

# Simone Murray and the “power to publish”

## Methodological and epistemic failures in her account of The Women’s Press, London (TWP)

*A response to Simone Murray, “Books of Integrity’: Dilemmas of Race and Authenticity in Feminist Publishing”, in Mixed Media: Feminist Presses and Publishing Politics (London: Pluto Press, 2004), pp. 66–95. Quotations are given with page references to that edition; bracketed material within quotations is our own corrective annotation.*

### 1. Overview: what Murray gets wrong

The quotations discussed below are from the Australian academic Simone Murray. Widely quoted in turn by others, they display multiple errors of fact together with false and misleading assumptions. They particularly misrepresent:

- the founding, vision and ownership of The Women’s Press, London (TWP);
- founder and co-owner Stephanie Dowrick’s agency and contributions through 20 of TWP’s 25 years;
- the intellectual and political contributions of TWP authors, mediated through successful professional trade publishing;
- management failure, and the causes of the 1989–1991 financial and publishing crisis that took TWP to the brink of collapse;
- the claim of “interference” by Naim Attallah, who stepped in to act on Dowrick’s — and the authors’ — behalf when the levels of debt could no longer be sustained;
- the “power to publish” restored at TWP post-1991 by Kathy Gale as co-Managing Director, and her team.

Murray’s assumptions depend upon the same confirmation bias that weakens the work of others, including Catherine Riley (*The Virago Story*, 2018) and the contemporary work of Dr Rosy Mack. Murray has failed — and in the twenty years since her work was first published has continued to fail — to check facts or evidence that would disrupt romanticised assertions straying far from common sense, and from the feminist and publishing ethics that underpin any claimed right, as well as power, to publish.

By elevating the least successful, most chaotic and disruptive period of The Women’s Press into a heroic feminist psychodrama, and by seriously misreading the business structure that uniquely allowed for high-level publishing that was also boldly political, Murray overlooks a formidable intellectual, political and publishing history. She trivialises what was actually published and how, ignoring the most irrefutable material evidence: the authors and their books, published across the full 25-year period.

Murray demonstrates repeatedly a combination of reductive essentialist stereotyping; ignorance of the founding principle that editorial independence was linked to solvency; denial of any TWP management accountability, under then MD Ros de Lanerolle, for the financial and publishing crisis that threatened the press's survival (1989–1991); and denial, too, of the political as well as publishing strengths that saved TWP from 1991 onwards for a further 13 years of politically and professionally sound publishing — dismissed by her as a “revamping” towards more “commercial priorities”.

## 2. Five methodological flaws

A single paragraph, quoted in full in §4 below, exemplifies the methodological and epistemic problems recurring throughout Murray's work. Those problems can be grouped under five headings.

**1. Stereotyping and narrative simplification.** TWP's story is reduced to a simplistic drama: a “patriarchal villain” (Naim Attallah) against a “feminist purist” (Ros de Lanerolle). This erases the material accomplishments of the press, and the core agency and creative and political vision of its founder, Stephanie Dowrick — a vision directly reflecting the aspirations and values of the Women's Liberation Movement.

**2. Reliance on media gossip and self-interested hearsay.** Accounts that substitute dramatic press coverage and partisan oral testimony for rigorous analysis of publishing output, financial records and operational strategy focus not on material evidence of what was achieved and how, but on conflict. This overshadows, and in places entirely obliterates, the actual achievements and the mechanisms of publishing and marketing that sustained TWP's radicalism.

**3. Epistemic exclusion of key figures.** Murray and those who follow her have not approached, interviewed or consulted the primary living architects of TWP — Dr Stephanie Dowrick and Kathy Gale — while nonetheless drawing definitive conclusions about their motivations and actions. This exclusion perpetuates confirmation bias and undermines historical accuracy.

**4. Anti-commercial romanticism.** A bias widespread among some academics, and clearly displayed by Murray, equates financial instability with radical purity while dismissing periods of solvency and professional management as political compromise. Financial crises are romanticised and their causes ignored or applauded; disciplined business practice is disparaged, misrepresented or trivialised. The Women's Press's losses over three years were cumulatively £344,086 — some £998,000 in 2026 terms.

