

“STOP PRESS—Not abortion again”: Disrupting linear time through archival analysis of *Broadsheet* magazine

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Abstract

This article draws from the published and archival material of the New Zealand feminist magazine *Broadsheet* (1972-1997) to explore its response to the Contraceptive, Sterilisation and Abortion Act 1977 (CSA), which was passed under urgency and described as “one of the most repressive abortion laws in the world” (Coney, 1982b, p. 16). The January 1978 issue of *Broadsheet* had just gone to print when the Act passed into law, and its next issue was not due to be published until March. Acutely aware of how critical a delay of three months is to an unintended pregnancy, *Broadsheet* volunteers painstakingly added additional information about alternative options to each copy of the printed magazines. This intervention was no small feat, and offers a compelling account of feminist resistance; however, as later issues of *Broadsheet* illustrate, such efforts were not sustainable. Taking up the theme of ‘pause’, this article draws on the work of Elizabeth Freeman (2010, 2019) to explore the temporality of relations of power, here visible in the contrast between ‘urgency’ and ‘delay’. It further draws on the work of Kate Eichhorn (2013) to explore how ‘pause’ within the archive itself works to interrupt understandings of time as linear, and therefore also offers opportunities to contest narratives of linear ‘progress’. As the recent retraction of reproductive rights in the United States illustrates, ‘progress’ is neither inevitable nor secure. This article therefore uses an archival analysis of *Broadsheet*’s response to the CSA Act as an opportunity for pause and reflection on the continuing struggle for reproductive rights in the present, and the constant need for resistance.

Key words: *Broadsheet*, feminism, Aotearoa New Zealand, archives, print culture, abortion

Introduction

Feminist periodicals such as the New Zealand magazine *Broadsheet* (1972-1997) were a prominent feature of ‘second wave’ feminism, providing alternative representations of feminism to those within the mainstream media, in which feminists’ “concerns and actions, and the movement itself, were consistently ignored, trivialised, and distorted” (Coney, 1982, p. 11, cited in Daly 1993, p. 100). *Broadsheet* comprised a range of feminist art, activism and analysis, and also played a key role in connecting the diverse feminist groups operating throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, providing a forum through which feminists could share concerns beyond their local communities. In addition, the Broadsheet Collective established a feminist bookstore in Tāmaki Makaurau and compiled an extensive archive of research on women (University of Auckland, n.d.). *Broadsheet* therefore became largely synonymous with feminism in Aotearoa—as Sue Kedgley recently wrote, “when *Broadsheet* closed down in 1997, it seemed to symbolise the end of the second wave of women’s activism” (2021, p. 182). This reputation has been further cemented through the archiving of the magazine and the Collective’s other records in the Sir George Grey Special Collections, as well as through its recent digitization by the University of Auckland.

This article draws from the published and archival material of *Broadsheet* (1972-1997) to explore its response to the Contraceptive, Sterilisation and Abortion Act (CSA), which significantly limited existing access to abortion and was described as “one of the most repressive abortion laws in the world” (Coney, 1982b, p. 16). When the Act passed into law in December 1977, the January 1978 issue of *Broadsheet* had just gone to print, which meant that the magazine would be unable to address the change in law until the next issue. While this is not uncommon for periodicals, in this case the delay was further compounded by an extended break in *Broadsheet*’s production, which meant that the next issue would not appear until March. Acutely aware of how critical three months can be for an unintended pregnancy, *Broadsheet* volunteers painstakingly added a flyer containing advice and information about alternative options to each copy of the printed magazines, and glued labels that read “Where to get an abortion: see inside” to each cover (Coney, 1982b, p.

16). This striking intervention occurred alongside several other feminist responses, including setting up the Sisters Overseas Service (SOS), which assisted women to access abortions in Australia, to offer a compelling example of feminist resistance to the change in law. As the struggle for reproductive rights continued, however, later issues of *Broadsheet* instead evoke a sense of weary inevitability, as captured by the comment “not abortion again” (Coney, 1983, p. 40). The highly restrictive laws based on the Crimes Act 1961 and the Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion Act 1977 remained in place in Aotearoa New Zealand until the passing of the Abortion Legislation Act 2020 (Goodyear-Smith, 2023). Despite the decriminalisation of abortion in Aotearoa New Zealand, the concerns expressed within *Broadsheet* continue to resonate. Reproductive rights remain under threat, as has been acutely demonstrated by the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in the United States (US) in 2022.

