

Book Review - Claire Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory*. Duke University Press, 2011. 272 pp.

Reviewed by Gigi McNamara

Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory by Claire Hemmings is a thoughtful and provocative addition to the canon of contemporary feminist theory as it asks us to question firmly-rooted beliefs. Narrative storytelling and self-reflexivity are crucial to studying the history of feminism and feminist discourse, but Hemmings shows that all is not as it seems in contemporary feminist scholarship. By analyzing and critiquing key feminist journals including *Signs*, *Feminist Review*, *Feminist Theory*, and *European Journal of Women's Studies* (17), Hemmings provides a useful and germane interpretation of three key feminist narratives - progress, loss and return. In doing so, Hemmings theorizes that the ways in which feminists "tell the story" is as important as the stories themselves. Hemmings is interested in studying the "pervasive stories that feminist and other theorists participate in reproduce, and embellish" (17). More importantly, she seeks to examine the potential political motivations behind that storytelling. In short, she writes, "...how feminists tell stories matters in part because of the ways in which they intersect with wider institutionalizations of gendered meanings" (1). Hemmings is particularly interested in studying how these journals presented essays regarding Western feminist theory's development.

Divided in two parts containing three chapters each, Hemmings asks us, the reader, to reexamine many accepted feminist tropes. The first section of the book deconstructs

three widely known tropes. The second asks us to reexamine the contributions of scholar Judith Butler, including *Gender Trouble* (1990) using a new analytical lens.

The first trope, progress, includes examining the notion that we have moved past the overly simplistic notion of “woman.” Since we have embraced the duplicity of meaning regarding what “woman” stands for, we no longer cling to a “false unity or essentialism” (2). In short, feminist theory has moved away from preoccupations with the labels of ‘patriarchy,’ ‘woman’ and ‘female subordination,’ focusing instead on the power structure that shows the intersections of gender, race and class.

The second trope, loss, explores the supposed demise of feminism in recent decades. No longer unified by an all-consuming, collective identity, feminism and the feminist movement have become fragmented. Indeed some may even argue that feminism’s day has past. There exist divisions between scholars and activism, between academic theorizing and a real-life feminist movement. Hemming writes: “Conservative institutions of feminist thought and the generational popularity of ‘postfeminism’ are empty parodies of a feminist social movement that has incontrovertibly past” (4).

The third and final trope, return, involves the notion that feminists have recognized and validated feminism’s existing shortcomings and limitations, but are prepared to move forward “ from the current and theoretical and political impasse” (5). This trope marks our current understanding of feminism. Previous decades of feminism brought us awareness and social change, but, Hemmings notes, “is it is now time to pull back from the deconstructive abyss – which has its own orthodoxy anyway – and move beyond critique” (97). She concludes, in a telling moment that, “We need a new direction that

is neither nostalgic nor taken in by what is quite often rendered as the sheer silliness of postmodern and poststructuralist seductions. In the cold light of day, we know better” (98).

Hemmings’ research methodology involves analyzing selected citations from the aforementioned journals. Most importantly, she teases out the similarities behind each author’s argument and identifies recurring patterns within those arguments. Her goal is not to critique each author’s *individual* position, but rather analyze the repetition and similarities of said arguments. By bypassing the theoretical positions presented by each individual author, Hemmings succeeds in broadening and strengthening her overall argument. Hemming cites only the journal and year of each article. The phenomenon is bigger than any one scholar or journal and “the system,” academia, is somewhat complicit. This conclusion, Hemmings argues, supports the notion that the academy supports the retelling, and reinforcement, of an accepted belief system. There are remarkable similarities to the arguments presented. Feminist scholarship, at once potentially transgressive and transformative, has fallen into a common conundrum. Hemmings writes: “...Western feminist progress narratives’ insistence that feminist theory has moved to a more expansive present, one full of new epistemological innovation and complex objects and analytic frames, relies on a flattened vision of the feminist past” (162). In order to move forward with a more expansive view, scholars must not be fearful of questioning a historical “truth” about feminist theory.

The second half of the book analyzes the contributions of the influential, and frequently cited, scholar Judith Butler. Hemmings challenges us to reexamine how readers have

traditionally interpreted Butler's seminal work, *Gender Trouble*. Hemming writes: "Whether for progress, loss or return narratives, Butler is routinely positioned as forcing feminist theory onwards, beyond itself" (165). Studying how and when writers cite Butler's work, Hemmings asserts our collective understanding of this scholarship as "outside" the accepted, feminist linearity. She attempts to reexamine Butler's contributions to feminist scholarship by "rereading" her theories via the contributions of Monique Wittig. Hemmings argues that she chooses Wittig's work in particular because of "her central presence in *Gender Trouble*" (182). Could there be a different way to interpret the historical influences on Butler's work? While this is a provocative statement, Hemmings causes us to question the academy's position on feminist theory. Academic citations "mark Butler as responsible for moving Western feminism beyond both essentialism and identity reductionism" (54). Instead of focusing on the usual and common historical timeline when analyzing feminist scholarship, Hemmings argues that "renarration" allows for a more nuanced and complex reading of feminist theory. In short, Hemmings uses Butler's work as a case study for her stunning and original hypothesis.

The questions ultimately posed by Hemmings are vexing and compelling. This book is suitable for members of the academy, including graduate students and faculty, who are interested in exploring the academy's accepted citation practices. From introductory to advanced-level classes in feminist theory, students will be asked to think "outside the box" when citing, and privileging, key scholars. Most importantly, in an era when women's studies departments are redefining their missions in order to be more inclusive for many diverse groups, *Why Stories Matter* asks us to deconstruct the power structure

which allows certain narratives to be told and retold as the historical and accepted underpinnings of feminist theory.

Sex, Work, Law and Sex Work Law: Towards a Transformative Feminist Theory

*By Tom Dreyfus**

Introduction

There has been significant academic debate over whether sex work performed by women is primarily an industrial activity or whether it is a manifestation of male sexual violence towards women. The debate is significant because if sex work is a form of violence against women, then the only appropriate legal and public policy solution is to prohibit it. If, on the other hand, sex work can be theorized as a valid form of waged labour, then its regulation or deregulation becomes an important point of legislative and political contention.

This article attempts to deconstruct the liberal feminist—sex work as work—discourse and the radical feminist—sex work as sexual violence—discourse. While acknowledging that these positions are neither unitary nor conveniently representative of *all* feminist discourse about sex work, the two often dominate feminist theory and pedagogy on the issue. The article demonstrates that the problem for much contemporary Euro-American feminist debate on prostitution is that it disallows the possibility of supporting the rights of those who work in prostitution as workers while remaining ‘critical of the social and political inequalities that underpin market relations in

* LLB (Hons), BA (Hons), University of Melbourne. I am grateful to Freya McCormick, Joe Dreyfus, Mark Dreyfus and Deborah Chemke for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this article.

general, and prostitution in particular'.¹ However, rather than trying to reconcile these two opposing modes of feminist thought, I offer a transformative feminist theory that emphasizes the polymorphism in prostitution: the multitude of experiences and performances that construct the female sexual services industry. In keeping with the transformative purposes of this article, the terms 'sex work' and 'prostitution' will be interchangeable and are taken to refer to the female sexual services industry.²

Part II of this article explores the social and historical construction of the prostitution stigma. Parts III and IV analyse and compare the dominant radical and liberal feminists sex work discourses in order to identify the discursive space that exists for a transformative feminist theory of sex work. Part V explores the 'prostitute identity' and the identities of prostitutes as they are viewed through the lens of transformative feminist theory. Part VI evaluates the impact of different systems of sex work law on sex workers, with particular focus on the Swedish model and the Victorian regulatory regime. The article concludes that policy frameworks should be guided by an acknowledgement of the differences within the industry and the ways in which prostitution stigmas affect sex workers themselves.

¹ Julia O'Connell Davidson, 'The Rights and Wrongs of Prostitution' (2002) 17 *Hypatia* 84, 85.

² It is important to note that in line with this definition of sex work and the corresponding focus of this article, the arguments that I put forward do not necessarily apply to other members of the sex work industry such as sex slaves or child prostitutes. Complex issues relating to consent and subjugation (to name but a few) have found themselves beyond the scope of this research. In a similar vein, the article's focus on women and on feminist theories of the provision of sexual services by women to men means that the succeeding critique may not apply to the experiences of male, transgender, transvestite, transsexual or gay prostitutes. Finally, by relying for the most part on theories proffered by Westerners and engaging in an analysis of the sex work legal regimes in Western countries, I betray a Westernized perspective that I fully acknowledge compromises the potential applicability of my arguments beyond a Western context.

The prostitution stigma

Prostitution is sometimes described as ‘the oldest profession’,³ demonstrating its potential for cross-historical construction. It is a term with no obvious meaning and one whose characterization may change according to specific social and cultural conditions. Nevertheless, this article focuses on prostitution as it is conceptualized in the West and takes as its practical definition ‘the provision by one person to or for another (whether or not of a different sex) of sexual services in return for payment or reward’.⁴ I recognize the problems inherent in using a legal definition of prostitution. States define sex work in different ways depending on whether sex work has been prohibited, legalized or decriminalized. Further, the way in which prostitution is defined by the law will have an effect on the social construction of its stigma.⁵ It is this ‘prostitution stigma’ that provides the platform from which most critiques of sex work are launched.

Historical constructions of ‘the prostitute’ have been dominated by the image of a ‘whore’ or deviant whose sexual appetite is insatiable.⁶ As Gail Pheterson explains, ‘[t]he prostitute is the prototype of the stigmatized woman’⁷ because she is ‘defined by her unchastity which casts her status as impure’.⁸ She is contrasted with the ideal of pure femininity, the ‘Madonna’, who provides a mirror for ‘the prostitute’, as if to say that it is between these two polarities that

³ Jean D’Cunha, ‘Prostitution Laws: Ideological Dimensions and Enforcement Practices’ (1992) 17 *Economic and Political Weekly* 34, 34.

⁴ *Sex work Act 1994* (Vic).

⁵ For a discussion of the social construction of stigma in and by the law see, for example, Eric A. Posner, *Law and Social Norms* (Harvard University Press, 2002).

⁶ Teela Sanders, Maggie O’Neill and Jane Pitcher, *Prostitution: Sex work, Policy and Politics* (SAGE, 2009) 2.

⁷ Gail Pheterson, *A Vindication of the Rights of Whores* (Seal Press, 1989) 231.

⁸ Sanders, O’Neill and Pitcher, above n 6, 2.

every woman must choose. In contemporary discourse, the classical Madonna/whore binary has been loosely translated into good girl/bad girl. These femininity-defining discourses appear to be self-sustaining and have been part of the representation of women throughout tradition to modernity and continuing into postmodernity.⁹

The 'prostitution stigma' is clearly worthy of the feminist opposition to which it has been subjected. It discounts the possibility of female sexual expression while characterising prostitutes themselves as 'fallen' women.¹⁰ Martha Nussbaum identifies two characteristics that make the 'prostitution stigma' different from other historical stigmas: that prostitution is 'widely held to be immoral' and that it 'is bound up with gender hierarchy'.¹¹ The first of these characteristics is a weak and relativist reason for the stigma attached to prostitution; the second will be explored below. But however it manifests, stigma has traditionally been a difficult thing to challenge. In dealing with this difficulty, Caroline Howarth makes the point that there has been an 'over-emphasis on the perceptions of the stigmatising ... and not enough attention given to the *social psychological* conditions for challenging stigma from insiders' perspectives'.¹² It follows from this that resisting the 'prostitution stigma' must be a 'collective enterprise'¹³ from within and without the sex work community. It is an enterprise that requires a better understanding of the

⁹ M O'Neill, *Prostitution and Feminism* (Polity Press, 2001) 124.

¹⁰ Judith R Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Society: Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge University Press, 1980) 3.

¹¹ Martha Nussbaum, 'Whether From Reason or Prejudice: Taking Money For Bodily Services' (1998) 27 *The Journal of Legal Studies* 693, 707.

¹² Caroline Howarth, 'Race as Stigma: Positioning the Stigmatized as Agents, not Objects' (2006) 16 *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 442, 450; see also L. Sayce, 'Stigma, Discrimination and Social Exclusion: What's in a Word?' (1998) 7 *Journal of Mental Health* 331.

¹³ *Ibid* 451.

'prostitute identity' and a willingness to engage in transformative theory that crosses feminist lines.

Deconstructing the discursive binary: radical feminism versus liberal feminism

The feminist sex work discourse is often framed in binary terms: liberal opposed to radical; sex work opposed to sexual violence. This 'either/or' approach to the 'problem' of prostitution presumes the universal application of one or the other of these theories and discounts the possibility that neither might be wholly appropriate. In order to move beyond this binary, it is necessary to canvass and ultimately to deconstruct the two different perspectives' theoretical foundations. I approach this task with Joan Scott's conception of deconstruction as a basis, by 'analysing in context the way any binary opposition operates, reversing and displacing its hierarchical construction, rather than accepting it as real or self-evident'.¹⁴

Those perspectives most closely associated with liberal feminism begin their analysis from the premise that there is nothing wrong with prostitution *per se*. Many liberal feminists emphasize the autonomy of sex workers and their clients and explain the exchange of sexual services for money in terms of a mutually beneficial arrangement between consenting adults.¹⁵ As Alison Jaggar argues, the prostitution contract is 'entered into by each individual for

¹⁴ Joan Scott, *Gender and The Politics of History* (Columbia Press, 1999) 41.

¹⁵ Karen Peterson-Iyer, 'Prostitution: A Feminist Ethical Analysis' (1998) 14 *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 19, 25.

her ... own benefit, each striking the best bargain that ... she is able'.¹⁶ Liberal feminism often finds itself aligned with prostitutes' organizations. In Australia for instance, the sex work industry's most vocal advocacy organization is the Scarlet Alliance, which argues that 'prostitution is work' and that prostitution is a legitimate employment 'choice' for women.¹⁷

It follows from these arguments that many of the negative stereotypes associated with prostitution must be irrational reactions to the socially constructed stigma attached to sex workers and to the sex work industry.¹⁸ Martha Nussbaum, in her influential article on female sex work, concludes that many of the problems identified by feminists as inherent in prostitution can be found in all of women's employment choices. In this way prostitution is 'just like' all other forms of employment for women. Nussbaum's argument is most compelling when constructing a continuum of bodily services as wage labour on to which prostitution clearly falls. For Nussbaum, factory workers, lawyers, operas singers, doctors and prostitutes are all alike because they all do things with parts of their bodies for which they receive a wage in return. However, this line of reasoning has been criticized by radical feminists for its 'abstract contractarianism' and failure to place prostitution 'in the social context of the structure of sexual relations between women and men'.¹⁹ Accordingly, Nussbaum's conception of the essential similarity of all female waged labour can be contrasted with Catherine MacKinnon's continuum of the ways in

¹⁶ Alison M. Jaggar, 'Prostitution' in Alan Soble (ed), *The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings*, 1st ed. (Rowman & Littlefield, 1991) 262.

¹⁷ See generally Linda Banach and Sue Metzenrath, *Principles For Model Sex Industry Legislation* (Scarlet Alliance and the Australian Federation of AIDS Organizations, 2000).

¹⁸ Nussbaum, above n 11, 696.

¹⁹ Carole Pateman, 'Defending Prostitution: Charges Against Ericsson' (1983) 93 *Ethics* 561, 563.

which women engage in sexual intercourse with men. For MacKinnon, female prostitution is symbolically aligned with sexual abuse and rape.²⁰

As with many liberal feminist analyses of sex work, a particular weakness is that Nussbaum's is an 'exclusive' argument: excluding considerations of the structural inequalities that permeate all gender relations and especially women's employment in the sex work industry. And as O'Connell Davidson pithily point out, in reality, sex work is not entirely like other work, for in what other industry will an unhappy customer beat, rape or murder the service provider?²¹ So long as the pervasive social stigma attached to the sex work industry remains, sex work must be differentiated from other forms of work.²² The liberal position that all sex work is simply work compromises feminists' ability to challenge the exploitation and gendered inequalities that exist in the industry and beyond.

Much of the radical feminist discourse approaches prostitution from the opposite perspective: that no matter how it is theorized, the existence of an industry for female sexual services is inimical to the interests of women. For Carole Pateman, 'the central feminist argument is that prostitution remains morally undesirable, no matter what reforms are made, because it is one of the most graphic examples of men's domination of women'.²³ For radical feminists, prostitution is the manifestation of the right of male access to

²⁰ Catherine A. MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified* (Harvard University Press, 1987).

²¹ Julia O'Connell Davidson, *Prostitution, Power and Freedom* (Polity Press, 1998) 64.

²² Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher, above n 6, 11.

²³ Pateman, above n 19, 561.

women's bodies.²⁴ A prostitute can never be a 'sex worker' because in offering her sexual services in exchange for money, a woman is transformed into a 'sex object'.²⁵ More recently, Sheila Jeffreys has gone so far as to suggest that the legalization of prostitution by a State (as in Victoria) is tantamount to the State acting as a pimp in the continuing male domination and commodification of women's bodies.²⁶

The most powerful criticism levelled against radical feminists' attitude towards prostitution is that it has confused the commodification of sex with the objectification of women.²⁷ Radical feminists use prostitution and prostitutes as symbols of male domination and of the top-down hierarchy that perpetuates the exploitation of women.²⁸ As the foregoing discussion demonstrates, it is an attitude that is insulting to both prostitutes and women more generally. I agree with Lisa Maher who argues that taking the position that women who sell sex are victims leaves women 'devoid of choice, responsibility and accountability'.²⁹ For prostitutes, it denies the agency of the individual and ignores the choices (whatever their socio-political context) that such women may have made in entering the industry. Further, it relies on what has been referred to as the 'brainwash theory': the notion that women often make purportedly autonomous and objective decisions out of a false consciousness that has been constructed by – and to reflect the desires of – a

²⁴ See generally Carole Pateman, 'What's Wrong with Prostitution' (1999) 27 *Women's Studies Quarterly* 53; C. Overall, 'What's Wrong with Prostitution? Evaluating Sex Work' (1992) 17 *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 705; Sheila Jeffreys, *The Industrial Vagina: The Political Economy of the Global Sex Trade* (Routledge, 2008).

²⁵ Kathleen Barry, *Female Sexual Slavery* (Harper and Row, 1979).

²⁶ Jeffreys, above n 24, 2008.

²⁷ Jane Dickin McGinnis, 'Whores and Worthies: Feminism and Prostitution' (1994) 9 *Canadian Journal of Law and Sociology* 105, 106.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ L. Maher, *Sexed Work: Gender, Race and Resistance in a Brooklyn Drug Market* (Oxford University Press, 2000) 1.

patriarchal society.³⁰ This has led to a feminist emphasis on pimps and johns and has resulted in a focus on controlling and regulating the actions of men, rather than on the feminist mandate of representing women.³¹

Ultimately however, in attempting to construct effective policy frameworks for sex work, criticisms of each school of thought by the other are unconvincing. By criticizing each other, these models 'dichotomize agency'³² and 'ignore the complexity of power and resistance that defines the sex worker's experience'.³³ Forcing anyone with an interest in the industry to choose a side discounts the possibility that neither approach is totally right or totally wrong. Instead, demonstrating a non-judgmental attitude towards those women who do work in the sex work industry is a necessary part of providing practical outcomes for sex workers.³⁴ A non-judgmental approach should not be confused with a value-neutral approach. It is possible to integrate normative convictions into a non-judgmental approach by taking as a starting point an identity politics which 'speaks from the hearts and experiences of those involved in working, managing, and living within the sex industry'.³⁵ As Scoular correctly identifies, a discursive space exists for transformative feminist theory that both incorporates and exists outside of the liberal and radical feminist discourses. It is this discursive space that this article occupies:

³⁰ See Overall, above n 24, 711.

³¹ McGinnis, above n 27, 119.

³² Maher, above n 29, 1.

³³ Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher, above n 6, 12.

³⁴ R. Harding and P. Hamilton, 'Working Girls: Abuse or Choice in Street-Level Sex Work? A Study of Homeless Women in Nottingham' (2009) 39 *British Journal of Social Work* 1118, 1122.

³⁵ Sanders, O'Neill and Pitchers, above n 6, 14.

one in which the 'disruptive potential of the counter-hegemonic subject' is used to challenge hierarchical relations.³⁶

Equality and difference; sex work and sexual violence

In deconstructing two of the key feminist positions relating to sex work, it is useful to locate them in the historical development of feminist discourse. Two strategies dominated this discourse throughout the second half of the twentieth century: the strategy of asserting substantive equality between the sexes, and the strategy of highlighting the differences between them³⁷.

There are striking similarities between the equality discourse and the 'sex work as work' discourse. The works of Simone de Beauvoir and Martha Nussbaum provide useful examples of these discourses. Their similarities become evident in an analysis of the ways in which Nussbaum's theorization of sex work borrows from de Beauvoir's seminal work on women as the 'Other'. For de Beauvoir, woman's liberation can only come about through an acknowledgement and rejection of her position as 'Other'.³⁸ This 'Other' is 'as primordial as consciousness itself'³⁹ and its subjectivity and relationality is the source of man's transcendence. In this strategy 'Otherness' is antithetical to equality and the struggle to overcome it is an emancipatory mission for women. Couched in similar terms, albeit with a much narrower focus, Nussbaum contends that it is the stigma attached to sex work – its position as

³⁶ J. Scoular, 'The "Subject" of Prostitution: Interpreting the Discursive, Symbolic and Material Position of Sex/Work in Feminist Theory' (2004) 5 *Feminist Theory* 343, 352.