**5. Neglect of material achievements.** By focusing on interpersonal drama, and by elevating false notions of ideological courage in place of accountability for publishing failure within an established house, Murray and others fail to analyse the actual books published, the innovative branding, and the global reach achieved by TWP. They also fail to note that the three attempts by de Lanerolle and others to publish outside the kind of co-operative structure Dowrick had established within the Namara Group did not result in the publication of a single writer.

### 3. Founding, ownership and Attallah's financial role

Murray constructs a thesis in which the “power to publish” at TWP — as a core expression of feminist activism — was essentially compromised by a “corporate structure” and by the purported interference of a “male owner” in “control of the purse strings”, potentially “obliterat[ing] a particular list direction if it is deemed to be unprofitable, thus seriously jeopardising The Women's Press's public profile among feminists aligned with minority women's causes.”

#### Murray's claims

“Attallah guarantees the press an overdraft (the extent of which is undisclosed though it is undoubtedly substantial), which grants The Women's Press the financial cushioning to publish and promote risky writing from marginal groups. But this same outside control of the purse-strings can obliterate a particular list direction if it is deemed to be unprofitable, thus seriously jeopardising The Women's Press's public profile among feminists aligned with minority women's causes.” — p. 73

“This corporate affiliation with Namara has existed since the press's inception; in a 1979 article in radical London-based periodical *News from Neasden*, an anonymous author (most probably Dowrick) writes of ‘the support of our guarantor with whom we share formal “ownership” of the company’ (The Women's Press, 1979: 33).” — p. 73

“Far from independent, [TWP] is a fully owned subsidiary of a corporate media group and has been since its inception.” — p. 75

“Crucially, The Women's Press recognised that a feminist press can only act as a lever for social change if it continues in operation, and to this end Dowrick decided that firm financial backing, **even if this necessitated outside ownership of the press**, was a non-negotiable requirement.” — p. 94

#### The record

The Namara Group was not a “corporate media group” and still less a “conglomerate”. It was a small and decidedly un-corporate cluster of independent literary and cultural enterprises — among them Quartet Books, Robin Clark, the *Literary Review*, and later *The Wire* and *The Oldie* — none of them run for the returns a conglomerate would require. To describe TWP as “a fully owned subsidiary” of such a group is to misdescribe both the group and the press.

Murray demonstrates throughout her 2004 chapter, and in her work since, a serious absence of understanding that TWP — founded by Stephanie Dowrick and co-owned with Naim Attallah — depended for its acceptance within the global book trade on Dowrick's founding and sustaining vision and her high-level professional expertise. This was backed by Attallah's willingness to guarantee a highly conditional overdraft — never patronage — based on his enthusiasm for Dowrick as a fellow visionary, his knowledge of her capacity for hard work and public success, and her commitment to solvency through responsible

management of resources. Dowrick was initially the sole full-time worker, and worked from her home in the East End of London.

Why the persistent disbelief in Dowrick's ability to create and run a highly reputable, intellectually significant women's press that she co-owned, without surrendering agency and without "outside ownership"? The same model succeeded for all but the final three to five years of de Lanerolle's leadership, when she squandered the trust of Dowrick as well as Attallah, along with TWP's intellectual, imprint and financial resources — risking the very "demise" she had predicted to her business adviser, Robert Oakshott, in 1990, while still benefiting from her public profile at TWP.

There is no material or bibliographic evidence that "a particular list direction" was ever "obliterated"; nor that TWP's "public profile among feminists aligned with minority women's causes" ever suffered any blow, except among a handful of academics with little recognition of the tenacity of the press's effective and arguably unmatched material commitment to those causes — and to the many other causes relevant to the celebration and support of women's lives — across a quarter century of publishing.

TWP was never intended to be a subsidised press, as academic presses are, nor a "sheltered workshop", as the de Lanerolle team self-evidently expected. There is nothing "feminist" or courageous about publishing that fails to be responsible, and consistently ethically accountable.

Attallah had no reason to interfere with editorial independence and did not do so *until three years into a financial crisis that risked TWP's survival*. Even then his concern was not, as widely reported, an objection to Third World or Commonwealth writers. (Attallah was Palestinian; Dowrick a New Zealander.) His concern was the repeated publication of books that found few if any readers; lavish spending; "mass market" print runs, notably for science fiction, where no mass-market audience existed; and accelerating debts plus interest, for which the de Lanerolle team refused to be accountable.

