

**MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE: THE UNDER SIDE OF THE CORPORATE
CULTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND POSSIBILITIES FOR
A NEW FEMINIST CRITICISM¹**

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Introduction

Feminist scholars and social activists have, over the past decade, noted the world wide antifeminist backlash aimed at clawing back the gains toward equity and social participation that women had made over the thirty years since the second wave of the feminist movement. Hidden by the globalization discourse, the general trend toward fundamentalist ideologies in many parts of the world—the east as well as the west—have particular implications for feminist scholarship, criticism, and ultimately the participation of women in framing and contributing to policy and decision making.

Over the past decade there have been some salient critiques of the turn to globalization and privatization as it affects post secondary institutions, and the teaching and scholarship they support. However, these critiques have, by and large, failed to note the hidden gender component of these processes and of the implications for feminist researchers and scholars within the academy. As so often happens with critical theory, even those advanced by well informed and socially conscious social critics, the feminist framework falls out of the discussion.

After contextualizing the problematic, this paper offers a feminist analysis of three specific examples that otherwise appear to be gender-neutral incidents in the academy, and thereby points to a possible direction for a new feminist criticism.

The challenge of maintaining a feminist standpoint

In a radio interview (CBC, 2004) in March, Judy Rebick² suggested that, in the west, the feminist movement is in disarray. “Young women don’t think that the feminist movement

represents them”, she said and consequently, she went on to say, “the women’s movement is aging”.³ For those of us who consider ourselves to be part of the feminist movement, Rebeck’s observations were not startling. Indeed, I found it telling that the topic was featured on Canada’s national public radio network. I believe Rebeck is not alone in questioning the apparent absence of voices in our everyday social and cultural life from a once vibrant and hopeful movement.

There are reasons why, collectively, many of us, both inside and outside the academy, have come to reflect on the place and impact of feminism in the year 2004.⁴ As a feminist teacher, I know that teaching feminist theories in the academy requires that students become familiar with certain kinds of concepts, that they engage certain kinds of discussions, and that they produce certain kinds of knowledges having to do with the critical awareness of our social, political and economic situation. Increasingly I find myself searching for the right feminist texts that might serve my students well. Every term, I prepare a “good enough” pattern of readings and an experimental juxtaposition of discussions. Yet I am increasingly aware that the texts that brought such richness and complexity to my generation’s understanding of the issues with which feminism concerned itself, seem not to fit the generation of my students.⁵

Sometimes it feels like I am in a “time machine”. I am aware that, each year that I face a new class of students, I am a year older than I was the year before, while my students remain the same age. Year after year I get older. They stay the same age. More than fifteen years later, I am teaching the daughters and the sons of my contemporaries.

I know that I am not alone in finding it more and more difficult to identify those texts by which to raise the conversations that would speak to the realities of my students’ lives. The image of a weaver works well as a metaphor for the contingencies of feminist politics and practices where the usefulness of the woven product is matched by the importance of the process

of juxtaposing texture, and pattern, and colour. At the end of each term, like a weaver, I examine the product aware that it is not quite what is needed. The colours are not quite right. The textures are too rough. The patterns don't fit. The warp can't sustain the weft.

This presents a particular challenge.

It is a challenge I face in the everyday routines of my work in the academy: every time I consider what and how I will teach; every time I think about how to encourage students to engage feminist frameworks of critique; every time I reflect on the politics of graduate student admissions, research funding and financial support of graduate students; every time I am confronted with the increasingly complex and problematic ideologies surrounding research and scholarship; and every time I consider the complexities of invoking a feminist standpoint when thinking about the experiences of women whether this be in the academy or in the variety of other places where women live and work.

Those of us in the academy, along with the thousands of tireless women who are not in the academy, represent both the "young" and the "old" of the feminist movement. We also represent the "old" and the "young" of women in the academy. Rebeck's observations as well as our own experience speak to the topic to which this discussion is directed.