³⁷ Susan J. Hekman, *The Future of Differences: Truth and Method in Feminist Theory* (Polity Press, 1999) 12-13.

³⁸ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Penguin, 1972).

³⁹ *Ibid* 16.

'Other' – rather than anything wrong with the actual sale of sexual services that has led to its prohibition and moralistic condemnation.⁴⁰ What both authors argue is that so long as the (male) subject and its 'Other' – and for Nussbaum all workers and sex workers – are not recognized as equals, women and sex workers cannot be liberated from the strictures of state-sanctioned patriarchy.

The second strategy emphasizes the differences between men and women and argues that the valorization of the feminine is a positive and necessary step for the feminist movement.⁴¹ Carol Gilligan definitively expounds this strategy and provides a platform for the 'different voice' of women.⁴² It is only through an acknowledgement of difference that feminists can achieve the goal of the emancipation of women. This emphasis on difference is mirrored in many radical feminists' conception of sex work as different to all other work. Prostitution prohibitionist Carole Pateman, for example, argues that the prostitution contract is different to any other contract because it manifests the male right of sexual access to women's bodies.⁴³ The 'difference theory' expounded by Gilligan and Pateman highlights the differences between women and men's experiences and between the prostitution contract and any other contract of labour. Both authors see difference as the framework from which to begin a radical critique of 'patriarchal right'.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Nussbaum, above n 11, 693.

⁴¹ Hekman, above n 37, 17.

⁴² Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Harvard University Press, 1982).

⁴³ Pateman, above n 24, 53.

⁴⁴ *Ibid* 53.

Herein lies the problem: a choice between difference and equality or, as it manifests in the prostitution debate, between defining the sale of sexual services as work or as sexual violence creates yet another dichotomy that divides, rather than unites, feminists. Joan Scott, for example, has argued that '[w]hen equality and difference are paired dichotomously, they structure an impossible choice. If one opts for equality, one is forced to accept the notion that difference is antithetical to it. If one opts for difference, one admits that equality is unattainable'.⁴⁵ Feminist philosopher Susan Hekman takes this problem and demonstrates the significant and problematic epistemological similarity between the two strategies.⁴⁶ Both assume that 'the differences between men and women are monolithic and hierarchical, that qualities are either masculine *or* feminine, either superior *or* inferior'.⁴⁷ To counter this 'impossible choice' further deconstruction of the liberal and radical feminist positions with regard to sex work is necessary.

Equality-versus-difference cannot dictate the feminist debate about prostitution because the oppositional pairing misrepresents the importance and value of both terms.⁴⁸ It allows one side to co-opt 'difference' while the other focuses on 'equality', resulting in a static theoretical duopoly. Whether a radical feminist, a liberal feminist or belonging to a prostitutes' organization, advocates often ascribe particular characteristics to *all* sex workers and argue that as a consequence one approach to the 'problem' of prostitution must be right. These advocates adopt positions that essentialize prostitution rather

⁴⁵ Scott, above n 14, 172.

⁴⁶ Hekman, above n 37, 17.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Scott, above n 14, 172

than incorporating into their understanding differences of opinion and of practice from within the industry. These feminisms also fail to incorporate a 'conception of subjectivity that defines differences [within a group] as constitutive rather than marginal'.⁴⁹ Radical feminism ignores this subjectivity by denouncing all sex work as contributing to the normalization of 'patriarchal right'. Liberal feminism ignores it by asserting women's agency without acknowledging the gendered relationality of all sexual acts. In order for the interests of sex workers and of women more generally to be met, we need a positive category that recognizes the women within the sex work industry as a plurality with internal structure whose members 'are differentiated and differentiable', that relate to one another in a variety of ways and as a result 'is coalesced as a distinguishable "something"'.⁵⁰ This category is one that necessarily depends on an understanding of differences.

The approach of acknowledging plurality within a category has been criticized as inducing feminists to abandon generalizations, and with them feminism's unifying force.⁵¹ With regard to sex work in particular, without the galvanizing strength of generalizations that can be applied to all women in the industry, advocating for reform becomes increasingly difficult. However once more we see here the creation of a dichotomy that forces a choice between emphasizing the proliferation of differences within the industry and identifying a homogenous body of female sex workers. Neither of these approaches is desirable. The first begs Susan Bordo's rhetorical question: 'just how many

⁴⁹ Hekman, above n 37, 18.

⁵⁰ Marilyn Frye, 'The Necessity of Differences: Constructing a Positive Category of Women' (1996) 21 *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 991, 1002.

⁵¹ Susan Bordo, 'Feminism, Postmodernism and Gender-Scepticism' in Linda J. Nicholson (ed), *Feminism/Postmodernism* (Routledge, 1990) 139

axes [of difference] can one include and still preserve analytic focus or argument?⁵² The second discounts the multitude of experiential possibilities within any group of people.

A better understanding of the heterogeneity of sex workers can be found in an analysis of the effects of 'polymorphism in prostitution'.⁵³ Brewis and Linstead explain this approach by reference to the 'full range of orientations towards or acceptations of the term prostitution in a depoliticized way'.⁵⁴ 'Polymorphism' is a useful term that describes the way in which being a prostitute might mean doing a particular thing for one woman and a completely different thing for another. That is not to say that a sex worker can simply remove herself of her own volition from the socio-political and cultural context in which she offers her services. As Shrage reasons, 'although the prostitute may want the meaning of her actions assessed relative to her own idiosyncratic beliefs and values, the political and social meaning of her actions must be assessed in the political and social context in which they occur'.⁵⁵ However telling a prostitute how her actions 'must' be assessed reflects the kind of intellectual imperialism that feminists have often been guilty of in relation to prostitutes. This is reflected in the top-down approaches of both liberal and radical feminism which describe prostitution in terms that best serve to make a theoretical point. And as Joan Scott tells us, feminist deconstruction requires a reversal of hierarchical constructions⁵⁶ so that in the case of prostitution we should be theorizing from the bottom up rather than from the top down. This

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Joanna Brewis and Stephen Linstead, *Sex, Work and Sex Work* (Routledge, 2000) 189.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Laurie Shrage, 'Should Feminists Oppose Prostitution' (1989) 99 *Ethics* 347, 357.

⁵⁶ Scott, above n 14, 41.

means using the 'prostitute identity' and the identities of prostitutes as our starting point.

Sexuality and selfhood: the 'prostitute identity' and the identities of prostitutes

Part of the transition from modernity to postmodernity has been the transformation of what defines an individual's identity. Rather than identity being defined by what the individual does or makes, it is suggested that we now live in a world where identity is contingent upon consumption; it is what we consume that defines who we are.⁵⁷ What then, does this mean for the prostitute? Brewis and Linstead propose that 'prostitution is ... an occupation in which what is produced and simultaneously consumed is the body, or at least its parts'.⁵⁸ According to this conception of prostitution the commodification of the sex worker is complete: her work becomes a self-propagating cycle of production and consumption.

The 'prostitute identity' and its production/consumption cycle stems from an understanding of what John Locke called property in the person. Locke wrote that '[e]very man has a property in his own person. This nobody has any right to but himself. The labour of his body, and the work of his hands, we many say, are properly his'.⁵⁹ Properly understood, Locke's dictum allows for the commodification of a person's bodily capacity to labour but not of people themselves. Liberal feminists have tried to fit prostitution into this liberal

⁵⁷ Brewis and Linstead, above n 53, 207.

⁵⁸ Ibid 209.

⁵⁹ John Locke, 'The Second Treatise on Government' (1689) in David Wootton (ed), *John Locke: Political Writings* (Penguin, 1993) 274.

concept of property so that any interventionist strategy can be seen as a violation of the prostitute's natural right to engage in voluntary transfers of her rightful property.⁶⁰ For O'Connell Davidson however, this is a misconception of the prostitution contract which is not in fact a voluntary transfer of property, but an agreement by a prostitute '*not to use* her personal desire or erotic interests as the determining criteria for her sexual interaction'.⁶¹ According to O'Connell Davidson then, prostitution is a form of self-Othering, in which a prostitute fixes herself as a transformative object able to satisfy erotic needs on demand.⁶²

However, I would argue that a better way of constructing 'the prostitute identity' in the discursive context of prostitution labour is to use a combination of *both* of these theories. To take the key points from each conception of prostitution, the 'prostitute identity' is self-commodifying *and* transformative. It is not a fixed identity but one that necessarily requires the prostitute to transform herself from client to client while maintaining the commodification (or production) of her bodily capacity to labour. It is an identity constructed by what prostitutes actually do.

The 'prostitute identity' can be distinguished from the identities of prostitutes. How prostitutes understand themselves is at least partly informed by normative attitudes towards sexuality and labour.⁶³ This by no means enables us to make generalizations about how all prostitutes see themselves. The focus instead should be on the operation of the consumer service industry in

⁶⁰ O'Connell Davidson, above n 1, 85

⁶¹ *Ibid* 91

⁶² *Ibid*.

⁶³ Brewis and Linstead, above n 53, 225.

which prostitutes work. It is an industry which has at its core an exchange of value for sexual services. Brewis and Linstead suggest that there might not be anything wrong with this exchange. They argue that 'for prostitutes themselves and for male ... clients ... [prostitution] might represent a way of embracing the transactional and consumptional nature of sex and avoiding the emotional entanglements and moral strictures that might otherwise attend it'.⁶⁴ In terms of constructing a positive identity of prostitutes, this description is a step in the right direction. It is non-judgmental and yet stops short of creating a fictional role for the prostitute as a 'sex therapist' and someone 'respected for her wealth of sexual and emotional knowledge'.⁶⁵ However establishing whether or not it is possible or desirable for prostitutes and clients to engage in this level of emotional detachment is reliant on a close examination of the micro-practices that constitute 'prostitution' and is beyond the scope of this essay.

The preceding idea, that it is possible to separate sex and self, is one that inspires vehement opposition in radical and religious feminist camps. For religious feminist ethicist Karen Peterson-Iyer, sex 'carries an undeniably unique meaning for most people, and certainly for most women'.⁶⁶ Extending this generalization, she argues that there is a universal 'connection between sexuality and selfhood' that is 'broken in prostitution' when a prostitute detaches her identity from her sexual bodily activity.⁶⁷ Pateman similarly holds

⁶⁴ Ibid 195.

⁶⁵ This is the role that Sybil Schwarzenbach envisages for the sex worker once sex work has been normalized and the prostitution stigma destroyed. See Sybil Schwarzenbach, 'Contractarians and Feminists Debate Prostitution' (1990-1991) 18 *New York University Review of Law and Social Change* 103, 125.

⁶⁶ Peterson-Iyer, above n 14, 38.

⁶⁷ Ibid 39.

that 'when sex becomes a commodity in the capitalist market so, necessarily, do bodies and selves'.⁶⁸ I would argue that it is precisely this unwillingness to acknowledge that the 'prostitute identity' might not be fixed in space or time that has compromised liberal and radical feminists' ability to think creatively and proactively about the 'problem' of prostitution.

Constructing sex work law

Given the foregoing deconstruction of the two main feminist prostitution discourses, the question must be asked, 'where to from here?' This article makes clear that the focus in constructing a legal framework should be on practical solutions for the problems currently facing prostitutes on the ground. Jane McGinnis correctly argues that 'it is only by integrating the views of women we see exploited in our society, a group which includes not only whores but housewives, that we will be able to work against ... the sexualisation of subordination'.⁶⁹ In the same vein, we should see feminist proselytising about how women *should* lead their lives as betraying an intellectual triumphalism that undercuts the feminist mandate to represent *all* women.⁷⁰ However the fact remains that the complexity and heterogeneity of the sex work industry has hindered efforts to locate a unified voice from within the sex worker community. It has also made it difficult to identify the best way to deal with the 'problem' of prostitution in a public policy and legal sense.

Four systems of sex work laws dealing with this 'problem' have been enacted in various parts of the world: the prohibitionist system, the tolerationist system,

⁶⁸ Pateman, above n 19, 562.

⁶⁹ McGinnis, above n 27, 108.

⁷⁰ Ibid 110.

legalization and decriminalization.⁷¹ Broadly speaking, the prohibitionist system is exemplified by Sweden, where the *buying* of sex is illegal.⁷² It is a system idealized by some radical feminists who believe that it correctly identifies prostitution as a problem about men.⁷³ The tolerationist system does not seek to abolish prostitution *per se* but is intended to target the trafficking in women and girls for prostitution.⁷⁴ Legalization is the system engaged in the Australian state of Victoria and creates a regime that controls and regulates some forms of legal sex work and makes all other forms illegal. The fourth system is decriminalization under which the sex work industry is regulated in the same way as any other.

It should be noted that recent empirical research into the effects of these apparently contrasting legal approaches has produced similar results, even in the case of legalization and decriminalization.⁷⁵ All four systems lead to 'the increased marginalization of more public forms of sex work (street sex work) and its participants, and a relative inattentiveness to many forms of indoor work'.⁷⁶ The Swedish system deserves particularly close attention because it is the one championed by Mary Sullivan in her recent book that describes the Victorian system of legalization as a 'failed experiment'.⁷⁷ The consistent message across a number of evaluations and official sources is that the

⁷¹ D'Cunha, above n 3, 34.

⁷² Arthur Gould, 'The Criminalisation of Buying Sex: the Politics of Prostitution in Sweden' (2001) 30 *Journal of Social Policy* 437, 437.

⁷³ See Mary Sullivan, *Making Sex work: A Failed Experiment With Legalized Prostitution* (Spinifex, 2007).

⁷⁴ D'Cunha, above n 3, 34. The tolerationist system reflects the goals of the United Nations' *Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others*, opened for signature 2 December 1949, 96 UNTS 217 (entered into force 25 July 1951). As at 2 July 2012, 81 countries are parties to the Convention.

⁷⁵ P.J. Hubbard et al., *Regulating the Spaces of Sex Work: Assessing the Impact of Prostitution Law: Full Research Report*. ESRC no. RES-000-22-1001, 2007.

⁷⁶ Scoular, above n 36, 13.

⁷⁷ Sullivan, above n 73.

Swedish law prohibiting the purchase of sexual services⁷⁸ has been selectively enforced and that its most visible outcome has been a temporary reduction in street sex work, 'leading to the displacement of women and men into more hidden forms of sex work'.⁷⁹ In real terms, the Swedish system has led to the marginalization of the already marginalized.

This apparent ineffectiveness has led some authors to suggest that the solution to all of this theorising is to avoid the 'choice' of legal systems at first instance. That, at least, is what Laura Agustín argues in her critique of the role that legal regimes have played in dealing with prostitution.⁸⁰ Agustín sees the notion that the classic prostitution regimes are a rational response to a social problem as a 'pretense'⁸¹ and proves her point by reference to the empirical evidence mentioned above. However Agustín's anti-statist approach does not provide a model for reform. While she is right to state that sex work viewed exclusively through the lens of legal doctrine frames the subject too narrowly, her understanding of 'the law' is limited and monolithic.

The problem with Agustín's schema is that when 'reality' does not 'relate directly to law's pronouncements, [law] is rendered irrelevant'.⁸² Agustín assumes that the relationship between law and its subject has to have direct

⁷⁸ *Svensk författningssamling* (SFS) Lag [The Prohibition of the Purchase of Sexual Services Act] 1998 (Sweden), s 408: 'Den som mot ersättning skaffar sig en tillfällig sexuell förbindelse, döms - om inte gärningen är belagd med straff enligt brottsbalken - för köp av sexuella tjänster till böter eller fängelse i högst sex månader'. s 408 states: 'A person who obtains a casual sexual relation in return for payment will be sentenced – unless the act is punishable under the penal code – for the purchase of sexual services to a fine or term of imprisonment not exceeding six months'. [Jane Scoular trans].

⁷⁹ Scoular, above n 36, 18.

⁸⁰ Laura Agustín, 'Sex and the Limits of Enlightenment: The Irrationality of Legal Regimes to Control Prostitution' (2008) 5 *Sexuality Research & Social Policy* 73.

⁸¹ *Ibid* 83.

⁸² Scoular, above n 36, 25.

and measurable consequences for it to be relevant. Clearly for prostitution this will not always be the case. For instance, it was presumably not the Victorian legislature's intention that a sexually explicit entertainment trade would burgeon alongside the legalization of brothels, however that is precisely what has occurred.⁸³ Arguing however that sex work law is irrelevant reflects a simplistic understanding of prostitution as a single and definable thing. It also fails to recognize that numbers often do not tell the whole story. In the case of apparently contrasting systems of regulation, empirical evidence might suggest that the result is the same for sex workers regardless of which system is in place. But as Jane Scoular explains, we should also look to the 'types of subjectification' that each system encourages.⁸⁴ In all the systems discussed in this essay it is possible to see the encouragement of 'self-governing, rational actors' whether through licensing or industry-exiting strategies.⁸⁵ It is this underlying policy goal that helps to explain why law matters for prostitution. As Scoular goes on to state, '[I]aw operates through freedom as much as through censure; through both the "empowering" system of licensing and welfare inspired interventions designed to liberate women from the oppressive "reality" of commercial sex'.⁸⁶

In Victoria then, where the ideas that construct this article were first formed, does sex work law matter? To answer this question we need to understand how the Victorian system constructs the 'prostitute identity' and how it sometimes unwittingly perpetuates the 'prostitution stigma'.

⁸³ Sullivan, above n 73, 187.

⁸⁴ Scoular, above n 36, 31.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid 36.

Victoria's system of regulating prostitution is largely contained in the *Sex work Act 1994* (Vic). It is based on a harm minimization approach that aims to protect both sex workers and the wider community.⁸⁷ It is designed to provide safeguards against the types of exploitation that tend to be at the forefront the radical feminist call for the prohibition of sex work. However the Victorian experience has been that prostitutes do not often seek the types of legal recourse typically available to them even where prostitution has been legalized.⁸⁸ In Victoria especially, where legalization has created a regulatory system that is designed to operate to protect sex workers' legal rights, it is surprising how few sex workers readily resort to protective legal mechanisms. Kristen Murray suggests that this is because '[t]he difference between sex workers' patterns of engagement with paid work and the gendered construction of what "real" work is may ... mean that sex workers, either consciously or unconsciously, view protective legal mechanisms as having little application to the work they engage in'.⁸⁹ Underlying this reasoning is the public/private distinction that permeates all gender relations and has particular force in gendered industries such as sex work.

While there has been a tendency in feminist scholarship to fall back on the public/private distinction to explain gender inequalities, it remains a useful framework. Catherine MacKinnon explains the concept in simple binary terms, that 'public is opposed to private, in parallel with ethics and morality, and factual is opposed to valued determinations ... these distinctions are gender

⁸⁷ Sullivan, above n 73, 4.

⁸⁸ See Chapters 4 and 5 in Kristen Murray, *Sex Work as Work: Labour Regulation in the Legal Sex Industry in Victoria*, (Masters thesis, University of Melbourne) 2001.

⁸⁹ *Ibid* 202.

based: female is private, moral, valued, subjective; male is public, ethical, factual, objective'.⁹⁰ It is a distinction that maintains an 'absolute separation between work and family'⁹¹ so that productive labour is 'performed and rewarded in the market place and reproductive labour is performed (and not financially rewarded) in the home'.⁹² However the reality (or realities) for sex workers – their polymorphic conceptions of prostitution – does not reflect this artificial distinction.

A prostitute's work is both productive (typically a public activity) and symbolically reproductive (notionally a private activity). Put another way, a prostitute performs reproductive labour and is rewarded in the market place. The failure of the Victorian system lies in its characterization of legal sex work as only and exclusively an industrial issue, when it is also an issue about sex. This fundamental misconception of the 'prostitute identity' has had a dehumanizing effect on the identities of prostitutes. It has done nothing to deal with the 'prostitution stigma' as Martha Nussbaum believes the normalization of prostitution should do. This is evidenced by decisions such as the one by the Supreme Court of Victoria in *R v Hakopian*.⁹³ In that case the principle established in *R v Harris*⁹⁴ that a male rapist will be sentenced to a lesser penalty where he rapes a prostitute rather than any other woman was reaffirmed. The decision was based on the dubious notion that the rape of a prostitute with 'greater' sexual experience was somehow less heinous than

⁹⁰ MacKinnon, above n 20, 151.

⁹¹ Rosemary J. Owens, 'Women, "Atypical" Work Relationships and the Law' (1993) 19 *Melbourne University Law Review* 399, 402.

⁹² Murray, above n 88, 203.

⁹³ (Unreported, Supreme Court of Victoria, Court of Criminal Appeal, 11 December 1991).

⁹⁴ (Unreported, Supreme of Victoria, Court of Criminal Appeal, Starke J, 11 August 1981) 6-7.

the rape of a 'chaste woman'.⁹⁵ It is a decision that reflects that conception of the prostitute as a 'fallen woman' not deserving of the full protection of the law.

