numbers of women in positions of power in Washington during the Reagan and Bush administrations, claimed that murders of women rose 160 per cent between 1976 and 1984 when these rates have been stable for 30 years, cited increases in sexual-harassment complaints while ignoring feminist judicial victories in this area, and damned Hollywood for the movie <i>Fatal Attraction</i> while pointedly overlooking overtly feminist heroines in films such as <i>Alien</i>. That's just for starters.</p> <p>Dubious statistics, particularly regarding violence against women, are everywhere. From Ann Landers columns, to mainstream women's magazines, to government publications, to pamphlets distributed by police departments and university orientation programs, our society is bombarded with "facts" about an "epidemic" of male violence that often don't stand up to casual scrutiny.</p> <p>In 1988, for example, the Ms. Foundation published a study based on interviews with more than 6,000 U.S. undergraduates. It claimed that "one in four female respondents had had an experience that met the legal definition of rape or attempted rape." Repeated ad nauseam since, this data became the source of the assertion that one-of-four young women will be raped. But when the female students in this study were specifically asked whether or not they been sexually assaulted, only 3 per cent said yes.</p> <p>If a social movement is a march toward Paradise, the vast majority of North American women recognize that the big battles have been won, that they're well on their way to a world in which gender equality is a given. There are still boulders and potholes along the path, to be sure, but who would expect to receive everything they want, precisely when they want it?</p> <p>As our society has become more egalitarian, the organized women's movement has become more, rather than less, extremist.</p> <p>For some feminist activists, the campaign -- the march toward Paradise, rather than Paradise itself -- has become their <i>raison d'être</i>. Because their careers and often their personal and social lives have been built on the idea that contemporary North American women are hopelessly oppressed, they aren't about to suddenly lay down their arms and declare victory.</p> <p>But the rest of us need to beware. If we continue to follow where these people would lead, we risk marching right past a more just and humane world into another kind of hell -- in which men and women are pitted against each other in different but no less harmful ways.</p> <p>Donna Laframboise holds a degree in women's studies and is the author of <i>The Princess at the Window: A New Gender Morality</i>. E-mail donna@razberry.com</p>	
27 0	2 Aug 1997	"About that victory party for feminism"	Judy Rebick	D7	Response	<p>I see that Donna Laframboise has recycled the same tired criticisms she has been making of the women's movement for most of this decade. And of course <i>The Globe and Mail</i>, which could not find any space to cover last year's Women's March Against Poverty, has given her cheap polemic an entire page.</p> <p>Ms. Laframboise, not the women's movement, refuses to acknowledge the forward movement toward women's equality. For her, the progress of feminism seems to have stopped with Betty Friedan. Since Ms. Friedan's work, two generations of women around the globe have pushed forward the monumental struggle for the liberation of half of humanity. Rather than engage the real debates about the roads to achieving that equality, Ms. Laframboise prefers to whine.</p> <p>Since the turn of the century, critics have always attacked the women's</p>

						<p>movement as antimale. As in any mass movement there are <i>feminists</i> who engage in rhetorical excess and some intolerance of difference. But to accuse the women's movement of antimale hostility, intolerance and extremism is an outrage. In fact, the women's movement is the only social movement of such enormous scope that has been totally non-violent, inclusive of every race, nationality and social class, and so successful in fundamentally changing the lives of so many people.</p>
27 1	2 Aug 1997		Denise G. Reaume	D7	Response	<p>Oh, it's so-o-o-o tempting to demonize those you disagree with, isn't it? Especially when the disagreement is over something that touches a nerve. Sure, the women's movement has seen more than enough intemperate internal wrangling, but Donna Laframboise herself abandons the moral high ground pretty quickly, indulging in a little name-calling (<i>feminists who are too radical for her taste are nut cases and man-haters</i>). She thereby turns what might have been an interesting subject for an article into just another intemperate rant and loses sight of the essential issues in the process. Some things have improved for women – there are no more male-only bars. But just as many women as ever seem to be beaten and killed by their intimate partners. We've still got a long way to go, and pondering whether <i>feminism</i> has outlived its usefulness because some find uncomfortable the heat generated by some of the debates it has provoked doesn't help get us there.</p>
27 2	2 Aug 1997	Adam Newman		D7	Response	<p>Donna Laframboise wonders why <i>feminists</i> have not held a victory parade to celebrate their triumph. After reading her article, however, it seems to me that anyone invited to attend the celebrations would be justified in asking the very question posed in Ms. Laframboise's title -- for what?</p> <p>As evidence that "<i>Feminism</i> has triumphed" Ms. Laframboise offers the following: bars that refuse to serve women are no longer commonplace; book reviewers no longer make references to housewives; and it's now legal to disseminate information about birth control. That's it?</p> <p>I imagine the hypothetical recipient of Ms. Laframboise's invitation then considering the following: Why is there only one woman among the five leaders of major political parties in Canada? How many MPs are women? How many women are CEOs of banks or major corporations? Why do women still earn less than men? Why is there no nationally funded child-care program?</p>
27 3	2 Aug 1997	Jeannelle Savona		D7	Response	<p>University of Toronto – Donna Laframboise's article on the failings, abuses and dangers of <i>feminism</i> seems to me both outdated and short-sighted (You've Come A Long Way, Baby ... And For What? – Focus, July 26). Outdated because, like a 19th-century antisuffragette, Ms. Laframboise feels she has to be the champion of men, who are presented as so many victims of an imaginary war of the sexes. There may still be some men who feel threatened by <i>feminists</i>, but all Ms. Laframboise's paranoid article does is to pit them against women instead of helping them to understand how deeply beneficial gender equality is to everybody.</p> <p>She ignores the fact that, for more than 25 years now, <i>feminism</i> has been a source of social, psychological and intellectual enrichment to many men who have now made <i>feminist</i> viewpoints an integral part of their daily lives. On the one hand, she denies the great improvements <i>feminist</i> endeavours and ideas have brought to our societies; on the other, she overlooks the fact that there is still much to be done to achieve gender equality and justice in many societies, including our own. Her perspective is therefore both illogical and limited. For example, she does not even mention women's low economic standards of living and political under-representation, which are unquestionable universal facts. Why?</p> <p>Another outstanding shortcoming of Ms. Laframboise's argument is that she focuses entirely on North American white middle-class <i>feminists</i>, thus ignoring the struggle and vision of other more disadvantaged <i>feminists</i> both in Western countries and, more recently, in such developing nations as South Africa, India or Bangladesh. I have just had the privilege of watching a rough version of <i>My Feminism</i>, a Canadian documentary film soon to be released, and I was struck by two extraordinary aspects of contemporary <i>feminism</i>: (1) the truly humanized, tender images of many young men whose notion of masculinity no longer corresponds to that of 25 years ago, (2) the international scope of the movement which has spread to other parts of</p>