Conceptual Framework

I begin with a short retrospective. A retrospective is not a bad idea so long as we understand that the power of looking back lies in the way it helps us understand the present and possibly imagine a future with more clarity. In her book, Texts, Facts, and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling, Dorothy Smith says:

In the women's movement, we began to discover that we lived in a world put together in ways in which we had had very little say. We found that we had participated unknowingly in a culture and an intellectual life in the making of which we had had little part. We discovered that we had been in various ways

silenced, deprived of the authority to speak, and that our experience therefore did not have a voice, lacked indeed a language, for we had taken from the cultural and intellectual world created largely by men the terms, themes, conceptions of the subject and subjectivity, of feeling, emotion, goals, relations, and an object world assembled in textually mediated discourses and from the standpoint of men occupying the *apparatuses of ruling*. (Smith, 1990, p. 1)

It was these terms of our social relations that only a decade ago we still called *patriarchy*. And *sexism* is what we called what happened to women within such a structure of male domination. The discourses by which men occupied what Smith calls “the apparatuses of ruling” were evident to us not only in the images that surrounded us on billboards, advertising, television and other media representations, but also in the organization of work, in various social and economic institutions and practices, in our access to the professions, in family and social forms of engagement, in the language by which we articulated our experiences (Lewis, 1990), in the practices of schooling with its attendant curricula, and in the academic context with regard to programmes, policies, research and scholarship.

As we uncovered and debated the “apparatuses of ruling” we extended our voices and demanded the space within which to raise them. In the academy, Women's Studies programmes, feminist research centers and the presence of feminist faculty and students provided an environment of rigorous discussion, political engagement and community. We debated the “masculine face” of the university. We strategized around the political rationale of course offerings and programme development. And through all this we lauded the increasing numbers of women in the academy, both as faculty and as students, believing it to be a hopeful sign that our presence might bring about new economies of knowledge and new engagements of practice. We had high hopes for feminism and the women's movement inside the academy and out.

As Rebeck reminded those of us who were part of the women's movement in the early days of the second wave of feminism, it was a time of energy and a general positive mood pervaded our politics and practice: we marched; we debated; we organized; we developed policy; we insisted on equal representation, equal educational opportunities, and equal presence in the workforce including equal pay for equal work; we demanded relief from the burdens of child and home care; we insisted on equal access to the economic resources of the state and of the family; and we demanded control over our own bodies and sexuality.

I don't want to suggest that all was "sweetness and light". I have never been comfortable with nostalgia. And there was no hint of nostalgia in Rebeck's views, either. Back then, as now, there were certainly reasons to be challenged, or to challenge ourselves, when our own myopia gave over to the tendency to romanticize the notion of the "collective voices of women". Effacing our differences within the category "woman" has never served us well. We live our experiences deeply across the divide of race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, age, ability, geography and politics, among other social categories of difference. Being brought up short by the differences among us is a valuable contribution that feminist debates made to the politics of women's self-determination; a self determination that meant different things to women positioned differently by social, economic, and identity markers.

However, in taking stock of how far we have come, we see that, at least in regard to some disciplines, women have achieved more faculty positions than was the case two or three decades ago. As well, we can point to increasing numbers of women who have been granted significant positions of institutional power and decision-making. Indeed, if the presence of more women on university campuses is the issue, it seems that a feminization of the academy of sorts has occurred over the twenty or thirty years since women academics have battled for our right to

teach, do research, and participate in administrative decision making. Even if this feminization is less evident in the more prestigious faculties and departments of Business, Economics, and Computer and Mechanical Engineering (Wood, 2004), or in the more prestigious appointments to senior faculty and research positions such as the new *Canada Research Chairs*, it is less likely than it once was that most university students will complete an entire undergraduate programme without encountering a single female professor.

Yet, for many *feminists*, women colleagues notwithstanding, the question of “climate” persists. This suggests that what is at stake, in the relationship between the academy, women, feminist politics, and the new economies of knowledge and scholarly activity, is not so much the *gender* of the social actors but the ideologies that drive academic practice, administrative decisions over academic teaching and research, and, given the current social, political and economic context, the terms by which a feminist analysis might be invoked.

To be sure, an experience based gender analysis is imperative.⁶ We need to know the facts of what has and what has not changed for women in the academy: Is it still the case that women are required to produce more work in order to achieve the same plateaus of success that men achieve with less work? Is it still the case that as women we pay for our participation in the professions and the academy by forfeiting our health and a personal life that men take for granted? Is it still the case that women academics fulfill their private and institutional requirements by meeting the ideologically fused mandates of the good professional, good mother, good intellectual? Indeed, these are important questions to ask.

However, I don't believe that the answers are enough to explain all of the ways that gender and social difference work within the academy's particular and current cultural and economic structures.

There is historical precedent to suggest that the increased participation in a profession or institution, of socially, politically and economically subordinated groups, can sometimes be less an indication of successful political battles for equity than an indication of the repositioning of the profession or institution within larger relations of power. In the current academic context, not only have the forms changed through which marginalization and exclusion are expressed, but our experiences of them may be a function more of the ideological shifts within the institution than of gender, even if it is through gender, and other forms of minority status, that its consequences are lived out.