Clearly then, neither the Swedish nor the Victorian model satisfies the focus here on deconstructing the prostitute stigma. Nor does either model adequately incorporate a transformative understanding of the 'prostitute identity' or the identities of prostitutes. And yet for fear of falling into the trap laid by Agustín, I must emphasize that I do not see sex work law as irrelevant to the 'problem' of sex work. The transformative potential of sex work law lies in its ability to tacitly (rather than officially) acknowledge sex work as a valid form of waged labour. A system of sex work law has the potential to be both appropriate and effective if it treats sex work as the same as, different to and something other than a form of work. There can be no quick fix. However of all the systems mentioned thus far, decriminalization would best allow the myriad identities and experiences in the industry to define what prostitution 'is' in order to reframe problems within the industry as reflections of wider industrial and relational gender inequalities.⁹⁶ Above all, decriminalization avoids an 'imperialist, uncritical[ly] positivist position'⁹⁷ towards the strategic use of sex work law, and better enables the pursuit of a 'deconstructivist

⁹⁵ Jocelynn Scutt, 'Judicial Vision: Rape, Prostitution and the "Chaste Woman"' in *Without Consent: Confronting Adult Sexual Violence* (Australian Institute of Criminology, 1992).

⁹⁶ Although beyond the scope of this article to provide a draft of a comprehensive legal framework that reflects these ideals, the development of sex work law in New Zealand (the first country in the world to decriminalize all forms of non-forced sex work) provides an interesting case study into the paths towards, implementation and consequences of decriminalized sex work. See generally, Gillian Abel, Lisa Fitzgerald, Catherine Healy and Aline Taylor (eds), *Taking the Crime out of Sex Work: New Zealand Sex Workers' Fight for Decriminalization* (The Policy Press, 2010).

⁹⁷ Scoular, above n 35, 39.

agenda *within* legal arenas and discourses'.⁹⁸ Importantly, because the institution of prostitution is rife with sexism, racism and class discrimination,⁹⁹ decriminalization must be accompanied by the implementation of a full array of social reforms.¹⁰⁰ These reforms must take the form of preventive and educative social policies encouraging normative gender equality that operate in tandem with the gradual repeal of sex work specific criminal and labour laws.

Conclusion

As a prostitute interviewed in Laurie Bell's book states, sex workers are 'very hard to politicize as a group, [they are] a bunch of mavericks'.¹⁰¹ This sentiment reflects the problems with contemporary feminist debates about sex work. The strict liberal and radical feminist discourses refuse to recognize that sex work is not just about work nor is it always sexual violence played out on women's bodies. It is many different things to many different people but it must always include the story of *being* a prostitute. As Elizabeth Bounds points out, feminists must be 'self-conscious' in their theory and strategy or else 'risk silencing oppressed women by making them objects rather than subjects and agents of analysis'.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ R. Sandland, 'Between "Truth" and "Difference": Poststructuralism, Law and the Power of Feminism' (1995) 2 *Feminist Legal Studies* 14.

⁹⁹ Francis M. Shaver, 'Prostitution: A Critical Analysis of Three Policy Approaches' (1985) 11 *Canadian Public Policy* 493, 499.

¹⁰⁰ For a discussion of the types of reforms that I envisage, see *ibid* 498-501.

¹⁰¹ L. Bell (ed), *Good Girls/Bad Girls: Sex Trade Workers and Feminists Face to Face* (Women's Press, 1987) 114.

¹⁰² Elizabeth M. Bounds, 'Sexuality and Economic Reality: A First and Third World Comparison' in Susan E. Davies and Eleanor H. Haney (eds), *Redefining Sexual Ethics: A Sourcebook of Essays, Stories, and Poems* (Pilgrim, 1991) 142.

Accordingly, in this article I have engaged in a self-conscious deconstruction of the dominant feminist approaches towards prostitution. A transformative feminist theory has been offered that locates prostitution in the discursive space that exists outside of the radical/liberal and sex work/sexual violence dichotomies. It is a theory that focuses on the 'prostitute identity' and the identities of prostitutes so that the most appropriate and effective legal and policy reform can be identified and implemented. The Swedish model of prohibition and the Victorian model of legalization have been shown to be theoretically and practically deficient. It is therefore concluded that of the limited systems of sex work laws contemplated by lawmakers, decriminalization best attends 'to the concrete lives and self-expressed needs of prostitutes themselves'.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Peterson-Iyer, above n 14, 36.

Bibliography*Articles/Books/Reports*

Abel, Gillian, Lisa Fitzgerald, Catherine Healy and Aline Taylor (eds). *Taking the Crime out of Sex Work: New Zealand Sex Workers' Fight for Decriminalization* (Policy Press, 2010).

Agustín, Laura. 'Sex and the Limits of Enlightenment: The Irrationality of Legal Regimes to Control Prostitution' (2008) 5 *Sexuality Research & Social Policy* 73-86.

Banach, Linda and Sue Metzenrath. *Principles For Model Sex Industry Legislation*, (Scarlet Alliance and the Australian Federation of AIDS Organizations, 2000).

Barry, Kathleen. *Female Sexual Slavery* (Harper and Row, 1979).

de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex* (Penguin, 1972).

Bell, L. (ed.). *Good Girls/Bad Girls: Sex Trade Workers and Feminists Face to Face* (Women's Press, 1987).

Bordo, Susan. 'Feminism, Postmodernism and Gender-Scepticism' in Linda J. Nicholson (ed), *Feminism/Postmodernism* (Routledge, 1990), 133-56.

Bounds, Elizabeth M. 'Sexuality and Economic Reality: A First and Third World Comparison' in Susan E. Davies and Eleanor H. Haney (eds.), *Redefining Sexual Ethics: A Sourcebook of Essays, Stories, and Poems* (Pilgrim, 1991), 131-43.

Brewis, Joanna and Stephen Linstead. *Sex, Work and Sex Work* (Routledge, 2000).

Davidson, Julia O'Connell. *Prostitution, Power and Freedom* (Polity Press, 1998).

———, 'The Rights and Wrongs of Prostitution' (2002) 17 *Hypatia* 84-98.

D'Cunha, Jean. 'Prostitution Laws: Ideological Dimensions and Enforcement Practices' (1992) 27 *Economic and Political Weekly* 34-44.

Frye, Marilyn. 'The Necessity of Differences: Constructing a Positive Category of Women' (1996) 21 *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 991-1010.

Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice* (Harvard University Press, 1982).

Gould, Arthur. 'The Criminalisation of Buying Sex: the Politics of Prostitution in Sweden' (2001) 30 *Journal of Social Policy* 437-56.

- Harding, R. and P. Hamilton. 'Working Girls: Abuse or Choice in Street-Level Sex Work? A Study of Homeless Women in Nottingham' (2008) 39 *British Journal of Social Work* 1118-37.
- Howarth, Caroline. 'Race as Stigma: Positioning the Stigmatized as Agents, not Objects' (2006) 16 *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 442-51.
- Hekman, Susan J. *The Future of Differences: Truth and Method in Feminist Theory* (Polity Press, 1999).
- Hubbard, P.J. et al. 'Regulating the Spaces of Sex Work: Assessing the Impact of Prostitution Law: Full Research Report'. ESRC no. RES-000-22-1001 (2007).
- Jaggar, Alison M. 'Prostitution' in Alan Soble (ed.), *The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings*, 1st ed. (Rowman & Littlefield, 1991), 348-68.
- Jeffreys, Sheila. *The Industrial Vagina: The Political Economy of the Global Sex Trade* (Routledge, 2008).
- Locke, John. 'The Second Treatise of Government' (1689) in David Wootton (ed.), *John Locke: Political Writings* (Penguin, 1993), 261-386.
- MacKinnon, Catherine. *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law* (Harvard University Press, 1987).
- Maher, L. *Sexed Work: Gender, Race and Resistance in a Brooklyn Drug Market* (Oxford University Press, 2000).
- McGinnis, Jane Dickin. 'Whores and Worthies: Feminism and Prostitution' (1994) 9 *Canadian Journal of Law and Sociology* 105-22.
- Murray, Kristen, *Sex Work as Work: Labour Regulation in the Legal Sex Industry in Victoria* (Masters thesis, University of Melbourne, 2001).
- Nussbaum, Martha, 'Whether From Reason or Prejudice: Taking Money For Bodily Services' (1998) 27 *Journal of Legal Studies* 693-724.
- O'Neill, M. *Prostitution and Feminism* (Polity Press, 2001).
- Overall, C. 'What's Wrong with Prostitution? Evaluating Sex Work' (1992) 17 *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 705-24.
- Owens, Rosemary J. 'Women, "Atypical" Work Relationships and the Law' (1993) 19 *Melbourne University Law Review* 399-430.
- Pateman, Carole. 'Defending Prostitution: Charges Against Ericsson' (1983) 93 *Ethics* 561-65.

———, 'What's Wrong with Prostitution?' (1999) 27 *Women's Studies Quarterly* 53-64.

Peterson-Iyer, Karen. 'Prostitution: A Feminist Ethical Analysis' (1998) 14 *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 19-44.

Pheterson, G. *A Vindication of the Rights of Whores* (Seal Press, 1989).

Posner, Eric A. *Law and Social Norms* (Harvard University Press, 2002).

Sanders, Teela, Maggie O'Neill and Jane Pitcher. *Prostitution: Sex Work, Policy and Politics* (SAGE, 2009).

Sandland, R. 'Between "Truth" and "Difference": Poststructuralism, Law and the Power of Feminism' (1995) 3 *Feminist Legal Studies* 3-47.

Sayce, L. 'Stigma, Discrimination and Social Exclusion: What's in a Word?' (1998) 7 *Journal of Mental Health* 331-43.

Schwarzenbach, Sybil. 'Contractarians and Feminists Debate Prostitution' (1990-1991) 18 *New York University Review of Law and Social Change* 103-29.

Scott, Joan. *Gender and The Politics of History* (Columbia Press, 1999)

Scoular, J. 'The "Subject" of Prostitution: Interpreting the Discursive, Symbolic and Material Position of Sex/Work in Feminist Theory' (2004) 5 *Feminist Theory* 343-55.

Scutt, Jocelyne. 'Judicial Vision: Rape, Prostitution and the "Chaste Woman"' in *Without Consent: Confronting Adult Sexual Violence* (Australian Institute of Criminology, 1992).

Shaver, Francis M. 'Prostitution: A Critical Analysis of Three Policy Approaches' (1985) 11 *Canadian Public Policy* 493-503.

Shrage, Laurie, 'Should Feminists Oppose Prostitution' (1989) 99 *Ethics* 347-61.

Sullivan, Mary. *Making Sex Work: A Failed Experiment with Legalized Prostitution* (Spinifex, 2007).

Walkowitz, Judith R. *Prostitution and Society: Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge University Press, 1980).

Cases

R v Hakopian (Unreported, Supreme Court of Victoria, Court of Criminal Appeal, 11 December 1991)

R v Harris (Unreported, Supreme Court of Victoria, Court of Criminal Appeal, 11 August 1981)

Legislation

Sex work Act 1994 (Vic)

Svensk författningssamling [The Prohibition of the Purchase of Sexual Services Act] 1998 (Sweden)

Breastmilk Exchange and New Forms of Social Relations

By Robyn Lee

The feminist push to socialize the work of mothering is motivated by a desire to share childrearing labour more equally throughout society. Breastfeeding presents a potential obstacle to the equalization of childcare because we currently understand it as an activity that may only be carried out by a mother for her biological child. In this paper I will discuss two general approaches to exchanging breastmilk: commodification and gifting, both of which are problematic. I argue that considering breastmilk as an exchange object obscures the relational nature of its production, while considering breastmilk as a gift is also problematic because mothers are already expected to give selflessly; gifts that are “free” still have a cost to women. While emphasizing the relationality of breastfeeding we must still recognize the time and effort required to produce breastmilk. Therefore, in this paper, I will examine the ways in which the exchange of breast milk challenges the understanding of breastfeeding as work that is not shared by creating and shaping new social relationships beyond that between a mother and her biological child.

Breastfeeding: An Obstacle to Achieving an Equitable Division of Childcare?

Women continue to perform the majority of childcare in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011). Breastfeeding often leads to ongoing inequalities in childcare,

with women's primary responsibility for infant feeding carrying on into taking on primary responsibility for other elements of caring for children. Law is pessimistic about possibilities for reconciling breastfeeding and equal distribution of household labour (Law, 2000). However, Blum argues that infant feeding can serve as a site for working out paradoxes of female autonomy and argues that breastfeeding has potential for resisting gendered inequalities (Blum, 1993, pp. 305-306). Socializing breastfeeding makes it more visible in the public sphere, and more recognizable as a form of labour requiring substantial time and effort. Nursing children who are not your biological offspring challenges the perception of breastfeeding as "work that is not shared" (Shaw, 2004, pp. 287-8).

It is important for feminist reasons that we value breastfeeding, because it is part of the labour that women perform that has historically been underappreciated and unequal in its burden. Breastfeeding constitutes part of social reproduction, which refers to the processes required to maintain and reproduce people and their labour power on a daily and generational basis (Luxton & Bezanson, 2006, p. 3). But there is a tension between conceiving of breastfeeding as biologic reproduction (lactation) versus social reproduction (breastfeeding) (Law, 2000). Biologic reproduction refers to pregnancy and giving birth, which is limited to one individual woman. If only the biological mother of a child can carry out the work of breastfeeding, then breastfeeding cannot be shared with others. If this is not the case then we can challenge the traditional division of labour where the mother is

the primary caregiver of children. Exchanging breastmilk allows this labour to be performed by women other than the biological mothers.

Privatization of Breastmilk

Breastfeeding is often read as highly sexualized, and therefore something that should only be carried out in the privacy of one's own home. Despite breastfeeding advocacy efforts, breastfeeding in public is still often interpreted as obscene. Breasts have become hypersexualized while motherhood has been desexualized. As a result breastfeeding has become a site for working out these contradictions. Providing breastmilk to children who are not your own is considered taboo, and the use of milk banks is very limited due to anxieties concerning disease and contamination.

Discomfort with breastfeeding in public has been identified as a contributing factor in shaping infant feeding choice and the decision to stop breastfeeding in particular (Boyer, 2011, p. 430). For instance, in Toronto the vast majority of breastfeeding women (93.2%) reported feeding their baby in the presence of family members, while 77.2% reported feeding their baby in the presence of friends. However, fewer mothers (68.6%) reported breastfeeding in public locations. The most frequently reported public locations were malls and restaurants, followed by recreational/cultural facilities, places of worship, parks,

workplaces, and/or public transit (Toronto Public Health, 2010). Interviews with mothers also indicated that women who felt comfortable breastfeeding in public were more likely to continue breastfeeding to six months.

People who support breastfeeding, and yet oppose it when it takes place in public, often argue that breastfeeding should be “discreet”; but behind this call for discretion hides deeply held concerns about women’s sexuality. Based on information derived from the literature of several disciplines, lay publications, and the news media, Dettwyler outlined four fundamental assumptions underlying cultural beliefs about breasts: 1) the primary purpose of women's breasts is for sex, not for feeding children; 2) breastfeeding serves only a nutritional function; 3) breastfeeding should be limited to very young infants; and 4) breastfeeding, like sex, is appropriate only when done in private (Dettwyler, 1995).

The women’s movement has long challenged previously held beliefs about the relationship between the public and the private. According to the famous slogan “the personal is political” social arrangements structuring private life are recognized as not neutral but rather as relations of power, and consequently subject to transformation. By examining breastfeeding we can recognize the political ramifications of this supposedly private activity.

Breastfeeding and Social Class

The bond between mother and child developed through breastfeeding is accorded great importance in the bourgeois nuclear family. However, the economic necessity that mothers work outside the home makes this increasingly difficult. At the same time, the growing popular awareness of the nutritional superiority of breastfeeding, in combination with the trend towards the social investment state, has resulted in a push to breastfeed in order to maximize the health, intelligence, and emotional well being of children.¹ Breastfeeding represents one way in which responsibility for the health and well-being of children is shifted from the state to individual women (Rippeyoung, 2009).

Fox argues that intensive or attachment parenting is only possible in middle-class families. Breastfeeding is a key component of intensive mothering because it is believed to enhance the bond between mother and child. Middle-class parents are more likely to endorse attachment parenting because it is believed to inculcate the traits necessary for professional employment when children grow up. Fox notes that intensive mothering may also be viewed as a way of maximizing children's quick development and high IQ, and thus future success, and assuaging their guilt about returning to work. By breastfeeding, women may be trying to ensure the intergenerational reproduction of social class (Fox, 2006, p. 259). Recent studies indicating that breastfed children have higher IQs play a

¹ For a description of the growth of the social investment state, see (Saint-Martin, 2007).

role in these beliefs (Petherick, 2010); (Kramer et al., 2008); (Anderson, Johnstone, & Remley, 1999).

For these reasons, breastfeeding poses questions of social justice. Since white women and women of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to breastfeed, breastfeeding could be considered a class-based and race-based privilege rather than a viable infant-feeding decision (Ahluwalia, Morrow, Hsia, & Grummer-Strawn, 2003; Ryan, Wenjun, & Acosta, 2002). The health benefits of breastfeeding will therefore not be distributed equally to all infants (McCarter-Spaulding, 2008, p. 210).

Inequalities in the distribution of breastmilk are not contemporary in their origin: the history of wet nursing has been a history of poorer women feeding the children of richer women. The quality of milk provided by wet nurses in twentieth century America were classified according to race and the characteristics assumed to accompany it (Golden, 2001, pp. 191–2). Blum notes that for African-Americans breastfeeding often has strong negative associations with slavery, since white landowners frequently handed over their children to be wet nursed by black slaves (Blum, 2000, p. 171).

Wet nursing and Cross-nursing

Wet nursing and cross-nursing both involve the breastfeeding of a baby by someone other than the baby's biological mother; however, wet nurses are

usually paid employees, while cross-nursing is between peers, is usually unpaid, and can be reciprocal (Thorley, 2008, p. 88). Recently, a return to wet nursing has begun among upper-class Americans: in Beverly Hills, clients of Certified Household Staffing can order a wet nurse from the company's website, along with their cleaning ladies and nannies, for around \$1000 per week (Pearce, 2007).

Wet nursing was widely practiced from ancient times and continues to be common in many traditional societies, most commonly with poor women nursing the children of upper-class women (Golden, 2001); (Riordan, 2005); (Fildes, 1988). Wet nurses were popular among upper class families because they increased the fertility and sexual availability of wives. Galen, in the second century, said semen in a woman's body soured her breastmilk, a belief that persisted until the middle ages. Until the 18th century the Catholic church encouraged the use of wet nurses so that women could pay their husbands their "conjugal due"(Cassidy, 2007, p. 237). Wet nursing was never widespread in North America, where it was used primarily in cases of maternal death or illness, and was more common in the American South, where enslaved black women nursed their masters' children (Fildes, 1988, pp. 128, 141).

Wet nurses were often chosen according to strict guidelines for morality and physical health, since it was widely assumed that breastmilk could pass on any deficiencies to the child. The lower socioeconomic status of wet nurses was often an obstacle since it often signified moral or physical degeneracy to upper class

parents. Wet nursing was often problematic since most wet nurses were women from the margins of society: poor, often unmarried, and therefore morally suspect. Respectable families did not want wet nurses in their homes, and the wet nurses' own infants, deprived of their mothers' milk, often quickly perished (Pineau, 2011, p. 16). Objections to wet nurses centered on their presumed promiscuity and their lower socioeconomic class: in both ways they presented a challenge to the middle-class family.

Golden argues that wet nursing did not "lose" to formula feeding but that it lost favour because of growing social class divisions between the women who were employed as wet nurses and the families in which they worked, the changing cultural perceptions of motherhood and infancy that were linked to the rise of America's middle class, the growing authority of medical science, the expanding role of physicians in shaping child-rearing practices, and the profound ethical dilemmas raised by the practice of wet nursing in the nineteenth century (Golden, 2001, p. 2).

Commodification of breastfeeding has historically led to a symbolic association with prostitution. The lactating breast has been analogized with the syphilitic penis, in both cases as the point of contact between illicit sexuality and prostitution, and the family circle (Richter, 1996, pp. 17–8). Wet nurses perform their work not out of a sense of maternal duty, but for a wage, and it was widely assumed that illicit sexuality led to their having milk to sell. As a result of suspicions about the moral integrity of wet nurses, criteria for testing the moral

and physical health of the women was developed, however there remained great doubtfulness of the effectiveness of screening for possible contagion (that is, venereal disease).

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wet nursing began to fall out of favour as the bourgeois model of the family became generally accepted, in which closeness between parents and children was valorized and children were accorded special consideration. With this privatization of the family, closeness with the bodies of those outside the family unit became unacceptable (Hedenborg, 2001, p. 400). Richter notes that wet nursing was associated with monetary payment and illicit sex (Richter, 1996, pp. 17–18). Breastfeeding one's biological child, however, was thought to be reflective of maternal duty, purged of economic gain or sexual pleasure.