					the world where women, more than men, live in abject poverty and the constant threat of violence. How can Ms. Laframboise be so blind to these two new phenomena? --Professor Emerita
27 6	25 Oct 1997	"Every mother is a working mother"	Paula Brook	D1	<p>Housekeeping is the main activity of 3.4 million Canadians, making it the largest occupation in the country. At a symposium in Ottawa, 70 women representing 41 organizations confer on how to make 'women's work' count with others, including with other <i>feminists</i>. This was precisely the topic -- how to make "women's work" count -- when 70 women representing 41 organizations gathered for a conference sponsored by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. Women's work may be defined as, significantly, the work for which we are paid plus the unpaid work for which we generally pay in the end. The people driving the symposium are the women who lobbied successfully to have unpaid household work included in the 1996 census, and the main object of this exercise is to prepare to greet the results next March: to claim and analyze them before politicians and the media have a chance to stake ownership. So who exactly are these stay-at-home <i>feminists</i>? The term sounds like an oxymoron -- and maybe it was, last year. But this is now, and here in this Ottawa hotel there is no dissension at all about the pricelessness of kids and the urgency of redefining both "work" and "feminism" to recognize this fact. An alliance has been struck here: an uneasy one, to be sure, but an alliance nonetheless, of aging revolutionaries, conservative homemakers, career-track boomers, unionized farm women, lifers from the faculties of women's studies and radical grannies with "Home Manager" on their business cards. Indeed, if this symposium does nothing more than bring all these women together under one roof and keep them for a day without incident, it will have to be considered a success. (That it ends with a hand-holding, swaying chorus of Bread and Roses in French turns it into a small triumph.)</p> <p>There are many reasons why women fall into the ranks of the uncounted and the undervalued, but the main one is children. And this, according to <i>feminist</i> critic Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, is why children have become this generation's version of what Betty Friedan called the "problem that has no name." In Ms. Friedan's <i>The Feminine MYSTIQUE</i>, the unnameable problem for '60s housewives was isolation from the world of power and economic productivity. And although the ensuing 30 years have brought countless opportunities for women to walk out the front door, we remain as trapped as those '60s housewives -- but instead of being isolated at home, most of us are ghettoized in the lower end of the workforce where it is still possible (if just barely) to both work and raise children. Funny, but this doesn't feel much like liberation. In her 1996 book, <i>Feminism Is Not the Story of My Life</i>, Ms. Genovese writes, "Children, not men, restrict women's independence. Children, not men, tend to make and keep women poor. Few but the most radical <i>feminists</i> have been willing to state openly that women's freedom requires their freedom from children. Yet the covert determination to free women from children shapes much <i>feminist</i> thought and most <i>feminist</i> policies." And so, it is children, more than anything, that have fuelled the backlash against <i>feminism</i>.</p> <p>"Family values" have become the movement's nemesis. "If you want to open the floodgates of guilt and dissension anywhere in America," writes Hillary Clinton in <i>It Takes a Village</i>, "start talking about children." That's why the organizers of <i>Mothers Are Women</i> are gratified but realistic about the symposium. "We need to be aware of a risk," says co-ordinator Evelyn Drescher, an Ottawa mother of two. "In making our unwaged work visible, in calling for its measurement and valuation and demanding that it be included in public policy, the data may be used in ways that do not further the social, economic and political equality of women."</p> <p>Specifically, it may be used to keep women in their "place." As in: if household work is so darned valuable, maybe that's what women should be doing -- and it's the "should" that marks the great divide between progressive and traditional values, between women such as Ms. Drescher, who wish to take the revolution to its next stage, and those who'd like to see it go away. When asked whether they consider themselves <i>feminists</i>, almost all the women I interview at the symposium say yes -- though more than a few seem startled by the question, and pause as if sorting out some inner conflict. These are the ones wearing lipstick and June Cleaver heels. Carol Lees, the</p>

						<p>Saskatoon-based director of the Canadian Alliance for Home Managers (wearing no makeup and moccasins) is explicit:</p> <p>"For many young women today, the term is highly negative. I certainly believe in equality and women having equal access and being valued equally with men, and if that's your definition of <i>feminism</i> then I'm a <i>feminist</i>."</p> <p>More than any single person, Ms. Lees is responsible for this gathering and the campaign to have unpaid work counted in Canada. With a single act of civil disobedience in 1991, she launched the movement: She refused to complete that year's census form because there was nowhere for her to record her full-time occupation. Indeed, anyone who had not worked for pay in the previous five years was forced to mark a box that said, "Never worked in life." For her refusal to complete the form, and her indifference to the threat of a criminal charge, she has been described as the Rosa Parks of unpaid work -- which she finds both funny and flattering. She went on to found the Canadian Alliance for Home Managers, one of whose goals was to push for recognition of household work on the 1996 census. A number of women's groups joined the campaign, which came to be called "Work is Work is Work," and it worked. Statistics Canada added three questions (under the "activities" section, not under "labour," alas) asking Canadians how many hours they spent doing unpaid house and yard work, looking after children and/or providing care to seniors. Like her first act of civil disobedience, the census change was largely symbolic, Ms. Lees says, "allowing Canada to focus for the first time on the issue of unpaid work. We should see this as a win, but certainly not as the end of the journey."</p> <p>I have had as much opposition from <i>feminists</i> as I've had from conservative women." Indeed, she reserves her sharpest criticism for the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the self-proclaimed vanguard of Canadian <i>feminism</i>. "There has not been much interest from NAC," she says, "There has been a lot of lip service, but no muscle."</p> <p>At least, not yet. But NAC does make its presence felt at the meeting in the person of its president Joan Grant-Cummings, and Ms. Lees sees this as encouraging: "We have to be hopeful they will absorb a little of the energy that is here, and understand more fully what we're talking about and feel less threatened, because NAC feels threatened by this." It's the old problem of kids, and even Ms. Grant-Cummings acknowledges NAC has some guilt in this regard. In promoting day care as a community responsibility, <i>feminists</i> have alienated the women who choose to stay home and raise families. "If we're going to recognize the child-care issue within the home, what is the best thing to do? Should the government give an individual family support for this through the tax system? I think we have to have those frank discussions. I think we're afraid to engage in that debate, but we have to. To ignore it is to be seen as family-values-challenged." This is precisely what <i>feminism</i> has become. "We don't want the government or right-wing forces leading the debate over child care, which is the risk we're facing," Ms. Grant-Cummings says. "It's pretty clear to me this weekend that we're going to have to look for a solution that values women wanting to stay at home rearing children, in addition to the public child-care systems." It's not as though these marching <i>feminists</i> are immune to the tug of <i>motherhood</i>. Ms. Grant-Cummings, 38, has an eight-year-old son and she never stops thinking about him.</p> <p>...Catherine Buchanan calls herself a <i>feminist</i>, which makes people like Joan Grant-Cummings crazy. But that's why the symposium is so interesting -- and important. <i>Feminism</i> is changing, along with the yardstick by which its adherents measure the elusive goal of equality. To a growing number of women, equality is not about measuring themselves against the same yardstick as men. It's about making a new yardstick.</p>
