TEXTUAL MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

Feminist Moments

Reading Feminist Texts

Edited by Susan Bruce and Katherine Smits

BLOOMSBURY

Feminist Moments

Textual Moments in the History of Political Thought

Series Editors

J. C. Davis, Emeritus Professor of History,
University of East Anglia, UK
John Morrow, Professor of Political Studies,
University of Auckland, New Zealand

Textual Moments provides accessible, short readings of key texts in selected fields of political thought, encouraging close reading informed by cutting-edge scholarship. The unique short essay format of the series ensures that volumes cover a range of texts in roughly chronological order. The essays in each volume aim to open up a reading of the text and its significance in the political discourse in question and in the history of political thought more widely. Key moments in the textual history of a particular genre of political discourse are made accessible, appealing and instructive to students, scholars and general readers.

Published

Utopian Moments: Reading Utopian Texts
Miguel Avilés & J. C. Davis
Censorship Moments: Reading Texts in the History of Censorship and Freedom of Expression
Geoff Kemp
Revolutionary Moments: Reading Revolutionary Texts
Rachel Hammersley
Patriarchal Moments: Reading Patriarchal Texts
Cesare Cuttica, Gaby Mahlberg

Forthcoming

Liberal Moments: Reading Liberal Texts
Ewa Atanassow and Alan S. Kahan

Feminist Moments

Reading Feminist Texts

Edited by
Susan Bruce and Katherine Smits

Bloomsbury Academic
An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

BLOOMSBURY
LONDON • OXFORD • NEW YORK • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

Bloomsbury Academic
An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

50 Bedford Square
London
WC1B 3DP
UK

1385 Broadway
New York
NY 10018
USA

www.bloomsbury.com

BLOOMSBURY and the Diana logo are trademarks of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published 2016

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: HB: 978-1-4742-3038-4
PB: 978-1-4742-3039-1
ePDF: 978-1-4742-3041-4
ePub: 978-1-4742-3040-7

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Series: Textual Moments in the History of Political Thought

Typeset by Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.

Contents

List of Contributors

Susan Bruce is Professor of English at Keele University, UK. She is currently Chair of University English, the Subject Association for UK English Literature and Language departments. She has published on numerous subjects from Thomas More to the production of HE English. She is editor of *Three Early Modern Utopias* (1999), *King Lear* (1997) and *Fiction and Economy* (2007) and is currently working on televisual dramas set in the National Health Service and on representations of the uterus.

Susan Hays Bussey is Associate Professor of English at Georgia Gwinnett College, the United States. She has published several articles on American and African-American literature, including '"Whose Will Be Done?": Self-Determination in Pauline Hopkins's *Hagar's Daughter*' (*African American Review*, 2005, reprinted in *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism* 2011). Her '"You've Never Done That, Have You?": Sex in *The Sound and the Fury*' is forthcoming in *Make It New: Teaching the Modernist Period in the 21st Century*, Precious McKenzie and Catherine MacKinnon editors.

Glenda R. Carpio is Professor of African and African American Studies and English at Harvard University, the United States. Her book *Laughing Fit to Kill: Black Humor in the Fictions of Slavery* was published in 2008. Professor Carpio's essays have appeared in *American Literature, American Literary History* and the *New Literary History of American Literature*. In 2011, she co-edited *African American Literary Studies: New Texts, New Approaches, New Challenges* with Professor Werner Sollors; see http://www.amazon.de/African-American-Literary-Studies-Approaches/dp/382. She is currently working on a book on immigration in twentieth- and twenty-first-century American literature.

Maitrayee Chaudhuri is Professor and Chairperson of the Centre for the Study of Social Systems in the School of Social Sciences at Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. She is the author of *The Indian Women's Movement: Reform and Revival* (1993, 2010), *Sociology in India: Intellectual and Institutional* (2010), *Feminism in India* (2005) and *The Practice of Sociology* (2003).

miriam cooke is Braxton Craven Distinguished Professor of Arab Cultures at Duke University, the United States, and Director of the Duke University Middle East Studies Center. She is the author of several monographs, including *The Anatomy of an Egyptian Intellectual: Yahya Haqqi* (1984), *War's Other Voices: Women Writers on the Lebanese Civil War* (1988), *Women and the War Story* (1997), *Women Claim Islam: Creating Islamic Feminism through Literature* (2001), *Dissident Syria: Making Oppositional Arts Official* (2007), *Nazira Zeineddine: A Pioneer of Islamic Feminism* (2010) and *Tribal Modern: Branding New Nations in the Arab Gulf* (2014).

Catherine Dollard is Associate Professor of History at Denison University, the United States. She is the author of *The Surplus Woman: Unmarried in Imperial Germany, 1871–1918* (2009) and has published numerous articles in journals such as *German Studies Review, Women's History Review* and *Women in German Yearbook*.

Claire Hurley is a PhD student and 50th Anniversary Scholar at the University of Kent, UK, working on Gertrude Stein, Lorine Niedecker, Barbara Guest and Susan Howe. She will be taking up a Graduate Fellowship at the University of Texas in April 2015.

Jim Jose is Associate Professor in Politics & International Relations at the University of Newcastle, Australia. He is the author of *Biopolitics of the Subject: An Introduction to the Ideas of Michel Foucault* (1998) and the co-editor of *Not So Strange Bedfellows: The Nexus of Politics and Religion in the 21st Century* (2013). He has published numerous articles on political theory, feminist theory, and Australian politics and public policy.

Céline Leboeuf is a PhD candidate in the Philosophy Department at Harvard University, the United States. Her research focuses on the intersection of phenomenology, feminism and critical race theory. Her dissertation defends a phenomenological account of gender and race, with particular attention to the experiences of bodily alienation under racial and sexual oppressions and to our resources for embodied resistance.

Alexandra Lewis is Lecturer in English Literature and Associate Director of the Centre for the Novel at the University of Aberdeen, UK. She serves on the British Association for Victorian Studies Executive Committee. Her recent publications on the Brontës include chapters in *Picturing Women's Health*

(2014), *The Brontës in Context* (2012) and *Acts of Memory: The Victorians and Beyond* (2010). She is currently completing a monograph on mental trauma in nineteenth-century literature, culture and psychology.

Kari Lokke is Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Davis. She is the author of *Gérard de Nerval: The Poet as Social Visionary* (1987), *Tracing Women's Romanticism: Gender, History and Transcendence* (2012) and the co-editor of *Rebellious Hearts: British Women Writers and the French Revolution* (2001). She is currently working on a book about political and religious fanaticism in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European literature.

Nadia Margolis is a specialist in French and Medieval studies, trained in both her native France and in the United States. After taking her PhD at Stanford University, she has published primarily on Christine de Pizan and Joan of Arc and taught at various institutions in the United States, most recently Mount Holyoke College, the United States, from whence she has just retired. Still an active scholar, she now lives in Rockland, Maine.

Rebecca Jo Plant is Associate Professor in the History Department at the University of California, San Diego, the United States. She has published on the history of women and gender and the history of psychiatry and therapeutic culture in the twentieth-century United States She is the author of *Mom: The Transformation of Motherhood in Modern America* (2010) and the co-editor of *Maternalism Reconsidered: Motherhood, Welfare, and Social Policies in the Twentieth Century* (2012).

Helen Pringle works in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of New South Wales, Australia. Her research has been widely recognized by awards from Princeton University, the Fulbright Foundation, the Australian Federation of University Women, and the Universities of Adelaide, Wollongong and NSW. Her main fields of expertise are human rights, ethics in public life and political theory, with particular attention to issues of sexual equality and discrimination and of freedom of expression. She is the author of the most recent edition of *Australian Protocol & Procedures*.

Amber K. Regis is Lecturer in Nineteenth-Century Literature at the University of Sheffield, UK. Her research explores life-writing practices across different media and genres. She has published widely on John Addington Symonds, Virginia

Woolf and Vita Sackville-West. Her monograph – *Victorian Auto/Biography: Tradition and Experiment in Biography and Autobiography, 1850–1940* – is under contract.

Shirley Samuels teaches English and American studies at Cornell University, the United States, and is former chair of History of Art and Visual Studies. Her books include *Reading the American Novel, 1780–1865* (2012), *Facing America: Iconography and the Civil War* (2004), *Romances of the Republic: Women, the Family, and Violence in the Literature of the Early American Nation* (1996), *The Cambridge Companion to Abraham Lincoln* (2012), *Companion to American Fiction, 1780–1865* (2004) and *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America* (1992).

Katherine Smits is Associate Professor of Politics and International Relations at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. She works in political theory and is the author of *Reconstructing Post-Nationalist Liberal Pluralism: From Interest to Identity* (2005) and *Applying Political Theory* (2009). She has published numerous articles in the areas of liberal political theory, multiculturalism, identity politics and nationalism.

Vicki A. Spencer is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Politics at the University of Otago, New Zealand. She is the author of *Herder's Political Thought: A Study of Language, Culture, and Community* (2012) and the co-editor of *Visions of Peace: Asia and the West* (with Takashi Shogimen, 2014) and *Disclosures* (with Paul Corcoran, 2000). Her research encompasses eighteenth-century European political thought and contemporary political theory with a focus on culture, identity and concepts of power, recognition and toleration.