Taking up the theme of ‘pause’, this analysis takes as its starting point Elizabeth Freeman’s (2010, 2019) explorations of the temporal dimensions of social power and, following Foucault, her claim that linear understandings of time work to “organize individual human bodies toward maximum productivity” (2010, p. 3). It further draws on the work of Kate Eichhorn (2013) to specifically consider how feminists’ archival activities, which proliferated during an apparent abeyance or ‘pause’ of feminist activism, offer opportunities to disrupt linear time, and with it the teleological narratives of ‘progress’ as described by Clare Hemmings (2011). For Eichhorn (2013), these disruptions offer new opportunities for feminist politics. As she asks, “what could be more hopeful than the realization that time is not simply marching forward and that we might imagine a way outside our oppressive present through a radical repudiation of ‘progress’?” (Eichhorn, 2013, p. 7). This article explores the temporality of relations of power by first considering how the CSA Act, and *Broadsheet*’s response to it, were structured and shaped by ‘urgency’ and ‘delay’. Then, taking a broader perspective, it moves to consider how the mediation of these events through *Broadsheet*’s archives works to disrupt contemporary understandings of linear progress within feminism. Throughout each level of analysis, this article maintains that ‘progress’ is neither inevitable nor secure and calls for continuing vigilance in the struggle for reproductive rights in the present.

Literature review

Feminist print culture is often considered a defining feature of second-wave feminism (Godard, 2002; Jordan, 2010; Travis, 2008). Feminist periodicals and other publications were considered a crucial source of feminist knowledge (see, e.g., Bazin & Waters, 2016; Beins, 2017, 2021; Sedgwick, 2020). The production of alternative media has been a regular feature of feminism and other social movements (Whyte, 2022), however the 1960s saw the emergence of an entirely separate feminist press, “a complete but parallel system of diffusion” in which feminist writing was supported by feminist printers, publishers, distributors and other actors (Godard, 2002, p. 215). At the heart of feminist print culture was the belief that women-only institutions were necessary to overcome structural patriarchy (Travis, 2008). Feminist print culture coincided with a proliferation of women-only centres and services, from cultural and art cooperatives to health clinics and legal services. Each of these organisations sought to redress different permutations of sexism, however, the power to represent and shape the meaning of feminism itself was considered particularly significant. As Travis (2008) writes:

Women would never be truly free unless they first seized ownership of the means of cultural production and then restructured and de-hierarchicalized that production, liberating the written word from the material regime that had grown up to enforce the oppressive epistemological and moral structures of capitalist patriarchy. (p. 282).

Feminist print culture aimed to incorporate feminist values into every stage of the “communications circuit” described by Robert Darnton (1982), which has become a cornerstone of analyses of print culture. In response to growing fragmentation of scholarship exploring the “social and cultural history of communication by print”, Darnton (1982, p. 65) aimed to provide a holistic overview of the communication process, and further to highlight the synergistic interdependence of each of its components. He describes how a book moves through several stages during its “life-cycle”: First the author, then the publisher and printer, through shippers and booksellers, to finally the reader. Darnton’s (1982) model also acknowledges the broader forces that bear upon each of these stages, including intellectual influences and publicity, economic and

social conjuncture, and political and legal sanctions. *Broadsheet* and other feminist periodicals resisted the influences of patriarchal capitalism in both their content and their production. However, they remained constrained by dominant modes of production, negotiating these and adapting them to fit with feminist values.

The nuances of feminist print culture have also prompted scholars to revisit the “communications circuit” itself. Simone Murray (2004) argues that Darnton’s (1982) model—which does not account for gender—is structured around “successful communication” that advances through each stage of production, distribution and consumption (pp. 16-17). It therefore cannot account for the contingency surrounding feminist publishing, or for “what founders in the system, for what remains unwritten, for that which is rejected for publication, or for books refused retail space or denied distribution outlets” (Murray, 2004, p. 16). Murray (2004) maintains that “the ghosts of these silences and hiatuses haunt feminist publishing endeavours” in particular (p. 17). Other scholars point to the different translations between social, economic and cultural capital in feminist publishing. As Travis (2008) makes evident, many—though certainly not all—feminists viewed patriarchy as deeply intertwined with capitalism, and profit-making was often viewed with suspicion (Beins, 2017; Godard, 2002; Travis, 2008). Many feminist periodicals also aimed to keep the cost to the reader as minimal as possible in order to expand the movement, further limiting their resources (Flannery, 2005, p. 25). Barbara Godard (2002) explores feminist periodicals’ disavowal of profit through Luce Irigaray’s understanding of the ‘labour of love’ to argue that women contribute to periodicals “on a volunteer basis, reproducing the traditional characteristics of women’s work as a ‘labour of love’ outside the public sphere and, consequently, without the prestige of symbolic recognition” (p. 212).