28 6	8 June 1998	"NAC fights to attract new blood"	Jane Armstrong	A3	news	<p>OTTAWA -- Halfway through a lively discussion on the role of young women in the <i>feminist</i> movement, Idil Mussa approached the microphone to make a point about <i>feminism</i> and high heels. Earlier, a panelist had tossed off a dig at women who wear high heels, and that brought Ms. Mussa out of her chair to address the crowd gathered in a downtown hotel ballroom for the 26th annual general meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. "Look, I like to wear high heels and makeup," the 20-year-old</p>

					<p>University of Toronto student told the audience. "It's important not to bash each other here."</p> <p>Ms. Mussa added that she often hesitates to call herself a <i>feminist</i> because of the "negative connotations" it evokes from others.</p> <p>Towering behind Ms. Mussa in the lineup for the microphone was Sacha Haque, a 19-year-old CEGEP student from Montreal who was made several inches taller by a pair of stylish high-heeled sandals. Ms. Haque told a simple story of how she had had to fight to be part of her school's Muslim organization, which was traditionally male-dominated. To gain inclusion, she ran for vice-president and won. Not exactly revolutionary tales. Some of the older guard of women – the ones who fought for pay equity, better day care, employment equity – couldn't help but wince at the younger women's entreaties. But Canada's largest women's organization isn't the group it was 26 years ago or even 10 years ago.</p> <p>Today, its very existence is threatened by federal cutbacks that have seen its annual grant slashed from almost \$1-million to about \$250,000. Many of its 700 member groups – sexual-assault centres, shelters for battered women – have suffered the same fate and are operating on shoestring budgets or have simply disappeared. Finally, bitter internal struggles over race and leadership saw the exodus several years ago of many of the founding members, a largely white and middle-class group of women who believed NAC had been sidetracked and ultimately sidelined by radicals.</p> <p>Today, NAC is smaller and more subdued. Its internal battles have been settled, but its financial problems have taken a toll. Worse, members are keenly aware that it has a big public-relations problem, namely that many women no longer find it relevant. There were no doctors, lawyers or accountants at the weekend conference. The vast majority of delegates were women who work on the front lines of the women's movement, people from women's centres or trade unions. The professional women, those who benefited most from the gains made by the women's movement, stayed home.</p> <p>They left in the early 1990s along with several executive members who quit because they felt NAC was drifting too far to the left politically. When Sunera Thobani was elected president in 1995, she went further, complaining openly that NAC itself was racist, and setting about to ensure that more women of colour were in positions of authority. The changes spurred an exodus, but leaders today say the shakeup improved the organization.</p> <p>"It's a calmer NAC," said president Joan Grant Cummings. "We have figured out a way to work together."</p> <p>Former president Judy Rebick is less diplomatic. She said hostile media blew the race issue out of proportion, turning an intense debate into a race war. NAC came out of the debate stronger, but observers decided the group was now marginal, she said.</p> <p>"NAC is the most inclusive organization in the country," Ms. Rebick said. "There is a place for young people, for people with disabilities, everyone. NAC transformed itself. It wasn't easy. A lot of people resisted the change. A lot of people were hurt. But we live in a diverse world . . ."</p> <p>"People should be studying what NAC did, not denouncing it."</p> <p>Ms. Grant Cummings said the main reason NAC is quieter these days is because it is far poorer. Over the past decade, federal funding for women's groups has dropped from \$13-million a year to slightly more than \$8-million. "We've seen the erosion of women's ability to participate politically."</p> <p>NAC wants that money restored – and more than doubled. It is calling on the federal government to set aside \$30-million a year for women's groups.</p> <p>Ms. Grant Cummings acknowledged that NAC has to do a better job of selling itself to attract new blood and continue the fight for equality. Enter the young women, Ms. Haque and Ms. Mussa, both of whom are far more savvy about politics, women's rights and racism than their comments about clothes and makeup may suggest. Both Muslims, Ms. Haque and Ms. Mussa have been struggling to define themselves as independent individuals in a religious community not always comfortable with outspoken women.</p> <p>"I follow the Koran, but I interpret it differently," Ms. Haque explained. She thinks the role of women in Muslim life has been distorted and</p>
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						<p>diminished over the centuries by male-dominated societies. Calling yourself a <i>feminist</i> in this type of environment is even tougher, she said, although both women said their parents and family are supportive. By the end of the weekend, Ms. Haque and Ms. Mussa were far more confident about calling themselves <i>feminists</i> and more confident about their role in NAC.</p> <p>On Saturday afternoon, about 24 hours after her comment on high heels, Ms. Mussa was back at the microphone demanding changes to the group's constitution that would ensure young women are part of NAC's executive committee.</p> <p>She didn't get those changes. The resolution was brought to the floor too late. But Ms. Mussa said she will be back next year to make the same demand. She said NAC has to listen to young people if it is to survive.</p> <p>Her young colleagues agreed.</p> <p>"The next <i>generation</i> is crucial," said Nancy Peckford, 25, a student at Memorial University in St. John's, Nfld. "We have to capture the energy of the next <i>generation</i>. Unless we can do that, the struggle is over."</p> <p>Like Ms. Haque and Ms. Mussa, Ms. Peckford said <i>feminism</i> is a dirty word with many of her peers.</p> <p>"I think we as a society have done a very good job of equating <i>feminism</i> with very radical thinking."</p> <p>Still, most young people interviewed left the conference in high spirits. All agreed that it had opened their eyes to many issues. On Friday, Ms. Haque was not even aware of the internal divisions NAC had weathered on the topic of racism. By Saturday afternoon, she had met several other young Muslim women, was aware of NAC's bumpy history and was grateful the race issue had been settled.</p> <p>"I feel very comfortable here," she said. "Everyone seems very open-minded. It's a very diverse group of people."</p>