Over the last decade much has changed in the politics and economies of the western world. In their book, Taking a Stand in a Postfeminist World, Mascia-Lees and Sharpe (2000) ask the question: "...where do we turn in a world in which many feminist arguments have lost the power to surprise and, therefore, to offer powerful criticism" (p. 16)?

This suggests that the language by which we would articulate a critique, the conceptual frameworks by which we would analyze and understand social, political and economic relations, and the political actions by which we would change the terms of these relations, are in peril of achieving the status of an anachronism. Making ideas like *patriarchy* and *sexism* feel and appear to be anachronistic is the very process of turning against themselves the once politically viable terms that could be used so powerfully to fight against marginalization and exclusion.

The project of feminism is changed by this fact.

Macia-Lees and Sharpe go on to argue for "a cultural criticism that is strategic, not programmatic, one that preserves the multiple commitments, ideas, and positions required to make sense out of our postfeminist context. [One that] theorizes and demonstrates the struggles

and maneuvers required to gain any sort of footing that might allow us to remain 'upright' and 'upstanding' on today's shaky ground" (p. 16).

I agree. Today, we cannot speak about sexism in the academy in the same terms we did ten or twenty or thirty years ago. Given the workings of patriarchic ideology, there is no going back. As the "*apparatuses* of ruling" have shifted, so the language of critique that suited the conditions and social economies of one historical moment, having once been spoken, shifts the terrain, the very experience, to which the critique was directed in the first place. In this regard, not only gender identity but also the effects of global structures must bear analysis.

On Being Startled

Globalization, internationalization, global economy, information technologies, global culture, new knowledge economies, virtual learning systems, new conservatism, public/private partnerships, backlash, neo liberalism, savage capitalism, privatization, standards and standardization, e-learning, the knowledge society, genetic modification, the new slavery, the new world order, McWorld, free trade zones, global competitiveness, work intensification, contract labour, market share, human capital... .. The words cascade.

I ask, is this the new place to which the machinations of patriarchy have moved?

The university, no more or less than any other institution, is a product of its time. If the language of critique has slipped away from those of us who have used the university as an important venue for debating and critiquing the very ideas by which social decisions would be made, then I want to know by what turns the ground has shifted. How might the story of feminism in the academy be told in these early years of the twenty-first century? What are the ideologies that drive institutional policies, decision-making and practices that have the effect of what several generations of feminists have identified as sexism? What is the "new face" of

sexism in the academy? Do the ideologies of globalization set in motion processes of re/masculinization that parallel the complex and uneven course of the feminization of certain aspects of the academy and the creation of a cheap and feminized labour force world wide?

What is the relationship between the shifting gender balance in the academy and the university's changing relationship to the macroeconomics of globalization and the new processes of colonization (Bales, 1999)? How might the presence of women in the academy signal the possibilities for dynamic change? And yet, how are the possibilities for feminist critique undermined where institutional practices have been fortified by the ideologies of globalization, marketization and privatization? What are the dynamics by which the heretofore vigorous feminist discourses in the academy might be being silenced? What are the possibilities of sustaining a feminist critique in an academic context where the terrain has shifted to new sites of masculinization? And finally, how do we work with students, who as the daughters and sons of their feminist mothers, carry the history of feminism as a birthright, and yet fail to notice the shifting ground of patriarchy?

In what follows, I offer three stories the subsequent analysis of which will reveal how each of them carries a hidden gender component, which, if left unremarked, reproduces a new version of gender inequality in the academy and ultimately in the larger structures of national and global economies.

First Story: The first story I have entitled Unit Pricing. Recently a heated debate arose, specifically among the undergraduate students on my campus. The issue is this. Not unlike other universities, the current fiscal situation of the university and the administrative response to it has created a hybrid institution with regard to the economics of programme delivery. Some programmes have been deregulated while others have not. Consequently students pay different

levels of tuition depending on their scholarly and professional interests; in other words, depending on what programme they are in, students' tuition costs are either regulated and therefore lower, or deregulated and therefore higher. Students in the deregulated programmes—coincident with programmes that are seen to be highly lucrative and market driven, and hence programmes that charge higher tuition fees—have complained that the students in the regulated programmes who take elective courses offered in the deregulated programmes are getting more *value* than they are paying for. The value to which they are referring is the unit price of the course arrived at by dividing the tuition fee by the number of courses required in the given programme. By this process of accounting, they claim that students in the regulated programmes are paying less per course taken in the deregulated programmes than those students who take these same courses as tuition paying students of the deregulated programmes. Presumably the solution would be to levy a sur-charge on students in the regulated programmes or, conversely, in not permitting students from the regulated programmes to take course options in the deregulated programmes.