Patricia Springborg is Guest Researcher at the Centre for British Studies at Humboldt University, Berlin. Previously, she held a personal chair in Political Theory at the University of Sydney, Australia, and from 2007 to 2013 she was foundation professor of political science (professor ordinario) in the School of Economics of the Free University of Bolzano, Italy. She is a Hobbes scholar and also published Mary Astell's Political Writings (1996).

Valeria Wagner is Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Letters of the University of Geneva, Switzerland. She is the author of *Bound to Act: Models of Action, Dramas of Inaction* (1999). Among her recent publications, the following bear on issues related to feminist studies: '¿Saber, o no saber?: el legado eurocentrista

ante la subjectividad migrante', *Eutopias*, vol. 6, 2013; 'Miradas advertidas: la escena narcisista en dos obras de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz', *Iberoamericana*, N° 57, Febrero 2015; 'Le genre de Narcisse', dans *A bras le corps*, eds. Noémi Étienne, Agnès Vannouvoung, Éditions du Réel décembre 2013; 'La marque de genre de la lutte des Mères de la place de Mai', ed. Marie-Claire Caloz-Tschopp, Paris, 2013.

Joseph Zizek is Senior Lecturer in European History at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. His research interests include voluntarism and civic identity during the French Revolution, as well as practices of history and memory during the revolutionary era.

Series Editors' Foreword

At the heart of the serious study of the history of political thought, as expressed through both canonical and non-canonical works of all kinds, has been the question (to which we all too readily assume an answer), 'How shall I read this text?' Answers have varied greatly over time. Once the political works of the past – especially those of Classical Greece and Rome – were read with an eye to their immediate application to the present. And, until comparatively recently, the canonical works of political philosophy were selected and read as expressions of perennial, abiding truths about politics, social morality and justice. The problem was that this made little or no concession to historically changing contexts, that the 'truths' we identified were all too often **our** truths. A marxisant sociology of knowledge struggled to break free from the 'eternal verities' of political thought by exploring the ways in which past societies shaped their own forms of political expression in distinctive yet commonly grounded conceptions of their own image. The problem remained that the perception of what shaped past societies was all too often driven by the demands of a current political agenda. In both cases, present concerns shaped the narrative history of political thought off which the reading of texts fed. The last half century has seen another powerful and influential attempt to break free from a present-centred history of political thought by locating texts as speech acts or moves within a contemporary context of linguistic usage. Here the frequently perceived problem has been (a by-no-means inevitable) narrowing of focus to canonical texts, while the study of other forms of political expression in images, speech, performance and gesture – in all forms of political culture – has burgeoned independently.

We have, then, a variety of ways of approaching past texts and the interplay of text and context. The series 'Textual Moments in the History of Political Thought' (in which this present volume is the fifth to be published) is designed to encourage fresh readings of thematically selected texts. Each volume focuses on a major theme and each chapter identifies a key textual moment or passage in its history and provides a reading by an acknowledged expert. The aim is fresh insight, accessibility and the encouragement to read, in a more informed way for oneself.

In *Feminist Moments*, Susan Bruce and Katherine Smits have invited their contributors to explore dimensions of feminist politics that emerge from a range of historically significant philosophical, polemical and literary works. The authors of the chapters in this collection consider the ways in which their chosen texts exemplify a challenge to the overwhelming historical tendency for women and their interests to be excluded from public life and the reflection of this exclusion in the canon of western political thought. These texts were produced in American and Afro-American, European, Islamic and Latin American contexts and span the period from the medieval to the contemporary worlds. Whatever their form, they are fundamentally political in that they address issues of domination and subordination and make varying claims on the implications of ideas, cultural practices and legal barriers to the effective recognition of freedom and equality for women.

The chapters in this book raise a number of important questions for students of the history of political thought. The formal and informal bases of power imbalances between men and women are often set in the context of more general discussions about the structural and ideational sources of other form of discrimination and injustice, and thus raise questions about the relationship between intellectual aspects of the feminist politics and those which have predominated in conventional accounts of historical political thought. Questions concerning the nature of civic membership and the basis of claims to it are central to feminist agendas, as are those which arise from considerations of the bases of autonomy, the scrutiny of arguments that seek to justify subordination and the tactics that women might adopt in order to counter these arguments and the practices they support. Finally, the breadth of sources on which the authors write and the contexts they address, point to the complex manifestations of the politicization of the personal which has become such a key theme in feminist thought.

Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank the series editors for their helpful guidance and advice on this volume. Thanks to the School of Social Sciences in the Arts Faculty at the University of Auckland for providing funding for us to bridge the hemispheres and work together on this project in the same location, and to Keele University for allowing Susan Bruce research leave to bring the volume to completion. In addition, Katherine Smits would like to thank Marty Wechselblatt for, as always, his forbearance, loving support and provision of cooked dinners, and Susan Bruce would like to thank Daniel and Luke Lustig-Bruce for periodically finding ways to get her to take her mind off work.

Introduction

Susan Bruce and Katherine Smits

> *On June 13th … some 13,000 Suffragists assembled on the Embankment and marched to the Albert Hall … . It was a striking pageant with its many gorgeous banners, richly embroidered and fashioned of velvets, silks and every kind of beautiful material … [several] prepared by the Artists League for Women's Suffrage. Some were blazoned with the figures of women great in history, … Boadicea, Joan of Arc and Queen Elizabeth; others bore emblems commemorating women's heroic deeds, or reforming achievements, – Elizabeth Fry … and Mary Wollstonecraft, being amongst those … After these came a contingent of international Suffragists; Australians, Americans … and representatives from Hungary, Russia, South Africa, and other countries … The professional women were led by … scientists and a great band of medical women in the splendid robes of crimson and black … . the women writers headed by the Scriveners' banner … Then came the artists, the actresses. Next, the nurses, all in uniform, and … gardeners, pharmacists, physical trainers, typists and shorthand writers, shop assistants, factory workers, and homemakers. Next came the militant Women's Freedom League, the Women's Cooperative Guild, the National Union of Women Workers, and the members of various women's organisations connected with the political parties … . Altogether the procession was acknowledged to be the most picturesque and effective political pageant ever been seen in this country, and every newspaper spoke of its impressive dignity and beauty.*[1]

Among many possible feminist moments, we have chosen to open our collection with Sylvia Pankhurst's account of a demonstration that took place a week before the famous Hyde Park rally of 21 June 1908, organized by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies in conjunction with other organizations. The Suffragette movement (or, the less patronizing, less feminizing locution Pankhurst uses, the 'Suffragiste' movement) is probably to western eyes the most famous feminist moment in history, one now iconic of feminism. But, as this passage shows, it was built on a long history and on

the participation of numerous women whose diversity, both of nation and of class, was remarkable. The historical figures Pankhurst mentions may be mainly British, but those joining demonstrations to demand the vote were not. By 1908, the Suffragette movement could make credible claim to be a global phenomenon, nineteenth-century activism for women's rights having emerged not only in Europe, the United States and the Commonwealth (New Zealand, then a self-governing British colony, was the first to give all adult women the vote) but also, less well known to western readers, in some Asian and Middle Eastern societies. 'The movement towards liberty then springing up amongst the women of the far east also inspired us,' Pankhurst writes; 'news of the women's cry for freedom came to us from North, South, East and West, and we felt ourselves part of a Universal movement' (91–92).

The triumphant energy of Pankhurst's passage celebrates not only the international character of the Suffragette movement but also its support across classes: the demonstration is composed of not only academics and professional women, but also nurses, shop assistants, factory workers and homemakers. In fact, the relationship of class to feminist arguments was a more vexed question for the Suffragettes than Pankhurst's passage suggests. Until 1918, only men of certain means – those who met a property qualification – were entitled to vote in the UK, and many feminists insisted, as did Pankhurst herself, that the campaign for women's right to vote be tied to that for universal suffrage (the rights of all adults to the franchise, irrespective of property ownership and class). Others, however, disagreed, arguing that the fundamental claims of women to the vote should be addressed separately to the rights of working-class men.[2] That this disagreement eventually split the Suffragette movement does not, however, undermine the magnitude of the moment Pankhurst describes, where women from all classes, from 'North, South, East and West', came together in a collective 'cry for freedom'.

The protests of the Suffragettes were embedded in a narrative that not only looked back to historical examples of famous women, but also forwards to wider claims to equality and freedom. In her preface to *The Suffragette*, Emmeline Pankhurst, Sylvia's mother, calls up in her imagination the women of a more egalitarian future. 'Perhaps the woman born in the happy days that are to come', she writes, 'while rejoicing in the inheritance that we of today are preparing for them, may sometimes wish that they could have lived in the heroic days of stress and struggle and have shared with us the joy of battle, the exaltation that comes of sacrifice of self for great objects and the prophetic vision that assures us of the certain triumph

of this 20th century fight for human emancipation'. Her locution – 'this twentieth century fight for human emancipation' – signals her recognition that achieving the vote, while an end in itself, was also a symbol for a wider freedoms, a fact acknowledged outside the Suffragette movement as well as within it. 'These women are prepared to kill themselves with fatigue and exposure,' a journalist in *The Standard* observed at the time, 'not for the vote but for what the vote means' (216).