#### 4. The 1989–1991 crisis and the "power to publish"

By June 1991 The Women's Press had been in loss for three years, and losses cumulatively stood at £344,086 (some £998,000 in 2026 terms). De Lanerolle claimed the losses were "small" and "decreasing". They were neither. The press was back in modest profit at the end of Kathy Gale's first six months, in 1992.

##### Murray's claims

The following paragraph is, on the historical record, fact-free. Bracketed corrections are ours.

**"Attallah, as the owner of the press [co-owned with Dowrick], was the party in the dominant position during the ensuing dispute [he had waited three years to act, and was blatantly deceived by de Lanerolle], and he was able to achieve his desired outcome [he had held back for almost three years as management**

responsibility at TWP evaporated]: **the dismissal of de Lanerolle** [who chose to resign, having — inexplicably — been offered the chance to stay on as editor-in-chief, and who in the previous year had sought to set up a rival imprint, Miriam Books, and “to take key staff” with her]; a **revamping of the press’s list priorities away from Commonwealth and third-world writing** [Attallah had no interest in revamping; his concern was unchecked spending and repeated publishing failures]; and the **appointment of a more commercially sympathetic management team** [Dowrick went personally to London, undertook extensive media work and, critically, appointed Kathy Gale, a publishing professional and longtime activist — an appointment widely welcomed and essential to TWP’s survival].” — *p. 81*

“Having benefited from the financial protection that **a conglomerate structure** can provide, The Women’s Press in March 1991 **experienced the flip side of corporate ownership, namely loss of editorial independence and the power to publish.**” — *p. 80*

“Former joint managing director Kathy Gale also recognised that private backers like Attallah, **however they may interfere in list direction** [Gale is on the record denying that she had anything but support from Attallah, and expressing profound gratitude for the support of Dowrick — who had also mentored de Lanerolle for several years from 1982–5], **are occasionally willing to extend credit in situations where banks cannot justify the continued financial risk.** Of the 1991 dispute she remarks: ‘**If The Women’s Press had been solely guaranteed by a bank, there’s no question that it would have gone then**’ (Steel, 1998: 28).” — *p. 79*

“The 1991 **resignations crisis** [a crisis caused by unsustainable losses, poor publishing and disastrous marketing across a number of areas including SF, internal chaos, and de Lanerolle’s lack of focus as she attempted to set herself up in rivalry through Miriam Books in 1990] at the press signals both an already **remarkable longevity** [the actual longevity ran 13 further years] for a small press in a **tumultuous industry** [where more, not less, publishing skill was required — and had been demonstrated by Dowrick], and the **final clarification of where the power to publish actually lies in any fully owned publishing corporation.**” — *p. 94*

“The decision resulted in a press better able to produce high-quality, widely distributed and well-marketed titles, and one able to survive the exigencies of rapid expansion and bestseller success, but one also in which **final editorial control lay in the hands of an individual with debatable commitment to the ideology of the women’s movement.**” — *p. 94*

“Yet the publishing recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s plunged The Women’s Press into losses of between £105,000 and £300,000 (the exact figures are disputed by the firm’s key players of the time) and precipitated a boardroom struggle for control of the press’s direction (de Lanerolle, 1991: 4; cf. Jones, 1991b: 16). Attallah alleged that the losses were the result of overconcentration of The Women’s Press list on risky third-world writers (Pallister, 1991: 38; Steel,

1998: 28); de Lanerolle countered with evidence that the operating deficit was, in fact, declining and that recessionary economics were the true cause of a drop in sales (1991: 4).” — p. 71

## The record

The quotation attributed to Gale needs unpacking. What she meant is certainly not that Attallah exchanged financial patronage for a “right” to interfere. On the contrary: his *lack* of interference as debts grew and accelerated was something no bank would have tolerated — nor would any organisation resembling a “conglomerate structure”. That Attallah waited as long as he did, and then offered de Lanerolle a continuing position even knowing she had planned to set up a rival press, speaks to his reluctance to interfere at all, until the survival of the press that was Dowrick’s political and publishing vision — and to which he had made a commitment of trust in 1977 — was itself at risk.