Second Story: The second story I have called The “Shocking” Ideology of Graduate Funding. As is the case with many graduate programmes in many of our institutions of higher learning, funding for graduate students is cobbled together from a variety of sources. Some of these sources are individual faculty based, and some are university based, government based, and/or private funding based. Finding adequate funds to support graduate students is, of course, always a challenge and debates rage as to who is responsible and what consequences should follow from the application of these various sources of funding. At one such discussion, a colleague declared her view that only those faculty who hold research funds (specifically federal government research funds, which she considers most prestigious) should be *allowed* to supervise graduate

students. She dramatized her point by declaring that she was “shocked”, mediated by overtones of disdain, that faculty members who do not hold such research funds would assume that they *could* supervise graduate students.

Third Story: The third story I have called Labouring in the Minefield or To Whom Do the Profits Flow? Last month was not the first time that a graduate student asked me for advice having to do with university protocols and practices. Nor is the particular student of this story the only one who has come to me over the last several months with the question that is the topic of this story. She was new to the graduate programme and wasn't sure about how things worked. What she did know is that something felt not right: she felt uncomfortable and at risk. Her question had to do with the protocols of authorship. She had collected data; she had written a paper; she was hoping to publish it. But, it seems, her senior faculty supervisor assumed that she, who had not collected the data and had not written the paper, would be first, or, at the very least, second author on her publication. The student wondered what her rights were with regard to ownership of her work.

There is politics in how the story is told

Richard Johnson reminds us that “...stories obviously come not merely in the form of bookish or filmic fictions but also in everyday conversation, in everyone's imagined futures and daily projections, and in the construction of identities, individual and collective, through memories and histories” (Johnson, 1986/87, p. 6). A parallel view is suggested by “the Hmong [of South East China, Laos, and Cambodia]” who, Anne Fadiman writes, “have a phrase, hais cuaj twub kawm txub, which means ‘to speak of all kinds of things’. [This phrase] is often used at the beginning of an oral narrative as a way of reminding the listeners that the world is full of things that may not seem to be connected but actually are; that no event occurs in isolation; [and] that you can miss a lot by sticking to the point” (Fadiman, 1997, pp. 12-13).

For those of us who came to the discursive logic of story telling not through the wisdom of South East Asia's mountain people but through the tenets of western feminism, we know how often it happens that we are encouraged to see as unrelated, things that are profoundly connected in their expression and effects. It is also the case that we give meaning to our lives by the stories we tell ourselves, made significant, always, in relation to the stories by which *others* make sense of *their* lives. Feminism taught us that there are many ways to tell a story and that how the story is told is more a function of the storyteller's position in the relations of power than of the truth of the matter.

That we might be startled by a story, our own, or that of another, is the starting point for reflecting upon the context that makes a particular story possible. What stories startle us is ultimately a political question and, I believe, the point of departure for feminist politics. In attempting to bring focus to our lived experiences of the relationships between many apparently disconnected practices, policies and ideologies, I am encouraged by the ancient Hmong knowledge to not stick to the point in order to miss as little as possible, even as I am certain that missing some things is inevitable.

In telling these three stories, as I do here, it is important to emphasize that I do not intend that they be read as examples of personal pathologies enacted by the participants, or as *exposes* of individual characteristics (even though they may be these as well). For my purposes, these stories are important only to the extent that they amplify the political context that make these events possible and hence provide the ground from which a collective conversation may begin about current social, political and intellectual life in the academy.

Just as early feminist analysis and critique uncovered specific forms of gender inequity effected by the politics of modernist ideologies and the particularities of modernism's grand

narratives, so it is that this era we are calling postmodernism has its own ideological structures, attended by specific manifestations and enactments.

Analysis

In her book, Failing the Future, Annette Kolodny quotes Mary Douglas: “For us, the hope of intellectual independence is to resist, and the necessary first step in resistance is to discover how the institutional grip is laid upon our minds” (Kolodny, 1998, p. x).

The simplest of statements often seem to be the ones that carry the most potential. And so it is with this statement. As any casual conversation with colleagues will reveal, in the academy, the “institutional grip” that is currently “laid upon **our** minds” is, as David Hawkes states, “the complete dominance of the market, [and] of the exchange of commodities, [as related to] today’s global economy” (Hawkes, 1996/2003, p. 161).