What the vote meant for the Suffragette movement was not only the right to participate in elections, but also the right to be heard in public debate. More broadly, it stood for women's demands for legal and civil equality: for the rights to own property independently, to resist threats of bodily violence, to retain independence once married and to gain full access to education and the professions. That these feminist claims were cast in terms of 'rights' reflects the nineteenth-century development of a European and American discourse of human rights, increasingly recognized in international agreements. Such a framing facilitated links between women's rights and the rights of those colonized or subordinated on the grounds of race, class and – in the later twentieth century – sexuality. Sometimes, as with the Suffragette movement itself, these overlapping claims provoked discord. But from the latter part of the twentieth century, feminists have increasingly embraced the complex interrelation between subordination on the grounds of gender and subordination based on race, class or sexuality; several of our chapters address this intersectional dimension of women's experience of subjugation.

The pageant Pankhurst describes is a happy emblem for our volume, which begins with a medieval Italian French noblewoman, Christine de Pizan and ends with Luisa Valenzuela, a contemporary Argentinian novelist. It encompasses both 'first-wave' feminism – the suffrage movements – and 'second wave' – the diverse women's movements that emerged in the 1970s – but extends before and after these.[3] Like the pageant participants, our authors include philosophers, polemicists, poets, novelists and homemakers. Most are women; many are from Britain and the United States, but also included are several Europeans, a Lebanese Arab and a Muslim from what is now Bangladesh. Many wrote before the term 'feminism' existed, it being first coined in the 1830s by Charles Fourier, a French utopian socialist; some of the concepts 'feminism' denotes today would be foreign to many of these authors. Nevertheless, even where the concept of feminism is not yet 'thinkable', all our authors are explicitly conscious of their respective societies' gender divides, and all challenge aspects of gender inequality. Some lodge their challenges

politely and quietly, or with humour, others with energy and anger. Some focus on women's political and civil claims; some on religion; some on sexual freedom. But, among their diverse concerns, we can identify themes recurrent across histories and nationalities: women's rights to education and participation in public life, their just treatment in the family and their rejection of the view that women are the property of men.

Feminism is so global a phenomenon, its history so extensive and so august as to impose on us constraints of extreme selectivity. For this reason, we have excluded the great body of academic feminism that emerged in response to second-wave feminism. Academic feminism has rewritten the landscape in which academics and students, at least in the Humanities and Social Sciences, teach, learn and research: it has transformed the canon; insisted on attention to gender in what, and in how, we read; and influenced, profoundly, several generations of students. But there exist many anthologies of academic feminism; accordingly, we have confined ourselves to authors whose interventions in their worlds were aimed at audiences wider than academia alone.[4] We begin in the early modern period, which saw both European state formation and widespread debates over women. Nadia Margolis explains how Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies* intervened in one such debate, the 'Querelle des femmes', countering clerical misogyny with the argument that the sexes were culturally as well as biologically formed, and that women, intellectually equal to men, should be permitted participation in public debate. Our second early modern woman, Anne Bradstreet, is important, argues Susan Bruce, not merely because her poetry articulates the private 'female' experience of loss that was part of the domestic life of most of her peers, but because in negotiating the boundaries between access to public and private audiences, Bradstreet modulates her voice in ways which persist in the construction of gendered identity to this day.

Christine de Pizan answered a patriarchal clerical tradition; Bradstreet wrote in a period which saw substantial public debate over women pursued in much more populist fora.[5] The editors of *Patriarchal Moments* (a companion volume to this[6]) point out that the term 'patriarchalism' derives from the Judeo-Christian conception of God-the-Father and Biblical patriarchs but extends well beyond sacred texts. Consequent on the rise of printing, such debates in the Renaissance became more demotic: the analogy between Biblical patriarchalism and state and familial patriarchalism (where the King was father to the state, just as God was father to humankind and fathers kings in their own families) became subject to question and defence in the

texts of authors such as John Milton, Robert Filmer and John Locke, as well as in popular pamphlets. Key questions in such debates included whether women enjoyed the capacity of reason. Already apparent in the works of Christine de Pizan and Bradstreet, such concerns became increasingly articulated in the discourse of rights and freedoms, as we see in Patricia Springborg's examination of Mary Astell's *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest* (1694), in which Astell defends women from the claim that the superior power of men legitimated their domination of women. Also attentive to the notion of freedom is Vicki Spencer's chapter on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's account of her visit to the Turkish baths in *The Turkish Embassy Letters* (1763): for Montagu, the bath house is a place where women can express themselves freely, unconstrained by the gaze of male spectators.

But it was with the French Revolution that the discourse of rights found its true moment. Olympe de Gouges's 1791 *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen* mirrors the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*, celebrating, Joseph Zizek explains, revolution as an emancipatory instrument and grounding issues familiar to eighteenth-century political parlance in sexual difference. Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), written in the same politico-historical context, returns to a perennial concern of early feminists, articulating Wollstonecraft's conviction that women, like men, possess the faculty of reason. Kari Lokke shows how Wollstonecraft counters the patriarchal arguments of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Milton: for Wollstonecraft, woman is not a part of man but a whole unto herself who should be free to develop her reason independently.

As Wollstonecraft confronted Rousseau and Milton, so Anna Doyle Wheeler's and William Thompson's *Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women: Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain Them in Political, and Thence in Civil and Domestic, Slavery* (1825) is written, its subtitle declares, *in Reply to a Paragraph of Mr. Mill's Celebrated 'Article on Government'*.[7] Jim Jose explains the significance of the *Appeal*'s treatment of women's status as slaves, of the sexual inequality upon which women's subordination rests and of the domestic violence that underpinned their subordination. But from this text, we move to another version of domesticity entirely and a very different genre. The nineteenth-century rise of bourgeois individualism and of the novel as the hegemonic literary form for the exploration of that individualism allowed authors to focus in new ways on the domestic aspects of female lives. Alexandra Lewis's discussion of

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) investigates how the novel's attitudes to marriage, desire, property and work have been addressed in criticism from 1847 on, and shows how it raises issues about the patriarchal ideal of 'the angel in the house' and the place of passion in feminist criticism; Susan Hays Bussey examines how Harriet Jacobs negotiates attitudes to hegemonic ideas about marriage and maternity in the context of enslavement, in her *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. The formulation of gender concerns in terms of rights, however, persisted throughout this period: as Katherine Smits shows, John Stuart Mill's 1869 *The Subjection of Women* lodged an impassioned argument for women's civil and political rights, explaining how inequalities affect the subordinated, and how socialization shapes not only behaviour but also identity.

Tensions between gender and class were debated throughout Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Catherine Dollard's essay explores the ways in which Clara Zetkin, a key player in Germany's powerful socialist movement, articulated a clear distinction between the causes of bourgeois and proletariat women in her 1896 speech to the International Workingmen's Congress: for Zetkin, the industrial era exacerbated female subjugation along class lines, marriage becoming even more imperative for bourgeois women, while proletarian women becoming ever more vulnerable to the capitalist appetite for cheap labour. A very different approach is taken by Shirley Samuels to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's enigmatic short story *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892). Samuels asks whether reading the text as a civil war story might shed light on some of its many ambiguities: many women, like Gilman herself, underwent the 'rest cure' developed to treat veterans of that conflict suffering from what we would now call post-traumatic stress syndrome.

Gilman is also famous for her feminist utopia *Herland*. That text is not the topic of an essay in this collection, but readers may wish to seek it out so as to juxtapose it with Rokeya Hussain's short, humourous utopia, *Sultana's Dream* (1905), which is. Maitrayee Chaudhuri locates this text in the context of colonial India and its politics and explores how that context fundamentally shapes feminist arguments. This is a utopia which imagines a 'Ladyland' run by women where men are as invisible in public life as, in Hussain's 'real' world, are women who observe purdah (like many Muslim women, Hussain herself wore the veil). Critics of veiling see it as a way of rendering women invisible[8] and recent controversies over the veil might suggest that debate over the practice is a new phenomenon. But, as miriam cooke's discussion of Nazira Zeineddine makes clear, the debate has a far longer history, and the practice has

been in and out of favour since the nineteenth century. Zeineddine's *Unveiling and Veiling* (1928), the first book about women's rights in Islam written by a woman contends that the Qur'an and Sunna, rightly interpreted, supported women's equality with men and did not prescribe veiling.

In *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Virginia Woolf addresses another way in which women have been rendered invisible: women, Woolf observes, have only rarely told their own stories. Amber Regis follows the legacy of Woolf's arguments through contemporary feminist life-writing and criticism, showing how they enabled the rediscovery of genres previously overlooked and tracing the afterlife of Woolf's call to think 'poetically and prosaically' in the narrative criticism practised today by some feminist life-writing critics. From here, we move to Glenda Carpio's chapter on Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). The novel, for Carpio, exposes a contrast between the reader's views and those of the community in which its heroine, Janie, exists: the reader, unlike the more judgemental community in the text, sees how Janie's sexuality emerges against a background of a gender violence which is between black communities and intrinsically connected to racial violence. And, while Carpio focuses on the interconnections between gender and racial violence, Céline Leboeuf explores the sex/gender distinction fundamental to many feminist accounts in the twentieth century. Leboeuf takes issue with the conventional interpretation of Simone de Beauvoir's famous phrase 'One is not born, but rather becomes a woman' (*The Second Sex*, 1949) arguing that that Beauvoir does not strictly separate sex and gender but sees human bodies as interpreted and constructed through the social experience of each individual.

