

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of feminist literary magazines and their editors as facilitators of change within Canadian literary and cultural field from the 1970s through the 1990s. Such an investigation entails a broader analysis of the politics of cultural production in Canada with a focus on the production and editing of selected publications in the context of feminist publishing and alternative publishing, including an analysis of networks, relations and exchanges among editors, contributors, readers, and institutions. The publications chosen for analysis – *Room of One's Own* (1975-), *Fireweed* (1978-2002), *CV2* (1975-), *Tessera* (1984-2005) and *(f.)Lip* (1987-1990) – are examined as representatives of women's literary magazine culture that emerges in the mid-1970s, signaling a shift in Canadian literary magazine history that has remained largely unexplored. Research questions at the core of the study relate to the nature of agency of both editors and their publications, the degree of embeddedness of feminist periodical production in changing socio-political and cultural contexts, the politics of editing and producing feminist literary magazines in Canada, and the links between editing, representation and legitimation of writing by women marginalized on the grounds of race, sexual orientation and class.

The primary methodological assumption is at the same time the key tenet of the rapidly developing field of periodical studies, i.e. that magazines are “autonomous objects of study” (Latham and Scholes 2006) – physical and ideological objects with their own material, social, and cultural histories. In order to study magazines and editors as facilitators of cultural and social change, the project employs and adapts frameworks devised by periodical studies scholars (Hammill and Smith 2015; Parker and Philpotts 2009) and representatives of the burgeoning field of feminist periodical studies (Beins 2017; Groeneveld 2016; Jordan 2019). Also, the study is to a large extent based on archival research into unpublished materials such as private correspondence and other documents related to the production and editing of selected magazines. Hence, in its entirety, it brings to light the otherwise invisible aspects of editorial labor and feminist periodical production, drawing on and contributing to the emerging field of research into “editing as cultural practice in Canada” (Irvine and Kamboureli 2016).

In four interrelated chapters, the thesis showcases the multiple layers of agency of editors and their publications, revealing the many ways in which editorial collectives worked towards transforming and expanding the literary and cultural field in Canada in

the decades crucial to the development of women's literature, feminist sensibilities and legitimation of diversity both within the women's movement and Canadian society in general. The analysis of publishing histories of all five publications shows that each magazine was embedded in, responsive to, and dependent on the changing socio-political and cultural contexts of its production and that editorial collectives, though to a different extent and in different capacities, were actively working to shape social and cultural discourses. Moreover, the thesis provides a valuable insight into the mechanics of editing and producing feminist literary magazines, revealing the existence of a significant correlation between collaboration and cultural production as well as providing examples that speak to feminist editorial labor as a collective labor of love.