In short, feminist publishing was precarious. This meant that feminist periodicals were particularly vulnerable to the effects of neoliberalism and its “repressive effect” on democratic dissent (Brown, 2001; Godard, 2002). Wendy Brown (2015) describes neoliberalism as a “governing rationality extending a specific formulation of economic values, practices, and metrics to every dimension of human life”, such that “citizens” are transformed into “consumers” (p. 30). Increasing costs of production brought about by privatisation and deregulation and the unsustainability of volunteer labour forced the closure of groups throughout all aspects of feminist print culture. At the same

time, the increasing accommodation of feminist writing within mainstream publishing meant there was increasingly perceived to be no longer any need for distinctively feminist publishing—or indeed feminism itself (Flannery, 2005; McRobbie, 2008). The arrest and apparent abeyance of feminist activism under neoliberalism prompted the ‘archival turn’ within feminism, as I return to shortly.

Through its focus on ‘pause’, this article situates analyses of feminist print culture within broader discussions of temporality and power. Elizabeth Freeman (2019) draws specific attention to the temporality of the disciplinary power articulated by Foucault, arguing that its “method and modality temporalized the human body more completely, more thoroughly, and more minutely than ever before” (p. 2). She therefore introduces the concept of ‘chrononormativity’ to describe how time works normatively, as “naked flesh is bound into socially meaningful embodiment through temporal regulation” (Freeman, 2010, p. 3). Beyond the individual, as Dana Luciano (2007) has explored, ‘chronobiopolitics’ describes how entire populations are managed so that personal histories of birth, marriage, and reproduction are aligned with the economic interests of the nation, that the “sequence of socioeconomically ‘productive’ moments” recognised and legitimised by the state coincides with individuals’ perceptions of “what it means to have a life at all” (Freeman, 2010, p. 5). Here, women’s reproductive labour becomes a crucial point of tension, unvalued within capitalist discourse yet simultaneously essential to the continued availability of human capital. In her elucidation of ‘neoliberal feminism’, Catherine Rottenberg (2017) highlights how temporality works to manage these contradictions: New technologies such as egg freezing enable women to engage in “careful sequencing of career and maternity and smart (self-)investments in the present to ensure enhanced returns in the future”, thus mobilising the future as a key technique of power (Rottenberg, 2017, p. 332). As it is made complicit with the productivity of capitalism, therefore, neoliberal feminism is contained and controlled within strict parameters that disavow any need for dissent.

Crucial to our regulation through temporality is the construction of time as linear. Freeman (2010) argues that linear understandings of time work to “organize individual human bodies toward maximum productivity” (p. 3). If we are regulated and made productive through linearity, then the discontinuities within these sequences may offer potential for resistance. Drawing on Eli Zaretsky,

Freeman (2010) observes that, despite being culturally constructed, “emotional, domestic, and biological tempos” cannot easily be aligned with and absorbed into “the mechanized tempo of industrial capitalism” (p. 7), as demonstrated in Rottenberg’s (2017) analysis of reproductive labour cited above. For Freeman (2010), therefore, disruptions to sequential time, such as “synchrony, anachronism, anastrophe, belatedness, compression, delay, ellipsis, flashback, hysteron-proteron, pause, prolepsis, repetition, reversal, surprise” (xxii), may provide opportunities to rethink and resist our subjectification as primarily productive. Here, the modalities of the archive itself generate such discontinuities. Archives facilitate encounters or ‘proximities’ between agents who otherwise occupied different periods of time and space (Eichhorn, 2013). Because matrices of knowledge and power intersect within archives—Foucault (1972) writes that the archive is a “system that establishes statements as events and things” (cited in Stoler, 2002, p. 94)—these encounters across temporalities generate new opportunities for politics. Kate Eichhorn (2013) elaborates on the political potential of archives through Wendy Brown’s (2001) understanding of ‘genealogy’. Brown (2001) outlines how genealogical analysis interrupts understandings of history as a linear and determining force, in which the present is understood as a necessary or inevitable outcome of the past, by emphasising the contingency of historical events. Instead, a genealogical approach posits “continual yet discontinuous histories, histories without direction yet also without end, histories of varied and protean orders of subjection” (Brown, 2001, p. 104). Accordingly, the archive becomes a site in which relations of power can be contested.

Eichhorn (2013) primarily focuses on the ‘archival turn’ within feminism. For Eichhorn (2010), the decline of feminist publishing has meant that feminist archives have now become the “primary apparatus through which we have continued to authorize new forms of feminist knowledge and cultural production” (p. 627). Following Brown’s (2001) discussion of genealogy, Eichhorn (2013) suggests that feminist archives are a rich site in which the contingencies of both past and present are revealed: Feminism’s “scrap heap” manifests as “a complex site where the past accumulates in the present as a resource to be embraced and rejected, mined and recycled, discarded and redeployed” (p. 29). This reconfiguration of past and present opens up new possibilities for feminist futures, which are no longer bound by sequential and ‘progressive’ narratives. Clare Hemmings (2011) has highlighted how the linear narratives that underpin feminist histories, such as the ‘wave’ metaphor, reinscribe discourses of ‘progress’ and ‘loss’ within feminism that work

to position feminists of different generations in opposition to each other. These narratives compress differences within each generation into what Joan W. Scott (1990) describes as an “illusory unity” that takes “as representative of feminism whatever discourse seems dominant at a particular moment” (p. 83). At the same time, differences between generations are amplified, such that the potential for solidarity between feminists of different generations is eclipsed by the exaggeration of their differences. This emphasis on generation appears to be a product of broader neoliberal discourse—the highly dramatised conflict between “millennials” and “baby boomers” offers another example—and itself can be understood as a means by which we are regulated through temporality (Winch, Littler & Keller, 2016).