30 6	13 Feb 1999	"Girls just wanna have fun"	Stephanie Nolan	D1, D3	<i>girls</i>	<p>These three <i>girls</i> are not the usual visitors to the gay world: jittery straight couples who sit stiffly, clutching each other as they look around wide-eyed – "breeder voyeurs," as they are known among gays. Rather, these grinning young women in midriff-baring tops and platform shoes are here in this once-foreign land because they just might want to sleep with some <i>girls</i>. They have come visiting, because the land's not so far away any more, and the border can be crossed without any trouble at all. "It's like eating Indian food without joining an anti-racism group," says Elise Chenier with a throaty chuckle. Ms. Chenier is working on a doctorate at Queen's University on the history of sexuality. Her gentle face and long dark hair belie a tough, no-nonsense manner. She will, if pushed, identify herself as bisexual. She is currently in a lesbian partnership and she has firm ideas about what's going on with <i>girls</i> and sex. "Women don't have to assume a radical political struggle just because they want to have sex with another woman," she says. "Sex is overpoliticized. Sex is just a pleasurable experience. Identity politics are disintegrating, that's what this is about." This is about young women experimenting with sex the way their parents' <i>generation</i> did with drugs. It's about young women sleeping with other women without feeling any need to take on questions of sexual identity, and without worrying about the L-word – not because they reject it but because they're not interested in any label at all. This is not about <i>feminist</i> response to patriarchal society; it's about <i>girls</i> on a Saturday night.</p> <p>Miriam Kaufman, a pediatrician in the Teen Clinic at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, has seen the phenomenon. The politics of identity was central to decisions about sexuality in previous <i>generations</i>, she says, but that is far less true now. "Kids have broken free of some of that. They're into 'Who am I attracted to?' and 'I think this is kind of cool.' It's about being queer, not gay or lesbian." Dr. Kaufman talks about young women experimenting with lesbian sex: "She's exploring who she is without exploring a sexual identity." There are two important things about the lesbian experimentation, Dr. Kaufman says. One is that it is still largely a big-city phenomenon. And the other is that it is limited to <i>girls</i>. "There are hardly any boys experimenting that way. There is way more homophobia with boys, much more rigid ideas about masculinity." So what's going on with the <i>girls</i>?</p> <p>That question fascinates Keith Louise Fulton, who teaches gay and lesbian literature at the University of Winnipeg. At 52, she says she is delighted to see young people profiting from the battles fought by gays</p>

					<p>and lesbians of her <i>generation</i>. "We wanted women to own and to experience their sexuality," she says. "We wanted there to be no coercion, either for compulsory heterosexuality or for a battle with homophobia. This is part of their rejection of labels -- of oppression as well as the labels of struggle." Take Sara, 27, a personal trainer in Toronto who declines to reveal her last name. "I sleep with women, women I'm attracted to," she says impatiently. "And I sleep with men I find attractive. And I don't stay up at night thinking about whether I'm bisexual or anything else. I'm healthy. I have sex. I have relationships. And I think we're past the politics of all that. I don't march."</p> <p>And there are lots more like them, according to Bert Archer, a Toronto writer whose book <i>The Death of Gay and the End of Identity Politics</i> will be published this spring. "They call into question the link between sexual behaviour and sexual identity," he says. "These are people whose sexual behaviour does not agree with their sexual identity and who refuse to give up either." And no wonder, Mr. Archer adds. "There are well-established communities with good things associated with all of them -- there is heterosexual privilege, there is gay chic." Mr. Archer dates the sea change to 1991, citing influences from the gay character on the television program <i>Roseanne</i>, to Madonna's <i>Justify My Love</i>, to the movie <i>Philadelphia</i>. "As a result of the media affirmation, people feel comfortable doing and talking about these things," he says. "As people have been allowed to play in the margins, they increasingly are." Ultimately, these changes are the product of debates played out in the lesbian community since the 1969 Stonewall riots in New York City, when gay resentment of police harassment erupted. The fierce gay rights movement, which claimed lesbianism as a political identity, was challenged in the early 1980s by a movement that wanted to bring the sex back into sexual orientation. In 1985, a high-profile U.S. lesbian porn mag began to publish with the mocking title <i>On Our Backs</i> (a shot at the radical <i>feminist</i> journal <i>Off Our Backs</i>). Books such as <i>Sapphistry: The Book of Lesbian Sexuality</i>, written by arch-leather dyke Pat Califia and published in 1988, argued that lesbianism was primarily and ultimately about women giving women pleasure, not politics. From this split -- between the theorists and the hedonists -- there grew, in the early 1990s, a gradual recognition that the community was big enough for everybody. Then two new species began to pop up in the dyke field guides: the LUG and the lipstick lesbian.</p> <p>The lipstick lesbians, of whom the best-known example today is Anne Heche, the sleek blond actor who pouts on the arm of comedian Ellen DeGeneres, were a new incarnation of the plaid-shirt-and-Birkenstock lesbians of yore. In power suits or fancy frocks, they were as unapologetically gay and out as they were attractive. LUG (lesbian until graduation) is the slightly derisive name for a phenomenon that has erupted on college campuses. Dyke became the coolest thing that a young, on-her-own and flirting-with-new-ideas-and-her-roommate college girl could be. Overheard from a burly football player, newly arrived at Queen's a year ago: "Man, there's not a single chick on this campus who doesn't have one of those rainbow flag things pinned to her backpack." The latest evolution in that cycle is the reclamation of "queer" -- the label of choice for a younger generation that eschews "gay" or "lesbian" in favour of grandmother's word for the two nice fellows who share a house down the road. Check out Friday night at Tallulah's Cabaret in Toronto: dancing hordes in plastic barrettes, goth black, combat pants and crushed velvet. These are the kinds of kids who recently slapped up "Queer is Cool" stickers all over downtown Kingston. Kids who read 'zines and dance to techno and move in a community where gender is far less defined and sexual orientation is far less significant. Brenda Wardle, a Kingston high-school guidance counsellor who facilitates a support group for "queer kids," says teenagers are questioning earlier and experimenting more. She attributes the change to the prevalence of images of queer sexuality in the arts and media, and to an openness among young people about all things sexual. But Ms. Wardle is quick to point out that, for many queer-questioning kids, it can be as difficult today to face the gossip-mongering, status-obsessed world of the high-school locker room as it was 20 years ago.</p> <p>Take Stephanie Docherty. She transferred from one Kingston high school where students wrote "fag" on her locker to another where she</p>
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Coding Sheets: *The Globe and Mail*, 2000-2007

	DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR	PG	THEMES	QUOTES