Our next three authors are all white, North-American, middle-class and Jewish, but their writings are worlds apart from one another. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, argues Rebecca Plant, appealed to white, middle-class American women because it articulated the reasons for their discontent, exposing the vacuity of the post–Second World War ideal of suburban domesticity they had been encouraged to pursue. Plant explains the book's influence on feminists who later proposed consciousness-raising as a tool for transforming personal misery into political action. Political agency is also the focus of Claire Hurley's essay on Adrienne Rich's 'Diving into the Wreck'. Writing at the pivotal moment of second-wave feminism, Rich explores questions of motherhood, sexuality and female complicity in patriarchy, embodying the idea that 'the personal is the political' and utilizing poetry to deconstruct patriarchal language forms and contest normative representations of the female. Andrea Dworkin's views

of female complicity in patriarchy take that complicity to be fundamental to the social construction of gender. Helen Pringle shows how in Dworkin's *Intercourse* (1987) that construction creates accomplices in, rather than victims of, oppression: by participating in 'the fuck', women are subordinated not only through rape, pornography and prostitution, but through sex itself, and genuine freedom in the context of heterosexuality becomes very difficult to achieve.

Reading this volume's chapters chronologically will provide a (partial) history of feminist arguments. But, readers might also juxtapose chapters from different periods and contexts. Our volume concludes, for example, with Valeria Wagner's account of Luisa Valenzuela's short novel *Bedside Manners* (*Realidad nacional desde la cama*), whose engagement with national literary history and the lasting effects of the dictatorship's 'Process of National Reorganization' is articulated through a feminist lens. Valenzuela foregrounds the analytical potential of feminism through the figure of her passive, bedridden, protagonist; that focus on domestic spaces is also apparent in Gilman and in Brontë. Montagu compares the women-only Turkish bath house to the male realm of the English coffee house; Hussain imagines a utopian, female-only public space. Christine de Pizan, Bradstreet and Woolf all address the question of the audibility of the female voice in the public as well as private sphere; Wollstonecraft and Zeinnedine, writing in very different times and cultures, both defend women against patriarchal claims that they are lacking in reason. Astell and Wheeler, both white, but writing in very different periods, compare women's situation with slavery; Jacobs uses her actual experience of enslavement to challenge the normative ideals of female behaviour, as well as the institution of slavery, and Hurston, an African American woman, interrogates a post-slavery world in which gender and racial violence are intimately related. Several authors explore patriarchy's control over women's bodies: Zeineddine through the issue of veiling, Gilman through that of the psychological destruction produced by physical confinement and Dworkin through her examination of 'the fuck'.

These are just some of the ways one can read this volume. There are many others, for feminism has fundamentally changed the way we think about politics. We explore this in more detail in the postscript to this volume. The chronological ordering of feminist texts here leads us to ask, though, to what degree should we read them as reflecting a story of progress from benighted patriarchal past to egalitarian, enlightened present? There has been some progress: Malala Yousafzai won the Nobel Peace Prize for her campaign for women's education, having survived the Taliban attempt to kill her for her

endeavours for that cause; violence against women and sexual abuse may remain both common and brutal worldwide, but campaigns against such abuses are vocal and unceasing. But, despite the reiterations of women's right to participate in politics, only a scant dozen of almost 200 countries have, in 2015, a female head of state. Globally, women are disproportionately represented among the lowest paid and very scarce among the highest. Wollstonecraft may have argued in the eighteenth century that women possessed as much as men the God-given faculty of reason, but only in 2015 did the Anglican Church finally consecrate its first woman bishop, an achievement which speaks to the perseverance of the women who fought, for years, for that victory, but also to the entrenched opposition which resisted it for so long. 'You've come a long way, baby,' an advertisement for Virginia Slims cigarettes (featuring a glamorous woman, smoking) declared patronizingly in 1968. Perhaps. But, there remains a good stretch of ground left still to cover before we finally arrive in what Emmeline Pankhurst imagined as 'the happy days that are to come'.

1

A Feminist-Historical Citadel: Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies*

Nadia Margolis

I.7: Christine Tells How She Replied to the Three Ladies

Once I finished listening to the words spoken by the three ladies [Reason, Rectitude and Justice], which had commanded my complete attention and had totally dispelled the dismay I had been feeling before their arrival, I threw myself fully face down in front of them, not just onto my knees, out of respect for their noble status. Kissing the ground they stood on, I adored them as if they were great goddesses, praising them with these words: 'O noble and worthy ladies, light of the heavens and of the earth, fountains of paradise bringing joy to the blessed, how is it that you have deigned to come down from your lofty seats and shining thrones to visit me, a simple and ignorant scholar, in my dark and gloomy retreat? How could one ever thank you enough for such graciousness? The sweet rain and dew of your words have already sunk into my arid mind, refreshing and replenishing my thoughts which are now ready to take seed and to put forth new shoots which will bear fruit of great virtue and delicious flavor. But what have I done to be chosen to undertake the task of building a new city on earth that you have just described to me? I am no Saint Thomas the Apostle who, by the grace of God, created a fine palace in the heavens for the king of India. Nor does my poor brain have any idea of art or geometry, let alone of the theory and practice of construction. Even if I could learn the rudiments of these things, my weak female body would hardly be strong enough for such an undertaking. Yet, honored ladies, though I'm still daunted by the prospect of this extraordinary task, I know that nothing is impossible for God.'[1]

Although it may seem somewhat anachronistic to use the modern term 'feminist' to describe Christine de Pizan's *City of Ladies*, that text, the first recorded history of women by a woman author, constitutes one of the first deliberate, systematic

refutations of male assertions of women's inferiority ever written. Its most direct target was medieval misogyny which, despite the growing importance of the Virgin Mary, had been exacerbated in the Middle Ages by the Christian Church's characterization of Eve, but in it, Christine also challenges much earlier misogynies, dating back to ancient pagan Greece and Rome. Her attempt to revolutionize the image of women in western culture begins by deliberately echoing St. Augustine's City of God (written 416–22). Both Christine and Augustine (the fifth-century 'Doctor of the Church,' as Christine calls him (8)) attempted to alter an entire system of cultural beliefs: Augustine in defending and glorifying Christianity and Christine in defending women. As Augustine contends that Christianity did not bring about the fall of Rome, Christine counters traditional priestly prejudice by demonstrating that women did not cause the Fall of Man.

Christine's *City of Ladies* is a catalogue of exemplary women. Such catalogues of women had been composed before, by ancient Greek, Roman and earlier medieval authors, but always by men. Designed mainly for women's moral instruction or simply to complement the more serious catalogues of great men, these portraits of virtuous women were restrictively one-dimensional, often condescending or tongue-in-cheek, as in the case of Boccaccio's *Famous Women* (1361–1375), which was a major source for Christine, and which she considerably reworked.[2] Her *City of Ladies* is divided into three books or parts, according to an ascending moral hierarchy, emphasizing her belief in human progress.[3] Each 'brick' in its walls is an exemplum or instructive account of a famous woman's life, usually a positive role model, whether pagan or Christian, ancient or modern, mythic or historical. Part 1, Reason's domain, offers examples of women in political power, learned women and women of commendable judgement. Part 2, ruled by Rectitude, tells of sibyls and prophets, women's filial piety, excellent wives, women saviours of their societies, more learned women, while extoling women's habitual chastity. Those in Part 3, Justice's domain, are female saints and martyrs, to be revered but, unlike the exempla in Parts 1 and 2, not to be directly imitated. In fact, most of the women in all three parts would be impossible fully to emulate, but Christine held that women should be able to adapt their virtues (courage, intelligence and faithfulness) to their own lives. Rare negative cases (2.49) instruct by counter-example, while certain traditionally problematic heroines, like Medea, are favourably recast.

In her closing chapter (3.19), Christine addresses women of all classes, urging them to endure brutal husbands with patience and to cultivate prudence and respectability, since, she believes, a woman's honour and role in maintaining family and thus social stability must take priority over her individual needs.

This ultimately conservative message often disappoints modern feminists. But given the limited legal and social options for women in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, Christine's solution to prevailing misogynies is a practical one. Her ideal woman uses meekness as a form of long-term power over her cruel husband, receiving in return a posthumous heavenly reward, if not her husband's on earth. For the first time, we see in her text a history of women designed to encourage their autonomous potential and emotional or professional partnership with men, rather than one designed to keep them confined as had masculine doctrine. That is extraordinary enough, but Christine claims a political role for women as well. In the France of the Hundred Years War, social unrest and outright civil war had threatened the kingdom's survival from within, as gravely as belligerent English claims to French royal succession menaced it from without. Christine contended that women – whether queens, princesses, city-dwellers or servants – could play a special part in restoring peace and harmony, as well as in protecting their homes or fiefdoms when their husbands went off to war, a political objective that persists in the sequel to the *City, The Book of the Three Virtues* (1405–1406) where Christine emphasized the importance of women's education.