The losses were accelerating, not declining, and were worst in the final year of de Lanerolle’s leadership (see [ARCHIVE](#)). Poor publishing — weak acquisition choices, clumsy and protracted editing, absent marketing and media strategy, little attention to the backlist — combined with poor management, including admitted internal “chaos”, unchecked expenses, and a lack of focus at TWP as alternatives to it were pursued, produced the near-demise that de Lanerolle herself predicted in 1990, while attempting to raise funds not for TWP but for Miriam Books.

In the same market conditions — the “recessionary economics” she cited as “the true cause of a drop in sales” — Gale achieved a solvency turnaround through skilful revitalisation of the stylish radicalism, linked to genuine intellectual and political acumen, that had sustained TWP and supported its authors. It would continue to do so for more than a dozen years.

Murray also states that de Lanerolle was dismissed. In fact it is arguable that she should have been, given her plans — circulated in the previous year and documented in [ARCHIVE](#) — to set up a rival company and to “take key staff with her”. She was offered the role of Editor-in-Chief and refused it. “Fortunately,” adds Dowrick in 2026. “The chaos had to be stabilised. I flew to London, took over as Chair, appointed publishing professional Kathy Gale. Had that not happened, the history of TWP would have ended in 1991, and 13 further years of successful feminist publishing would not have happened.”

De Lanerolle’s own attempts to secure funding for publishing failed uniformly: Miriam Books in 1990, with business advice from Robert Oakshott; an essentially performative MBO offer, with no funds raised, in 1991; and her later venture, Open Letters, in 1992. Her late-found passion for independence — after benefiting for most of a decade from the structure and the authors established by Dowrick — could not be matched by business sense, a distribution network, or sufficient cash flow to be of service to any writer, to their work, or to feminism itself.

Writing thirteen years before TWP came to an end, Murray speaks of “remarkable longevity” while ignoring that the longevity was threatened not by a “publishing corporation” or a “corporate structure” — both myths — but by inefficiency and disruption

on a colossal scale, by women pushing their “publishing power” well beyond viable limits. The actual longevity was achieved by recreating and revitalising the power to publish as an act of tenacious political activism.

The “debatable commitment”, likewise, is not Attallah’s. Final editorial control was an understanding wholly embraced throughout, trashed during the three-year crisis, and re-established between 1991 and 1999 by Gale as MD and Dowrick as Board Chair, with the reputation of TWP restored.

Contemporaneous and accessible documents — including Dowrick’s and Attallah’s letters to *The Guardian*, and the accounts prepared by the Namara Group company secretary, Tim Cochrane — expose the flaws in these assertions. Murray, however, supports her claims here and elsewhere with reference to other inaccurate academic texts, raising serious concerns about academic process, whereby misinformation is cited as truth and repeated until it appears to be so.

### The conditions on which the claim of feminist integrity rests

Murray’s final assertion — that 1991 offers “the final clarification of where the power to publish actually lies in any fully owned publishing corporation” — goes to the heart of a seriously flawed understanding both of TWP’s business structure and of the ethical basis on which Dowrick founded it as a genuinely independent *women’s* press. For the claim of feminist integrity to be substantiated, the following conditions had to be met, and were:

- TWP’s editorial, marketing and management independence would rest on solvency.
- That solvency was built by Dowrick’s husbanding of resources: the founding of the TWP Bookclub in 1980; the acquisition of UK rights in high-profile writers to establish the imprint; and the commissioning of original titles against which foreign and paperback rights could be sold.
- TWP was not to be subsidised, was not to function as a sheltered workshop, and was not to rely on grants or on individual or institutional patronage.
- Attallah’s backing of Dowrick’s publishing vision rested on mutual enthusiasm, respect for her achievements, and trust. For almost a decade this allowed for good and sometimes dazzling publishing. Criticism of a so-called “corporate structure” and “intolerable interference” arose only when the debts, and the loss of sales and media support caused by mismanagement, could no longer be tolerated by the TWP Board — and when accountability was shunned in favour of ideological accusations with little or no basis in fact.