327	12 August 2000	Byline: "It's not that I'm opposed to Judy Rebick selling out. It's that she sells out so awkwardly"	Leah McLaren	R3	Judy Rebick Generation Young feminists	And the No. 1 thing that makes me embarrassed to be a young Canadian <i>feminist</i> today is -- drum roll please -- CBC television's latest Judy Rebick vehicle, Straight From The Hip. Starting Monday the <i>Newsweek</i> airwaves will be clogged with Rebick's five-part series on young women, 30 and under. I'm ashamed to say that, for some reason, I participated in one of these unspeakably lightweight one-hour gab fests. I was flattered to have been invited, but I should have declined. As an adolescent I actually admired Rebick, then Canada's most visible <i>feminist</i> organizer. Admired her, that is, until I noticed how the National Action Committee on the Status of Women had been irreparably marginalized due to restrictive hiring policies put in place during her tenure. Admired her, until I went to university

						<p>and saw plainly what her prudish, pious brand of <i>feminism</i> had wrought.</p> <p>I witnessed a <i>generation of girls</i> whose education consisted of little more than a series of weekly committee meetings held to determine who had been most offended by what – whose “safe space” had been violated by the most innocuous gesture, comment or cultural hiccup. If you’ve ever wondered what’s wrong with the CBC, I’d suggest you tune in to <i>Straight From the Hip</i> and find out. The show is so spectacularly terrible it’s hard to know where to begin. Could it be the humourless, didactic tone? The stunningly irrelevant topics? The panels of barely awake female guests struggling to agree with each other?</p> <p>I don’t think so. Such qualities are in too much abundance in run-of-the-mill coffee-klatch women’s talk shows – which, incidentally, seem to be spreading over the multichannel universe at the pace of smallpox. The <i>grandmother</i> of them all, <i>The View</i>, has been successfully boring viewers for years now with falsely convivial discussions on the wonders of platform shoes and high-protein dieting. <i>Straight From the Hip</i>, however, isn’t just another jabberjaw chick forum, it’s a particularly horrible jabberjaw chick forum. Only the CBC would think to position Judy Rebick as Canada’s own Barbara Walters. As a host, the woman lacks anything resembling on-air warmth, and conducts her panel discussions in a hectoring, teacherly voice – which utters sentences so predictable you can see them lumbering around the corner. It’s not that I’m opposed to Rebick selling out. It’s that she sells out so awkwardly.</p> <p>Who’s supposed to watch this show anyway? It’s too doctrinaire for contemporary <i>feminists</i>, and too dull for the Oprah school. The remaining audience is limited to those who have fallen asleep with the remote in their hand.</p> <p>How bad could it be, you ask? The episode I was on is described in the press release as “Pop Culture, Fun and Fashion.” Beforehand, the producer e-mailed me a detailed memo outlining the bent of the show, and a note forbidding panelists from wearing perfume to the taping because “Judy is allergic.” If that didn’t trip my inner alarm, I should have known it from the list of discussion topics, which read like a Teen Beat magazine table of contents. They included “What’s hip and cool?” “The Chick beat,” “How important is spending time with friends?” and (my personal favourite) the cultural influence of the <i>Friends</i> cast on real young women. I’m no pro at television, but it doesn’t take much to know a prima donna TV type when you see one. Though the series bills itself in as an extended cheerleading session for young Canadian women, Rebick failed to treat her guests with basic professional courtesy. The day of the taping, she didn’t bother coming up to the green room to meet the panel of young women in advance, nor did she rouse herself from her overstuffed armchair to shake our hands when we arrived on set. She even snapped at the poor camera guy for scrolling her teleprompter lines too fast.</p> <p>More importantly, the questions were as unimaginative and patronizing as the first round of <i>The Dating Game</i>. “Do you like books?” she asked me, and “What do you like to do for fun?” This was accompanied by a facile discussion on whether or not Britney Spears is a good role model for young women today.</p> <p>Rebick can barely conceal her contempt for anything that disturbs her precious, outdated notion of what <i>feminism</i> is. When she isn’t <i>preaching to the converted</i>, she is visibly uncomfortable. In fact, such moments prove to be the series’ only highlights. In the “Sex and Relationships” episode, Rebick is shocked at a guest’s admission that she sometimes enjoys playing “the slut.” “Slut is okay?” Rebick demands with obvious disapproval. If Rebick had hoped to give the impression that she takes young women and their concerns seriously, she would have been well advised not to insult her guests and audience with patronizing questions. And if CBC <i>NewsWorld</i> wishes to salvage a shred of relevance to any Canadian under 30, take my advice, <i>girlfriends</i>: Get this show off the air.</p>
328	16 Aug 2000	"Rebick's Legacy"	Rebecca Adell	A16	letters	<p>I began reading Leah McLaren’s column about Judy Rebick’s new television series with great interest (<i>It’s Not That I’m Opposed To Judy Rebick Selling Out. It’s That She Sells Out So Awkwardly</i> – Aug. 12). But, by the end, I was dismayed at both the points on</p>

						<p>which Ms. McLaren chose to attack Ms. Rebick and the general tone of the article.</p> <p>Ms. McLaren states that she "witnessed a <i>generation of girls</i> whose education consisted of little more than a series of weekly committee meetings to determine who had been most offended by what." I witnessed the same thing in my first six years of university, beginning in 1994, and I readily agree with Ms. McLaren's claim that the <i>feminism</i> so outspokenly advocated by Ms. Rebick and others contributed to this hypersensitivity among many young women. I also witnessed its negative intellectual effects as certain topics became off-limits for study, male students became increasingly afraid to critique the work of female students, and it became awkward to spend any length of time in a male professor's office. However, rather than ridiculing Ms. Rebick's stance and the unquestioning acceptance of it by so many female students, I am grateful to have witnessed it, as it pushed me to recognize, and move beyond, its limitations. It was largely my frustration with the same "<i>girls</i>" Ms. McLaren describes that inspired me to work harder to ensure that my work was taken seriously.</p> <p>I agree with Ms. McLaren that when young women congregate to "determine who had been most offended by what," there is something wrong with our society. But the list of insults she hurls at Ms. Rebick provides some of the best evidence I've seen of this phenomenon. Ms. Rebick offended Ms. McLaren by not meeting and thanking her guests in person before the taping of her show, by not standing when the guests came on stage and by having an allergy, in addition to leading a "particularly horrible jabberjaw chick forum" of a show.</p> <p>Ms. McLaren and I both owe a lot to <i>feminists</i> of previous generations, and surely that gratitude is displayed more constructively by attempting to build something positive out of our mutual negative experience than by resorting to callous personal insults that display one's own hypersensitivities.</p>
329	16 Aug 2000	" Rebick's legacy " [2]	Jan N. Zarzycki	A16	letters	<p>You should give Leah McLaren a raise. What a refreshing point of view from this "lippy" young writer. I'm referring in particular to her column about Judy Rebick. High time that someone had the gumption to take a swipe at one of CBC's sacred cows. Since my arrival in Canada 17 years ago, the CBC has been one of the windows through which I observed and learned about the "intelligentsia" of this country, and listening to Ms. Rebick has often caused me to despair for the minds of her listeners. I spent my first several decades in a <i>Soviet bloc country</i>, and was fed enough of Ms. Rebick's brand of ideological pablum to have, fortunately, become immune to it.</p> <p>I am not in the least surprised to learn of Ms. Rebick's contempt for her television guests, as her obvious contempt for the viewer oozes off the screen. If not a raise, then at least Ms. McLaren should be encouraged to keep on speaking her mind, as it is an interesting one.</p>