Much has already been said about this new global order. As Henry Giroux points out, Robert W. McChesney provides a concise overview in his Introduction to Noam Chomsky’s Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order, where he states:

Neo-liberalism is the defining political economic paradigm of our time—it refers to the policies and processes whereby a relative handful of private interests are permitted to control as much as possible of social life in order to maximize their personal profit. Associated initially with Reagan and Thatcher, for the past two decades neo-liberalism has been the dominant global political economic trend adopted by political parties of the center and much of the traditional left as well as the right. These parties and the policies they enact represent the immediate interests of extremely wealthy investors and less than one thousand large corporations. (Giroux, 2002, p. 425)

That the university is not exempt from this economy is revealed in big and small ways. Sometimes it is briskly put, as in the case of a publicly available departmental document in which it is stated, “...the [administrator’s] office has been meeting delegations from [fill in the name of a third or second world country] to attempt to sell our services to them”. Other times, it

encompasses an entire web of interconnected ideologies, practices, and policies (Denning, 2004).

In the academy these are ones having to do with programme development, programme delivery, graduate student admissions, and the granting of research monies.

Analysis of the First Story: to the extent that the selective privatization and deregulation of some university programmes results in the commodification of academic disciplines, the differential valuation of certain kinds of knowledge encourages students to embrace a market economy ideology. As a consequence, the differential valuing of disciplinary areas undermines the hoped for effects that the increasing numbers of women in the academy might have brought about. The disciplinary areas where women have achieved near or more than fifty percent of student enrolment—but, I hasten to add, still only in the vicinity of thirty percent of the faculty in most instances—have simultaneously been devalued, ironically by the very processes of differentially imposed regulations on tuition. The commodification of higher education, driven by the ideologies of a market economy, has serious implications for how students make sense of their education.

In the university, the language of the market place imagines not an intellectually informed and politically disquieted student ready to grapple with challenges to the status quo, but rather a student who sees knowledge and its value as a commodity to be acquired, to be hoarded and ultimately to be bartered in the market place of salaries and prestige. If the acquisition of such knowledge is at the expense of another, all the better, because the ideologies of a market economy, premised on a supply and demand structure, is what gives value to the enterprise. The question of the *social* value of what is known doesn't enter into this calculation.

To the extent that neo-conservative ideologies embrace the notion that profit driven private enterprise is the fundamental economic engine of a developed society,⁷ the impact on the

culture of the university has been immense. No longer determined by the intellectual community, the knowledge economy is now being decided and enforced by what the government, linked to private enterprise, is willing to pay for.⁸ Under such conditions, students and faculty are encouraged to agree that all of the Humanities and much of the Social Sciences have little value. Philosophy, History, Geography, Sociology, Literature, Modern Languages, Classics, Art, Music, Drama, Film and the list goes on, have all been named as “useless” by various governments and their representatives, including the previous government of Ontario. One can only imagine what such governing bodies might think about areas of study such as Women's Studies, Postcolonial Studies, Gay/Lesbian/Transsexual Studies, Area Studies, and Development Studies.

This ideological framing of the work of particular aspects of the academy is not new. Indeed, it is nearly twenty years ago that Richard Johnson pointed out that “one manifestation [of the Conservative Counter-Reformation in Britain and the U.S—and we can always add Canada] is a vigorous assault on public educational institutions, both by cutting finance and by defining usefulness in strictly capitalist terms” (Johnson, 1986-87, p.41), and that gives value to only those areas of study that are demonstrably useful to market economies and commodity exchanges. It cannot be a surprise then if our students measure the value of their education not in terms of their intellectual development but in terms of the marketability of their credentials.

I am suggesting that the undervaluing of these disciplinary areas has a deleterious *gender* component. It may not be a coincidence that it is in these “major humanities [and some of the social sciences disciplines: that we] have developed means of formal description which are indispensable for cultural analysis” (Johnson, 1986-87, p.59); that we have built and honed the analytical tools we needed for cutting edge social critique; that we have developed the critical

frameworks that are the necessary prerequisites for the activist agendas aimed at bringing about the social changes for equity that were so much the motivating force behind the rights movements of the 60s and 70s; and that these are also the disciplinary areas where most of the women are, both as students and as faculty.

Analysis of the Second Story: The second story makes evident the ideology *and* the concrete effect of the commodification of knowledge and scholarship.

The postmodern form of imperialism, claims David Hawkes (1996/2003), is not repression but ideology. The ideologies of commodification and its twin brother privatization are the lived forms of this new imperialism. However, ideologies have real material outcomes and conversely material realities prod people to think about things in particular ways. As Marilyn Waring (1998) has pointed out, the ideologies of capitalism (of both the global *and* the local varieties) encourage the belief that value is created only when a financial exchange occurs. She goes on to say that, as a consequence, most of the work women do in the world is counted as *value less*—that is free of any value what so ever.