Christine de Pizan was born in Venice in 1364/1365, the daughter of a highly regarded judicial astrologer, Tommaso da Pizzano, who, in Christine's infancy, had been invited to serve at the court of King Charles V of France. Her marriage at fifteen to Étienne de Castel, a royal notary of good family, seemed to guarantee her a privileged life in her adopted country, but the death of Étienne and Christine's father a decade later left her to fight for years in the law courts for a surprisingly small inheritance, fending off poverty in the meanwhile. Because Tommaso had unconventionally endowed her with an exceptional education, the young widow was able to support her mother, children and a niece by her pen. After first working as what we might call a paralegal clerk, in around 1394–1399, she established herself as a lyric poet, whose plaintive verses, first written for self-consolation, appealed in their fresh, elegant poignancy to royal patrons accustomed only to male poetic voices. She then attempted weightier topics and genres in verse and prose, engaging her knowledge both of Italian humanist ideas – which stressed the role of classical learning in the improvement of society – and of French philosophy, theology, history and literature. Early on, she earned respect from both her male allies and adversaries by contributing to the famous intellectual and moral debate concerning the *Romance of the Rose*, a much-admired, thirteenth-century encyclopaedic allegory by Guillaume de Lorris

and Jean de Meun on the art of love. That debate (1401–1404) began as a discussion among learned clerics on the moral responsibility of an author in regard to public sensibilities, which Christine reshaped into one centred on the *Rose*'s flagrant, albeit humorous, defamation of women. Throughout her later works (encompassing moralized allegorical histories, military and political instruction manuals on navigating the treacherous climate of the Hundred Years War with England, and religious texts), Christine managed to reconstruct her authorial persona from that of unfortunate, solitary victim to one of privileged marginal: an involved yet incorruptible sibylline figure for whom writing as a woman became an asset, not a liability. This special, gender-based 'immunity' empowered her as she experimented with various poetic and prose genres: first, as a means of consoling herself and earning a living as a widow, and then as a way of improving her society's image of women's capabilities and helping to save France from England's looming dominance. Because as a woman writer, she was not expected to say anything worthy or credible, her keen intelligence and eloquence caught her public off-guard. Her innovative yet learned self-expression earned her authority, attracting powerful male and female patrons alike while often blindsiding potential detractors.

The *City of Ladies*, composed at her career's highly prolific midpoint, deployed her vast literary and moral-historical learning to rewrite women's history and refute western misogynistic tradition; it was, unusually, a text addressed not to men, but to women. The passage under scrutiny here, from Part 1, chapter 7 of the *City of Ladies*, validates her as author and authority within the spiritual structure of the City to be built. Her mentors in this project are the heaven-sent allegorical ladies, Reason, Rectitude and Justice, symbolizing humble Christine's divine election for this task. Her self-introduction is here completed by her reply to the three ladies' pronouncements just prior to the City's actual construction. Christine, as narrator-protagonist, has already explained her reasons for writing this book in chapter 1: primarily her deep dismay and disgust at the overwhelming misogyny exhibited by male authors throughout the ages. Here, she refutes not only the mediocre, forgettable Matheolus – also called 'Matthew the Bigamist' or Matthew of Boulogne, whose satirical diatribe, the *Lamentations* against women (ca. 1295), claims fame today only for having triggered Christine's vision – but also influential authorities such as Aristotle. A touch of theodicy also surfaces: if God is good, how could he have created woman as evil? In chapters 2 through 6, after lamenting her fate as a woman to

God, Christine, as narrator-protagonist, falls asleep and experiences awe-inspiring, comforting visions of three crowned ladies, allegorized virtues, sent by God: first Reason (chs. 2–4), then Rectitude (ch. 5) and finally, Justice (ch. 6). Each explains how she will govern corresponding levels of the City, to be built in ascending order. The first, Lady Reason, provides the citadel's avowedly indestructible foundation in refuting the misogynistic tradition and informs Christine of her selection, above all other mortals, as builder of the City (1.4.1). Rectitude offers the symbolic yardstick of moral truth governing the entire structure, which culminates in the high turrets of Justice, the most exalted virtue.

Christine's entire city rises as both an impregnable fortress against further calumny and as a utopia commemorating and fostering women's achievements and virtue. Beyond this striking metaphor of moral architecture, the drama and sanctity of this encounter between divine and mortal recalls Biblical antecedents. First, it echoes the Old Testament (2 Kings 17: 7) in comparing women constrained by misogyny to the Jews enslaved by Pharaoh, thereby likening Christine to Moses (Exod 1; Deut 34). Just as Moses was chosen to lead the Israelites to freedom, so Christine was chosen to lead women to better destinies.[4] Second, it parallels the language of the Gospels (especially Luke 1: 26–35) in narrating the Visitation and Annunciation of the angel to Mary, a resemblance further underscored by the accompanying miniatures illustrating this scene in manuscripts of the City.[5] This visitation scene is also portentous for Christine's battle with Jean de Meun, as part of her rebuttal of some of the *Romance of the Rose*'s most influential, but saliently misogynous episodes. As Maureen Quilligan argues, she rewrites the dialogue between Reason and the Lover, the naïve male narrator-protagonist of the *Rose*.[6] Jean de Meun's Reason is an intelligent female allegorical mentor-figure for his supposed 'art of love', but Christine found her perversely portrayed: a negative example of a learned woman right down to her vulgar language. Instead, Christine, as pupil in the *City* (ch. 6), engages with Reason in an edifying, ethically progressive discussion about the sad state and possible reform of men's attitudes towards women.

This is but one example of how Christine tried to reform women's image in literature and the sciences, whether by overt teaching or by example, throughout her forty-three works: others appear as our passage continues. Chapter 7 continues the visitation scene. Now Christine, the chosen 'builder', though elated, attempts to answer the ladies without alienating them or the reader by excessive hubris – a risk implicit in her self-depiction as divinely

chosen. Humility is a frequent concern among medieval visionary authors, and Christine dramatizes hers by throwing herself 'fully face down', by 'kissing the ground' near their feet and by spontaneously uttering emotional, self-deprecating words without diminishing her credibility. Her reply begins by interweaving three symbols – light, fountains and loftiness – to represent how her previous state, suffering in darkness, aridity and lowliness in various forms, has now been uplifted by these three ladies whom she now compares to goddesses. She exploits this symbolism, and further emphasizes her humility, by evoking multidimensional oppositions, enhanced by the purely emotional contrast between the 'joy' these ladies' teachings instil within her and her 'gloomy' state before encountering them. Thus, she moves from the celestial level of each – light of heaven, fountains of Paradise and shining thrones – down to their earthly impact by means of botanical imagery: their teachings nourish and refresh her mind, enabling it to bear delicious fruit: presumably this book, which she hopes will entice her readers to think and act on a higher level.

Her imagery quickly shifts from the horticultural back to the architectural, however, when she asks why the ladies chose her. She activates another opposition: that of male versus female capability, enabling her to play with stereotypes so as to demolish them. In questioning her worthiness, she self-identifies with Dante, whose writings she was the first author to introduce into French literature, by invoking an analogous precedent. Just as Dante answered Virgil's invitation to journey with him to the Underworld in Inferno with 'I am not Aeneas, I am not Paul' (2: 31–32), Christine declines comparison with the apostle St. Thomas who, unlike Christine, possessed architectural training as well as God's grace, enabling him to build a city for King Gundafor of India.[7] Quilligan intriguingly connects Christine's shift from a self-doubting Dante to the famously doubting apostle Thomas.[8] Dante's self-doubt arises from his humility before two celebrated precursors – one, Virgil's epic founding hero of Rome, and the other, 'God's Chosen Vessel' – both voyaging beyond mortal realms through divine election. But Christine's self-doubt is even more understandable since, as she states, even were she a 'quick study' in the principles of architecture, her physical weakness due to her gender prohibits such an undertaking. She refuses, however, to deny her intellectual ability to master architecture and building, except in a passing mention of her 'poor brain' for mathematics (similar disavowals would be echoed by many women writers, such as, for example, Anne Bradstreet in the following centuries.

See Chapter 2 of this volume). Yet, that the ladies chose her because of her uncompromising intelligence is reaffirmed when, in the following chapter, they command her to 'take the spade of your intelligence and dig deep' to begin work on the citadel (ch. 8, p. 16). They evidently plan to compensate for her physical weakness by imparting their God-given grace, for which, as our passage concludes, 'nothing is impossible'. Once Christine has cleared the Field of Letters of the old misogynistic ideas with her spade, her City can grow in their place (City, ch. 8, p. 16): now rid of misogynist 'dirt', it is ready for insertion within the cultural canon as 'corrective answer' to the negative male tradition.[9]

Christine's 'correction' remains restrained and prudent: she did not so much advocate female supremacy as equality, a complementary co-working with men for a better society. And to render her teachings more applicable to women of all classes, Christine followed up the *City* with the aforementioned *Book of the Three Virtues* (1405–1406), significantly retitled by her first printer, Vérard (1497), as *The Treasury of the City of Ladies*. For this is a text which presents a woman's honour and virtue as her 'treasury' in real-world dealings, a figure that would remain influential into nineteenth-century feminist thinking. Both works were widely translated in their own time and reproduced in many manuscript copies before print versions appeared.[10] Such success would have pleased Christine, since perhaps the *City*'s greatest contribution is its unprecedentedly accessible content, its new canon, to women of all social ranks, not just the literate aristocrats: a way of improving each class of woman by example.[11] For the less-literate classes unable to read her words, Christine raised aristocratic consciousness of their plight and yet also their potential for redemption, an inspiration to upper-class women especially to look after the less fortunate. Her feminism never sought to deny or usurp male agency, but rather to alert women to their own powers of agency, superior or at least equal to men's as a sort of partnership within all ranks of society and in keeping with God's will. Yet, she never expects them to be solitary, studious 'politicos' like her, probably because she wishes them greater happiness.[12]

Towards the end of her life, in monastic retreat from the violence all around her, Christine, elated at Joan of Arc's exploits, became the first French author to praise them during the heroine's lifetime in her last known work, the *Song of Joan of Arc* (1429). Written to offset English propaganda (which ascribed Joan's Orleans victory to witchcraft), the poem affirms Joan as appointed by God, a parallel to Christine's own divine 'appointment' by the Three Virtues

to build the City of Ladies. This fervently patriotic poem asserts that Joan not only validated France's right to her own king, but also acted as a *City of Ladies* heroine come to life. In creating that figure, Christine extended her tireless exaltation of women and cemented her transformation of them from the damnable temptresses and mindless servants of men that she had inherited from the male authors who preceded and surrounded her, to potentially valiant saviours favoured by God on all levels. This transformation was her proto-feminist achievement.