By interrupting these understandings of sequential time and progress—for example, by revealing how issues such as abortion are repeatedly reasserted and reanimated—archives offer opportunities to resist our regulation through temporality within dominant relations of power. However, archival practices are necessarily political. Stuart Hall (2001) argues that “the activity of ‘archiving’ is... always a critical one, always a historically located one, always a contestatory one, since archives are in part constituted within the lines of force of cultural power and authority” (2001, pp. 89–92). While the aim of genealogy is to deconstruct ‘essential’ identities—including that of the researcher—this can never be fully realised because genealogical analysis itself remains animated by forces of the present. As Brown (2001) explains, “there is no illusion that we stand apart from ourselves” (p. 108). Therefore, while genealogy creates new possibilities for politics, it does not prescribe what these will be (Brown, 2001). Feminists’ engagement with archives therefore remain shaped by the neoliberal rationality of the present.

Methodology

This article uses qualitative research methods to critically examine the ‘scrap heap’ of published and archival material from the magazine *Broadsheet*. The entire collection of over 200 issues of *Broadsheet* has been digitised and made available by the University of Auckland (n.d.). In addition, its administrative records and other material are held within the Sir George Grey Special Collections in Tāmaki Makaurau. Following Anne Begg (2012, pp. 2-3), this article uses an “eclectic mix” of material to highlight “exemplary moments” and draw out the relations between

these. It primarily draws its material from several reflections on *Broadsheet's* own history published within the magazine itself, as well as regular sections including “Fronting up: The workers’ report to the readers” in which the Collective published notices, requests for volunteers or donations, future feature topics and deadlines, and details of its financial situation. These sections offer contemporary researchers insight into both the practicalities and sentiments of the magazine’s production. In focusing on *Broadsheet's* production rather than the histories of abortion in Aotearoa New Zealand, this article leaves largely unexplored the wider context of the struggle for reproductive rights, in which confrontations between pro-choice and pro-life groups occurred in media texts, physical protests and attacks, and in legislation and policy. Nor does it examine the range of differing ‘feminist’ perspectives on abortion—particularly in relation to intersections of race and colonialism—comprised within *Broadsheet* itself, despite these being an invaluable area for future research.

***Broadsheet's* response to the Contraceptive, Sterilisation and Abortion Act 1977**

The CSA Act was passed into law in December 1977 under urgency (Goodyear-Smith, 2023). Prior to the Act, while abortion was a crime under the Crimes Act 1908, a 1961 amendment provided for lawful abortion up to 20 weeks gestation if “the person doing the act believed that the continuance of the pregnancy would result in serious danger... to the life, or to the physical or mental health, of the woman or girl” (New Zealand Parliament, 1961 cited in Goodyear-Smith, 2023, p. 73). This allowed for the establishment of the first abortion clinic in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Auckland Medical Aid Centre (AMAC), in 1974 (Goodyear-Smith, 2023). The increasing accessibility of abortion prompted increasing opposition. The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) led a series of anti-abortion campaigns that prompted a Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion which investigated “whether current law on abortion met the needs of society, and whether any law changes should be made” (Goodyear-Smith, 2023, p. 74). As Goodyear-Smith (2023) explains:

The Commission was clearly anti-abortion... They recommended changes to the Crimes Act, including the setting up of a statutory committee to oversee the working of abortion law, and the establishment of panels to decide whether an

abortion being sought was justified under the law... The aim was a reduction in the number of abortions taking place. (p. 74).

It was on these recommendations that the CSA Act was introduced, and, despite feminist opposition, women's reproductive rights were abruptly restricted. In practice, this meant that:

Getting an abortion was now much more difficult. Women seeking consideration for abortion must be referred by their GP to two certifying consultants, one of whom must be an O&G specialist, and neither to be the operating doctor. An Abortion Supervisory Committee was established to appoint and regulate the certifying consultants and decide which institutions would be licenced to provide abortions. Neither socio-economic hardship, rape, incest, the health of the mother nor carrying a grossly abnormal baby that would be born with serious handicaps were grounds for an abortion. (Goodyear-Smith, 2023, p. 74).