Cross-nursing and milk banking have been limited by fears of contamination. There is great discomfort, even disgust, with exchanging breastmilk (Shaw, 2004). Breast milk sharing has been discouraged by discourses that labeled other women's breastmilk, like other bodily fluids, as dangerous, especially in the 1980s when fears were heightened by the emergence of HIV (Zizzo, 2009, p. 103). Within the monogamous family, breastmilk is considered to be "clean" and "safe": women are not routinely screened for HIV or other sexually transmitted illnesses before they breastfeed their biological children. However, the nature of bodily fluids is to create feelings of discomfort in people, because bodily fluids challenge our understanding of selfhood as discrete, distinct, and self-contained

(Shildrick, 1997). Shaw argues these fears may be alarmist considering that HIV-positive women would be unlikely to offer to cross-nurse (Shaw, 2007, p. 440).

The moral outrage surrounding a case of so-called “non-consensual” cross-nursing in New Zealand in 1996 demonstrates the panic that surrounds the breastmilk of other women (Shaw, 2003). According to the mother of the infant, professional babysitters allowed a relative stranger to breastfeed her baby ‘without consent’ and this was a moral outrage. The mother publicly denounced the actions of the breastfeeding woman, accusing her of violating the child’s rights and putting the child’s health at risk and demanded that she undergo blood tests (Shaw, 2003) .

The idea of a lactating woman feeding and bonding with a child who is not her biological offspring is viewed negatively (Shaw, 2004). Zizzo found in her qualitative research that women had no issue with sharing breastmilk as long as it was delivered through pumping and bottle feeding, not direct breastfeeding: distance from the body that provided the milk was preferred so that emotional bonds between the child and the lactating woman who produced the milk were not formed (Zizzo, 2009, p. 103). Breastmilk is not inherently unpleasant but “when it is brought into contact with our body through the mouth, then this proximity is felt as offensive” (Springgay, 2011, p. 72). Breastmilk is acceptable when understood to be nutritious food for infants, but disgust arises through the proximity with other bodies. Outside of the biological mother-infant dyad it is an abject substance, the exchange of which produces anxiety (Longhurst, 2001).

Milk Banking

There are only a few non-profit milk banks in North America. These are usually affiliated with hospitals, and supply breastmilk only for premature or ill infants. In milk-banking breastmilk is pasteurized and collected en masse and the characteristics unique to individual milk donors disappear. These include antibodies a woman has developed through exposure to pathogens, different tastes due to variations in diet, and nutritional and consistency differences due to age of her child. Due to increasing awareness of the nutritional superiority of breastmilk and low rates of breastfeeding, there has recently been an increase in the sale of breastmilk by for-profit milk banks as well as between individual parents via the Internet. Consequently, there have been warnings from public health agencies and breastfeeding advocacy groups about the health risks posed by sharing breastmilk. Along with these warnings, there have been concerns expressed in the media about the commodification of breastmilk in private milk banks and the sale of breastmilk online. Milk banking continues to be uncommon in North America despite the WHO and UNICEF's strong support for the practice, dating back to 1980. Even after reports were published indicating that HIV could be transmitted through human milk, the WHO and UNICEF continued to support donor milk banking, with the precautions of pasteurizing and, when possible, screening donors for HIV.

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that breastfeeding is an activity for the whole society (United Nations, 1990, sec. 2e). Mothers are

not mandated to breastfeed, but governments are mandated to educate all mothers and parents so that they can make informed choices. Arnold notes that by extension, this means that parents should also be educated about the uses of banked donor milk and its benefits, so that they know about this option and can request it if necessary (Arnold, 2006, p. 3). However, the FDA warns against using donor milk that is not obtained through a milk bank that screens. It lists risks for the baby that include exposure to infectious diseases, including HIV, to chemical contaminants, such as some illegal drugs, and to a limited number of prescription drugs that might be in the human milk, if the donor has not been adequately screened. In addition, if human milk is not handled and stored properly, it could, like any type of milk, become contaminated and unsafe to drink. The FDA specifically warns against human milk obtained directly from individuals or through the internet, saying that the donor is unlikely to have been adequately screened for infectious disease or contamination risk, and that it is not likely that the human milk has been collected, processed, tested or stored in a way that reduces possible safety risks to the baby (U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2010).

The La Leche League also cautions women about sharing breast milk, forbidding its leaders from ever suggesting an informal milk-donation arrangement, including wet-nursing or cross-nursing. If a mother asks to discuss these options, the Leader's role is to provide information about the risks and benefits so that the mother can make her own informed decision based on her situation (La Leche

League International, 2007). The League's concerns include the possibility of transmitting infections, a decrease in supply for the donor's own baby, psychological confusion on the part of the infant and the fact that the composition of breastmilk changes as children get older.

The Commodification of Breastmilk

The commodification of breastmilk is linked to the neoliberal discourse of the perfection of children and medicalized understanding of risk. Although it may have the potential to transform the economy of the nuclear, patriarchal family, it may also reinforce it by drawing on the labour of poorer women for the benefit of wealthier families. Online milk exchange has become more popular, providing women with substantial economic rewards. For instance, on the website Only the Breast the asking price is between \$1 and \$2.50 per ounce, which can net a productive woman \$20 000 in a year (Dutton, 2011).

Feminist views on the commodification of reproductive labour vary. Some of the reasons why feminists think receiving money for reproductive labour is dignifying for women include the fact that within capitalism, being paid to do things for other people is a sign of respect, and getting paid to do reproductive labour for others can also enhance women's autonomy by fulfilling autonomous desires they may have to sell that labour. Such payment can also disrupt patriarchal ideals of motherhood or womanhood (McLeod, 2009, p. 271). The commodification of breastmilk gives women market power, which is power under capitalism. It also

helps out women who are in economic hardship, an important consideration given that women, particularly mothers, are much more likely than men to live in poverty.

However, commodifying the work of social reproduction does not mean that individuals who perform this work will be fairly compensated. When valued by the market, social reproduction is “gendered, often racialized, and poorly remunerated” (Luxton & Bezanson, 2006, p. 6). When childcare is commodified, less affluent women are paid low wages to care for more affluent women’s children (Taylor, 2011, p. 901). Shaw notes that breastmilk was poorly compensated in early milk banks (Shaw, 2007, p. 443). Commodifying breastmilk may also have the unfortunate effect of further limiting its availability to wealthy parents. In addition, the buying and selling of breastmilk could lead to exploitation of women who make their breastmilk available to purchase, particularly women who may be forced into commercial breastmilk production as their only means of economic exchange (Zizzo, 2009, p. 106). The price of breastmilk online fluctuates depending on women’s willingness to provide blood work confirming their good health, as well as on the healthiness of the women’s diets. Given the additional costs of eating a healthy diet, there is potential for stratification of the value of women’s breastmilk.

Commodities and gifts are generally considered to be opposites. Malinowski first proposed the dichotomous notion of gift versus commodity in 1922, whereby gift exchange must be understood as an oppositional economy to that of market

exchange. Gift giving as moral economy is distinguished from the political economy of monetary transactions (Giesler, 2006, p. 284). The exchange of commodities is assumed to happen between strangers, not between kin or friends (Belk, 2007, p. 127). Gifts, on the other hand, establish a relationship between people: the debt is generally not annulled, but gives rise to further gifting between them. Belk describes the body of the mother as the ultimate expression of sharing because she generally neither sells her womb or her breastmilk, nor is it usually considered a special gift (Belk, 2007, p. 129). Nevertheless, Belk acknowledges surrogate motherhood and wet nursing as exceptions to the gift of the maternal body.

The Gift of Breastmilk

Breastmilk is unusual in that it has been commodified for centuries through wet nursing, but then underwent a transition to a gift economy in North America and Western Europe. When the first breastmilk bank was established in Boston in 1910, breastmilk was treated as it was treated historically: as a commodity purchased from poor women. However, by 1970, the payment for breastmilk was an anachronism, a “symbolic tribute to middle-class donors’ special commitment to their own and other infants’ well-being” (Pineau, 2011, p. 21).

Pineau notes that three trends in American society led to milk banks relying on donors rather than sellers. First, changes in women’s employment meant that poor mothers who had previously sold their milk found alternative work, while the

increase in middle-class mother's employment expanded the breastmilk supply, as mothers began expressing milk at work. Second, with the rise of the ideology of intensive motherhood, breastmilk came to embody the virtue of good mothering. Finally, improvements in breast pumps, refrigeration, medical testing, and shipping, made collection and storage of breastmilk easier and more convenient (Pineau, 2011, pp. 17–18). Mothers' high rate of employment is an important factor in the availability of donors because mothers who pump regularly often express more than their infants need, creating an excess supply they feel uncomfortable disposing of, due to the highly symbolic meaning of the milk. Women's employment therefore allows milk banks to follow an altruistic model (Pineau, 2011, p. 21).

Considering breastmilk as an exchange object obscures the relational nature of its production. In milk-banking breastmilk is pasteurized and collected en masse and its unique character disappears. Genevieve Vaughan opposes gift giving and exchange (Vaughan, 1997, p. 30). She describes gift giving in terms of the nurturing or caring work of mothering and as therefore relegated to the home, whereas exchange is self-reflecting, focuses attention on equivalence between products and the satisfaction of another's needs is a mere means to satisfying one's own needs. Thus exchange creates isolated, independent egos, not community (Vaughan, 1997, p. 32). Giving presents is therefore an alternative to a patriarchal exchange economy.

On the other hand, considering breastmilk as a gift is problematic because of

concerns that mothers are already the foundation of gifting; they are already expected to give selflessly. Banning commodification, or imposing a model of altruism on the exchange of breastmilk, may not be beneficial to women, since women have traditionally been the caretakers of the world and continuing to rely on women's acculturated desire to help others perpetuates sexism (McLeod, 2009, p. 267).

Gifts are never actually "free" because they still have a cost in domestic labour. If the cost of gifts is disproportionately borne by women, than the gifting of breastmilk should be considered unjust. Gifting breastmilk comes at a cost to the women who produce it. For example, time is potentially an important economic cost of breastfeeding, especially if the opportunity cost (that is, wages in employment) of a mother's time spent breastfeeding is high. Another significant issue is how the work of childcare and feeding is shared. Mothers may feel that their leisure time and autonomy is reduced by breastfeeding. Another cost mothers may face in breastfeeding is that of consuming additional calories and maintaining a healthy diet (Smith, 2004, p. 373).

Gifting can also be commodification in disguise, since biotechnology firms and researchers are using breastmilk to produce consumer products. For instance, Prolacta Bioscience, a for-profit enterprise that operates somewhat like a pharmaceutical company, produces its own enhanced breastmilk product, a syrupy fortifier specifically for hospitalized newborns, at a cost of \$135 per baby, per day. With 58 hospital contracts and an ambitious distribution strategy for the

next year, Prolacta has a multimillion-dollar opportunity for its products (Dutton, 2011). Dickenson argues that in instances where donors are unpaid but their donations end up in consumer products this is not ‘incomplete commodification’ but rather “complete commodification with a plausibly human face” (Dickenson, 2002, p. 56). In this case, it is not women who benefit from this commodification, but rather the producers of consumer products.

Beyond Commodity and Gift to a Politics of Sharing Breastmilk

Donations to milk banks and blood banks are usually predicated on the assumption of a stranger relationship in which the recipient is rarely known to the donor and vice versa (Shaw, 2003, pp. 69–70). However, I will argue that the exchange of breastmilk has the potential to transform relationships between people who live at far remove from each other.

The example of breastmilk demonstrates how gift and commodity systems can no longer be neatly separated from one another. Donated breastmilk is already being commodified. For instance, the International Breast Milk Project represents a hybrid of gift and commodity exchange systems. The company Prolacta collects, screens and ships milk donated to the IBMP, but it actually only sends 25% of it to Africa, selling the other 75% to US hospitals at \$35 US per ounce, as well as using it to develop new therapies based on breastmilk (Boyer, 2010, p. 13). Waldby and Mitchell argue that waste, commodity and gift systems now operate in concert with one another, usually to the benefit of globalized medical

and pharmaceutical establishments (Waldby and Mitchell 2006). One example of this is the emergence of legal mechanisms designed systematically to separate patients from rights to their tissues and other biosubstances removed during surgery (which hospitals can then sell). When produced in excess of what an individual child requires, breastmilk may be viewed as waste, and therefore figure into combinations of gift and commodity systems (Boyer, 2010, p. 12).

Boyer points out that, like other forms of charitable giving, the act of giving to the International Breast Milk Project yields psychic and biophysical benefits for the donor. Donations to the IBMP are not merely altruistic because donors are invited to look at, and presumably take satisfaction from, images of their gifts being received and consumed. As well, by producing the gift (expressing milk) both decreases the donor's chances of getting diseases such as breast cancer and osteoporosis in the long term, and in the short term releases oxytocin, a hormone which generates feelings of contentment and well-being (Boyer, 2010, p. 13).

Sharing is an alternative to the private ownership implied in both commodification and gift exchange (Belk, 2007, p. 127). Alternative ways of exchanging breastmilk present new possibilities for reworking ideas of kinship beyond the heteronormative nuclear family. We have an incentive to share when our extended sense of self embraces other people outside of our immediate family, since when we feel a shared identity with others we feel a common sense of moral obligation toward them (Belk, 2007, p. 135). Consumer gift systems have

developed beyond necessity and mutual dependency to a new basis in individual choice (Giesler, 2006, p. 289). Since breastmilk exchange is now also being carried out over the Internet, between individuals who may never meet, Giesler describes it as having a “rhizomatic” character: flexible, voluntary, with social segments remaining independent.

Cross-nursing has many advantages. The exchange of breastmilk reduces the isolation of the small family unit, blurring the lines of private and public life. Advocates of cross-nursing argue that milk sharing lets women be good moms while fulfilling other goals. One woman who practices cross-nursing describes breastmilk as "a communal commodity around here"(Lee-St. John, 2007). Some mothers say sharing milk helps to alleviate the feeling of being tied down by a nursing infant and creates unique bonds with the children nursed as well as with their mothers (Pearce, 2007).

But contemporary cross-nursing is still race and class-based; it is generally poorer women who sell breastmilk to richer women. Concerns over disease are still associated with concerns about sexual morality and hygiene. White, middle and upper-class, heterosexual, married women are more often assumed to have “pure” milk, while fears of contamination are associated with poor, racialized, queer, and unmarried women who are assumed to be promiscuous and at higher risk of disease (Hausman, 2003, 2010). Describing the exchange of breastmilk as “sharing” rather than as a gift or commodity does not easily overcome inequalities in the production and distribution of breastmilk.

Breastfeeding is about relationships. We have a tendency to separate product from process, breastmilk from the activity of breastfeeding. However, in order to properly value breastfeeding, we need to see it in the context of relationships. Breastfeeding cannot be isolated to specific biological events in a woman's life. It needs to be understood in the broader context of her entire life and all her relationships with others. We place an economic value on breastfeeding only through examining the product. Breastmilk is given an economic value through comparing it to infant formula. Whereas infant formula is a commodity that anyone can buy and anyone can consume, breastfeeding is relationship-dependent. Without the suckling activity of the child, milk cannot be produced, and of course if the mother decides to restrict or stop breastfeeding the child cannot nurse.

Milk Kinship

Milk kinship is a family bond established by breastfeeding an infant you have not given birth to. Breastfeeding was practiced from the beginning of Islam in such a way as to broaden the network of relatives on whom one could rely for assistance and cooperation (Gil'adi, 1999, p. 27). Islamic milk kinship is the most widely known type of familial bond established by breastfeeding, but Parkes points out that it was also practiced by Christians in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Caucasus and the Balkans, and among the Hindu Kush. In addition, the canon law of several non-Orthodox eastern Christian churches recognised

marital impediments of milk kinship created by co-suckling similar to those of contemporary Sunni and Shi'ite Islamic law (Parkes, 2007).

Islamic law defines three different kinds of kinship: relationship by blood (*nasab*), affinity (*musaharv*), and milk (*rida'a*). This additional form of kinship increased the network of relatives that could be relied upon to provide assistance when needed.

In Islam, there is a prohibition against marrying anyone with whom you share milk-kinship. Milk relationships duplicate blood relatives with whom a Muslim man is forbidden to marry (Gil'adi, 1999, p. 24). Milk kinship thus also served as a way to avoid certain marriages (especially between members of unequal classes) while still forging connective family bonds (Parkes, 2005).

Although milk kinship has waned in popularity, Parkes points to its continuing significance as an "alternative social structure in reserve" enabling diverse groups to enter into relationship with each other (Parkes, 2007, p. 354). Milk kinship has also been mobilized for political action in Saudi Arabia. Milk kinship also historically had the advantage of allowing women to go unveiled while in the presence of their milk kin. In contemporary Saudi Arabia the norms of veiling have become less strict and that consequently milk kinship for the sake of avoiding otherwise compulsory veiling is no longer common (Altorki, 1980). Nevertheless, in 2007 Dr. Izzat Atiyya, a lecturer at Cairo's Al-Azhar University, issued a fatwa stating that gender segregation in the workplace could be

overcome through establishing milk kinship. If a woman breastfed her male colleague at least five times they would establish a family bond and would then be able to be alone together at work. This ruling evoked public outrage, however, and Dr. Atiyya was forced to retract it ("Breastfeeding fatwa causes stir," 2007; Reso, 2010). The issue has not died, as this June two high-profile sheiks recommended that women breastfeed adult men in order to be able to have unfettered social contact with them. Sheikh Al Obeikan recommended that this be done via expressed milk, while sheik Abi Ishaq Al Huwaini argued that men should suckle directly from women's breasts (Reso, 2010). In response to these edicts Saudi women launched a campaign for the right to drive, threatening to breastfeed their foreign drivers and turn them into sons if their demand is not met (Sandels, 2010). This political action not only undermines the patriarchal family structure, but also nationalism.

Strathern argues that anthropological studies of kinship founder on the cultural constructs that are used to identify kinship. Kinship is culturally laden, and yet what else can we use to distinguish kinship from any other phenomenon? The process of searching for kinship demonstrates the connections and disconnections between people who may or may not be considered relatives (Strathern, 2005, p. 7). As I have argued that breastmilk moves between and beyond the categories of commodity and gift, so too does breastmilk make us both strangers and family.

Re-Socializing Breastfeeding

Alternative understandings of breastmilk exchange require that we open up our conception of family and socialize breastfeeding. An example of this is milk kinship, which has historically been practiced in the Islamic world and beyond as a way of binding people together into a familial relationship that is nearly on par with the bonds of blood. Milk kinship provides an alternative to both the commodification and gift models of breastmilk exchange and gives us a way to think about alternative kinds of resulting relationships. I draw on Foucault's concept of "rights of relations" to argue for expanding our understanding of breastfeeding relationships.

It is important to have new forms of relations, according to Foucault, and he suggests the promotion of rights of relations, rather than individual rights. These rights of relations allow for individuals to determine new possibilities for selfhood, while always recognizing that rights are dependent upon relationships with others (Foucault, 1997). Foucault argues

We live in a relational world that institutions have considerably impoverished. Society and the institutions that frame it have limited the possibility of relationships because a rich relational world would be very complex to manage. We should fight against the impoverishment of the relational fabric" (Foucault, 1997, p. 158).

Foucault advocated the development of more kinds of interpersonal relations, and breastmilk sharing can make this possible.

Zizzo argues that breastmilk sharing has the potential to eliminate or reduce biologically based separation between birth and non-birth mothers and the division of labour when caring for children. These alternative ways of sharing breastmilk include inducing lactation in non-birth mothers and having their infant suckle at the breast, and buying and selling of breast milk collected from lactating women other than the biological mother (Zizzo, 2009, p. 96). This may make a “three-way bond” between both mothers and their child easier to establish (Zizzo, 2009, p. 104). Zizzo also notes that this same effect may generate more egalitarian parenting in other types of families, allowing men to become the primary or co-caregivers by bottle-feeding expressed breastmilk. Sharing breastmilk thus has the potential to challenge and redefine maternal and gender roles in families generally (Zizzo, 2009, p. 106). Boyer suggests that milk expression by pump can expand our understanding of caring at a distance both by suggesting ways in which biosubstances can create a care-relation between distant strangers, and by suggesting competing narratives about the conditions under which it is (and is not) appropriate to offer and accept this kind of care (Boyer, 2010, p. 6).

Conclusion

Through new kinds of relationships based on sharing breastmilk we can challenge the understanding of breastfeeding as work that is not shared. Expanding our conception of the breastfeeding relationship exposes breastfeeding as an intrinsically social activity, rather than a merely natural or

biological one. Considering breastfeeding from the two extremes of commodification or freely-given “gift” overlooks the way in which breastmilk is always produced relationally. Opposing milk banks on the one hand with the private mother-infant dyad on the other forecloses on other possible forms of breastfeeding relationships. Without ignoring both of these important forms of breastfeeding relations, there are more possibilities for socializing the activity of breastfeeding. Between the marketplace and the privacy of the family different breastfeeding relationships of kinship and political action are possible. Expanded breastfeeding relationships also have the potential to increase the visibility of breastfeeding, decrease the taboo of breastfeeding in public, and ease the pressure on individual women to carry out all the labour of breastfeeding on their own.