Dowrick’s earlier success, Gale’s later success, and de Lanerolle’s near-toppling of the press all occurred within the same structure. There was no acceleration of political boldness during de Lanerolle’s era, and no diminution of it during Gale’s. Ironically, the SF list was as much a loss-maker for de Lanerolle and her editor, despite a small proportion of fine crossover SF/literary writers, following writers such as Marge Piercy and Charlotte Perkins Gilman published much earlier by Dowrick.

The crisis misrepresented by Murray and others was not a failure of idealism or of ideological commitment; material evidence to the contrary exists throughout this site and undeniably in the list of publications. It reflected a long series of poor publishing decisions and highly irresponsible management, and also an abandonment of the core principle of Dowrick's feminist ethics in founding a house to be called *the women's press*: that unfettered editorial and management independence would co-exist with fiscal responsibility.

## 5. Publishing ethos and “collaboration”

### Murray's claim

“Chiefly, **the press's aim at its outset was to achieve practical and attitudinal change in the way books were commissioned, edited and marketed**, with on-going collaboration between author, editor and reader as the optimal goal.” —  
*p. 76*

### The record

These, too, are romanticised and inaccurate assumptions. How a book is commissioned and edited greatly concerns writers; bookshops and readers attend to the finished product and to the publisher's ability to meet their needs and interests.

As a publishing professional, Dowrick — and later Gale — knew that no “process” serves a writer well when it fails, ultimately or dismally, to connect her to readers. The stylish radicalism that launched and distinguished TWP's books, posters, badges and postcards, amplified by designer Donna Muir, also brought authors' work into high street bookshops, secured review and media coverage, and created essential imprint and reader loyalty — extended from 1980 onwards when Dowrick established the TWP Bookclub.

The optimal goal was the publishing of excellent books: books that advanced women's sense of agency, celebrated women's achievements, informed as well as entertained, empowered readers, and allowed them to see themselves and others with renewed interest and integrity. *The collaborations that allowed this were the process, not the goal.*

There was no period beyond 1977 to 1982/3 in which more books were originated, commissioned and contracted. ([ARCHIVE](#) holds the complete list of titles contracted by Dowrick, and the far fewer contracted by de Lanerolle, who even with mentoring and support from Dowrick lacked publishing contacts.) Both Dowrick and Gale themselves edited, acted as art director for individual titles and for the list as a whole, and supervised the marketing of the books for which they were responsible. When “collaboration” came to mean the use of highly paid and frequently inexperienced freelancers, working to imprecise briefs and chaotic timelines, it did not ensure success for authors; it became part of the recipe for disaster.

During Dowrick's period of originating and contracting, radically bold publishing was achieved — TWP having to indemnify the printer of Phyllis Chesler's *About Men* against charges of obscenity, to take a single example.

It needs to be noted that Murray did not at any time choose to check her assumptions with the co-owner, founder and later Chair, Dr Stephanie Dowrick, or with the MD, Kathy Gale — who, far from representing “the appointment of a more commercially sympathetic management team” (p. 81), saved TWP from its crushing debt burden through publishing experience and flair, astonishingly hard work, fiscal responsibility, and a commitment to authors and their work as writers and activists that allowed that work — and the press — to survive and flourish.

## 6. The evidence is in the publishing

It would be the priority of any reputable publishing house to survive. That is owed to staff, to readers and, most especially, to authors. If the house in question was established as a *women's* press, then the basis on which it is rescued from crisis or potential collapse bears examination. *The evidence is in the publishing.*

There, Murray chooses to ignore:

- Dowrick's publishing experience and expertise, which established TWP within mainstream British publishing while husbanding its financial as well as intellectual resources — including working from her own house as the sole full-time employee until income from sales began to finance the press;
- the catalogue evidence of the major authors and books acquired, commissioned and contracted by Dowrick from 1977 to 1985, some of them — Alice Walker among them — remaining with TWP until 2002;
- the tenacity and publishing expertise with which Kathy Gale brought TWP back from disaster, and published writers and books that were not at any time determined solely by “commercial priorities”. A glance at the books published between 1992 and 1999 shows that Gale returned to the values of professionalism established by Dowrick without losing an atom of political independence.