The CSA Act emerged in a broader context of struggle for reproductive rights in Aotearoa New Zealand, of which *Broadsheet* had “followed every twist and turn... providing the kind of reportage the dailies are loathe to give” (Coney, 1982b, p. 16). This included, for example, a police raid and subsequent prosecution of Dr James Woolnough, who had been performing abortions at the AMAC (Broadsheet Collective, 1974) and the Hospital Amendment Act 1975, which appeared to specifically target the AMAC by restricting abortions to public hospitals. These formal interventions dovetailed with the protest and activism of anti-abortion groups. When the AMAC relocated to the former Aotea Hospital in order to circumnavigate the restrictions imposed by the 1975 Act, pro-life demonstrators set up outside the new premises “within hours” of the Centre's reopening, armed with “with a New Zealand flag at half-mast and a small white coffin, decorated with daffodils and a cross” (Coney, 1975, p. 11). Recounting these “frightening... fanatical and aggressive” activities, Coney (1975) predicted that pro-life activists may “resort to arson or assault, so reckless is their disregard for human life - when it's adult and female” (p. 12). This prediction was realised the following year, when the AMAC was attacked by arsonists in 1976, *Broadsheet* featured a photograph of a “charred and twisted hospital bed” in the burnt-out clinic on its cover (Coney, 1982b, p. 16). Similarly, the June 1977 cover of *Broadsheet* featured the names of three

women who had lost their lives to “backstreet abortions”, in protest of the Royal Commission’s controversial report (Coney, 1982b, p. 16).

When the CSA Act passed into law, therefore, *Broadsheet* was central to the rapid response from feminists. Coney (1982b) recalled that:

Even before workers picked up their morning papers, to read of the passing of the Act, posters had appeared in towns and cities all over New Zealand condemning the new Act. Initiated by Broadsheet workers the poster printing and paste up had been orchestrated from the Broadsheet office in Victoria Street. (p. 16).

In addition to this censure of the Act itself, feminists also worked quickly to provide support to women who sought abortions: “within hours of the passing of the Bill, Joss Shawyer in Auckland had formed the Sisters Overseas Service to get desperate women to Australia and within days similar groups sprang up throughout New Zealand” (Coney, 1982b, p. 16).

For *Broadsheet* magazine itself, however, the passing of the Act coincided with two forms of routine ‘pause’ in its production. The first of these was that its next issue, January 1978, had just gone to print. Here, a full-page comic strip published in 1980 provides useful insight into the processes of *Broadsheet*’s production. In contrast to the potential immediacy of contemporary digital communication, the production of *Broadsheet* spanned weeks. Having finalised the content for an issue (for copy was received and then reviewed or edited via mail), typesetting and layout took multiple days each, and a Collective member then had to catch a train from Tāmaki Makaurau to Whanganui to get the finalised pages to the printer—which itself took a week (Broadsheet Collective, 1980, p. 14). The point at which an issue went to print, then, was the point at which new content would be delayed for the longest before its publication. In several issues, the inclusion of the phrase “stop press!” indicates last-minute additions to an issue just ahead of this point, so that urgent news would not be delayed. Further, as these delays were inherent to these modes of production, they were not uncommon—as Beins (2017) writes, “delays in publication occasionally meant that announcements for events appeared after they had already occurred” (pp. 22-23). While the January 1978 issue addressed abortion extensively—its editorial even began “the abortion

struggle - why haven't we won it yet?" (Guy, 1978, p. 6)—the issue does not mention the Act at all. In the present example, however, this potential delay was compounded by a second form of 'pause', because the Broadsheet Collective did not publish a February issue of the magazine, instead taking an extended break in publishing over the holiday period. This standard publishing schedule therefore meant that, without intervention, *Broadsheet* would not have addressed the passing of the Act in print until March 1978.

My primary interest in this article is in how the Broadsheet Collective interrupted these rhythms of production by appending material to the printed magazines before they were distributed, in order to minimise delay in addressing the change in law. This intervention allowed the Collective to quickly provide women with basic and necessary information, before analysing the change in law more comprehensively in the following issue. As Coney (1982b) later recounts:

A flyer was hurriedly produced telling where women could go for help... *Broadsheet's* flyer, stuffed inside each January issue of the magazine, carried information on how to contact SOS and urging women to fight the new law. Volunteer workers patiently glued a label on the front of each magazine with the message: 'Where to get an abortion: see inside'. (p. 16).

The flyer itself has not been digitised as part of the January 1978 issue, illustrating the complexities and contention surrounding the digitisation of archival material, as I return to in the discussion. However, it can be viewed in *Broadsheet's* archives at the Auckland Central Library. A single page of black text on white paper, its title reads "How to get an abortion". The flyer refers primarily to the SOS, providing information about the service and contact details for Tāmaki Makaurau and Ōtautahi branches of the organisation, so that women "are not forced to resort to backstreet butchery" (Broadsheet Collective, 1978). It promises that the March issue will contain "more information on how to get an abortion, and what women can do to get the law repealed". Large text at the bottom reads "Make sure you get involved in fighting anti-abortion laws now!" (Broadsheet Collective, 1978).