References

Ahluwalia, I. B., Morrow, B., Hsia, J., & Grummer-Strawn, L. M. (2003). Who is breast-feeding? Recent trends from the pregnancy risk assessment and monitoring system. *Journal of Pediatrics*, 142, 486–493.

Altorki, S. (1980). Milk-Kinship in Arab Society: An Unexplored Problem in the Ethnography of Marriage. *Ethnology*, 19(2), 233–244.

Anderson, J. W., Johnstone, B. M., & Remley, D. T. (1999). Breast-feeding and cognitive development: a meta-analysis. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 70(4), 525 –535.

Arnold, L. (2006). Global health policies that support the use of banked donor human milk: a human rights issue. *International Breastfeeding Journal*, 1(1), 26.

Belk, R. (2007). Why Not Share Rather Than Own? *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 611(1), 126 –140.

Blum, L.M. (2000). *At the Breast: Ideologies of Breastfeeding and Motherhood in the Contemporary United States*. Boston: Beacon Press.

———. (1993). Mothers, Babies, and Breastfeeding in Late Capitalist America: the Shifting Contexts of Feminist Theory. *Feminist Studies*, 19(2), 291–311.

Boyer, K. (2010). Of care and commodities: breast milk and the new politics of mobile biosubstances. *Progress in Human Geography*, 34(1), 5–20.

Boyer, K. (2011). “The way to break the taboo is to do the taboo thing” breastfeeding in public and citizen-activism in the UK. *Health & Place*, 17(2), 430–437.

Breastfeeding fatwa causes stir. (2007, May 22). BBC News. Retrieved August 1, 2012, from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6681511.stm>

Cassidy, T. (2007). *Birth: The Surprising History of How We Are Born*. New York: Grove Press.

Dettwyler, K. (1995). Beauty and the breast: the cultural context of breastfeeding in the United States. In P. Stuart-Macadam & K. Dettwyler (Eds.), *Breastfeeding: biocultural perspectives* (pp. 167–215). New York: de Gruyter.

Dickenson, D. (2002). Commodification of Human Tissue: Implications for Feminist and Development Ethics. *Developing World Bioethics*, 2(1), 55–63.

Dutton, J. (2011, June). Liquid Gold: The Booming Market for Human Breast Milk | Magazine. Wired. Retrieved from

http://www.wired.com/magazine/2011/05/ff_milk/

Fildes, V. A. (1988). *Wet nursing: a history from antiquity to the present*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Foucault, M. (1997). "The Social Triumph of the Sexual Will" in *Ethics: subjectivity and truth*. (P. Rabinow, Ed.). New York: New Press.

Fox, B. (2006). *Motherhood as a Class Act: The Many Ways in Which "Intensive Mothering" is Entangled with Social Class*. In M. Luxton & K. Bezanson (Eds.), *Social reproduction: feminist political economy challenges neo-liberalism*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Giesler, M. (2006). *Consumer Gift Systems*. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 33(2), 283–290.

Gil'adi, A. (1999). *Infants, parents and wet nurses: medieval Islamic views on breastfeeding and their social implications*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.

Golden, J. (2001). *A social history of wet nursing in America: from breast to bottle*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.

Hausman, B. L. (2003). *Mother's milk: breastfeeding controversies in American culture*. New York: Routledge.

———. (2010). *Viral Mothers: Breastfeeding in the Age of HIV/AIDS*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Hedenborg, S. (2001). To Breastfeed Another Woman's Child: Wet-Nursing in Stockholm, 1777–1937. *Continuity and Change*, 16(03), 399–422.

Kramer, M. S., Aboud, F., Mironova, E., Vanilovich, I., Platt, R. W., Matush, L., ... For the Promotion of Breastfeeding Intervention Trial (PROBIT) Study Group. (2008). Breastfeeding and Child Cognitive Development: New Evidence From a Large Randomized Trial. *Arch Gen Psychiatry*, 65(5), 578–584.

La Leche League International. (2007, March). LLLI | Wet Nursing and Cross Nursing. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from <http://www.llli.org/llleaderweb/lv/lvjulaug95p53.html>

Law, J. (2000). The Politics of Breastfeeding: Assessing Risk, Dividing Labor. *Signs*, 25(2), 407–450.

Lee-St. John, J. (2007, April 19). Outsourcing Breast Milk - TIME. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1612710,00.html>

Longhurst, Robyn. 2001. *Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries*. New York: Psychology Press.

Luxton, M., & Bezanson, K. (2006). *Social reproduction: feminist political economy challenges neo-liberalism*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

McCarter-Spaulding, D. (2008). Is Breastfeeding Fair? Tensions in Feminist Perspectives on Breastfeeding and the Family. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 24(2), 206 –212.

McLeod, C. (2009). For Dignity or Money: Feminists on the Commodification of Women's Reproductive Labour. In B. Steinbock (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Bioethics* (pp. 258–281). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/philosophypub/338>

Parkes, P. (2005). Milk Kinship in Islam. *Substance, Structure, History. Social Anthropology*, 13(03), 307–329.

———. (2007). Milk kinship in Southeast Europe. *Alternative social structures and foster relations in the Caucasus and the Balkans. Social Anthropology*, 12(3).

Pearce, T. (2007, May 1). Breast friends - The Globe and Mail. *Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/article756126.ece>

Petherick, A. (2010). Development: Mother's milk: A rich opportunity. *Nature*, 468(7327), S5–S7.

Pineau, M. G. (2011). From Commodity to Donation: Breast Milk Banking in the United States, 1910 to the Present. *CSW Update Newsletter*. UCLA Center for the Study of Women, UC Los Angeles. Retrieved from <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/5cq095sn;jsessionid=27EA30AABCAE6535D76D4E617C2CCA9D#page-2>

Reso, P. (2010, June 9). Saudi clerics issue fatwa okaying adult breast-feeding as way of circumventing Islamic law. *New York Daily News*. Retrieved August 1, 2012, from <http://articles.nydailynews.com/nydn-nav.php?c=27066690&p=NYDailyNews&t=ap-NYDN9-G02&s=News&n=>

Richter, S. (1996). Wet-Nursing, Onanism, and the Breast in Eighteenth-Century Germany. *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 7(1), 1–22.

Riordan, J. (2005). *Breastfeeding and human lactation*. Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Rippeyoung, P. (2009). Feeding the State: Breastfeeding and Women's Well-Being in Context. *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement*, 11(1).

Ryan, A. S., Wenjun, Z., & Acosta, A. (2002). Breastfeeding continues to increase into the new millennium. *Pediatrics*, 110, 1103–1109.

Saint-Martin, D. (2007). From the Welfare State to the Social Investment State. In M. C. Smith & M. Orsini (Eds.), *Critical policy studies*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Sandels, A. (2010, June 22). Saudi Arabia: Women threaten to breastfeed drivers if they aren't allowed to drive. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved August 1, 2012, from <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2010/06/saudi-women-use-fatwa-in-driving-bid.html>

Shaw, R. (2003). Theorizing Breastfeeding: Body Ethics, Maternal Generosity and the Gift Relation. *Body & Society*, 9(2), 55–73.

———. (2004). The virtues of cross-nursing and the “yuk factor”. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 19(45), 287.

———. (2007). Cross-nursing, ethics, and giving breast milk in the contemporary context. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 30, 439–450.

Shildrick, M. (1997). *Leaky bodies and boundaries: feminism, postmodernism and (bio)ethics*. New York: Routledge.

Smith, J. (2004). Mothers' milk and markets. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 19(45), 369.

Springgay, S. (2011). The Ethico-Aesthetics of Affect and a Sensational Pedagogy. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 9(1), 66–82.

Statistics Canada. (2011, July 12). General Social Survey 2010: Overview of the Time Use of Canadians. Retrieved July 4, 2012, from http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/access_acces/alternative_alternatif.action?l=en&loc=http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-647-x/89-647-x2011001-eng.pdf&t=General%20Social%20Survey%20-%202010:%20Overview%20of%20the%20Time%20Use%20of%20Canadians

Strathern, M. (2005). *Kinship, law and the unexpected: relatives are always a surprise*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, T. (2011). Re-examining Cultural Contradictions: Mothering Ideology and the Intersections of Class, Gender, and Race. *Sociology Compass*, 5(10), 898–907.

Thorley, V. (2008). Breasts for Hire and Shared Breastfeeding: Wet Nursing and Cross Feeding in Australia, 1900-2000. *Health and History*, 10(1), 88–109.

Toronto Public Health. (2010). Breastfeeding in Toronto - Promoting Supportive Environments. Retrieved from

http://www.toronto.ca/health/breastfeeding/environments_report/

U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2010, November 30). Use of Donor Human Milk. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from

<http://www.fda.gov/ScienceResearch/SpecialTopics/PediatricTherapeuticsResearch/ucm235203.htm>

United Nations. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child | United Nations | International Treaties (1990). Retrieved from

http://www.canadiancrc.com/UN_CRC/UN_Convention_on_the_Rights_of_the_Child.aspx

Vaughan, G. (1997). *For-Giving: A Feminist Criticism of Exchange*. Austin, TX: Plain View Press.

Waldby, Catherine, and Robert Mitchell. 2006. *Tissue Economies: Blood, Organs, and Cell Lines in Late Capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books.

Zizzo, G. (2009). Lesbian Families and the Negotiation of Maternal Identity Through the Unconventional Use of Breast Milk. *Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review*, 5(2), 96–109.

One After the Other: Collecting in *A Girl of the Limberlost*

By Beth Nardella

In Gene Stratton-Porter's *A Girl of the Limberlost* from 1909, Elnora Comstock grows through her habit of collecting. She begins as a fascinated child gathering interesting items while at play. On the first day of her freshman year in high school, she learns that she can make money from collecting moths and her knowledge of their habits. She pays for her education by selling the insects and artifacts she gathers in the swamp near her home to distant collectors, using a character named the Bird Woman as a liaison. One Summer while gathering items to sell, Elnora meets Philip Ammon, a rich city boy living with his uncle in the country to recover from an illness. With her work ethic and self-education adding to her intrinsic value, she becomes a commodity to him. She possesses the necessary attributes that a cultured, affluent man like Philip is looking for in a woman and before the close of the novel, they marry.

Although the novel is full of the kinds of stereotypes of womanhood prevalent in the early 1900s and is essentially a romance novel for teenage girls, *A Girl of the Limberlost* was transformative. Much of the novel's overwhelming popularity is due to Elnora. She is charming and generous, kind and honest, yet also steadfast and resolute. Generations of young women have seen her as an ideal role model because of these positive character traits. Throughout the course of the novel, Elnora overcomes many hardships: she is able to go to school because she works hard, and she excels while there; she has a strained relationship with her mother but she is not insolent (although

not always obedient); and she wins Philip Ammon without being calculating. Her honesty, strength, and perseverance appeal to readers because she also has faults. Elnora's character is believable and, as such, encouraging.

A Girl of the Limberlost gives an important glimpse into a realm where scientists and educated amateurs engaged jointly in making discoveries, cataloging their finds, and establishing an economy of exchange, both intellectual and financial. Stratton-Porter used her vast historical knowledge of nature and the Limberlost Swamp to create an accurate portrait of this exciting historical moment in which the fictional Elnora engages the minds of her young readers through the vehicle of moth collecting. Elnora moves from collector to collected through her marriage to Philip Ammon in a transitional period of time during which moth collecting evolved from hobby to science, and women gained status in universities.

Specimen Collecting Evolves

The entomologist's collecting activities contributed to the stereotype of eccentric 'bug hunter' so common among nineteenth-century Americans. After all, the capture, pinning, and arrangement of specimens in cabinets were the most conspicuous 'activities' in which entomologists engaged, and these activities reinforced the impression of eccentricity that was associated with the collecting and hoarding of esoteric items of nonutilitarian value.

— W. C. Sorensen, 34

Moth collecting has been a documented activity for hundreds of years. While Asian cultures showed some of the earliest interests, it has also been present in Europe for over 400 years (Epstein). The early 1800s saw the first studies of American Lepidoptera with subsequent publications and collections. The most notable collections of that time

period belonged to Titian Peale of Philadelphia and Count Castleman, whose collection was housed at the National Institute in Washington, D.C. (Sorensen 21). There were also several entomological societies active before the late 1800s comprised of self-designated scholars in the field (“literary gentlemen”) who, among other similar endeavors, published catalogs of American insects. These groups had strict requirements for membership.

At the time, very few entomologists were actually making a living from their studies. There was no need yet for such occupations. In fact, the wider field of natural history had yet to produce many income-generating positions (Barrow 496). The Smithsonian Museum was not established until 1846 (“History”). Andrew Carnegie gave Pittsburgh the funding for its Museum of Natural History in November of 1895, but it wasn’t finished until 1907 (“Walk”). Until the 1850s and the building of these museums, there weren’t any institutions in the United States to hire a naturalist, and it would be years before someone would carry the specific title of Entomologist. Pivotal changes to the practice of entomology did not occur until institutions such as Harvard began adding entomology programs. It was then that the need for elite societies of entomologists was eliminated.

When entomologists began to be trained in colleges and universities, they also began to come from more diverse segments of the population. Although still widely middle and upper class, entomologists dropped their elitism and began to create ties to other communities such as farmers and horticultural groups (Sorensen 35). In addition, entomological collections were becoming increasingly financed by agriculture and

commerce. These agricultural entomologists also maintained correspondence with European groups, exchanging specimens and information instead of animosity (Sorensen 63).

Because of these recently formed interest groups, entomology and nature studies became part of the curriculum at primary and high schools nationwide. Women were also beginning to be accepted in the field (Bonta 145). Anna Botsford Comstock pioneered the nature studies movement. With her husband, she “built the entomological department at Cornell into one of the outstanding departments of the United States” (Sorensen 84). She was instrumental in developing a program in the New York public schools that taught students about the importance of nature and our relationship to it. Her philosophy included the importance of actually going outside to study nature directly. After the experimental program was successful, it was implemented in schools nationwide. Her *Handbook of Nature Study*, a compilation of the materials she developed for her work in the schools, is still popular and in print today with translations in eight languages and twenty-four editions (Yaple 7). Kohlstedt writes that Comstock “carved out a niche for her own interest in natural history and biology and simultaneously formed a new site where women’s traditional prospects might intersect with exciting opportunities that involved genuine career advancement” (4). Anna Botsford Comstock was essential to the founding and growth of the nature studies movement. Ironically, she was not granted tenure at Cornell until 1919, the year women were first allowed to vote. She was 65 years old (Comstock 254). Comstock brought nature study into the elementary school curriculum. By 1909, when *A Girl of the*

Limberlost was first published, women such as Elnora were able to find work teaching in this field.

Anna Botsford Comstock was also a part of the staff of *Country Life in America*, one of the popular special interest magazines of the time which promoted the idea of moth collecting. During the years 1905 – 1914 it printed more than five articles about the practice, significant for a magazine whose audience consisted of wealthy city dwellers living vicariously through its photographs of country estates (Bussel 3). Aside from popular science and entomological journals, it was one of the few periodicals to even mention moths or write about collecting them. These articles ranged from the proper way to hunt and save specimens to listing the going rates for different types of larvae and cocoons. Stratton-Porter wrote several articles on variety of topics for them during this time. Its readership became primarily the upper-middle class or, as Sowards puts it, the “yacht, polo pony, and estate set” (Sowards). Like *House Beautiful*, which also premiered during the same time period, it soon began to glorify a rural lifestyle for its readership rather than those actually living and working in the country (Karson xviii-xix).

Most moth collectors were of the bourgeois class, collecting moths as a hobby. Dr. Epstein, Research Associate for the Smithsonian Institution, agreed. “Much like today,” he wrote, “the amateur hobbyists ruled. Some were physicians, others were from wealthy families. Around 1908 the only way to be a collector was to be employed by agriculture (U.S. or state), a university (often state funded) or be a wealthy collector” (Epstein). The working class did not have enough hours in the day to collect. In addition

to time, a collector would need both equipment and space to properly gather, classify, and preserve specimens. The end of the elitist Entomological Societies and the rise in popularity of insects at the beginning of the 1900s led to a wider range of collectors and, consequently, a more common and widespread understanding of their habits and nature (Sorensen 60). Further, serious collectors in America and abroad wanted to complete their collections with specimens from different regions of the country and the world bringing about an international trade of insects. Through the Bird Woman, Elnora gathered moths and butterflies for these collectors.

Elnora as Collector

And because he asked questions, even laughable questions, about the birds with no feet before he ever saw them; because he knew where beetles might be found and how to lure butterflies to a bit of dried dung; and most of all because he walked alone through the forests, for hours and days, and was comfortable there, and at peace, the islanders ascribed mystical powers to him. The birds, they claimed, came down from the trees to meet him.

— Andrea Barrett, 121

Collections are dependent on classification. This is why moths make the perfect collectible. Although there are certainly a finite number of moths, there are infinite ways to think about a collection. Collectors make many choices in how to organize and categorize specimens. When a collector figures out how he or she wants to organize a collection, the next choice is how far to take it. It isn't necessary to decide this from the start; part of the collector's passion is taking the collection further just as it nears completion. Since moths flourish almost all over the world, collectors have opportunities for creating large sets. A worldwide exchange economy revolved around the sale and trade of moths. In 1912, R.P. Dow suggested that entomological groups were the best

places to meet other collectors. He also listed publications such as *The Entomological News* and *The Canadian Entomologist* for their articles and advertisements by those seeking to trade (60). Elnora, however, worked through the Bird Woman. Stratton-Porter wrote herself into *A Girl of the Limberlost* as this character. To Stratton-Porter, life and work were interconnected. In fact, she was often called “The Bird Woman” by fans (Richards 33). He wrote, “her life was her work, and her work was drawn from her life itself. By her own admission, everything that she wrote was taken from her own life and experience” (Richards 17). Elizabeth Ford writes that Stratton-Porter “enters her narrative and offers herself, not as a fictional construct, as a surrogate mother to her audience as well as Elnora” (150). The Bird Woman can be a model for girls who share their passion for nature. Elnora met her by way of a sign she had put up in town saying (41):

WANTED: CATERPILLARS, COCOONS, CHRYSALIDES, PUPÆ CASES, BUTTERFLIES, MOTHS, INDIAN RELICS OF ALL KINDS. HIGHEST SCALE OF PRICES PAID IN CASH.

In addition to novels, Gene Stratton-Porter wrote and illustrated a number of nature books from *The Moths of the Limberlost* to *Homing with the Birds*. She needed specimens to photograph, draw, and paint. These came from all over the world. She would pay locals who lived near the swamp for the items they would bring to her and use these as capital to enhance her collection, in turn, enhancing her work. “I exchange them with foreign collectors,” says the Bird Woman. “I want a complete series of the moths of America to trade with a man in India, and another in Brazil. Others I can

exchange with home collectors for those of California and Canada” (*Limberlost* 51). In the novel, the collaboration benefited both Elnora and the Bird Woman just as it did Stratton-Porter and her local contacts in the author’s real life.

Elnora did not begin with the sign in the bank window. She began collecting moths, other insects and even arrowheads when she was a child. Collecting is common in children. This was studied as early as 1906 by Elizabeth Howe, an elementary school teacher. She wrote, “the collecting instinct seems to arise in the majority of children, comparatively few have never collected” (466). She also found that the types of things children collect depend on where they live. Children who lived in rural areas tended to collect from nature, where children of other “localities” leaned toward stamps and buttons (468). Further, she writes, “The reasons for collecting are interesting. Things were collected, in the majority of cases, without any thought of value, but apparently, first, simply to own something, and, second, to increase the quantity of that something” (469). Only about half of the children with collections make any type of arrangement with them. Elnora pinned some of her moths in a case given to her by Freckles, a neighbor, but does not seek out ones she does not have until she needs them to sell. For her, it’s about owning something beautiful; having a space of her own.

Again, a significant aspect of the collection is its classification. In *On Longing*, Susan Stewart writes, “The collection is not constructed by its elements; rather, it comes to exist by means of a principle of organization” (155). Elnora doesn’t arrange her moths, as a typical collector would, nor does she arrange the “Indian stuff.” It is “piled up” in

Wesley Sinton's woodshed. Stewart also writes that a collection is about the whole (152). After meeting with the Bird Woman on her second day of high school, Elnora is concerned only with the *sum* of the parts: the dollar amount that paid for her tuition, her books, and her wardrobe. She doesn't have a collection, nor is she a collector. As a child, and like other children of the time period, she was merely a gatherer. Elnora saved pretty things, and unusual things, because she didn't have anything to call her own. She didn't want to complete a set, she just wanted more. We even hear it from Elnora herself when she admits her problems with the term "collector." "That 'collected' frightens me," she says to the Bird Woman. "I've only gathered. I've always loved everything outdoors, and so I made friends and playmates of them. When I learned that the moths die so soon, I saved them especially, because there seemed no wickedness in it" (*Limberlost* 45 – 46). It's almost pious; as if she is preserving them to make their short lives last longer. Elnora's fear of the term "collected" foreshadows her hesitation to marry Ammon, as it will force her to give up the life she has predicted for herself: teaching, living in a home near the swamp, being among nature.