Just as in the market place of things, in the academy, these processes of commodification, joined with a marketplace ideology, encourages particular ways of thinking. Linking the value of scholarship specifically to research dollars, as my colleague does in the second story, is one of these ways of thinking.

The implications for feminism in the academy become apparent when we think of the ideological state of our universe, both local and global. Carmen Luke (1999) reminds us that “Knowledge and control, as new sociology of education alerted us to way back in the early 1970s (Young, 1971) has pretty much remained in the tenacious grip of a profoundly masculinist ideology, embodied and enacted by men and hegemonized women. That control, as feminist

educators have long pointed out is enacted through the curricular exclusions and inclusions from grade school to graduate school” (p. 5; see also Lewis, 1993).

In addition, as knowledge and scholarship gain their value on the same terms as do other commodity goods, current neo-conservative times have returned us to *new* forms of control that have re-invigorated the battle ground between feminism (along with other critical theoretical frameworks) and, as Ronnie Casella (1999) suggests, the “functionalist epistemologies and methods of research”. No longer a priority with most funding agencies, feminist research, that has historically “focused on contemporary society and emphasized the importance of social change through a politicized research agenda,” (p. 110) has, by these turns lost its currency in the academy.

Indeed, it has been suggested to more than a few of us that gender and openly feminist approaches to research questions and methodologies are not only no longer of interest to research funders or even as a programme focus in some Faculties but may in fact be a liability.

We might wonder if such positioning of feminism and the question of sexism in the academy as an anachronism is the next turn in the masculinist ideological agenda aimed at the control of knowledge and power. It may be this same turn that prompted an academic administrator, who has direct control over the assignments and evaluations of my work to suggest that perhaps feminism is no longer a viable teaching and scholarly endeavour.

While my feminist “radar” might read this “suggestion” to be somewhat of a veiled threat, I think it equally as possible that this administrator imagined herself to be giving me valuable advice. In this context, Annette Kolodny’s (1998) definition of Anti-feminist intellectual harassment presented in 1991 to the MLA Commission on the Status of Women becomes entirely relevant. I present it in its entirety. She states:

Anti-feminist intellectual harassment, a serious threat to academic freedom, occurs when 1) any policy, action, statement and/or behaviour has the intent or the effect of discouraging or preventing women's freedom of lawful action, freedom of thought, and freedom of expression; 2) or when any policy, action, statement, and/or behaviour creates an environment in which the appropriate application of feminist theories or methodologies to research, scholarship, and teaching is devalued, discouraged, or altogether thwarted; 3) or when any policy, action, statement, and/or behaviour creates an environment in which research, scholarship, and teaching pertaining to women, gender or gender inequities is devalued, discouraged, or altogether thwarted. (p. 105)

“Implicit in this definition,” she goes on to say, “is the understanding that the harmful policies or behaviours may be enacted by women as well as by men, and that men—as well as women—may also be the targets of such harassment. No less important, this definition does not require that the agent of the harassment—whether a person or a university policy—be burdened with the guilt of intentionality (*intention* being difficult to prove in the best documented circumstances). Instead, ...this definition concentrates on effects and consequences” (p. 105-106).

Returning us to new forms of empiricism these neo-conservative times have redefined standards and what counts as useful knowledge. If in these times we do not take account of the anti-progressive (might we say, anti-feminist) weighting of what counts as useful knowledge, we might indeed believe that there is no politics involved in the allocation of research funding, in the processes of graduate admissions and in the intended relationship between the two as expressed by my colleague and the subject of the second story.

It may just be that my colleague was confused in not seeing a distinction between empirical research funded by research grants, and scholarship that can be produced with or apart from such grants. However, it is my observation that the view of my colleague, while it may not yet motivate formal policy, might certainly encourage tacit practices when it comes to decisions

on graduate admissions and the encouragement students receive in looking for faculty for supervision and other scholarly relationships.

The idea that only scholarship linked specifically to research dollars should engage our graduate students, and hence the next generation of academics and scholars, effaces the politics of research funding and the deeply anti feminist implications of this position. We need to ask ourselves: what would be the effect on the intellectual life of the nation if only that scholarship that is the direct product of funded research were admissible as the legitimate work of the academy?

Analysis of the Third Story: While the economy of intellectual work has always had some market value, over the past decade, the imperatives of a market economy in relation to the academy have shifted dramatically. This has significant implications for how a gender-inflected analysis might proceed.