330	19 Aug 2000		Elizabeth Muggah, New York	A14	letters	<p>I read Leah McLaren's column on Judy Rebick's soon-to-be-aired five-part series on young women with interest. I noted that as a "young Canadian feminist," she was shocked by the "unspeakably lightweight one-hour gabfests" hosted by Ms. Rebick, in which Ms. McLaren participated (but later regretted).</p> <p>In hindsight, Ms. McLaren might have lifted the intellectual level of the debate by steering the discussion toward her recent discovery that <i>hip New Yorkers are sporting T-shirts with logos remarkably similar to the CBC's (Zeitgeist – Aug. 12)</i>, a deep and thoughtful offering that lucky readers found on the same page as her column. And then, as Ms. McLaren was experiencing the "facile discussion on whether or not Britney Spears is a good role model for young women today," she might have turned to issues more pressing to young feminists, such as Macaulay Culkin's sad fairy-tale life, the subject of another insightful McLaren article in the same issue. In sum, I am grateful that Ms. McLaren, as representative of our generation, is keeping those sell-out older feminists honest.</p>
331	19 Aug 2000	" Rebick deserves better "	Gwen Smith	A14	letters	<p>It is not my habit to read Leah McLaren's column in The Globe's Saturday pages. Since the dispatch on her adventures in bikini waxing, I haven't felt the need. But I did read the Aug. 12 column, drawn by a heading about Judy Rebick.</p> <p>And what a column – a full frontal attack on Ms. Rebick and the</p>

						<p>banal experience of being a guest on her TV show. The program's topics, the author writes, "read like a Teen Beat magazine table of contents." The irony of the columnist of things lightweight accusing the advocate of women's rights of frivolity was pretty amusing. But I write because Ms. McLaren's skewering went much further. She insulted Ms. Rebick as a prima donna and a prude, though she is neither. Ms. Rebick is passionate, funny and not given to artifice. It may be that she just doesn't do shallow well. But, above all, I object to Ms. McLaren's deriding the valuable work Ms. Rebick has done on behalf of women in this country.</p> <p>Ms. Rebick deserves better than to be mugged, just for the fun of it, in the pages of <i>The Globe and Mail</i>.</p>
374	17 June 2003	"From the torch to the wet T-shirt"	Lisa Moore	R1	Column: off the map	<p>There's a big crowd at Junctions and they're all baby-faced. I mean really young. Some of the boys have baseball caps on backwards and the girls are bare-shouldered in halters and miniskirts. It's almost 1 a.m. by the time things get under way. A waitress works through the crowd with a tray of neon shooters; she has a tattoo near her collarbone that says Kyle. I'm here to check out the bar's infamous wet T-shirt contest. The grand prize is \$5,000, which must be spent on breast implants.</p> <p>...I'm suddenly struck by a terrible wave of guilt. Or I feel guilty about not feeling guilty. It's all my fault – me and the women of my generation – we're the ones that dropped the torch. We're the ones that let the passion of feminism turn to crusty rhetoric until it crumbled from our hands. How did such a torrent of revolutionary zeal dry up so fast? I want to know: What could we have done? It's not like I couldn't have seen it coming. I've met lots of 20-year-olds, over the last 10 years, who tend to spit the word feminism out of their mouths as if it were a piece of glass. But I decided, à la Scarlett O'Hara, to think about all that tomorrow.</p> <p>Worst of all, I'm not even sure what I think of the wet T-shirt contest. Yes, these women are being exploited big time. But if they are the inheritors of all that consciousness-raising, shouldn't they decide what they want to do with their bodies?</p> <p>My version of the ideal feminist, the prototype, the first wave, the one I have failed to become, rises before me. She's a blazing Amazon with wild hair and a loose dress. A bra-less wonder with a bowl of vegan salad in one arm, and a breast-feeding babe in the other. She flaunts her sexual freedom, takes a jackhammer to glass ceilings, demands affirmative action and wiggles her gorgeous body into a roomy corporate chair. She brings home the bacon, fries it up in a pan. She's got a sense of humour. She's wildly sexy. She loves men. Yes, she does. And she loves women. She burns like a shooting star and the long and short of it is, she's made everything pretty cushy for me. And yet, what a legacy to try to live up to. I was doomed to fail. But it's the half-naked Louise, after removing her shirt, who wins tonight's contest. She knew she had to take her shirt off to win and she decided to comply. It's this compliance that ends the evening for me with a certain disturbing chill.</p>
379	F7	"A feminist by any other name"	Melanie Coulson	F7		<p>Apparently, I'm turning my back on feminism.</p> <p>I got married a little more than six weeks ago. Hang on, sisters, it doesn't stop there: Even worse, I'm in the process of changing my name.</p> <p>It's amazing how some women respond when they hear this. Strong, independent women who have broken down doors and gone through glass ceilings for my generation. Women who have always felt the need to voice their opinions.</p> <p>"You're doing what? No. Oh, Melanie. Why?" There's always the same tone of disappointment. It's like somehow I've just donned an apron and burned my Gloria Steinem books before their eyes. I appreciate their concern, but I don't get it. I'm not quitting my job to support my husband. I'm not going to anti-abortion rallies. I'm changing my name. It's just a name, not an identity. Melanie Seal is becoming Melanie Coulson. But the soul, the flesh, the person are the same.</p> <p>In the 1970s, roughly about the time I was born, women fought to get equal pay, equal opportunity, equal rights. I imagine that by refusing to change their name when they married, these women were saying, "I'm not defined by my husband."</p> <p>Women of my generation studied their bold protests and were</p>

						<p>inspired by them. They told us we could be anything. And we bought it. We became astronauts, fighter pilots, surgeons, lawyers, athletes, entrepreneurs.</p> <p>But now we're discovering there are rules to this feminine MYSTIQUE. We can be anything, anyone – as long as we don't change our surname to match our husbands'. "You must hold onto your name," they say. "It's who you are . . ."</p> <p>Exactly right. My name does represent who I am. And now I am married, and part of a new family unit. It makes perfect sense to me – as much as I hate this expression – to take his name. I'll admit there are reasons why I'm not fond of my father's name. Imagine the ugliness of growing up with the name of a man who long ago had divorced your mother and moved on to his next wife. Imagine a <i>generation</i> of people like me who had liberated mothers but went to school under names that were different than theirs. A letter comes home from your Grade 3 teacher addressed to Mrs. Seal, and there is no such person. Imagine inviting friends over as a kid and flushing with embarrassment when they call her that. She's your mother, your role model, but you don't have the same name.</p> <p>I'm not changing my name out of some childhood anguish, though, or because of a sense of obligation. I'm doing it because I want to have the same name as my husband. Some women ask why I'm not adopting a hyphenated name. Or better, why isn't he changing his to match mine? Those might be viable options for some women, but I think many hyphenated names are pretentious, not to mention a mouthful. As for my husband adopting my father's name – recognizing a man who hasn't laid eyes on me for 12 years – that's just plain ridiculous. One friend of mine, married a year and living happily with her name change, says she thinks that "not changing your name sends the wrong signal – it seems that maybe you aren't 100 per cent committed to the new family you are building. "It's not that I've left my family for my husband's; it feels symbolic, that we are a new family together." In a world full of fractured families, she wants hers to be a complete unit. Another friend says she gets angry when people go on and on about her changing her name. And why not? It's her choice. Isn't that what our sisters in the Seventies were calling for? Some women are giving their children their own surnames instead of their husbands'. Brilliant. But why is this seen as progressive, when changing your name to match your husband's is not?