Throughout *A Girl of the Limberlost*, Elnora is described as an innocent country girl, ignorant of city life and society but she is also smart and driven, with strong morals. Morality was central to Stratton-Porter's writing. In 1916 she stressed that she only writes for "moral men and women who work for the betterment of the world." Her readers should "do their best instead of their worst" (80). Elnora's character is a model for these readers. She is hardworking and aspires to go to college, an uncommon goal for a girl of the time period. While "nineteenth-century domesticity and ecological

sensitivity appeared to go hand in hand,” writes Amy Green (145), making a career from nature study was still a new concept for readers. Elnora learns about the world around her in order to one day share her knowledge with future generations of young school children. At first she collected specimens while she was in school to help the teachers with their instruction (Phillips 155). Later Elnora would use this self-education in her own classroom. Teaching was an appropriate occupation until marriage and children. Stratton-Porter writes Elnora’s chosen career path as an unusual endeavor, but nature study was becoming quite conventional for women, especially by 1909, the date of the novel’s first printing. As Vera Norwood explains in her introduction to *Made from this Earth*, the nineteenth century brought about an increase in women’s nature study as a hobby which eventually led to its place as a suitable profession. She writes:

For a good many women, teaching children about butterflies, botanizing and birding on leisurely Sundays, sketching wildflowers collected in local terrain, and making an old-fashioned flower bed exemplify appropriate female behavior. Focusing on the environment, making it one’s familiar and home, has been key to women’s appreciation of nature. During the early nineteenth century, influential European and American women encouraged botanical study as a particularly suitable endeavor for women. (xviii)

Nature study was encouraged as part of a new American girlhood. This move was partly a reaction to the published writings of European visitors to America in the 1850s who claimed that American women seemed little more than “hothouse” flowers, “isolated

from nature” and leading “protected lives” inside the safety of the their urban homes (Norwood 4).

As the country became more industrialized, Americans began to connect nature study and women’s social roles. Norwood writes that this reflected “broad societal concern with defining women’s place. Specific arenas of nature study and conservation became identified as peculiarly suited to women’s domestic responsibilities” (xvii). The more women learned about plants and animals, the more of this knowledge they could pass on to their children, therefore increasing the value of the home and family. Further, they began to link nature study with religious morality:

Women’s role was to remind husbands and children of the republican virtues increasingly at risk in industrialized America. Ironically, idealized farms were offered as model households, in part because on small farms the family seemed closer to romanticized nature. Women instructed their children in the morals taught by nature study carried out in the domesticated fields and woods on the family grounds. Such duty required that nineteenth-century women become better educated, particularly in the burgeoning science of botany. (Norwood 2-3)

Literature geared towards young girls at the time also portrayed nature study as a religious endeavor. Susan Cooper, famed American author and naturalist James Fenimore Cooper’s daughter, felt that it was “women’s duty to use nature study for moral education. ... [She] used plants and animals she saw in nature as a springboard

for religious meditation and moral instruction” (Norwood 30). Cooper was part of an American movement emphasizing the importance of the environment. She felt that Americans needed to be more knowledgeable about nature and that morality was linked to an understanding of the natural world (Johnson 49). The most important attributes a woman of the nineteenth century could have were purity and piety. After Emerson and the Transcendentalist movement which emphasized the importance of nature, nature was inextricably linked with purity and society located piety in nature study.

Nature study provided Elnora the attributes necessary toward becoming a commodity for Philip Ammon. Elnora spent her formative years as a poor country girl and identifies with the uncultivated swamp. When Ammon enters her life, he can't see her as a society girl like his fiancée Edith Carr. He complains to Elnora that Edith, “takes pride in being just a little handsomer and better dressed than any girl of her set. She is interested in having a beautiful home, fine appointments about her, in being petted, praised, and the acknowledged leader of society. She likes to ... have her own way about everything” (*Limberlost* 286). When Elnora asks how Edith spends her time he scoffs and explains that her days are filled with “endless shopping, to find the pretty things; regular visits to the dressmakers, calls, parties, theatres, entertainments” (287). In contrast, he sees Elnora in her own environment, framed by her living landscape. Elnora *is* nature and Ammon is seduced by the natural world. Having grown up in Chicago, he sees the swamp as something to be desired. It is Elnora's only tool for competition in his world of Culture and refinement. Appropriately, he sees Elnora through this lens. Several scenes in the novel show Elnora through his eyes. During their first meeting, he studies Elnora

while being spied on by her mother. “Even the watching mother could not blame him.” The narrator continues, “Against the embankment, in the shade of the bridge, Elnora’s bright head and her lavender dress made a picture worthy of much contemplation” (264). She is part of a composition with nature as backdrop. The metaphors continue with another portrait of Elnora catching moths in the swamp:

She stood on the path holding a pair of moths. Her eyes were wide with excitement, her cheeks pink, her red lips parted, and on the hand she held out to them clung a pair of delicate blue-green moths, with white bodies, and touches of lavender and straw colour. All about her lay flower-brocaded grasses, behind the deep green background of the forest, while the sun slowly shifted gold from heaven to burnish her hair. ...“Oh, what a picture!” exulted Ammon at her shoulder. “She is absolutely and altogether lovely! I’d give a small fortune for that faithfully set on canvas!” (293)

Elnora is presented as beautifully and ornately framed by nature. She is always perfectly composed in the landscape, surrounded by a flawless natural setting. The colors of her hair and dress are the colors of the environment. However, Ammon creates a commodity out of the scene by wanting to pay to have it painted. He cannot appreciate Elnora as she is. He wants to bring her, on canvas, into his world. Elnora’s knowledge of the plants and animals of the Limberlost Swamp combined with her impeccable morals, kind personality, and appreciation of nature locate her in a domestic sphere and more desirable, to Ammon, than that of the typical society girl whose days are filled with mindless tasks.

Elnora becomes Collected

I said that 'all sorts and conditions of men' were among those interested in forming collections of moths, and it may be inferred that there are queer specimens among the owners of the cabinets as well as in the drawers of the cabinets themselves. ... Some collectors amass their material from an apparent simple satisfaction in possessing rare or odd specimens. They have ... no higher artistic interest in their possessions than that they have something no one else has got, and which it is difficult to obtain. A sort of purposeless mania seems to fall upon many of them. ... I have even heard of one rabid collector, now happily deceased, who destroyed every specimen he had or could buy up of a certain rare exotic species, except one pair in his own collection, so that he could say he was the only one who had it!

— Augustus Grote, 388

Ammon is the primary collector in *A Girl of the Limberlost*. On his second day with Elnora he calculates her uniqueness:

He looked at the girl in wonder. In face and form she was as lovely as any one of her age and type he ever had seen. Her school work far surpassed that of most girls her age he knew. She differed in other ways. This vast store of learning she had gathered from field and forest was a wealth of attraction no other girl possessed. (282)

Ammon was raised in an upper-class city family. As such, he is used to having his way and getting what he wants, at any cost. He also knows that he likes rare, hard-to-find objects. He isn't interested when "there's too many of them, all too much alike" (264). Ammon continues for another paragraph describing Elnora's relationship to nature and her manner toward animals. Ammon sees Elnora "as representative of womanhood" (Foster 24). She is a perfect specimen, an item targeted for a collection. As such, these items become more desirable the longer they are studied (Elsner and Cardinal 2).

At the same time, Ammon's interest in Edith, his high society fiancée, quickly fades, as is often the case with a completed collection. His descriptions of Edith are in stark contrast to those he composes of Elnora. He explains Edith's faults in detail: she is "strictly ornamental," he says, while Elnora is "ornament enough for the Limberlost" (*Limberlost* 303). The reader only sees Edith through Ammon's eyes. After returning to Chicago, he designs a dress inspired by the Yellow Emperor moth for Edith to wear at a ball he gives in her honor. Instead of working to create an Edith that is unique, instead, he creates a copy. In making Edith into a moth—and there are millions of moths—he further raises Elnora's status as an individual. Elnora is unique. As an imitation, Edith becomes less a part of the commodity culture Philip desires: nature, self-reliance, values. As Susan Stewart writes, "Within the development of culture under an exchange economy, the search for authentic experience and correlatively, the search for the authentic object become critical" (133). In the economy of collecting, being "authentic" is always more important than just classification. Philip has found nature in the Limberlost and tries to recreate it out of the city's materials. When a real Yellow Emperor moth flies into the ballroom, Edith's imitation is exposed. In capturing the moth, Philip tries to enact capturing Elnora, as he has once failed to do when he asks to kiss her before leaving the swamp for Chicago and is rejected. Again Stewart explains, "The collection presents a metaphor of 'production' not as 'the earned' but as 'the captured.' The scene of origin is not a scene of transformation of nature, it is too late for that" (164). Philip pins the moth but loses Edith when she learns the moth will be sent to Elnora. Edith dramatically returns her engagement ring to him and shouts, "You may 'complete your collection'

with that!" (366). Edith expects that Philip will come to her later, as he's done in the past.

Instead, he goes to the Limberlost to replace Edith with Elnora. When he cannot have Elnora as soon as he gets there, (he is powerless in the swamp) Elnora becomes even more desirable. As Baudrillard insists, collecting is about control (86). For Philip, it is no longer about the collection. It is about control, which Elnora has gained.

As the collector assumes the identity of the collection, items in the collection also lose individual identity. Bal argues that each piece in a collection is a sign. He writes, "objects are inserted into the narrative perspective when their status is turned from object-ive to semiotic, from thing to sign, from collapse to separation of thing and meaning, or from presence to absence. The object is turned away, abducted, from itself, its inherent value, and denuded of its defining function so as to be available for use as a sign" (111). When Elnora leaves Philip at the Limberlost after Edith's visit, she changes her status from present (physically and emotionally) to absent. Elnora becomes, as Bal explains, an "object" that moves to a "sign" for the collection Philip cannot complete. Like a rabid collector, when Philip's rare species leaves him with only a note, he breaks down and sobs. Three weeks later, he suffers a physical and nervous breakdown. He believes Elnora is dead and therefore completely unobtainable. He returns to health only after Elnora promises to be his, completing his collection with the rarest of the species.

Collection Complete

Oh, it is a perfect picture, all of it! I should like to hang it on the wall, so I could see it whenever I want to; but it isn't real of course; it's nothing but a picture.
— Elnora, *A Girl of the Limberlost*, 455

Elnora does want to marry Philip Ammon. Educated, attractive, rich, and passionate about nature, Ammon embodies everything girls of the early 20th century were looking for. Today's women readers may find this predictable ending a little ridiculous for their tastes, arguing that a girl like Elnora wouldn't fall for such a sickly city boy. Modern readers would also find the defense of domestic merits to an ex-fiancée unlikely. However, Elnora does this in the chapter, "Philip Kneels to the Queen." Edith Carr tells Elnora, "You may have a summer charm for a sick man in the country; if he tried placing you in society, he soon would see you as others will. It takes birth to position, schooling, and endless practice to meet social demands gracefully" (*Limberlost* 419). Elnora bites back: "As for managing a social career for him he never mentioned that he desired such a thing. What he asked of me was that I should be his wife. I understood that to mean that he desired me to keep a clean house, serve him digestible food, mother his children, and give him loving sympathy and tenderness" (419). The novel reinforces stereotypes while adding to them, a plot turn that would not appeal to contemporary readers who would rather see Elnora keep her job as an elementary school nature teacher or continue on to college than become a domestic object.

In the early 1900s, women were trophies signifying their husbands' wealth. Not only were their spending habits representative of his income, women themselves were

watched as evidence of that wealth. Veblen explains that women were seen as the property of men. Additionally in advanced societies, women's function in the social system was to "put in evidence her economic unit's ability to pay" (69). He writes that this was acknowledged by society, ultimately, through her dress. For the upper classes, they brought to the marriage not only a dowry, but the social status of their father's family and the propriety the family (through education and social skills) afforded. It brings us back to Elnora's argument. Veblen discusses the very virtues that she claimed to have over Edith. He lists:

The admissible evidence of the woman's expensiveness has considerable range in respect of form and method, but in substance it is always the same. It may take the form of manners, breeding, and accomplishments that are, *prima facie*, impossible to acquire or maintain without such leisure as bespeaks a considerable and relatively long-continued possession of wealth. (69)

These are the attributes a turn-of-the-century girl must possess in order to be a commodity for an educated man of good social standing such as Philip Ammon. Elnora is all of these and more, she insists. Consistent with Veblen's list, Elnora's work ethic and self-education through nature added to her intrinsic value—and unlike Edith Carr, she didn't lead the life of leisure usually essential for such standing.

Thorstein Veblen, in an essay published just before *Limberlost*, detailed a woman's place in a marriage as primary consumer. He begins by explaining that a man's social

standing depends on his wealth. Veblen explains further the role women play in this equation:

The immediate and obvious index of pecuniary strength is the visible ability to spend, to consume unproductively; and men early learned to put in evidence their ability to spend by displaying costly goods that afford no return to their owner, either in comfort or in gain. Almost as early did a differentiation set in, whereby it became the function of woman, in a peculiar degree, to exhibit the pecuniary strength of her social unit by means of a conspicuously unproductive consumption of valuable goods. (69)

The more he *shows* he has money to spend, through his wife's wardrobe and outward display of that wealth, the higher his rank in society.

Edith, however, does undergo a remarkable transformation as a result of Elnora's influence, a strategy no doubt employed by Stratton-Porter to help convey her message of virtue. Edith realizes after finally letting Ammon go that she has been the source of trouble. "It is all my selfishness, my unrestrained temper, my pride in my looks, my ambition to be first," she says while, unfortunately, placing much of the responsibility for her failures on her mother (469). This is an enormous step for Edith to take; she is trying to make amends. While walking through the forest she comes across a rare moth she knows is important to Elnora and brings it to her as a peace gesture, ending the novel. Elnora was powerful enough to move even the most unlikely subject.

Conclusion

A Girl of the Limberlost addresses the complexity of collecting in a transitional period for America. It reinforced turn-of-the-century values while instilling new ideas concerning education for women and nature studies. Gene Stratton-Porter's novels were immensely popular for these reasons. They were on best-seller lists, serialized in magazines, and made into successful films including *Michael O'Halloran* (1923), *A Girl of the Limberlost* (1924), and *Laddie* (1926) (Richards 68 – 69, 122 – 124). Her work reached millions. In one of the most significant books on Porter, Bertrand Richards examines the importance of her work for its audience and of the popular acclaim her novels received. Most importantly, he discusses how her books inspired readers to get involved with nature: “*A Girl of the Limberlost* is no doubt at the same time the shallowest yet one of the most enthralling of Porter's romances. It also reached a vast audience and, with *Freckles*, did much to quicken the interest of a large public in nature—in the outdoors and the plant and animal inhabitants thereof” (79). Readers of Stratton-Porter's fiction and non-fiction, such as American author Annie Dillard who credits Gene Stratton-Porter for fostering her love of science, were inspired to become involved in nature study (161).

During the early 1900s in America, moth collecting reached its peak. Stratton-Porter's knowledge of moths and the Limberlost Swamp worked in tandem to layer romance with scientific facts. Although the book is, to a large extent, a romance novel for young girls whose heroine abandons higher education to become a wife and mother, Elnora's

transformation was due, in part, to her love of the environment and dedication to nature study.

Works Cited

- Bal, Mieke. "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting." *The Cultures of Collecting*. Eds. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1994. 97 – 115.
- Barrett, Andrea. "The Birds with No Feet." *Ship Fever*. New York: Norton, 1996. 103 – 22.
- Barrow, Mark V., Jr. "The Specimen Dealer: Entrepreneurial Natural History in America's Gilded Age." *Journal of the History of Biology* 33 (2000): 493 – 534.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *The System of Objects*. Trans. James Benedict. New York: Verso, 1996.
- Bonta, Marcia Myers. *Women in the Field: America's Pioneering Women Naturalists*. College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 1991.
- Bussel, Alan. "A Technological Guide to the Suburbs: Country Life in America." Carleton University. Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism. Ottawa, Canada. August, 1975. Presented to the Magazine Division.

Comstock, Anna Botsford. *The Comstocks of Cornell: John Henry Comstock and Anna Botsford*

Comstock. Eds. Glenn W. Herrick and Ruby Green Smith. Ithica, NY: Comstock Publishing Associates, 1953.

Dillard, Annie. *An American Childhood*. NY: Harper Perennial, 1988.

Dow, R.P. "Moth Collecting." *Country Life in America*. 1 Oct. 1912: 60.

Elsner, John and Roger Cardinal, Eds. *The Cultures of Collecting*. London: Reaktion Books, 1994.

Epstein, Mark. "Moths." E-mail interview with the author. 22 April 2003.

Ford, Elizabeth. "How to Cocoon a Butterfly: Mother and Daughter in *A Girl of the Limberlost*."

Children's Literature Association Quarterly 18.4 (1993): 148 – 153.

Foster, Thomas C. "The Collector: Otherness, Obsession, and Isolation."

Understanding John

Fowles. Columbia, SC: U of South Carolina P, 1994: 20 – 37.

Fowles, John. *The Collector*. Boston, MA: Little Brown P, 1963.

Green, Amy S. "Two Women Naturalists and the Search for Autonomy" Anna Botsford Comstock and the Producer Ethic; Gene Stratton-Porter and the Gospel of Wealth."

Women's Study Quarterly 29.1/2 (2001): 145 – 154.

Grote, Augustus R. "Moths and Moth-Catchers." *The Popular Science Monthly* 27 (1885):

246 – 252, 377 – 389.

Hernandez, Audrey. "Moths Moths Moths." Message to the author. 28 Apr. 2003.

"History of the Smithsonian." Smithsonian: National Museum of American History. 14 Aug.

2012 < <http://www.si.edu/about/history> >.

Howe, Elizabeth. "Can the Collecting Instinct be Utilized in Teaching?" *The Elementary School*

Teacher. May 1906: 466 – 471.

Johnson, Rochelle. "Susan Fenimore Cooper's *Rural Hours* and the 'Natural Refinement of

American Culture." *ISLE* 7.1 (2000). 47 – 77.

Karson, Robin. *A Genius for Place: American Landscapes of the Country Place Era*. Amherst,

MA: U of Massachusetts P, 2007.

Kohlstedt, Sally Gregory. "Sustaining Gains: Reflections on Women in Science and Technology

in 20th-Century United States." *NWSA Journal* 16.1 (2004). 1 – 26.

Norwood, Vera. *Made from this Earth*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1993.

Phillips, Anne K. "Of Epiphanies and Poets: Gene Stratton-Porter's Domestic

Transcendentalism." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 19.4 (1994): 153 – 158.

Richards, Bertrand F. *Gene Stratton Porter*. Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1980.

Sorensen, W. Conner. *Brethren of the Net: American Entomology, 1840 – 1880.*

Tuscaloosa,

Alabama: U of Alabama P, 1995.

Sowards, Steven, Humanities Librarian. "American Magazines and Reviews from 1860 – 1920."

Modified by Robert Bannister. Oct. 1995. Swarthmore College McCabe Library.

14 Aug. 2012 <

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/rbannis1/Progs/USMags.1860-1920.html> >.

Stewart, Susan. "Objects of Desire." *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic,*

the Souvenir, the Collection. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1998. 132 – 166.

Stratton-Porter, Gene. *A Girl of the Limberlost.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1984.

---. "Hidden Treasure." *Country Life in America.* 15 June 1912: 29 – 36, 60 – 64.

---. *Homing with the Birds: The History of a Lifetime of Personal Experience with the Birds.*

Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1919.

---. *Moths of the Limberlost.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1912.

---. "My Life and My Books." *The Ladies' Home Journal* Sept. 1916: 13, 80 – 81.

Veblen, Thorstein. "The Economic Theory of Women's Dress." *Popular Science Monthly* 46

(Dec. 1894): 198-205. Reprinted in: *The American 1890s: A Cultural Reader.*

Eds. Susan Harris Smith and Melanie Dawson. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2000.

66 – 74.

“A Walk through History.” Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh. 11 Aug. 2012

<<http://www.carnegiemuseums.org/interior.php?pageID=5> >.

Yaple, Charles. “Anna Botsford Comstock: Matriarch of the American Nature-Study Movement.” *Taproot Journal* 20.1 (2010): 4 – 8.

Women 'Waking Up' and *Moving the Mountain*: The Feminist Eugenics of**Charlotte Perkins Gilman***By Susan Rensing*

The 1910s were a period of tremendous visibility of eugenic ideas throughout the United States, in large part because of Progressive Era enthusiasm for scientific solutions to social problems. Americans were concerned with how to improve the hereditary quality of the human race and eugenics was the science dedicated to pursuing that goal. Parallel to this expansion of eugenics in the public sphere was a revitalization of the women's movement that began to be called 'feminism.' Both eugenics and feminism were being constructed and expanded in the 1910s, and the interaction between the two ideologies is the focus of this paper. On the one hand, eugenicists attempted to use eugenics to shape the scope of feminism, and limit the roles of women to motherhood and breeding for racial betterment, what the British doctor and widely read science writer Caleb Saleeby termed "eugenic feminism."¹ On the other hand, "the foremost American female feminist" during this period, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, argued that the new age of women's equality would shape eugenics, not the other way around, and articulated a feminist eugenics that separated breeding from motherhood.² Feminist eugenics, as Gilman envisioned it, constrained the choices available to men by subverting their role as sexual selectors, taking away their economic power in marriage, and targeting the sexual double standard.