To the extent that the work we do in the academy is commodified and privatized it bears the marks of a capitalist economy. In the university this economy turns ideas into things, it creates private value out of what should be available as a public good, and it encourages a hoarding, manipulation and monopolization of the resources by which knowledges—now turned into commodities—might be generated and distributed.

As a general principle, the capitalist mode of exchange works best when those in control of its economy can arrange to reap the most profit from the least investment. Historically, this has been accomplished when those who hold positions of power—whether this be social, institutional, political or economic—can harness the labour of others for their own profit driven by the belief that they own not only the labourers' time but also the product of their labour.

In the academy, the commodity of exchange is measured in the garnering of programme development and research funds, and in the production of scholarship and publications. The value of our production is measured by volume on a yearly basis and has implications for our salaries and, perhaps even more importantly, for the prestige that such accomplishments bring to us. Add to this the now much recognized intensification of labour, including academic labour, and we find that these conditions encourage people to grab and take unto themselves items that they have not produced⁹; it encourages people to over produce the packaging in order to hide the meagerness of the content; it encourages people to value quantity over quality; and it encourages people to efface the real implications of what we know in return for the more “sellable” quietude produced by not knowing.

All of these have serious implications when scholarship-as-product returns a profit measured in research grants, publications and academic prestige as currency.

Conclusion

Many feminists in the academy are still of that generation that brought about significant social transformation. While still an anomaly in some disciplinary areas, by the late 60s and early 70s, women began to achieve access to post-secondary programmes and we began to graduate from universities in larger numbers—*and some of us were feminists*. Those of us who were there remember those times as both exhilarating and difficult. Our identity as intellectual women bore the scars of this history. Yet, after the heavy dose of non-feminist and often blatantly misogynist texts—the reading of which was the price we paid for being in the academy at all—reading the words of radical women scholars and social activists felt at times like a comfortable home and at other times like a call to action.

Indeed, in her work, *Feminism in New Times*, Carmen Luke (1999) observes that over the past decade “much has changed in our own lives, in the academy, in public debate, in feminist and social theoretical debate” (p. 1). This might be all the more reason to be surprised to still hear women students relate experiences not unlike the ones we experienced, to still bear witness to the struggles of our feminist colleagues as we encounter antifeminism in the classroom and from non feminist colleagues (men and women alike), in course evaluations, and in the ways some students and administrators use them (Lewis, 1999), and to hear women academics continue to relate experiences of doing more for less (Acker 2003, p. 391). In similar research, Sandra Acker and Carmen Armenti (2004) directed their attention specifically to “the conditions under which women academics work” Pointedly, they ask, and we might ask with them, “why, in these changing times and after thirty years of feminist writing and resistance, do these problems appear to persist” (p. 3-4)?

However, as it has been my intention to indicate, the question of how we talk about sexism in the academy in the year 2004 is more problematic than ever. In an earlier article, (Lewis, 1999), I relate a conversation I had with Evelyn Fox-Keller where she cautioned, “the power of patriarchy...is like water. When it is prevented from going in one direction it swells and pours off in another, perhaps altogether unexpected, direction with as much force as ever, and perhaps more, because of the advantage of not having been anticipated” (p. 60). We need to speak from this place of caution as we revisit the trajectories of patriarchy in the academy, which seem to have shifted, in a most unanticipated way, out of the range of feminist critique, *as we knew it*.

Indeed, the last ten years have seen a sea change in the academy. The economic imperatives lay heavy on our minds and spirits. Neither our teaching nor our research and

scholarship have, it seems, escaped its effects. The ideologies of a market economy bring with them commensurate practices sometimes embedded in policies; other times colouring the private/personal ways individuals think about academic work. Hidden by the ever-present claims to objectivity and professionalism, the effects of the ideologies of commodification and privatization manifest not only in the debates over tuition deregulation and industry/academy partnerships, but in the ideologies that frame the possibilities for research, funding, and scholarship.

The question of who gets admitted to our academic programmes, to which academic programmes they are admitted, what criteria of eligibility are used, how and from where funding is provided, how resources are distributed, what counts as legitimate scholarship, what opportunities for useful work are made available and so on, all impact on the work that is ultimately produced by us and by our graduate students—the next generation of faculty—the future of the academy.

I give the last word to one of my colleagues. In the university of the new millennium the itinerate academic is one whom we have come to know and upon whom the institution has come to rely for cheap and pliable labour. Pushed in and out of service as needed, these scholars cobble together a variety of part time and terminal jobs, they have no benefits, they have no hope of a pension, and they are mostly women (Acker 2003, p. 391). In conversation with one such intellectual labourer recently, I asked her what she thought about the question of Sexism in the Academy. “Sexism in the academy”, she repeated somberly, “it’s gone underground”. For me, this raised serious considerations regarding “where to next” with feminism.