The list of books contracted by Dowrick to 1982, the ongoing books by her originally contracted authors to 2002, and the books contracted and published by Kathy Gale between 1991 and 1999 are together material, irrefutable evidence that brave, bold publishing was a hallmark throughout — and that “revamping of the press's list priorities away from Commonwealth and third-world writing; and the appointment of a more commercially sympathetic management team” is an argument bearing no relationship to what was actually published during the years in which Gale's professional stewardship returned TWP to publishing and financial stability.

Why, then, was the de Lanerolle-led crisis presented as an instance of ideological idealism rather than of publishing and financial failure, when none of her alternative ventures resulted in the publication of a single text? And why was the revival, led by the Dowrick-

appointed Gale, ignored? The first is the result of serious confirmation bias, if not cognitive dissonance. The second, if examined even cursorily, would have disrupted the casting of Attallah as interfering capitalist and de Lanerolle as blameless victim of his commercial imperatives and censorship.

## 7. Historiographical myth and the empirical record

| Analytical dimension            | The myth / confirmation-bias narrative                                                                                                      | The empirical record (Dowrick–Gale evidence)                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Foundational agency and power   | A “patriarchal” financier (Attallah) “installed” Dowrick as a passive director, bankrolling a feminist project.                             | Dowrick conceived, designed and executed TWP’s vision, securing Attallah’s backing on her own terms and building the foundational backlist and solvency model.                                       |
| Institutional continuity        | The 1991 crisis marked the end of TWP’s creative and intellectual life, and of its authentic feminism.                                      | Dowrick as Chair and Gale as MD reversed the deficits, restored solvency, and sustained radical publishing for over a decade.                                                                        |
| Radical and intersectional edge | Commercial survival required political dilution and the loss of a radical edge.                                                             | TWP remained the UK’s definitive publisher for global, intersectional and uncompromising feminist voices — Alice Walker, bell hooks, Angela Davis among them.                                        |
| Global scope                    | A London-centric, Eurocentric focus, with non-UK developments marginalised.                                                                 | TWP prioritised international and Indigenous writers, expanding transnational feminist publishing and remaining globally focused in both writers and distribution.                                   |
| Theoretical sophistication      | The 1990s lacked the theoretical and political rigour of earlier decades.                                                                   | Through the 1990s TWP continued to pioneer intersections of feminist politics, psychology, anti-war critique, high-level cultural studies and mental health, publishing innovative and radical work. |
| Brand integrity and aesthetics  | Corporate survival demanded the loss of brave publishing, especially of “Third World” writers and SF, and the dilution of TWP’s aesthetics. | TWP revitalised its iconic branding through the 1990s, amplifying its earlier stylish radicalism and using design as a tool for mainstream impact and for viability, for authors and press alike.    |
| Contemporary peer validity      | The crisis of 1990–91 and de Lanerolle’s departure with “key staff” left TWP irrelevant as an influential                                   | TWP retained peer validity and, especially, author loyalty, and was praised for continued risk-taking and radical publishing combined with                                                           |

| Analytical dimension | The myth / confirmation-bias narrative | The empirical record (Dowrick–Gale evidence)                       |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      | global feminist publisher.             | solvency and security for staff, authors and imprint until 2002–3. |

## 8. Conclusion

Murray’s analysis relies on confirmation bias to the exclusion of any material examination of the facts, including what was published across the 25 years of TWP’s existence. By sustaining a misreading of the understanding reached between Dowrick and Attallah in 1977 — a collaboration founded on his conditional financial support for her vision and her proven publishing success — she discounts publishing at TWP as genuine political activism. She elevates a period of unsuccessful publishing as “ideological boldness” while ignoring the intellectual and political achievements that were also viable publishing successes.

Her insistence that the Namara Group was a “conglomerate”, and that Attallah’s interests were “commercial” and entitled him to “interfere”, ignores the foundational ethical understanding established between the two: that editorial, publishing, marketing and management independence were to be entirely women-controlled, with the clear and widely publicised understanding — set out in interviews with Dowrick from 1978 to 1983 — that independence would be linked to solvency through publishing. It was as a responsible entity, not as a sheltered workshop or a subsidised press, that Dowrick consistently intended TWP to function and to be judged.