2

Anne Bradstreet and the Seventeenth-Century Articulation of 'the Female Voice'

Susan Bruce

Thou ill-form'd offspring of my feeble brain,
Who after birth didst by my side remain,
Till snatched from thence by friends, less wise than true,
Who thee abroad, expos'd to publick view,
Made thee in raggs, halting to th' press to trudge,
Where errors were not lessened (all may judg).
At thy return my blushing was not small,
My rambling brat (in print) should mother call,
I cast thee by as one unfit for light,
Thy Visage was so irksome in my sight;
Yet being mine own, at length affection would
Thy blemishes amend, if so I could:
I wash'd thy face, but more defects I saw,
And rubbing off a spot, still made a flaw.
I stretched thy joynts to make thee even feet,
Yet still thou run'st more hobling then is meet;
In better dress to trim thee was my mind,
But nought save home-spun Cloth, i' th' house I find.
In this array 'mongst Vulgars mayst thou roam.
In Criticks hands, beware thou dost not come;
And take thy way where yet thou art not known,
If for thy Father askt, say, thou hadst none:
And for thy Mother, she alas is poor,
Which caus'd her thus to send thee out of door.[1]

Anne Bradstreet's poetic legacy remains contested. Jeannine Hensley, Bradstreet's first modern editor, speculates doubtfully that Bradstreet's legacy

was unambiguously discovered only in John Berryman's 'Homage to Mistress Bradstreet' (xxxvi),[2] and Bradstreet's achievement – remaining in print for more than three centuries – has sometimes been ascribed to the fact that she was the first American published poet (and, quaintly, in this regard, a woman), rather than to her originality or aesthetic value. If, in other words, posterity has looked kindly on Bradstreet in the form of continuous republication of her work, critics have seemed sometimes to share Bradstreet's own assessment of the quality of her poetry. They have also been divided on the implications of her poetry for a history of gender, but as I argue below, understanding Bradstreet's place in this history entails some exploration of what it meant to speak 'as a woman' in the early modern period and of the question of what 'counts' as 'feminist' discourse.

'The Author to her Book' appeared in the second edition of Bradstreet's *The Tenth Muse*. Her poems, so the story goes, were 'snatch'd by friends less wise than true' – that is, secretly taken in manuscript to Old England from New by her brother-in-law, John Woodbridge, in 1650, and published without Bradstreet's knowledge, being returned to her, to her 'blushing' embarrassment, in book form. The first edition of *The Tenth Muse* consisted mainly of Bradstreet's public, political verse. Her much shorter, private, personal poems, whose content is the homely and emotional (rather than the classical, historical material of her longer works,) only saw print in posthumous editions of *The Tenth Muse*. Well might Bradstreet have warned her literary 'child' to beware the 'Criticks' hands'. Adrienne Rich, writing in 1967 in a foreword to Hensley's edition, shared Berryman's view of the 'public' poetry (this 'bald/ abstract didactic rime', as Berryman put it), criticizing its 'technical amateurishness', its failure to respond to the New England landscapes into which Bradstreet, as a young woman of about eighteen, had arrived from England in 1630, and its 'impersonality'. For Rich, these poems were 'long, rather listless pieces', composed in a nostalgic attempt to maintain intellectual contact with the values of the world Bradstreet had left behind; for her, what is valuable in Bradstreet is the domestic verse, written on such occasions as a husband's absence, a house fire, the death of a child or fears about impending childbirth (xiv–xv).

Rich was the most famous proponent of a critical story told about Bradstreet in the 1960s and 1970s, which mapped onto her work a kind of teleology, maintaining that, through extensive poetic practice with less 'successful' and less 'personal' poetry, Bradstreet eventually found her voice – an authentic, woman's voice – in the domestic poems. This position was challenged in 1988

by Timothy Sweet, who maintained that it is in the earlier elegies that we see a substantial interrogation of gender, not in the domestic poems at all, which for Sweet, lodge no challenges to dominant gender-based power relations, merely reproducing the gendered hierarchies which marked early modern domestic space. Reversing what had until then been the traditional understanding of Bradstreet and gender, Sweet argues that instead of a progression through largely undistinguished poetry to the eventual accession of a personal voice, the arc of Bradstreet's career, from a feminist point of view, ends in failure: in her 'surrender or retreat into hostile terrain'.[3] To that claim, and to Bradstreet's domestic poetry, we will return later; here, however, it is important to note that Sweet's intervention ushered in a series of interpretations of the political poems that read them as far more attuned to questions of gender than Rich had allowed. For a woman, the act of publishing was itself a gendered act, an intrusion into a male sphere: to publish material such as *The Four Monarchies* (one of Bradstreet's quaternions, poems in four parts) or the *Dialogue between Old England and New* (her most extended consideration of the significance of a proto-American 'New World') was to publish on subjects about which few men believed a woman could have anything to say. These poems may appear arcane to many modern readers, but Susan Wiseman has shown that in Bradstreet's case, women's exclusion from the political arena produces a 'figurative, oblique, complex politics' rather than no politics at all.[4] Catherine Grey, similarly, claims that educated, literate women in the seventeenth century had a complex relation to the public sphere,[5] and both Wiseman and Grey have argued that the distinction made today between public and private, following a Habermasian account of the public sphere, maps uneasily onto the early modern period, where divisions between public and private were far more permeable than ours are today.

Nevertheless, with one notable exception, discussed below, the more obvious engagement with issues regarding women appears in Bradstreet's private, not her public, poetry. The critical argument over the nature of the gender politics in the domestic poetry raises questions germane not just to Bradstreet, but to the nature of feminism itself: what 'should' a feminist writer 'say', and what observations would deprive her of that label? There are unavoidable anachronisms in maintaining that anyone writing some 200 years before the word 'feminism' was coined would have self-defined in anything even approximating what we now understand as 'feminist'. Bradstreet certainly would not have done so and, as a good Puritan woman, subscribed to beliefs about order and propriety very different from

those that ostensibly obtain in today's western world. As we have seen, the voice that Bradstreet adopts is frequently a highly self-deprecating one: her poetry a 'rambling brat', with 'irksome' 'visage' and 'defects' and 'blemishes' which are the products of a 'feeble brain' (the latter a phrase that invokes the debates about whether women have access to reason which we see played out elsewhere in this collection by authors from Christine de Pisan to Mary Wollstonecraft). Many might agree with Sweet that a voice which constructs the female subject as 'defective' in its capacities is hardly a proto-feminist one, and that the way Bradstreet positions herself frequently seems to embrace, not challenge, the status prescribed for women by the patriarchal society of which she was a part. Thus, for instance, in 'To Her Most Honoured Father Thomas Dudley Esq.' she claims that she has neither 'strength nor skill' to produce poetry as excellent as her father's (p. 13, ll.9–10); that her verse, unlike his, is 'penned' by 'humble hand' (l.18); her 'ragged lines' (l.43) are 'poor' (l.31). Just as she models an appropriate modesty as poet, so as a daughter she emphasizes here and in 'To Her Father with Some Verses' (p. 252) the 'duty' underpinning the father–daughter relationship: her worth, if she has any, she owes her father (l.2); her 'bond' to him 'in force' (l.9). Bradstreet appears to epitomize the dutiful daughter; elsewhere, she apparently unambiguously embraces patriarchal paradigms of dutiful wife and loving mother. In her 'Epitaph on My Dear and Ever-Honoured Mother Mrs Dorothy Dudley', she describes her mother as 'worthy matron of unspotted life,/ A loving mother and obedient wife'; who ruled her servants 'wisely awful, but yet kind'; was 'religious in all her words and ways' and 'true instructor of her family' (p. 219). Some of the homilies in her *Meditations Divine and Moral* adopt a straightforwardly patriarchal model of authority, wherein familial and theological hierarchies shore each other up as 'a wise father will not lay a burden on a child … which he knows is enough for one of twice of his strength', she observes, for instance, 'much less will our Heavenly Father … lay such afflictions upon his weak children … but according to the strength he will proportion the load' (p. 304).