While developing the ideas in this paper I engaged an ongoing conversation with some of my graduate students. I wanted to be sure that, as I reflected on my own experiences and

challenges as a feminist academic, scholar, and teacher, I was still speaking to students on terms that had meaning for them. It was following one such conversation that one of my students subsequently wrote to me regarding her reading of this paper:

No kidding, just altogether really fabulous, inspiring, brain-opening in a very cool way – just a thing I wonder, though, not about this paper but some of the sentiments (overt or tacit) in it...you seem convinced, with the kind of distance that time has jammed between you, as 2nd wave, and the students you teach now, that the absence of new or relevant stuff for syllabi, the cryptic indoctrinations of backlash that manifest themselves in classes, the overall mood and climate, etc., that you don't and can't effect the kinds of changes you want. I really think you're wrong. Do you sometimes think about where **your teaching** actually goes?¹⁰

By this student's response, I am gracefully reminded that our collective hope must lie in our ability to notice that what we do in the classroom does, indeed, find a receptive audience among our students, in collaboration with whom we can create a new language of critique suitable to the current conditions, on terms that can be recognized by a new generation of feminists, using the new technologies by which we might raise a new movement, aimed at reinvigorating the much touted new world order with the integrity and care in the service of which feminist voices might continue to be raised over many generations.

Notes

¹ I thank Irene Chisholm for her careful readings of earlier drafts of this text, for her, always, insightful comments, and for continuing to share important conversations from which I learn so much.

² Judy Rebick is a feminist and social activist. She was the first president of the Canadian organization, *National Action Committee on the Status of Women*. She is publisher of *Rabble*, <http://www.rabble.ca/>, an independent project of *Alternatives*, <http://www.alternatives.ca/en>, a Montreal-based NGO. *Rabble* is supported by their founding partner, *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives* <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/>.

³ Rebick concluded by saying that "3rd wave feminism is an idea not a movement. What young women have to do is turn it into a movement".

⁴ For a sampling, see Reimer, 2004; Evans, 2003; Luke, 2001; Elam and Wiegman, 1995; Mascia-Lees and Sharpe, 2000; LeDoeuff, 2003; Kolody, 1998; Eagleton, 2003; Martinez and Stuart, 2003; Mandell, 1998.

⁵ For further discussions see Looser and Kaplan, 1997; and Davies, Lubelska, and Quinn, 1994.

⁶ For recent research on this, see Acker, 2003; and Acker and Armenti, 2004.

⁷ See McMurtry, 2002, 1999; and Stiglitz, 2002/2003.

⁸ The following is a representative sampling of relevant literature: Smyth, Dow, Hattam, Reid and Shacklock, 2000; Turk, 2000; Shumar, 1997; Menand, 1996; Readings, 1996; Ralph, Regimbald and St-Amand, 1997; Bakan and MacDonald, 2002; Axelrod, 2002; Panitch, Leys, Zuege and Konings, 2004.

⁹ I welcome Carmen Luke's unequivocal criticism and provide a lengthy analysis because the point remains important and salient: "My graduate days had already taught me a lifetime of lessons about gendered academic hierarchy.... I had spent a decade learning and reproducing the canon, what we then called 'male-stream thought.' *Getting ripped off by professors for authorship was one important lesson*" (2001, p. xiv). I want to make it clear that neither Luke nor I am painting all faculty with the same brush. Nor is this an issue concerning only teaching and research faculty. Indeed, administrators are not exempt from such indictments. While the self-monitoring of integrity and academic honesty, as required by many internal governing documents, is well honoured by many scholars, researchers and administrators, in the university there are those whose practices can be found to be objectionable, if not downright dishonest. Some of these practices are not new. However, the intensification of the ideologies of marketization and the commodification of academic work, and the commensurate intensification of labour, has brought with it an equal intensification, to almost fevered pitch in some academic units, of these practices. The only important caveat I would add to Luke's observations is that "male-stream thought" is not confined to the biologically male professor or administrator. The ideologies that drive these practices and the responses to it are as prevalent among senior women academics and administrators as it is among the men. It seems possible that these practices intensify as the processes of commodification raise the stakes. Indeed, more recently, junior faculty seem to be being *mentored* into these practices earlier in their careers as the academic requirements for review, tenure and promotion also intensify.

¹⁰ I thank Valerie Ashford for pointing this out to me, for her much valued suggestions and responses to this text, and for her boundless intellectual energy that, in the end, is what still makes it all worthwhile. Personal communication used with permission.

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