Murray critically ignores the circumstances that forced Attallah to intervene: to prevent complete collapse, not to claim the editorial power to publish. Using a reductive and stereotyping lens, and consistently disregarding contemporaneous factual evidence, she heroicises a failure so complete that it would have ended the power to publish at TWP altogether. She treats the departure of de Lanerolle as a loss for editorial integrity while ignoring her three further failed attempts to publish in a worker-led model. Conversely, she belittles the genuinely heroic revival led by Gale with the support of Dowrick as Chair and of the TWP Board, ignoring the significant publishing that this women-led intervention made possible.

Any analysis of this kind cannot serve adequately or fairly the history of print culture, of feminism, of feminist publishing, of effective Second Wave activism — or of The Women’s Press itself.

## Appendix: Murray’s key quotations, grouped by theme

*The quotations below are collected for reference. Each is examined, and answered, in the section indicated.*

#### A. On Attallah's financial role and ownership — see §3

- “Attallah guarantees the press an overdraft (the extent of which is undisclosed though it is undoubtedly substantial), which grants The Women's Press the financial cushioning to publish and promote risky writing from marginal groups. But this same outside control of the purse-strings can obliterate a particular list direction if it is deemed to be unprofitable, thus seriously jeopardising The Women's Press's public profile among feminists aligned with minority women's causes.” — p. 73
- “This corporate affiliation with Namara has existed since the press's inception; in a 1979 article in radical London-based periodical *News from Neasden*, an anonymous author (most probably Dowrick) writes of ‘the support of our guarantor with whom we share formal “ownership” of the company’ (The Women's Press, 1979: 33).” — p. 73
- “Attallah, as the owner of the press, was the party in the dominant position during the ensuing dispute, and he was able to achieve his desired outcome: the dismissal of de Lanerolle; a revamping of the press's list priorities away from Commonwealth and third-world writing; and the appointment of a more commercially sympathetic management team.” — p. 81

#### B. On TWP's financial model and intentions — see §3 and §4

- “Far from independent, it is a fully owned subsidiary of a corporate media group and has been since its inception.” — p. 75
- “Crucially, The Women's Press recognised that a feminist press can only act as a lever for social change if it continues in operation, and to this end Dowrick decided that firm financial backing, even if this necessitated outside ownership of the press, was a non-negotiable requirement.” — p. 94
- “The decision resulted in a press better able to produce high-quality, widely distributed and well-marketed titles, and one able to survive the exigencies of rapid expansion and bestseller success, but one also in which final editorial control lay in the hands of an individual with debatable commitment to the ideology of the women's movement.” — p. 94

#### C. On the 1991 crisis and editorial power — see §4

- “Yet the publishing recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s plunged The Women's Press into losses of between £105,000 and £300,000 ... and precipitated a boardroom struggle for control of the press's direction.” — p. 71
- “Having benefited from the financial protection that a conglomerate structure can provide, The Women's Press in March 1991 experienced the flip side of corporate ownership, namely loss of editorial independence and the power to publish.” — p. 80
- “Former joint managing director Kathy Gale also recognised that private backers like Attallah, however they may interfere in list direction, are occasionally willing to extend credit in situations where banks cannot justify the continued financial risk. Of the 1991 dispute she remarks: ‘If The Women's Press had been solely guaranteed

by a bank, there's no question that it would have gone then' (Steel, 1998: 28)." — p. 79

- "The 1991 resignations crisis at the press signals both an already remarkable longevity for a small press in a tumultuous industry, and the final clarification of where the power to publish actually lies in any fully owned publishing corporation." — p. 94

#### D. On TWP's radical publishing and collaborative ethos — see §5

- "Chiefly, the press's aim at its outset was to achieve practical and attitudinal change in the way books were commissioned, edited and marketed, with on-going collaboration between author, editor and reader as the optimal goal." — p. 76

#### Note on references

Page references are to the printed pagination of the Pluto Press 2004 edition of *Mixed Media*, in which the chapter runs from p. 66 to p. 95; the [JSTOR scan](#) reproduces that pagination. Where earlier drafts of this response gave different figures, the references above have been checked against the source and corrected. Readers are encouraged to consult the original chapter in full.