This is hardly evidence of a proto-feminist moment. And yet, if much of Bradstreet's expressed sentiment appears uncritically to reproduce the hierarchies of her age, there are many instances that sit less easily with the portrait of a woman content to embrace her God-given inferiority to men. The most explicit of these appears in her elegy to Queen Elizabeth, the only poem where Bradstreet addresses patriarchal prescriptions directly,

and perhaps the only unambiguously 'feminist' moment in all Bradstreet's writings, although as we will later see, another kind of female solidarity may be communicated in her domestic verse. When she addresses patriarchal prescriptions directly, however, her poetic subject enables her to borrow an authority and voice quite different from those she normally adopts, and thence to articulate explicitly a perspective she elsewhere communicates only implicitly. That (borrowed?) authority licenses an energetic rebellion against the misogyny of her age. The poem's 'proem' (preamble) rehearses, briefly, the self-deprecatory avowal of insufficiency with which we are familiar ('mongst hundred hecatombs of roaring verse/ Mine bleating stands before thy royal hearse') (p. 209). Whatever she says in her 'proem' about her 'bleating' verse, however, it is clear that once she gets into her stride, she believes she has something worth saying. For Bradstreet, Elizabeth's glory derives from many things: her foreign victories (l.48), invincible ships (l.49) and wealth creation (l.47). Elizabeth is the greatest of queens: Bradstreet compares her to Cleopatra and Zenobya, deftly establishing a sense of many great queens, not just one. But most of all, Elizabeth is the greatest of monarchs, the vast majority of whom have been men.

Bradstreet utilizes the figure of Elizabeth as a riposte to all men who disparage women. All that has been written about Elizabeth before is lacking: the eminent histories of John Speed and William Camden cannot contain the glories of 'Eliza's' reign; even Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (after Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the most canonical of Renaissance poems, and in this respect the most 'roaring' of all 'roaring' verse) fails to match this matchless woman. Thus, Bradstreet pits her own 'bleating' verse against pre-eminent literary and historical writers; she extends this challenge first to 'doctors' (i.e. scholars: Elizabeth is herself 'argument enough to make [them] mute' (l.40)) and then to all men. 'Now say, have women worth? or have they none?' Bradstreet asks; 'or had they some, but with our Queen is't gone?' Addressing all men, from the point of view of, implicitly, all women, Bradstreet not only berates them for their denial to women of the capacity for reason, but reconceptualizes that misogyny into an implicit crime against the state: 'Nay masculines, you have thus taxed us long', she says, 'But she, though dead, will vindicate our wrong./ Let such as say our sex is void of reason/Know 'tis a slander now, but once was treason' (ll.102–05).

Bradstreet concludes this poem with regret that Elizabeth is no longer ('but happy England, which had such a queen,/ Yea happy, happy, had those days still been' (ll.106–07)) and a promise that 'Eliza' will one day be reborn,

phoenix-like, to rule Albion once again. Some have therefore seen this elegy as a nostalgic poem, harking back to a Golden Age. But nostalgia is sentimental and regressive, whereas this poem focuses as much on the present and future as the past. Its conviction that Elizabeth is herself an argument against the 'wrong' done to women by 'masculines' transcends the sentimentality of nostalgia. And importantly, its sense that Elizabeth exemplifies female capability collapses the distance expected between speaking subject and monarch: Eliza (the diminutive is important for the familiar connection it suggests between speaker and subject) is for Bradstreet one of 'us'. This sense of a collective, a kind of sorority, both between all women and between poet and elegized monarch, is not nostalgic, but an unexpected and radical proto-feminist moment. 'If then new things their old forms shall retain/ Eliza shall rule Albion once again' (ll.114–15), Bradstreet concludes. She is explicit in yearning for a time when denying women reason will again be counted treason; the larger, utopian desire of her poem may be the wish for a world which can embrace again the possibility of female rule, the return of *an* Eliza, not necessarily *the* Eliza (which is something different from a nostalgic wish for the return of Elizabeth herself).

Such overtly proto-feminist lines in the domestic poetry are, however, rare. What, then, should we answer to Sweet's accusation that in that verse, Bradstreet 'surrenders' to patriarchal terrain? One could remark that Bradstreet's conviction that women should play a role in public as well as private spheres appears not just in the public poetry, but in the domestic too: her epitaph on her mother lists, among her mother's conventional virtues, 'the public meetings [that she] *ever* did frequent' (p. 218, l.16, italics mine). One could observe that in her preamble to her extraordinarily frank letter 'To my dear children', she takes it as read that her children will want to know what was in their 'living mother's mind', a rare conviction in the period (p. 262); or that in her 'Meditations' maternal models balance paternal ones, as in Meditation 39:

> a prudent mother will not cloth her little child with a long and cumbersome garment; she easily forsees what events it is likely to produce … falls and bruises, or … worse. Much more will … God proportion his dispensations according to the stature … of the person He bestows them on.
>
> (p. 304)

Or one could further explore Rich's contention that Bradstreet's domestic poetry has survived because, in the extraordinarily compassionate intimacy of her domestic verse, she communicates what must have been the perennial

experience for a large proportion of early modern women. Take, for instance, 'On My Dear Grandchild Simon Bradstreet, Who Died on 16 November, 1669, Being but a Month, and One Day Old':

> No sooner came, but gone, and fall'n asleep.
> Acquaintance short, yet parting caused us weep;
> Three flowers, two scarcely blown, the last i' th' bud,
> Cropt by th' Almighty's hand; yet is He good.
> With dreadful awe before Him let's be mute,
> Such was His will, but why, let's not dispute,
> With humble hearts and mouths put in the dust,
> Let's say He's merciful as well as just.
> He will return and make up all our losses,
> And smile again after our bitter crosses
> Go pretty babe, go rest with sisters twain;
> Among the blest in endless joys remain.
>
> (p. 259)

Bradstreet's wrenching, aching sense of the struggle it takes to reconcile unbearable loss with orthodox belief is compelling: whether that loss is finally reconciled in the poem with a conviction of God's goodness is an open question, but that the baby's death and the grief of its parents is fundamentally important is not. Can communication of such experience be counted 'feminist'? If 'feminist' is a descriptor confined to the articulation of overt resistance to patriarchy, it cannot. But Bradstreet articulates so movingly the reality of early modern women's affection for their kin, both kin who are 'taken' and those who are left behind, to and for whom these poems are directed and intended to afford consolation, even if that consolation is in acknowledgement of the reality of grief as much as in certainty of God's redemptive goodness, and this, surely, is of enduring worth. It offers real evidence against the now-outdated claim that, child mortality being what it was, early modern mothers did not love their children as today's parents do; it is hard to imagine that those, like Lawrence Stone, who first articulated this argument, could have done so given the desperate sadness of some of these poems.[6] Michael Breitweiser rightly observes that these poems are 'a public … legitimation of the right and necessity of mourning' which escapes the sententiousness of Puritan orthodoxy.[7] And in communicating so compellingly the emotional cost of an experience so fundamental to early modern women's lives, Bradstreet legitimates, both for them and for subsequent readers, not merely the reality, but the value, of that

experience and the emotions consequent on it. And this she achieves in many poems: her fears that she herself may die in childbirth are the subject of 'Before the Birth of One of Her Children'; 'To the Memory of My Dear Daughter-in-Law, Mrs. Mercy Bradstreet, Who Deceased' elegizes her daughter-in-law, who did (aged 28).

Bradstreet's insistent conviction that mourning has intrinsic, ineluctable worth is a quiet kind of feminism. She imbues the domestic – her 'homespun cloth' – with a value that is profound, writing about aspects of early modern women's experience in ways that quietly elicit the sense of a network of affective relations between women and their kin, both male and female, that has stood the test of time because she knows, as do we, that that experience matters. She articulates the value of maternal affection, and of the communication to others of domestic emotion. Moreover, her apologies for her voice and her denigration of the value of her own poetry are not merely dutiful articulations of the prejudices of her own time. '*Dubitatio*' – a rhetorical trope which expresses a feigned helplessness – would have been a tool with which Bradstreet, trained in classical rhetoric, would have been familiar: in her very espousal of the uncertain, halting voice in which patriarchy insists she must speak, she paradoxically finds a way of giving herself a voice. That disavowal of authority is a familiar trope for women authors of her day, and for many years afterwards: indeed, to this day we meet prescriptions that women should speak more hesitantly and quietly than men, should avoid too much directness and should model instead an appropriately 'female' uncertainty.[8] In the very act of denying her capabilities, however, Bradstreet ends up by affirming them. Her purported lament at the exposure to public view of her 'hobbling' child is undermined by the facts that her friends, if unwise, are also 'true' and by the delighted affection that so clearly underlies the poem with which we began. Like Elizabeth I, who also (Bradstreet reminds us,) utilized at Tilbury a rhetoric of insufficiency to afford her a more powerful voice (the phrase most remembered from this, Elizabeth's most famous speech is 'I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a King')[9] Bradstreet sometimes paraded the deficiency of her gender. But, she did so, paradoxically, all the better to be heard.

