**Mapping European Periodical Counterpublics: Building A Sustainable Collaborative Framework For European Periodical Studies**

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**Brief summary**

Agents of Change: Women Editors and Socio-Cultural Transformation in Europe, 1710-1920 examines a neglected aspect of the social and cultural life in Europe in the modern period: the impact of women editors on public debate. It advances the hypothesis that periodical editorship enabled women editors to take a prominent role in public life and as a result influence public opinion and shape transnational processes of socio-cultural change. Using a web-based data management environment to collaboratively gather data about female periodical editors and their periodicals, Agents of Change is able to trace these networks of intellectual exchange across temporal, geographic and linguistic borders. By working together with the local digital humanities centre and participating in DARIAH, the Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities, it is intended that Agents of Change will become a sustainable digital humanities research tool thriving beyond the fixed-term project funding.

**Full abstract:** “Agents of Change: Women Editors and Socio-Cultural Transformation in Europe, 1710-1920” is a five-year humanities research project funded by a European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant (2015-2020), directed by Marianne Van Remoortel from the Department of Literary Studies at Ghent University, Belgium. It examines a neglected aspect of the social and cultural life in Europe in the modern period: the impact of women editors on public debate. From the 1700s on, European women actively participated in the cultural arena through the journals that they edited. Agents of Change advances the hypothesis that periodical editorship enabled women editors to take a prominent role in public life and as a result influence public opinion and shape transnational processes of socio-cultural change. By examining how these processes unfolded in the press through practices of textual transfer both among women and in the larger publishing landscape, Agents of Change will not only initiate a shift in our thinking about the participation of women in society and print culture but also pave the way for pan-European research on the periodical press.

In order to trace these networks of intellectual exchange, Agents of Change is using a web-based data management environment to collaboratively gather data about female periodical editors and their periodicals, enabling the linkages (both biographical and bibliographical) between them to be explored. By gathering evidence to prove connections between people and publications across languages and state borders, we will be able to identify the dynamics of cultural prestige at work in Europe. For example, how knowledge and fashion radiated outward from a few trendsetting periodicals across the pages of myriad publications that translated, adapted, or reprinted them either in part or in their entirety. The data that we collect will also be invaluable as a descriptive index of periodical editors, a
role which traditional print-culture studies has tended to overlook, especially when it comes to female periodical editors. Our ultimate goal is to create a Virtual Research Environment (VRE), as an essential tool for establishing the research field of European Periodical Studies. The VRE will bring together primary sources and secondary literature, as well as the original scholarship that is produced as a result of the research data that we collect. Additionally, we would like the VRE to enable researchers outside the project team to contribute to the field, which we hope, step-by-step, will develop into a research community for European Periodical Studies.

To collaboratively gather our research data about female periodical editors and their periodicals, Agents of Change is using NodeGoat, a web-based integrated data management, network analysis, and visualisation platform, developed by Lab1100, a research and development company, based in The Netherlands. Alongside the collection of our research data, we are also requesting retrospective assignment of International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSN), a unique identification code for serial publications, for the periodicals that do not currently have one. These ISSNs will be used as stable identifiers for the periodicals that we store within our database. Similarly, we are working on establishing authority records via the Virtual International Authority File (VIAF) for those female editors that do not have one yet. We will use their VIAF IDs as stable identifiers within our NodeGoat dataset.

In order to fully capture these transnational networks of intellectual exchange it is important to strive for the most comprehensive coverage possible of the period and region at hand. Our project will bring together a multilingual and multidisciplinary team of six researchers who will combine methodologies from literary studies, (women’s) history and the social sciences. Particular attention will be paid to practices of textual transfer (including translation, adaptation, reprinting and reviewing) across language boundaries and historical periods. Even so, six researchers cannot cover every language across the 1710-1920 period. In order to make our data as rich as possible, we will be inviting researchers from outside our research team to contribute missing data. We will develop a workflow, based as far as possible on existing crowd-sourcing initiatives, for managing this community-sourced content. The workflow will enable the community-sourced data to be reviewed by the research team before it is added to the Agents of Change dataset. An important aspect of the workflow will be to ensure that such contributors are properly credited for their work.

A major aim of the project is to ensure that Agents of Change becomes a sustainable research tool after the end of the project funding. To enable this, Agents of Change is working closely with our local digital humanities centre. The Ghent Centre for Digital Humanities (GhentCDH) is an interdisciplinary centre facilitating digitally-enabled research in the arts, humanities and social sciences at Ghent University and beyond. GhentCDH also plays an active role in the coordination of Belgium’s participation in DARIAH, the Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities. Within the framework of DARIAH, Ghent University, along with the universities of Antwerp and Leuven, has received start-up funding from the Hercules Foundation, a Flemish structural funding instrument for investments in research infrastructure, to develop a Virtual Research Environment Service Infrastructure (VRE-SI).
The VRE-SI is being developed by focusing on the infrastructural needs of existing humanities research projects with a 'digital focus' in Flanders and Belgium. As the first year of the DARIAH-Flanders project draws to an end, step-by-step a better understanding is being developed of how DARIAH Partner Institutions can sustainably support digital scholarship in the humanities. For example, at Ghent University, it has been identified that the establishment of a digital humanities expert team including humanities researchers, library staff, IT professionals and digital humanities experts would help to institutionally embed digital humanities research support. The role of this interdisciplinary team is to work together with the concrete needs of the existing humanities research projects in order to realise the digital humanities element of their research. So far, it has been identified that a missing element in the existing service provision is a digital humanities scientific programmer, whose role is to combine an understanding of the humanities research questions with the skills of an IT professional to realise the tools and services needed. It is possible to use the DARIAH funding to recruit such a member of staff in order to demonstrate the value of such a post to the Faculty Management Team, with the view to, such a position being structurally funded by the faculty, in the medium to long-term.

Furthermore, considering the curation and management of the research data both during the duration of the project funding and beyond, is another aspect of sustainability. As it is intended that Agents of Change will become a sustainable digital humanities research tool thriving beyond the fixed-term project funding, the establishment and implementation of a Data Management Plan (DMP) has been anticipated from the start of the project. The Faculty Library of Arts and Philosophy, as a result of their Arts and Humanities Research Data project, is providing support to researchers in the faculty in the development of DMPs. Within DARIAH-BE, the intention is that every ‘DARIAH pilot project’, is strongly recommended to consider research data management from the outset. Finally, the GhentCDH is working closely with Lab1100 to explore how NodeGoat could be offered as a DARIAH-service. In the medium to long-term, the possibility of facilitating the development of an open source community around NodeGoat to further extend the environment for the needs of the digital humanities research is being investigated.

The aim of this short paper proposal is firstly, to present some initial research results, based on the analysis of the data gathered by the Agents of Change research team, on tracing the networks of intellectual exchange across temporal, geographic and linguistic borders through women editors and their periodicals. Secondly, this paper will explore how working together with the local digital humanities centre and participating as a ‘DARIAH pilot project’ is facilitating Agents of Change in becoming a sustainable digital humanities research tool that thrives beyond the end of the fixed-term project funding.
References

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