Eugenic Feminism

Warnings of “race-suicide” were commonplace throughout the Progressive Era, with eugenicists emphasizing the correlation between the “stupendous economic, educational, social, and political movement of women” and the “reduction of the birth rate.”³ Decrying the “ideals of our times,” one eugenicist claimed that the modern American woman was being led “to disregard to too great an extent social values, racial duties, and racial opportunities.”⁴ While begrudgingly accepting women’s enfranchisement and the importance of higher education for women, eugenicists focused on the restrictions that they believed eugenics placed on the women’s movement.

Eugenicists Paul Popenoe and Roswell Johnson, in their widely disseminated 1918 eugenics textbook, *Applied Eugenics*, addressed feminism in their chapter, “Eugenics and Some Specific Reforms.”⁵ While conceding the eugenic value of women’s political equality, both eugenicists were cautious about acknowledging women’s unconditional biological equality. As they defined it, equality only meant that “woman is as well adapted to her own particular kind of work as is man to his.” On this basis, they objected to feminism because “unfortunately, feminists show a tendency to go beyond this and to minimize differentiation in their claims of equality.”⁶ As an example of this wrongheaded feminist thinking, they cited “Ms. Charlotte Perkins Gilman” who “makes the logical application [from biological equality] by demanding that little girls’ hair be cut short and that they be prevented from playing with dolls in order that differences fostered in this way be reduced.”⁷ Popenoe and Johnson reached several conclusions about the social

reforms that feminists should advocate which would be both eugenically minded and beneficial to women. First, feminism should help to keep the number of “unfit” mothers to a minimum. Under the successes of feminism, those women without the maternal instinct “do not marry, and accordingly have few if any children to inherit their defects.”⁸ Second, feminism should advocate state sponsorship of motherhood, so long “as it is discriminatory and graded” according to the eugenic quality of the children.⁹ Lastly, “there is good ground for the feminist contention that women should be liberally educated” so long as that education is properly geared towards women’s role as a mother, in addition to her more general education.¹⁰ Popenoe and Johnson concluded their section on feminism by asserting that, above all, “the home must not be made a subordinate interest, as some feminists desire, but it must be made a much richer, deeper, more satisfying interest than it is too frequently at present.”¹¹ Eugenics, for them, constrained women’s choices, to focus on motherhood narrowly, and required that women accommodate themselves to having and raising children, rather than advancing any dramatic restructuring of society.

Eugenicists, then, saw the woman’s movement as something that would be proscribed by eugenics and saw feminism, as it was largely practiced, as dysgenic. As Caleb Saleeby articulated in *Woman and Womanhood*, a widely circulated popular science tract, “the very first thing the feminist movement must prove is that it is eugenic.”¹² Saleeby claimed that there were “varieties of feminism, making various demands for women which are utterly to be condemned because they not merely ignore eugenics, but are opposed to it, and would, if successful, be therefore ruinous to the race.”¹³

Saleeby then proposed as an alternative a “Eugenic Feminism” which would focus on women as mothers. Saleeby, Popenoe and Johnson all argued that eugenics defined women’s primary function as breeding, and therefore motherhood should be women’s sole focus.

This kind of maternalist feminism was amenable to more conservative women’s reformers like Anna Ellsworth Blount who asked, “What shall it profit us eugenically to have women delve into laboratories, or search the heavens, or rule the nations, if the world is to be peopled by scrub women and peasants?”¹⁴ Also, the rhetoric of feminism as dysgenic was a common chorus amongst anti-feminist tracts of the 1910s. For instance, John Martin’s *Feminism* complained in a section entitled “The Woman Movement and the Baby Crop” that “The woman’s movement is a movement towards progressive national deterioration and ultimate national suicide. Already the evidence is conclusive that the effects of Feminism upon the inalienable function and immemorial duty of woman—the bearing of children—are so appalling as to threaten the perpetuation of the best parts of the nation.”¹⁵ Similarly, Correa Walsh’s definitive anti-feminist tract, also titled *Feminism*, cited Charlotte Perkins Gilman as the most notable feminist who endangered society by ignoring the dictates of eugenic science.

Feminist eugenics

From a twenty-first century perspective, Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) stands out as one of the foundational feminist theorists in the United States. This might seem

odd considering Gilman herself stated flatly near the end of her life, “I abominate being called a feminist.”¹⁶ However, decades earlier, she was willing to include her own work under the rubric of “Feminism” in a 1908 article of the same name. In its most general sense, Gilman defined feminism as “the development of human qualities and functions among women; in their entering upon social relationships instead of...restricted to the sexual and domestic.”¹⁷ This would explain Gilman’s own preference for the term “humanist,” or “feminist humanist,” in describing herself, since “feminist” drew attention only to woman’s sex and not to her humanity. Eight years later, she again set out to define feminism in its broadest sense as “the social awakening of the women of all the world.”¹⁸

Gilman has occupied a canonical position in feminist thought for the last forty years. The “rediscovery” of Gilman’s work is credited to Carl Degler, whose 1956 *American Quarterly* article, “Charlotte Perkins Gilman on the Theory and Practice of Feminism,” rescued Gilman from what he later called a “blackout in the history of ideas.”¹⁹ The reissuing of three of Gilman’s critical works (*Women and Economics* by Degler in 1966, *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Elaine Hedges in 1973, and *Herland* by Ann J. Lane in 1979) led to a “Gilman renaissance” that cast Gilman as a foremother in the genealogy of feminism.²⁰

As a result, Gilman has been the focus of recent scholarship that explores the ideological roots of first-wave feminism. In particular, a number of historians have sought to explicate the racial roots of Gilman’s feminism in connection with her faith in

social evolution and hierarchies of civilizations.²¹ Still, as Alys Eve Weinbaum pointed out in her review article on Gilman studies in 2001, “of the over 100 texts on Gilman written in the past decade,...only seven offered sustained analyses of Gilman’s race politics.”²²

This relatively recent historiographic trend critical of Gilman’s social Darwinism can be contrasted with other literature, especially in the history of science, which has focused on Gilman’s social Darwinism as an effective alternative to mainstream scientific thought concerning women.²³ Cynthia Russett portrays Gilman as a revolutionary who forged Darwinian evolution into a feminist weapon: “Thus she drew on sexual selection while exploiting to the full the awkward break in Darwin’s account of human beings, among whom the females were kept, and other mammals, among whom the females were free and independent.”²⁴ In this literature, Gilman’s work, in particular her landmark *Women and Economics*, is presented as offering a radically different answer to the “woman question” by using evolutionary science to argue for women’s rights.²⁵

In the past decade, scholars have begun to take a fresh look at Gilman in an attempt to move beyond the overly simplistic characterizations of her as either feminist trailblazer or racist theorizer. Most notably, Judith Allen’s intellectual biography, *The Feminism of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* has set a new course for scholars to engage with the full complexity of Gilman’s feminism on its own historical terms.²⁶ Specifically with regard to eugenics, Gilman scholarship

has been hampered by confusion over her place within the eugenics movement during the Progressive Era.²⁷ This paper examines Gilman's attempts to reconcile eugenics and feminism during a period when eugenics took center stage in popular discussions of women, biology, and racial duties. Her vision of a feminist eugenics placed women as scientific experts in charge of engineering society's evolutionary progress, separated breeding from motherhood, and scrutinized the dysgenic behaviors and qualities of men.

Toward a Feminist Eugenics: Before and Beyond *Women and Economics*

In November of 1909, Gilman founded a monthly magazine, *The Forerunner*, explaining in verse that its purpose was "to tell the things we ought to know" and "to point the way we ought to go."²⁸ She was the sole author of the magazine's articles, poems, serialized novels, and book reviews. In the initial issue of *Forerunner*, Gilman devoted the first article to explicating her feminist eugenics. Appropriately titled "A Small God and a Large Goddess," it exalted female concerns for the good of racial progress over male preoccupation with sex. Contrasting the mature and wise goddess of motherhood with Cupid, the childish and simple god of love, Gilman argued that the former clearly takes precedence. Women, as mothers (Gilman, like Popenoe and Johnson, defined women in terms of their reproductive responsibilities), are "the main factor in securing to the race its due improvement."²⁹ As the "supreme officer[s] of the life process," women had a number of duties that are necessary for the advancement of the race:

Her first duty is to grow nobly for her mighty purpose. Her next is to select, with inexorable high standard, the fit assistant for her work. The third—to fitly bear,

bring forth, and nurse the child. Following these, last and highest of all, comes our great race-process of social parentage, which transmits to each new generation the gathered knowledge, the accumulated advantages of the past.³⁰

These duties outline the distinct phases of Gilman's feminist eugenics. It is important here to note that her eugenics is not strictly hereditarian; she proposes environmental reform both as a way of enhancing biological fitness and as a means of changing the future hereditary make-up of society. Thus, Gilman's feminist eugenics is both Neo-Lamarckian and "euthenic" as well as eugenic.³¹

Gilman's stark sketch of a feminist eugenic program serves as an anchor point for many of her apparently disparate social reforms. What is the common thread, the motivating principle behind Gilman's advocacy of women's dress reform, higher standards for food quality, women's physical fitness training, kitchenless houses, and social motherhood? All of these reforms are necessary steps towards Gilman's eugenically fit society that should and would be engineered by women. For Gilman, women were the sole proprietors of racial improvement because she subscribed to Lester Ward's "gynaecentric theory".³² This theory argued that the female is the race type for humans and as such females are responsible for any advancement of the species. For Gilman, women would advance the race not by transcending their traditional roles as wives and mothers, but by fully committing themselves to these roles and improving on them with the help of science, in particular the science of eugenics. Thus it would be incorrect to see the series of Gilman's reforms listed above as simply a program for female emancipation, as some historians have argued.³³ Instead, Gilman's reforms should be

evaluated in the light of Popenoe and Johnson's subsequent suggestions for feminist social reform; they are aimed at improving the race, ensuring fit motherhood, and strengthening and streamlining the home for maximum efficiency.

Gilman's first directive to eugenically minded women, "to grow nobly for her mighty purpose," manifests itself in her advocacy of physical fitness reform for women. Her earliest non-fiction publication was, in fact, dedicated to this purpose. In 1883, Gilman was in the midst of deep depression that would eventually lead to the collapse of her first marriage a few short years later. She felt trapped by the confines of institutionalized marriage and the sexuo-economic inequities that went with it, and understood that mental and physical health were vital. Gilman argued in "The Providence Ladies Gymnasium" that all women should regularly engage in physical exercise, particularly activities like weight training that ordinarily fell outside socially accepted norms.³⁴ This was necessary not only for women's own health but necessary in order to prevent racial degeneracy. The contemporary cultural expectations of women to refrain from physical exertion would lead (and was leading) to "a race of women who are physically weak enough to be handed about like invalids."³⁵ Gilman's Lamarckian evolutionary perspective required that women become physically fit in order to pass their strength on to their progeny. Similarly, women's dress reform was needed to halt the extreme and dysgenic sexual selection that men exerted on women's figures. Gilman was a staunch advocate of women's dress reform, flaunting her radical ideas by refusing to wear a corset.³⁶ Linking middle-class women's lack of physical fitness with her "burdensome clothes," Gilman desired less emphasis on prescribed feminine features because it

detracted from women's abilities to advance the race. Due to men's role as sexual selector, women were guarded from the effects of natural selection and only exposed to the extreme forces of sexual selection. The necessary step beyond dress and physical fitness reform that would help advance the race would be the return of women as sexual selectors, determining the "fit assistant for her work."

Gilman most explicitly addressed the harmful effects and remedies of the current sexo-economic relationship between men and women in her enormously popular work, *Women and Economics* (1898).³⁷ The overwhelming majority of scholarly attention has been focused on this one work. Gilman laid out for the reader three goals for her book in the preface. The first goal summed up her central thesis: women occupy an unequal position in society not because of any "inherent and ineradicable" biological deficiency, but because of "certain arbitrary conditions of our own adoption."³⁸ Gilman's second goal was to chart the course of human social evolution, in order to point the way towards future progress. Here she reminded her readers that even though social evolution naturally advances civilization, this advance "may be greatly quickened by our recognition and assistance."³⁹ Gilman's third and final goal has received much less attention and it is here where she asserts her vision of women's importance in society after they realize their impediments are not natural but social. Gilman hoped to "urge upon them [the thinking women of today] a new sense, not only of their social responsibility as individuals, but of their measureless racial importance as makers of men."⁴⁰ Optimistically, she had high hopes for women's success in this role, claiming in 1916 that while "It has taken Mother Nature long, long ages to turn fierce greedy hairy

ape-like beasts into such people as we are. It will take us but two or three close-linked generations to make human beings far more superior to us than we are to the apes.”⁴¹

The active call to feminine duty in both of these statements stand in strange contrast to her oft-quoted final sentence of *Women and Economics*: “When the mother of the race is free, we shall have a better world, by the easy right of birth and by the calm, slow, friendly forces of evolution.”⁴² The inevitable and inexorable language in this last sentence that extols the steady march of progress belies the active eugenic program that Gilman would advocate in her later work to engineer a better world.

Focusing solely on Gilman’s *Women and Economics* leaves a rather inchoate conception of Gilman’s eugenic beliefs. Her characterization of women as the “makers of men” is merely suggestive and not substantive. This characterization of women is, after all, just the logical extension of her call for women to be reinstated as the ‘selectors’ in human sexual selection. However, it would be an oversimplification to suggest, as Gail Bederman does in a footnote, that “Gilman’s essential position on the question of eugenics” was to “return woman to the position of sexual selector, and all would be well for the race.”⁴³ Gilman was not advocating that women should (or even could) just ‘naturally’ resume the position of sexual selector that females possess in the animal world. Instead, two years later in *Concerning Children* (1900), Gilman laid out a plan for “unnatural” wives and mothers who would construct a system of social parentage.

In the chapter entitled, "Mothers, Unnatural and Natural," Gilman began by toying with the designators of "natural" and "unnatural" with respect to motherhood, arguing that "natural" can have two meanings, either "primitive, uncivilized, savage," or "suited to man's present character and conditions."⁴⁴ Gilman concluded that motherhood is "natural" in the first sense, and thus calls for an "unnatural" motherhood, for "it would be very unnatural for modern women to behave as was natural to primitive women."⁴⁵ Instead modern women should seek to improve their motherhood skills because "Motherhood is as open to criticism as any other human labour or animal function. Free study, honest criticism and suggestion, conscientious experiment in new lines,--by these we make progress. Why not apply study, criticism, and suggestion, and experiment to motherhood, and make some progress there?"⁴⁶ Gilman advocated a more scientific motherhood that was contingent upon a systematic motherhood education program. This extensive training in "child-culture" would certify that women were well acquainted with eugenics and understood how to raise a properly fit child.

Gilman tried to ease her readers into the idea of eugenics, arguing that her system of improving the human stock should not bring to mind "breeders of cattle." Gilman proposed two important ways in which eugenically informed mothers could contribute to improving the race. First was "the mother's modifying influence upon the race through selection, --that duty of wise choice of a superior father for her children, which is 'natural' enough to the lower animals, but which we agree to ignore in the bringing up of our young women. Careful and conscientious training to this end would have a great effect upon the race."⁴⁷ Second, Gilman argued mothers could contribute to race

progress by “improving the environment of our young children, both materially and psychically, by the intelligent co-ordinate action of mothers.”⁴⁸ She labeled this co-ordinate action “social parentage” and described it as a system in which certified professional mothers would assume not only responsibility for their own children, but all children.⁴⁹ Despite the gender-neutral designator of “social parent,” Gilman only referred to women filling this role. She assumed that all fit women would fulfill their reproductive obligation by having children, but only a select few would rise to the status of social parent instead of being “merely a mother.”⁵⁰ Gilman strongly emphasized “that maternal love does not necessarily include wisdom.”⁵¹ Thus it was vitally important for the progress of the race to cultivate the “unnatural mother, who is possessed of enough intelligence and knowledge to recognize her own deficiencies,” and thus “gladly intrusts [sic] her children to superior care for part of the time, and constantly learns by it herself.”⁵² Gilman’s feminist eugenics created a role for select women to be child-culture experts by engineering a societal structure with a hierarchy of fit parents. Gilman closed her book by discussing the eugenic benefits of her system over a eugenics that merely seeks to reduce the numbers of the unfit. In contrast to other eugenic programs that sought to deny social support for unfit parents and their children, Gilman argued that her eugenics, strengthened by the expertise of women, would instead improve the children of unfit parents by providing them with additional parents. Gilman continued that her eugenic system of social parentage would actually reduce the numbers of unfit more effectively than would other eugenic programs that are focused on increasing the reproduction of the fit. By relying on Spencer’s law that “reproduction is in inverse proportion to specialization,” Gilman aimed to increase the specialization of unfit

children through social parentage so as to decrease their reproduction.⁵³ Part of the goal of social parentage was to educate those who were born to unfit parents in order to “Improve the individual” and thereby “check this crude fecundity.”⁵⁴

The increasing specialization of women was a direct consequence of feminism. It was not only parenting that would be transformed by this trend towards specialization, but also the entire home environment. Gilman explicitly developed these ideas in *Home: Its Work and Influence* (1903), although she began to form them in *Women and Economics*. *Home* advocated a complete restructuring of the domestic environment. Gilman argued that kitchenless houses were the inevitable consequence of increased specialization in cooking skills, as were more highly processed and sanitary food products. Unskilled mothers and wives could no longer be trusted to cook, clean, and shop for their family. Instead, Gilman envisioned increasing layers of trained female experts who would replace the unskilled labor. For her, social motherhood extended beyond caring for children and quickly spread to caring for and supervising all unspecialized individuals, including unskilled mothers, men, and less ‘civilized’ races. The societal consequences of Gilman’s feminist eugenics can most clearly be seen in her utopian novel, *Moving the Mountain*.

Women wake up: *Moving the Mountain*

In 1910, Gilman serialized a utopian novel in *Forerunner* entitled *Moving the Mountain*. It was what she later referred to as a “short distance utopia” meaning that it took place

only thirty years in the future and in a familiar setting, the United States.⁵⁵ It is unfortunate that not much historical attention has been paid to *Moving the Mountain*, Gilman's first utopian novel. Minna Doskow, in her compilation of Gilman's utopian novels, dismisses *Moving the Mountain* as less interesting, less dramatic, and less satirical than *Herland*.⁵⁶ The premise of the novel is to illustrate the answer to the "feminism question," namely what would happen when women wake up and are recognized as humans on an equal par with men. How would society be structured and operate differently? Gilman answered these questions with her feminist eugenics program.

Many of the reforms present in this future society are already familiar from Gilman's earlier work. Kitchenless houses and pure food abound now that women have specialized their labor. Hallie, the young niece of the narrator, is a key administrative official in the National Food Bureau that coordinates food distribution, processing, and preparation. Nellie, Hallie's mother, is the president of a co-educational college. In *Moving the Mountain*, there still exists a division of labor based on sex, "Men do almost all the violent plain work—digging and hewing and hammering; women, as a class, prefer the administrative and constructive kinds [of labor]."⁵⁷ In addition to specializing the home and food production, women are also responsible for specializing motherhood. Gilman postulated that "there had arisen a...far more efficient motherhood...and [women] built up a new science of Humaniculture; that no woman was allowed to care for her children without proof of capacity."⁵⁸ While Gilman would not deny women the right to reproduce, she envisioned that "if they want to take care of

them, they must show a diploma.”⁵⁹ Certified expert mothers headed the Department of Child Culture which was funded by the government to ensure proper child development and mother certification. Social motherhood was not limited to children however, as *Moving the Mountain* shows. Women’s increased specialization and expert authority in Gilman’s utopia quickly was applied to adults as well as children, again with women improving the race in ways that only they could.

Gilman’s feminist eugenics extended beyond children and mothers in *Moving the Mountain* to include the eugenic cultivation of men, particularly immigrants. As the characters of *Moving the Mountain* tell the history of the past thirty years, they explain how they solved the “immigration problem”:

We refuse no one. We have discovered as many ways of utilizing human waste as we used to have for the waste products of coal tar...What we have now is Compulsory Socialization [where] no immigrant is turned loose on the community till he or she is up to a certain standard, and the children we educate.⁶⁰

Gilman’s solution to the immigration problem relied on women to apply their expertise in humaniculture to improving the race. Her “compulsory socialization” for immigrants was similar to her “solution to the Negro problem” that she proposed in 1908 in *The American Journal of Sociology*. Here she suggested that the only clear solution to ensuring racial advancement is to “Let each sovereign state carefully organize in every county and township an enlisted body of all Negroes below a certain grade of citizenship.”⁶¹ Social motherhood, for Gilman, was all encompassing as a system of racial advancement necessarily designed and maintained by women, the race-type.