Broadsheet's appending of additional material to the January 1978 issue was no small feat. The magazine perpetually lacked labour and resources, and the cost of materials required to produce the flyers and cover labels would not have been negligible. In an early editorial, Coney (1973) writes that the addition of a single extra page to the then twelve-page magazine meant they needed “to sell 100 extra Broadsheets to cover the cost... so bang goes our profit (meagre as it is)” (p. 2). Additional forms of precarity affected other stages of the communications circuit—the distribution of the January 1978, for example, was impeded by many shops’ refusal to carry the labelled copies of the magazine. A comment in the following issue, titled “We are offensive?” noted that the magazine had been withdrawn from a bookstore following a reported complaint, and was eventually replaced with non-labelled versions (Broadsheet Collective, 1978b, p. 11). This refusal reflects an additional form of ‘interruption’, illustrating interruptions to the communications circuit and “what founders in the system” described by Murray (2004, p. 16).

The following issue critiqued and condemned the change in law from several different angles. Feature articles included discussions of “tactics” to resist the change in law and reports on protests that have already taken place (Sinclair et al., 1978); and a discussion of the risks of hormonal contraception in anticipation of increased numbers of women considering using them in response to the new restrictions on abortion (Coney, 1978). Another article comprised a biographical account of the life of a solo mother (Tarver, 1978, p. 13). A “pull out” insert on abortion provided more instructive guidance to readers, including contact details for twelve different SOS groups around the country (Broadsheet Collective, 1978c). The insert outlined that the safest option for an abortion—to fly to Australia for a medical procedure—is also the most expensive: “An Australian abortion will cost you approximately \$500, inclusive of the return air fare, the operation, taxi fares, overnight accommodation and medication” (Broadsheet Collective, 1978c, p. 19). On the following two pages are descriptions of “the unpleasant alternatives” to abortion (Broadsheet Collective, 1978c, pp. 20-21). These were, emphatically, not suggestions or recommendations, but instead an attempt to provide information about the efficacy and side effects of alternative options to women who may be considering them. Anecdotal evidence highlighted the need to provide such information—under the heading “Desperate women take desperate measures”, the issue also included reports of books about herbal remedies being out of stock at libraries, Vitamin C tablets being sold for \$10 each, and pharmacies being nearly sold out of eucalyptus oil, in which people

had been soaking tampons (Broadsheet Collective, 1978c, p. 19). As Coney (1982b) later wrote, the magazine's "cover summed up the feeling of feminists: a woman held a baby under one arm, a placard with the other saying "NZ Women Crucified" under the caption "A giant step backward — abortion outlawed"" (p. 16).

Together, these issues of *Broadsheet* point to a fierce, coordinated response by *Broadsheet* and other feminists to the change in law. Later issues, however, offer insight into some of the dispiriting and demoralising effects of the law on and among feminists. An editorial in the May 1978 of *Broadsheet*, which reported on a Women's Abortion Rights Conference held in Tāmaki Makaurau in March, described the women's movement as "depressed; split and scattered, directionless and powerless" (Ranstead, 1978, p. 12). Recalling this period, Coney (1982b) described the Act as "a bitter defeat for the feminist movement", explaining that:

Despite polls which showed a majority of New Zealanders supported a woman's right to choose, despite the focusing of much feminist energy on this one issue, despite years of lobbying, protests and submissions, New Zealand women were now saddled with the heavy yoke of one of the most repressive abortion laws in the world. (p. 16).

As she continues, "If we couldn't win such a basic right for women, what could we hope to achieve?" (Coney, 1982b, p. 17). In addition to these feelings of defeat, feminist energy was preoccupied by reactive rather than proactive work. Coney (1982b) writes that the "feminist energy that then went into the practical work of getting women to Australia for abortion took a lot of the stuffing out of the women's movement" (p. 17).

The struggle for reproductive rights wore on. In May 1978, only a few months later, *Broadsheet* reported that an arson attack that had targeted the SOS offices over Easter (Coney, 1978b). The same issue included a last-minute addition headed "stop press" noting an additional arson attack at a clinic in Sydney (Coney, 1978b, p. 9). Five years later, in 1983, a note titled "STOP PRESS—Not abortion again" evoked both urgency and fatigue as The Status of the Unborn Child Bill was introduced by National MP Doug Kidd (Coney, 1983, p. 40). According to Coney (1983), Kidd

“frankly states [the bill] was drafted by SPUC”, the same group who had prompted the Royal Commission (p. 40). In contrast to the swift, coordinated response to the CSA Act, Coney (1983) appears uncertain that a similar effort could be activated, asking “Can we do it again?” (p. 40). Coney (1983) observes that “while there are plenty of feminists, there are few feminist organisations... The response of many feminists has been an anguished ‘Not again!’ Yes, we do have to fight the same battles over and over again” (p. 40). Later, Coney provides further insight into this perceived lack of feminist organisation when she writes:

When Kidd introduced his anti-abortion bill into parliament, Auckland, for instance, had no feminist abortion group. Only Wellington and Christchurch appear to have active fertility rights groups. It was left up to the solitary feminist in government — Marilyn Waring — to outmanoeuvre the anti-abortionists and save the day. (1985, p. 14).