</p> <p>During the Middle Ages, a noble family would identify the head of household by appending to his name the name of the family estate. The estate name eventually became used by younger sons and came to be considered hereditary.</p> <p>The bourgeoisie and the poor mimicked the practice, and by the 18th century, everyone – including women whose name would instantly change at the time of marriage – adopted a "family" name. It wasn't an issue of men taking ownership over women. It was a means of keeping track of land. Today, it's family, not land, that needs to be identified in the minds of women who are deciding to change their name after marriage. The implication that women "belong" to men when they take the man's name is just not the issue it was in the Seventies. Now, there are other fights to fight. (Why not protest the fact that it's still rare to see a woman in the top levels of management in the nation's major businesses, that women are still whistled at on the street – why is that? – and that we read far more about the <i>Anna Kournikovas</i> of the world than we do about the true champions in sport?) Accomplished women tell me they have created a name for themselves – so they choose to keep it. Who says I can't build a name for myself as a Coulson? I see the new name as another chapter in my life, not the end of it.</p> <p>I still consider myself a card-carrying <i>feminist</i>. It's just that the name on the card has changed, that's all.</p>
380	7 July 2003	"The name-change game"	Alison Conway	A10	letters	<p>If Melanie Coulson does not understand the difference between a woman who gives her children her own (maiden) name, and a woman who takes her husband's name, she needs to enroll in Women's History 101. Until the 19th century, a woman lost her legal status and property when she married; her identity was literally, not metaphorically, subsumed into her husband's. How does this fact not represent "an issue of men taking ownership over women"?</p>

					I have two friends who, having taken their husbands' names at marriage, subsequently reclaimed their own. I'm wondering how Mrs. Coulson will feel in a few months time about the identity she has so readily adopted.
391	11 March 2004	"We've come part way, baby"	Judy Rebick	A21	<p><i>Feminists</i> need a new strategy in Canada, one that incorporates men and women in the fight for a more equitable society, says JUDY REBICK</p> <p>Canada has had one of the most successful women's movements in the world. From legal abortion and constitutionally guaranteed women's equality, to a wide range of <i>feminist</i> services like rape-crisis centres and shelters, to the creation of a multiracial movement, Canada's <i>feminists</i> have achieved extraordinary change in a <i>single generation</i>.</p> <p>But the march to women's equality has all but stopped under the federal Liberal government. The once powerful voice of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women has been silenced -- the victim of the right-wing shift in civil society; a 10-year campaign against NAC itself, led by right-wing forces in the country; and government cutbacks.</p> <p>The triumph of neo-liberal/neo-conservative politics has dealt a mortal blow to a <i>feminism</i> that seeks economic and social equality. The gains we have made are threatened by the increasing impoverishment of women, even as a few climb the heights of corporate, professional and political success; by the shocking degradation of women in international sex slavery; the overwhelming burden of the double day; longer, rather than shorter, work times; the rise of racism, militarism and the security state; the monopoly of men on power; closer ties, especially military ties, with the United States; and the continuing scourge of war and violence against women and children.</p> <p>There is some light in the darkness, however. Now that many people are questioning the corporatist agenda, a new opportunity has opened for the women's movement.</p> <p>My <i>generation</i>, or what scholars call <i>second-wave feminism</i>, made women into actors in history. We turned ourselves from passive observers of the world into active agents of change. In the process, we changed a lot of laws that were holding us back, and we changed workplaces, organizations and movements where women and <i>feminist</i> men are now in the lead.</p> <p>What we failed to do was uproot the patriarchy that we identified in the beginning as the root of the problem. Male power continues to dominate in war, in politics, in corporate boardrooms and in too many families.</p> <p>Patriarchy is a big word that means the rule of the father -- or as <i>feminist</i> elder Ursula Franklin pointedly defines it, "Do what I say, or else."</p> <p>Outside of war, it is hard to find a more obvious example of it than in Prime Minister Paul Martin's relentless campaign against Chrétien supporters in the Liberal Party. How many women could, or would want to, put up the kind of fight that Sheila Copps is waging against attack after attack?</p> <p>My <i>generation</i> of women, like Ms. Copps, put on armour to enter the <i>battlefields</i> created by patriarchy, and we won some battles. But to achieve the goal of changing the relationships of power, we have to follow the lead of many young women, who call themselves <i>third-wave feminists</i>. They refuse to be combatants in the way that powerful men have defined the fight. We need new ways of doing democracy, and many men will be our allies.</p> <p><i>Feminism</i>, above all, is about relationships of equality and co-operation rather than relationships of domination and competition. Women's equality is only possible in a world that values the <i>traditional</i> women's roles of <i>nurturing and caring</i> as important roles for both men and women to play. Gloria Steinem has said that our <i>generation</i> of <i>feminists</i> has allowed women to do what men traditionally did; now it is time for men to do what women traditionally did.</p> <p>More men are taking responsibility for parenting and nurturing those around them, but not nearly enough. Just as important, our social policy has lagged far behind the changes going on in families and the workplace.</p>

						<p>Women with children have suffered most in the neo-liberal reality. A new cross-country Network on Women's Social and Economic Rights has formed to defend parental leave. They agree that Quebec has led the way, with its five-dollar-a-day universal child-care and its family law that recognizes the need for generous government support to working parents.</p> <p>What we need is a new strategy for <i>feminism</i> in Canada and in the world. The Quebec women's movement has initiated and leads an international movement of women in the World March of Women, an <i>integral part of the global social-justice movement, which is planning a world charter on women for 2005.</i></p> <p>In 1972, <i>feminist</i> legend Laura Sabia organized a conference called Strategy for Change. It founded NAC, which then provided a space to debate strategies and policies, as well as providing a powerful voice for women. It's time for a Strategy for Change II, to bring together <i>feminists</i> from every walk of life, every part of the country, every community, every organization and every <i>generation</i>. Let's call it <i>Feminism in Globalization: FIG</i>. I can see the poster now.</p> <p>Judy Rebick, a former president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, is the Gindin Chair in Social Justice at Ryerson University, and the author of a forthcoming book: <i>Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution</i>.</p>