As it pertained to the male sex, Gilman's feminist eugenics had much more dramatic and rapid effects than social motherhood could produce. This was due to women's role as sexual selectors. Again, *Moving the Mountain* illustrates the social changes induced by women's rise to social consciousness. Through sexual selection, women have greatly improved the male sex, eliminating hereditary disease, prostitution, smoking, and liquor.⁶² Of these, hereditary disease was clearly the most significant as Gilman explained how women need to be taught eugenics in order to fulfill their duty as "makers of men":

Health—physical purity—was made a practical ideal. The young women learned the proportion of men with syphilis and gonorrhea and decided that it was wrong to marry them. That was enough. They passed laws in every State requiring a clean bill of health with every marriage license. Diseased men had to die bachelors—that's all ...disease is registered against him at the Department of Eugenics—physicians are required to send in lists; any girl can find out.⁶³

Gilman has equally harsh words for criminals and sexual deviants, who by implication she assumes to be men. Describing the steps her utopian society took to curb hereditary disease, she wrote:

Our first step...was to check the birth of defectives and degenerates. Certain classes of criminals and perverts were rendered incapable of reproducing their kind. In the matter of those diseases most injurious to the young, very stringent measures were taken. It was made a felony to infect wife and child knowingly. Physicians were obliged to report all cases of disease, and young girls were clearly taught the consequences of marriage with infected persons.⁶⁴

The eugenic improvement of men is swift and efficient in Gilman's utopia now that women are the sexual selectors. Gilman's feminist eugenics positions women as selectors on not just an individual mating level, but on a national, racial, and cultural scale. Women, now that they have "woken up" have assumed social control over every aspect of human life, environment, and reproduction. For Gilman, this eugenically utopian vision was the logical outgrowth of the success of feminism.

Conclusion

Gilman's writings on feminist eugenics grew out of her interests in the societal consequences of feminism, that is, what would (and should) happen when women "wake up." Feminist eugenics, as she articulated it, was a eugenics that constrained mostly men's, not women's choices. Gilman utilized the rhetorical appeal of maternalism and expanded it to the concept of "social parentage." She acknowledged that in order to be eugenic, 'fit' women needed to reproduce, but Gilman was the first to point out that they did not need to raise their own children. Thus, Gilman separated breeding from motherhood, allowing for women to pursue careers and leave family life if they desired. In addition, Gilman expanded upon the ideology of eugenics driven by female sexual selection, and laid out more clearly than any that came before her how this system might actually work in practice. However, it is also clear that she shared many of the same assumptions about class, race, and nationality as her Progressive Era contemporaries. While from a modern perspective her vision seems more dystopian

than utopian, Gilman was successful in merging feminism with eugenics in a way that did not restrict women merely to reproductive vessels for the next generation.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Blount, A. E. *Woman and the Larger Citizenship: 12 volume illustrated series for the Woman's Citizens Library, a Systematic Course of Reading in Preparation for the Larger Citizenship, The Civics Society, Hull House, Chicago, 1914.*
Chicago: The Civics society, 1913-14.

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "The Providence Ladies Gymnasium." *Providence Journal* 8 no. 2 (May 23, 1883).

———. *Women and Economics*. New York: Source Book Press, 1970, c. 1898.

———. *Concerning Children*. Boston: Small, Maynard, & Co., 1900.

———. *Man Made World; or, Our Androcentric Culture*. New York: Charlton Co., 1911.

———. "The New Mothers of a New World," *Forerunner* 4 no. 6 (June 1913): 148.

———. "The Biological Anti-feminist," *Forerunner* 5 no. 3 (March 1914): 64-67.

———. "Assisted Evolution," *Forerunner* 7 (January 1916): 5.

Martin, John. *Feminism*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1916.

Popenoe, Paul and Roswell Johnson. *Applied Eugenics*. New York: Macmillan, 1918.

Saleeby, Caleb Williams. *Woman and Womanhood*. New York: M. Kennerley, 1911.

Walsh, Correa Moylan. *Feminism*. New York: Sturgis & Walton, 1917.

Ward, Lester. "Our Better Halves." *Forum* 6 (November 1888): 266-75.

"The Woman Movement and Eugenics," *The American Breeders' Magazine* 2 (1911): 226.

Secondary Sources

- Allen, Judith. *The Feminism of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Sexualities, Histories, and Progressivism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Ceplair, Larry, ed. *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Nonfiction Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- Chang, Li-Wen. "Economics, Evolution, and Feminism in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Utopian Fiction." *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 39, no 4 (2010): 319-48.
- Cott, Nancy. *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987.
- Davis, Cynthia J. *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Biography*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010.
- . "His and Herland: Charlotte Perkins Gilman 'Re-Presents' Lester F. Ward." In *Evolution and Eugenics in American Literature and Culture, 1880-1940: Essays on Ideological Conflict and Complexity*. Edited by Cuddy, Lois A. and Claire M. Roche. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2003.
- Degler, Carl. "Charlotte Perkins Gilman on the Theory and Practice of Feminism." *American Quarterly* 8 (Spring 1956): 21-39.
- . "Introduction" in *Women and Economics*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.
- Doskow, Minna. *Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Utopian Novels: Moving the Mountain, Herland, and With Her in Ourland*. Madison, N. J.: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999.
- Egan, Maureen L. "Evolutionary Theory in the Social Philosophy of Charlotte Perkins Gilman." *Hypatia* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 102-119.
- Fessenden, Tracy. "Race, Religions, and the New Woman in America: The Case of Charlotte Perkins Gilman." *Furman Studies* 37 (June 1995): 15-28.
- Ganobcsik-Williams, Lisa. "The Intellectualism of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Evolutionary Perspective on Race, Ethnicity, and Class." In *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Optimist Reformer*, Jill Rudd and Val Gough eds. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999, 16-44.
- Hawkins, Mike. *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

- Hausman, Bernice L. "Sex before Gender: Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Evolutionary Paradigm of Utopia," *Feminist Studies* 24 (Fall 1998): 489-510.
- Hedges, Elaine R. "Afterword" to *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Old Westbury, New York: Feminist Press, 1973.
- Kline, Wendy. *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Kohlstedt, Sally Gregory and Mark Jorgensen. "'The Irrepressible Woman Question': Women's Responses to Darwinian Evolutionary Ideology." In *Disseminating Darwinism: The Role of Place, Race, Religion, and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Ladd-Taylor, Molly. *Mother Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890-1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.
- Lancaster, Jane. "'I could easily have been an Acrobat': Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Providence Ladies' Sanitary Gymnasium 1881-1884." *ATQ* 8, no. 1 (1994): 33- 52.
- Lane, Ann J. Introduction to *Herland*. New York: Pantheon, 1979.
- Lanser, Susan S. "Feminist Criticism, 'The Yellow Wallpaper,' and the Politics of Color in America." *Feminist Studies* 24 (Fall 1989): 415-41.
- Lloyd, Brian. "Feminism, Utopian and Scientific: Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Prison of the Familiar." *American Studies* 39 (Spring 1998): 93-114.
- Love, Rosaleen. "Darwinism and Feminism: The 'Woman Question' in the Life and Work of Olive Schreiner and Charlotte Perkins Gilman." In *The Wider Domain of Evolutionary Thought*, edited by David Oldroyd, 113-131. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1983.
- Magner, Lois. "Darwinism and the Woman Question: The Evolving Views of Charlotte Perkins Gilman." In *Critical Essays on Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, edited by Joanne B. Karpinski. New York: G. K. Hall, 1992.
- Newman, Louise. *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Russett, Cynthia Eagle. *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Seitler, Dana. "Unnatural selections: Mothers, Eugenic Feminism, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Regeneration Narratives." *American Quarterly* 55 (March 2003): 61-88.

Scharnhorst, Gary. *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Bibliography*. New York: Scarecrow Author Bibliographies, no. 71, 1985.

Valverde, Mariana. "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First Wave Feminism." In *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History*, edited by Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.

Vertinsky, Patricia. "Feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Pursuit of Health and Physical Fitness as a Strategy for Emancipation." *Journal of Sport History* 16:1 (1989): 5-26.

Weinbaum, Alys Eve. "Writing Feminist Genealogy: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Racial Nationalism, and the Reproduction of Maternalist Feminism." *Feminist Studies* 27, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 271-302.

Notes

¹ Caleb Williams Saleeby, *Woman and Womanhood* (New York: M. Kennerley, 1911), 7.

² Correa Moylan Walsh, *Feminism* (New York: Sturgis & Walton, 1917), 74. This anti-feminist tract singled out Gilman repeatedly as the most pernicious of the new "feminists."

³ Anonymous editorial [most likely Popenoe or Charles Davenport], "The Woman Movement and Eugenics," *The American Breeders Magazine* 2 (1911): 226.

⁴ Anonymous, "The Woman Movement and Eugenics," 226.

⁵ Paul Popenoe and Roswell Johnson, *Applied Eugenics* (New York: Macmillan, 1918): 378-384. In the second addition of *Applied Eugenics* (which came after the suffrage amendment), this section was extensively revised, 2nd edition (1933): 319-324.

⁶ Popenoe and Johnson, *Applied Eugenics*, 378.

⁷ Popenoe and Johnson, *Applied Eugenics*, 378.

⁸ Popenoe and Johnson, *Applied Eugenics*, 379.

⁹ Popenoe and Johnson, *Applied Eugenics*, 381.

¹⁰ Popenoe and Johnson, *Applied Eugenics*, 383.

¹¹ Popenoe and Johnson, *Applied Eugenics*, 384.

¹² Saleeby, *Woman and Womanhood*, 6.

¹³ Saleeby, *Woman and Womanhood*, 7.

¹⁴ A. E. Blount, *Woman and the Larger Citizenship: 12 volume illustrated series for the Woman's Citizens Library, a systematic course of reading in preparation for the larger citizenship, The Civics Society, Hull House, Chicago, 1914* (Chicago: The Civics society, 1913-14), 2905. For more on maternalism in this period, see Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

¹⁵ John Martin, *Feminism* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1916), 122.

¹⁶ Gilman to Grace Channing Stetson, August 21, 1929, quoted in Larry Ceplair, ed., *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Nonfiction Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 8.

¹⁷ Gilman, "Feminism," unpublished manuscript in Larry Ceplair, ed., *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Nonfiction Reader*, "Feminism," 183. For a fuller discussion of "feminism" and its meaning among activists

at the turn of the century and beyond, see Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 11-50.

¹⁸ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "What is Feminism?" *Boston Sunday Herald*, September 3, 1916, quoted in Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 14.

¹⁹ Carl Degler, "Charlotte Perkins Gilman on the Theory and Practice of Feminism," *American Quarterly* 8 (Spring 1956): 21-39. Degler, "Introduction" to *Women and Economics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), i.

²⁰ Degler, *Women and Economics*, vi-xxxv. Ann J. Lane, "Introduction" to *Herland* (New York: Pantheon, 1979), v-xxiv. Elaine R. Hedges, "Afterword" to *The Yellow Wallpaper* (Old Westbury, New York: Feminist Press, 1973), 37-63. Hedges was the first to compile *Herland* into book format from its serialization in *Forerunner*. Alys Eve Weinbaum, "Writing Feminist Genealogy: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Racial Nationalism, and the Reproduction of Maternalist Feminism," *Feminist Studies* 27, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 271-302. Weinbaum argues that the feminist genealogy that is uncritically constructed around Gilman ignores the foundational racism of Gilman's feminism.

²¹ Gail Bederman, "'Not to Sex-But to Race!' Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Civilized Anglo-Saxon Womanhood, and the Return of the Primitive Rapist," in *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 121-169. Louise Newman, "Eliminating Sex Distinction from Civilization: The Feminist Theories of Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Mary Roberts Smith Coolidge," in *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 132-157. Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams, "The Intellectualism of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Evolutionary Perspective on Race, Ethnicity, and Class," in *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Optimist Reformer*, Jill Rudd and Val Gough eds., (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 16-44. Mariana Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First Wave Feminism," in *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History*, ed. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 3-26. Susan S. Lanser, "Feminist Criticism, 'The Yellow Wallpaper,' and the Politics of Color in America," in *Feminist Studies* 24 (Fall 1989): 415-41. Bernice L. Hausman, "Sex before Gender: Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Evolutionary Paradigm of Utopia," *Feminist Studies* 24 (Fall 1998): 489-510. Tracy Fessenden, "Race, Religions, and the New Woman in America: The Case of Charlotte Perkins Gilman," *Furman Studies* 37 (June 1995): 15-28. Brian Lloyd, "Feminism, Utopian and Scientific: Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Prison of the Familiar," *American Studies* 39 (Spring 1998): 93-114. Weinbaum, "Writing Feminist Genealogy."

²² Weinbaum, "Writing Feminist Genealogy," 297, footnote 4.

²³ In the history of science, "social Darwinism" is a contested phrase. By using this term, I only mean that Charlotte Perkins Gilman applied evolutionary claims onto society and attempted to draw conclusions from these. By writing social with a lower case "s", I mean to distinguish it from "Social Darwinism" which was the use of Darwinian rhetoric to legitimate laissez-faire economics, among other things.

²⁴ Cynthia Russett, *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 13.

²⁵ Lois Magner, "Darwinism and the Woman Question: The Evolving Views of Charlotte Perkins Gilman" in *Critical Essays on Charlotte Perkins Gilman*. Ed. Joanne B. Karpinski (New York: G. K. Hall, 1992), 115-128. Sally Gregory Kohlstedt and Mark R. Jorgensen, "'The irrepressible woman question': Women's Responses to Evolutionary Ideology," in *Disseminating Darwinism: The Role of Place, Race, Religion and Gender*. Ronald L. Numbers and John Stenhouse, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 267-293. Rosaleen Love, "Darwinism and Feminism: The 'Woman Question' in the Life and Work of Olive Schreiner and Charlotte Perkins Gilman," in *The Wider Domain of Evolutionary Thought*, David Oldroyd, ed., (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1983), 113-132. Maureen L. Egan, "Evolutionary Theory in the Social Philosophy of Charlotte Perkins Gilman," *Hypatia* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 102-119.

²⁶ Judith Allen, *The Feminism of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Sexualities, Histories, and Progressivism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

²⁷ Mike Hawkins states in his *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought*, "Thus, Gilman became an opponent of eugenics," p. 264. Wendy Kline assesses Gilman's eugenic leanings and motivations in, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to*

the Baby Boom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 8, 11-13, 19. See also Dana Seittler, "Unnatural selections: Mothers, Eugenic Feminism, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Regeneration Narratives," *American Quarterly* 55 (March 2003): 61-88 and Li-Wen Chang, "Economics, Evolution, and Feminism in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Utopian Fiction," *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 39, no 4 (2010): 319-48.

²⁸ *Forerunner* 1, no. 1 (November 1909): back of front cover (no page number).

²⁹ *Forerunner* 1, no. 1 (November 1909): 2. Gilman clearly equates women with mothers throughout her writings; the two categories are the same for her, although she wants to create a new category of unnatural motherhood that not all women would qualify as. It also should be pointed out that Gilman's use of the word "race" is to be taken as an ambiguous category that most often refers to humanity in general. But as recent historiography of feminism points out, the very ambiguity of the term served both inclusive and exclusive rhetorical purposes.

³⁰ *Forerunner* 1, no. 1 (November 1909): 2.

³¹ The term "euthenics" was proposed by Ellen Swallow Richards (founder of home economics) to denote the science of creating better environments to enhance societal progress, but this term never really caught on. With the exception of Richards, euthenics was subsumed under the rubric of eugenics since Lamarckian inheritance was not fully discredited until about 1920 in the United States.

³² Lester Ward, "Our Better Halves," *Forum* 6 (November 1888): 266-75 and also in *Pure Sociology* (New York: Macmillan, 1903). For more on Ward's influence on Gilman's thinking, see Cynthia Davis, "His and Herland: Charlotte Perkins Gilman 'Re-Presents' Lester F. Ward," in *Evolution and Eugenics in American Literature and Culture, 1880-1940: Essays on Ideological Conflict and Complexity*. Edited by Cuddy, Lois A. and Claire M. Roche. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2003.

³³ Lois Magner's work on Gilman is only one example of this assumption that misdiagnoses the motivation behind Gilman's social reforms.

³⁴ Gilman, "The Providence Ladies Gymnasium," *Providence Journal* 8 no. 2 (May 23, 1883). See also Jane Lancaster, "'I could easily have been an Acrobat': Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Providence Ladies' Sanitary Gymnasium 1881-1884" *ATQ* 8:1 (1994):33-52 and Patricia Vertinsky, "Feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Pursuit of Health and Physical Fitness as a Strategy for Emancipation" *Journal of Sport History* 16:1 (1989): 5-26.

³⁵ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Man Made World; or, Our Androcentric Culture* (New York: Charlton Co., 1911), 55.

³⁶ Gilman lectured throughout the west coast in the late 1880s through the 1890s on dress reform. She also published numerous articles in *Woman's Journal* and *Pacific Rural Press* during this period on the subject.

³⁷ *Women and Economics* went through nine editions by 1920. It was translated into Dutch, Italian, German, and Russian and reviewed in twenty-five different periodicals within a year of its publication. For more information on the popularity of *Women and Economics*, see *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Bibliography* by Gary Scharnhorst, (Scarecrow Author Bibliographies, No. 71, 1985).

³⁸ Gilman, *Women and Economics*, xxxix.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Gilman, "Assisted Evolution," *Forerunner* 7 (January 1916): 5.

⁴² Gilman, "Assisted Evolution," 340. Sentence preceding this is, "Where our progress hitherto has been warped and hindered by the retarding of surviving rudimentary forces, it will flow on smoothly and rapidly when both men and women stand equal in economic relation."

⁴³ Bederman, Gail, *Manliness and Civilization*, 272, footnote 118.

⁴⁴ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Concerning Children* (Boston: Small, Maynard, & Co., 1900), 257. A number of Gilman's articles in *Forerunner* provide further evidence of the argument she develops in *Concerning Children*: "Prize Children" *Forerunner* 1 (May 1910): 10-11. "Genius, Maternal and Domestic" 1 (June 1910), 10-12, and July, 1910): 5-7. "The New Motherhood" 1 (December 1910): 17-18. "The New Mothers of a New World," 4 (June 1913): 145-149.

⁴⁵ Gilman, *Concerning Children*, 261. It is not the point that I am making here, but it is obvious how Gilman is measuring the progress of women against her racist hierarchies of civilization. Gilman's comment shortly preceding this one (same page) would also support this claim, "The 'nature' of

motherhood is to provide what is best for the child; and the multiplied services and facilities of our socially developed lives are as natural to us as our smooth white skins, once 'naturally' brown and shaggy."

⁴⁶ Gilman, *Concerning Children*, 261.

⁴⁷ Gilman, *Concerning Children*, 263-264.

⁴⁸ Gilman, *Concerning Children*, 263-264.

⁴⁹ Gilman, *Concerning Children*, 277.

⁵⁰ Gilman, *Concerning Children*, 265.

⁵¹ Gilman, *Concerning Children*, 266.

⁵² Gilman, *Concerning Children*, 274.

⁵³ Gilman, *Concerning Children*, 296-298.

⁵⁴ Gilman, *Concerning Children*, 298.

⁵⁵ Gilman, *Moving the Mountain*, preface.

⁵⁶ Minna Doskow, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Utopian Novels: Moving the Mountain, Herland, and With Her in Ourland* (Madison, N. J.: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999), 20. All subsequent citations are from this volume.

⁵⁷ Gilman, *Moving the Mountain*, 74.

⁵⁸ Gilman, *Moving the Mountain*, 76.

⁵⁹ Gilman, *Moving the Mountain*, 76.

⁶⁰ *Forerunner 2* (1911): 79-80.

⁶¹ Gilman, "A Solution to the Negro Problem" *American Journal of Sociology* 14 (July 1908): 78-85, in Ceplair, ed., *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Non-fiction Reader*, 176.

⁶² *Forerunner 2* (1911): 140-141.

⁶³ *Forerunner 2* (1911): 138.

⁶⁴ *Forerunner 2* (1911): 165.

About the Contributors:

Tom Dreyfus

Tom Dreyfus received his LLB (Hons) and BA from the University of Melbourne in 2011. He is currently completing an Honours thesis at the University of Melbourne researching changing masculinities in Argentina.

Robyn Lee Bio

Robyn Lee is a PhD candidate in Social and Political Thought at York University. Her interdisciplinary research examines ethics, theories of subjectivity and embodiment, feminist theory, and contemporary political theory. Her dissertation is entitled Breastfeeding: ethics, poetics, and politics.

Gigi McNamara

Gigi McNamara is a PhD candidate in Mass Communication at the Pennsylvania State University. She has taught previously at Duquesne University and Lock Haven University. Her research interests include exploring issues relating to gender, media and commodification and has presented papers at the National Women's Studies Association and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Beth Nardella

Beth Nardella is an Assistant Professor of writing in the School of Medicine at West Virginia University. In addition to teaching, she is currently researching girlhood in the United States. She holds an MFA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an MA from West Virginia University.

Susan Rensing

Susan Rensing teaches History and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. Her current research analyzes how eugenics was used to re-conceptualize romantic love, reproduction, and the institution of marriage in the early 20th century and how resistance to these changes motivated a backlash to first-wave feminism in America.