Another significant battle occurred in 1984, when the subject of abortion was central to the highly organised protests by conservative women that targeted a series of women’s forums organised throughout the country ahead of the new Ministry of Women’s Affairs (Broadsheet Collective, 1985). With links to both Christian and ‘far right’ groups, including the League of Rights, these women instead advocated for “the Family, motherhood, and traditional Christian values” (Rankine, 1985, p. 14). During the forums, large groups of conservative women carried “sheets of instructions about their protest and information on policy ideas” (Calvert, 1985, p. 14), and, in blocks, voted solidly against Labour’s women’s policies, including “contraceptive advice, abortion, sterilization and sex education in schools” (Rankine, 1985, p. 17); its entire health policy (Coney, 1985, p. 13); and in one case even passed a resolution against abortion in China (Bush, 1985, p. 17). In Ōtautahi, the new Minister Ann Hercus was assaulted following a statement in support of abortion (Rankine, 1985, p. 18), and in Tāmaki Makaurau, an abortion clinic was set on fire on the night of the forum (Coney, 1985, p. 15). Here, too, Coney (1985) describes feelings of fatigue among feminists, who were frequently outnumbered. She writes that “there were no feminist planning meetings before the day — we went as individuals and we did battle as individuals” (p. 14).

Over a decade later, in the final issue of *Broadsheet*, Coney (1997) diagnoses a similar issue. As several writers reflect on the ‘progress’ made for women’s rights in Aotearoa New Zealand throughout the magazine’s publication, Coney (1997) remains vigilant, writing that while reproductive rights have certainly advanced since *Broadsheet*’s first issue, they continue to be vulnerable:

The current Minister of Health is conservative on abortion and the chair of the Health Parliamentary Select Committee is an anti-abortionist activist. Already some CHEs are not bothering to provide abortion services. Who is going to hold them to account? Should this issue come up in the coalition government caucus, there will only be one woman present. (p. 61).

These final reflections illustrate how the struggle over reproductive rights persisted throughout *Broadsheet*’s 25 years of publication.

Disrupting linear time: ‘Urgency’ and ‘delay’

The CSA Act, and *Broadsheet*’s response to it, represent “exemplary moments” that highlight the temporality and playing out of relations of power. As described earlier, the Act was passed under ‘urgency’, which allows the House to proceed with “business until it is completed... while under normal circumstances a bill cannot be taken through more than one stage each sitting day” (New Zealand Parliament, 2017). The use of urgency illustrates the power of the state to manipulate time and, in doing so, to further intensify its power by limiting or precluding opportunities for scrutiny. MPs have less time to become familiar with legislation before it is debated, and public consultation, including the select committee process, may be bypassed altogether (Geiringer et al., 2011). The use of urgency therefore represents an expansion of state power intended to be used in ‘exceptional’ circumstances. What can or should be considered ‘exceptional’, however, is inevitably contested. Geiringer et al. (2011) observe that a frequent, yet inadequate, reason for a government to use urgency is as a tool to “make progress” on their agenda (p. 153). The passing of the CSA Act in December also appears to reflect a pattern “of pre-Christmas urgency, when there is a particular desire to clear the order paper before the long summer recess” (Geiringer et

al., 2011, p. 56). As described above, the extended summer break was a further cause of delay for *Broadsheet's* response, as the Collective did not produce an issue in February.

The use of urgency also appears to be increasing. Reflecting Giorgio Agamben's (2005) argument that the state of exception has become "the dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics" (2005, p. 2), former Green Party coleader James Shaw observed in 2024 that "by my count, the Government has put 16 bills through urgency and one item of Government business not through urgency" (Shaw, 2024, cited in Smith, 2024). In a highly controversial example, the New Zealand Parliament recently used urgency to pass the Pay Equity Amendment Bill, which both raised the threshold for making a pay equity claim and scrapped all 33 current claims, requiring that these be reinitiated under the new conditions (Moir, 2025b). A striking example of neoliberal rationality, the Bill was announced on 6 May as a measure that could lower the Government's costs by "billions of dollars", and had passed through all stages by the 8 May (Moir, 2025). It hardly seems a coincidence that former MP Marilyn Waring, described in *Broadsheet* as "the solitary feminist in government" (Coney, 1985, p. 14), has now set up a "people's select committee on pay equity" made up of several former women MPs to address the recent Bill (Waring, 2025). In this case, the Government's use of urgency to "make progress" (Geiringer et al., 2011, p.153) on its agenda has directly resulted in a stifling of 'progress' for Aotearoa New Zealand's lowest paid workers.