392	12 March 2004	"A new <i>feminism</i> "	Sarah Reynolds	A18	Letters "young women"	<p>Re We've Come Part Way, Baby (March 11): I was delighted to read Judy Rebick's call to arms and I fully agree that <i>feminism</i> needs a new strategy. My concern is that so many younger women have a distaste for the word.</p> <p>For them, <i>feminism</i> means disgruntled man haters who want more than their fair share. I hope the "third-wave" <i>feminists</i> can breathe new life into the word as well as the concept.</p>
415	26 Jan, 2008	"It's Official: <i>Feminism</i> is out of style"	Karen Von Hahn			<p>The death this week of Suzanne Pleshette - that sassy, sexy comedienne who, along with playing Bob Newhart's better half, starred in the kind of swinging seventies, Love, American Style romps that comprised my inappropriate after-school TV viewing schedule - has me feeling like I should be stuffed and put on display in some sort of museum of women's liberation.</p> <p>That, and the revelation that came to me while playing a board game over the holidays with my 26-year-old niece and 18-year-old daughter. The game is called Hoopla: You pick a card and act out the person, place or thing named on it for the group to guess. After drawing her card, my hip and literate niece asked whether she could choose another. "I don't have any idea who this is," she said, passing the card to my daughter. "Me neither," shrugged my well-informed Sophie. They passed it to me. The woman on the card was Gloria Steinem.</p> <p>Whether it's because we've all fallen asleep at our tasks like Snow White, or whether we've been outplayed in a subtle and long-standing culture war, what is clear is that we are living in a new era of post-feminism. That the young women I know see no great victory in Hillary Clinton's run for the U.S. presidency is proof enough. That they also see Barack Obama as the one candidate who represents "change" is nothing less than astounding.</p> <p>Ever since Clinton and her contemporaries crammed their way into law and business schools, we've been told by everyone from the cheerleading women's business networks to Virginia Slims that we've made it. Turning our backs on conventional <i>feminism</i> and its grinding focus on women's oppression, we empowered our daughters to embrace the more upbeat Girl Power movement.</p> <p>Candy-coating the world in Spice Girls tunes, pink-feathered purses and Sex and the City, we sold them a bill of goods: that women are as free and unencumbered as men, that they can achieve any goal they might dream of - even that the odds are in their favour.</p> <p>As a result, the girls of this <i>generation</i>, who consider it "lame" to align themselves with a woman candidate on the sole ground of sisterhood, are more likely to tune in to the new CosmoTV digital channel (sample program, Dirty Cows: "Take 10 stylin' British babes, add one cold and lofty barn and a young, rich, handsome farmer looking for love, and you've got a recipe for mayhem, because to win his heart they're going to have to fight like dirty cows") than flip open the 35th-anniversary issue of Ms. Magazine.</p> <p>Talk about old school: The issue featured Superwoman on its cover.</p>

						<p>(That's how tired the movement is looking: They had to resort to a comic-book heroine who appeared more than half a century ago to illustrate it.) The hard truth is that we have failed to impress upon our own daughters that women's issues still matter.</p> <p>As Steinem herself (yes, she is still alive) observed of the Clinton/Obama challenge in The New York Times, gender - not race - is still "probably the most restricting force in American life," adding that "black men were given the vote a half-century before women" and have ascended the ranks of power in greater numbers in advance of women.</p> <p>With our hands in the air begging to answer, we have outperformed our male colleagues at school only to be slapped hard in the real world. According to an April, 2007, study by the American Association of University Women, despite pulling in higher grade point averages across all majors, women earn 80 per cent of what their male counterparts take home one year after graduation. Ten years later, the figure drops to 69 per cent.</p> <p>In 2007, just 12 of the Fortune 500 companies boasted female chief executive officers. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 14.6 per cent of board seats are held by women, and a scant 6.7 per cent of us qualify among the top five wage earners. The most recent numbers from Statistics Canada are even worse: In our country, women make a measly 64 per cent of what men earn. Which means that pay equity day - the date by which women will reach the amount that men earned by the end of last year - won't happen till May 10 of this year.</p> <p>At the same time, according to numerous recent global studies, women - even those part of the growing ranks of double-income families - still shoulder the brunt of both housework and child care. And the right to choose, a key rallying cry for traditional <i>feminists</i>, is so taken for granted by today's young women that they giggle along with the hipster protagonists in <i>Knocked Up</i> who aren't mature enough to say the word "abortion" and the wisecracking teenager in <i>Juno</i> who opts to carry her baby to term because the abortion clinic gives her the creeps.</p> <p>But worst of all is <i>feminism's</i> failure to create true sisterhood. Like mean girls in the playground, we started feeling all warm and fuzzy toward Clinton only after our claws and barbs drew tears. Which, given the current "race versus <i>feminism</i>" question, might help explain why Clinton is doing just about as well with black voters as Obama is doing with women. Because if there is one thing that blacks and women share, apart from their oppression from the white male corridors of power, it is their enduring lack of faith in their own community.</p>
416	28 Jan 2008	"Feminist generation gap"	Alexis Hamilton	A14	Letters	<p>As a 27-year-old woman, I found it rather insulting to be grouped into Karen von Hahn's description of women of "my generation" (It's Official: <i>Feminism Is Out Of Style</i> - <i>Globe Life Style</i>, Jan. 26), as preferring <i>CosmoTV</i> to <i>Ms. Magazine</i>, and seeing "no great victory" in Hillary Clinton's run for the presidency.</p> <p>Being brought up in a family with strong women who enjoy successful careers didn't deter me from reading Gloria Steinem at 13 or choosing women's studies as my minor at McGill University. Nor did <i>Sex & the City</i> blind me to how difficult it was, is and will be for women to reach a point where our salaries and status in the workplace parallel those of men. Ms. Clinton is still being asked to "iron the shirts" of male hecklers.</p> <p>Perhaps Ms. von Hahn should try, as she advises, having some faith in her own community of women, and not write off an entire <i>generation</i> because we have different experiences.</p>
417	30 Jan 2008	"Thanks for patronizing us"	Stacey May Fowles	A18	Letters	<p>As the publisher of a <i>feminist</i> magazine for teenage girls, and as a proud 28-year-old <i>feminist</i>, I'm truly astounded by Karen von Hahn's article <i>It's Official: Feminism Is Out Of Style</i> (Jan. 26). It's official? Whether or not your 26-year-old niece or 18-year-old daughter happens to know who Gloria Steinem is doesn't qualify as "research" on my <i>generation's</i> belief systems on gender equality.</p> <p>Perhaps you don't recognize <i>feminism</i> in its current form because it's constantly evolving to fit the ever-changing landscape of women's lives, growing to be more inclusive and accessible to women of colour, queer women, women living in poverty, women living with disability, all women and their allies. Just because you don't</p>