In contrast, time appears to be another resource that the *Broadsheet* Collective perpetually lacked, alongside and related to its limited labour and economic resources. Throughout *Broadsheet's* publication, the Collective frequently characterized its production in terms of urgency and crisis—in 1987, one collective member described how production moved "from one crisis to the next" (Singh, 1987, p. 38). In contrast to the 'urgency' of the Parliament, however, for *Broadsheet* this urgency appeared to constrain, rather than intensify, the Collective's power, stretching its already minimal resources to their limits. While the January 1978 issue of *Broadsheet* represents an example in which the 'pause' or delays inherent to its production processes could be utilised to striking effect, as the gravity felt by the Collective was embedded into the physical magazines. As described, however, subsequent efforts appeared to erode feminists' energy, and future occasions

illustrated that this effort could not be easily sustained or reproduced. Instead, feminists appeared to long for a moment of ‘pause’, or relief, from the relentless struggle over reproductive rights.

A second form of pause within this analysis is that of the archive, which fosters interaction and exchange between the CSA Act and the contemporary context, nearly 50 years later, in which abortion has been decriminalised by the Abortion Legislation Act 2020. Following Eichhorn (2013), I argue that the insight offered by archival analysis is crucial not as a means of illustrating or celebrating this ‘progress’, but rather as a means of exposing its contingency. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the narratives of linear progress described by Hemmings (2011) coalesce with national mythology that constructs the country as especially and even innately progressive (Blackett, 2016). Romanticised histories celebrate, for example, the early enfranchisement of women in 1893 as characteristic of Aotearoa New Zealand itself, rather than the result of struggle and resistance. In obscuring past histories of struggle, these narratives also work to negate any need for resistance in the future. This article therefore aims to contest these narratives in relation to reproductive rights by highlighting the contingency of contemporary ‘progress’. *Broadsheet*’s archives illustrate forceful opposition to abortion from both the Government and conservative groups such as SPUC. As Lowe (2022) explains in the context of the US, this opposition has continued through a “decades-long strategy of seeking power and influence in the US political and legal system” and is further extended in connection with global groups.

As Eichhorn (2013) explains, however, the opportunities fostered by genealogical analysis within archives are themselves constrained by the neoliberal forces of the present. Marika Cifor (2016) has examined how increasing emphasis on cost efficiency and even profitability has worked to commercialise archives. Digitised records may now be hosted within “privately owned, managed and for-profit subscription databases”, with users interpellated as “customers” (Cifor, 2016, p. 25). The prohibitive costs of digitisation mean that archival material must be selected and prioritised according to its ‘value’—an inevitably subjective parameter. Further, digital technologies may be more than simply tools that make “research easier and more convenient” (Hamilton & Sponberg, 2016, p. 671). Eichhorn (2014) maintains that the separation of digital records from their original contexts and formats may affect the knowledge to which they contribute. As noted earlier, the additional flyer was not included in the University of Auckland’s digitised version of *Broadsheet*’s

January 1978 issue, which does still show the label on the front. Whether or not the flyer remains in that copy of the magazine (which is unclear, although unlikely), the processes of digitisation amplify and entrench the initial marginality of *Broadsheet's* urgent response to the CSA Act by introducing an additional dimension of contingency to the intersections of knowledge and power.

“The abortion struggle - why haven't we won it yet?”

Broadsheet's response to the repressive effects of the CSA Act invites several different approaches to the theme of ‘pause’, including the interruptions to and delays within the magazine’s production, the disrupted temporality of the archive, and, although less explored within this article, the affective longing for pause or relief from the relentless struggle for reproductive rights. This article has focused primarily on how temporality operates as a mechanism of power through the juxtaposition of Parliamentary use of urgency, which represents both a manifestation and intensification of state power, and the *Broadsheet Collective's* negotiation of intrinsic delays within their production practices through last-minute modifications and additions. It has further explored how linear narratives of ‘progress’ are disrupted within archives, which instead underscore feminist histories as circuitous and contingent.

The subject of abortion recurred frequently throughout *Broadsheet's* 25 years of publication, from its first issue to its last, and has remained a constant concern in the over 25 years since *Broadsheet* ceased publishing. While my reflections in this article are situated in a context in which abortion was recently decriminalised, this is juxtaposed against the removal of protections in the US, where 27 states have since removed or restricted access to abortion (Guttmacher Institute, 2024). As Goodyear-Smith (2023) insists, then, “we cannot be complacent” (p. 76). This article has used *Broadsheet* magazine to demonstrate how archival analysis can be used to interrogate the notion of linear progress and to argue that reproductive rights are neither inevitable nor secure and always remain fragile.

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