3

Mary Astell's Critique of Marriage Practices

Patricia Springborg

He who has Sovereign Power does not value the Provocations of a Rebellious Subject, but knows how to subdue him with ease, and will make himself obey'd; but Patience and Submission are the only Comforts that are left to a poor People, who groan under Tyranny, unless they are Strong enough to break the Yoke, to Depose and Abdicate, which I doubt wou'd not be allow'd of here. For whatever may be said against Passive-Obedience in another case, I suppose there's no Man but likes it very well in this; how much soever Arbitrary Power may be dislik'd on a Throne, not Milton himself wou'd cry up Liberty to poor Female Slaves, or plead for the Lawfulness of Resisting a Private Tyranny…. For if Arbitrary Power is evil in itself, and an improper Method of Governing Rational and Free Agents it ought not to be Practis'd any where; Nor is it less, but rather more mischievous in Families than in Kingdoms, by how much 100000 Tyrants are worse than one. What tho' a Husband can't deprive a Wife of Life without being responsible to the Law, he may however do what is much more grievous to a generous Mind, render Life miserable, for which she has no Redress…. If all Men are born free, how is it that all Women are born slaves? as they must be if the being subjected to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, arbitrary Will of Men, be the perfect Condition of Slavery? and if the Essence of Freedom consists, as our Masters say it does, in having a standing Rule to live by? And why is Slavery so much condemn'd and strove against in one Case, and so highly applauded and held so necessary and so sacred in another?[1]

Mary Astell's reputation in the twenty-first century largely rests on her famous question: '*If all Men are born free*, how is it that all Women are born slaves?', and she is hailed as a supporter of freedom from domination and of women's rights. In the first edition of *Reflections upon Marriage* (1700), which ran to five editions in her lifetime, Astell had made an argument for female slavery and male despotism that is deliberately ironic, later amplified

in the famous 1706 Preface. As a Tory pamphleteer, committed Christian and published theologian, it seems on the face of it odd that Astell should stake out such radical ground. And on closer examination, it is clear that Astell, who never went as far as Judith Drake[2] (whose work was credited to her), in comparing women with the 'slaves of our new colonies', in fact had quite a conservative view of the social order, based on hierarchy, piety and duty. Yet, she produced one of the most scathing commentaries on marriage and divorce in her day.

Reflections upon Marriage had been occasioned by the scandalous divorce of the Duchess of Mazarin but was not intended to sanction divorce. Astell as a High Church Tory defended the customary social order, however prejudicial to women. She was no defender of natural right any more than she was a defender of freedom of belief or of the press. Those who claim freedom of belief as a 'natural right' are subversive of the entire social order, she argued. Human beings were born into a tissue of networks and obligations; only the blind could pretend otherwise. Arguments for natural right were but thinly disguised arguments for might over right, which could only favour men as the stronger. Once married, she notes ironically, women were forced to recognize the superiority of the male sex, if only because it was the justification of their own servitude:

> Men are possess'd of all Places of Power, Trust and Profit, they make Laws and exercise the Magistracy, not only the sharpest Sword, but even all the Swords and Blunderbusses are theirs, which by the strongest Logic in the World, gives them the best Title to everything they … claim as their Prerogative; who shall contend with them? Immemorial Prescription is on their side in these parts of the World, Antient Tradition and Modern Usage! (xxii/29)

Several things are remarkable about *Reflections upon Marriage*. One is that it joins a number of works that respond to a genre of misogynous publications that flourished with the growing freedom of the press. Another is that it responds to certain trends in courtship and marriage that accompanied the gentrification that took place in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Britain with the increasing development of commercial society.[3] Astell does not go so far as Drake, who painted elaborate caricatures of the dandy and the fop, but she names them and has plenty to say about the forms of entrapment and insincerity practised by urbane suitors courting eligible women, with no intention whatever of honouring the expectations they raise in their hopeful prey. So, after 'the Glitter and Pomp of a Wedding … she whose Expectation has been rais'd by Court-ship, by all the fine things that her Lover, her Governess

and Domestic Flatters say, will find a terrible disappointment when the hurry is over, and when she comes calmly to consider her Condition, and views it no more under a false Appearance, but as it truly is' (54/60). For women also collude in their own subjection: 'Tho' we live like Brutes, we wou'd have Incense offer'd us that is only due to Heaven it self, wou'd have an absolute and blind Obedience paid us by all over whom we pretend Authority. We were not made to Idolize one another, yet the whole strain of Courtship is little less than rank Idolatry' (54/61).

Astell is aware that these elaborate courtship practices are among the hazards of affluence to which the rising bourgeoisie, in this case the gentry, is prone, observing of the petty domestic tyrant: 'if he has Prosperity enough to keep him from considering, and to furnish him with a train of Flatterers and obsequious Admirers; and Learning and Sense enough to make him a Fop in Perfection; for a Man can never be a complete Coxcomb, unless he has a considerable share of these to value himself upon; what can the poor Woman do?' (28/47). The development of market society in this period had increased the disposable income of the commercial classes, with both positive and negative consequences. It saw the rise in investment on the burgeoning stock market, in banking and in property; the rise of party politics, including politicking and caballing in coffee houses; but also the emergence of more ephemeral pastimes like horse-racing, gambling and fashion in all its forms. That these economic changes should be accompanied by changes in courtship and marriage practices, which have always included an element of conspicuous display, should not surprise us. And, while we usually credit Britain under the Hanoverians with these developments, later to be meticulously detailed in the novels of Jane Austen and George Eliot, Astell and Drake furnish evidence that these trends were well under way in the reign of Queen Anne. They lie behind Astell's mocking portrait of the modern gentleman, posturing, politicking, ruling and judging, but also drinking and gambling:

> All famous Arts have their Original from Men, even from the Invention of Guns to the Mystery of good Eating. And to shew that nothing is beneath their Care, any more than above their Reach, they have brought *Gaming* to an Art and Science, and a more Profitable and Honourable one too, than any of those that us'd to be call'd *Liberal*! Indeed what is it they can't perform, when they attempt it? The Strength of their Brains shall be every whit as Conspicuous at their Cups, as in a Senate-House, and when they please they can make it pass for as sure a Mark of Wisdom, to drink deep as to Reason profoundly; a greater

> proof of Courage and consequently of Understanding, to dare the Vengeance of Heaven it self, than to stand the Raillery of some of the worst of their fellow Creatures. (89/78)

The dynastic crisis of 1688, like the civil war that preceded it, seemed to create the space in which women could insert themselves, before peace settled them back down in their domestic roles. Astell, although the daughter of a journeyman from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, had joined a circle of like-minded aristocratic High Church Tory women, who included her patrons, Lady Catherine Jones, daughter of the Earl of Ranelagh, Paymaster-General of the Navy, to whom Astell's *Letters Concerning the Love of God* (1695) and her magnum opus *The Christian Religion as Profess'd by a Daughter of the Church* (1705) are dedicated; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to whose *Embassy Letters: The Travels of an English Lady in Europe, Asia and Africa (1724, 1725)*, Astell added a preface (see Chapter 4 of this volume); Lady Anne Coventry and Lady Elizabeth Hastings, as well as Elzabeth Elstob, the Anglo-Saxon scholar, and Princess Anne. It was the future queen to whom Astell had previously appealed with her *Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694), dedicated to Princess Anne, who is reported to have encouraged her project for a women's Platonic academy. It was not the misogynist mockery to which Astell was exposed for her *Project* that killed it, but rather the charge of Bishop Burnet that it smacked too much of an Anglican nunnery. But of mockery there was plenty. Astell was lampooned by the greatest satirists of her day, Jonathan Swift, Richard Steele as well as Daniel Defoe, Astell's nemesis in *A Fair Way with the Dissenters and Their Patrons* (1704), responding to Defoe's pamphlet of that year, *More Short-Ways with the Dissenters*. Defoe had plagiarized her in his proposal for 'An Academy for Women' in his *Essay on Projects* (1697) while Bishop Berkeley thought her ideas in the *Proposal* worth plagiarizing to the extent of some 100 pages in the *Ladies Library*, which Steele edited, and Steele added insult to injury by making Astell the butt of satire in *Tatler* nos. 32 and 63. As the promoter of women's causes, and particularly women's education, Astell is said to have been the model for Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748), and as late as 1847, Lilia, heroine of Alfred Lord Tennyson's *The Princess*, dreams of a women's college cut off from male society. Astell's female academy was later famously lampooned in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Princess Ida* (1887), but this time at one remove, through Tennyson. Over its gates, the inscription would read, 'Let no man enter on pain of death', a deliberately truncated version of the famous inscription that adorned the doors of Plato's Academy, 'Let No Man Enter Here Unless He Study Geometry'.

If Astell's broad interests included theology and social criticism, she was also a highly successful political pamphleteer. The rise of Whig political ideas, reflecting the emerging dominance of the bourgeois class and the compartmentalization of values in the division between public and private life that accompanied increasing economic development, produced an intensification of the division of labour and an increasing gap between the genders. In *Reflections upon Marriage*, Astell addresses the political consequences, railing against the hypocrisy of Whiggish values that hold the public to standards of freedom and democracy which would never be tolerated in the private sphere. And here, she addresses specific persons: John Milton, sublime poet, also a radical democrat and the author of a notorious work on divorce and the Earl of Shaftesbury, to whom she dedicates a later work, *Bart'lemy Fair* (1709), along with his influential secretary, John Locke (1632–1704). The famous question of the *Reflection*s, '*If all Men are born free*, how is it that all Women are born slaves?' – italicized to indicate quotation – makes direct reference to Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*. His *First Treatise* had set out to rebut Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, founded, Locke claims, on the principles '*That all Government is absolute Monarchy*' and '*That no Man is Born free*'. It was to the refutation of patriarchalism that Locke's *First* and *Second Treatises* were dedicated. Astell seems to be quoting from two different sections of Locke's *Second Treatise*. The first is Book 2, §22: 'A Liberty to follow my own Will in all things, where the Rule prescribes not; and not to be subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, Arbitrary Will of another Man.'[4] The second is Book 2, §149, the same passage that Astell in *The Christian Religion* quotes from the *Two Treatises* with acknowledgement.[5]

> For no Man, or Society of Men, having a Power to deliver up their *Preservation*, or consequently the means of it, to the Absolute Will and arbitrary Dominion of another; whenever any one shall go about to bring them into such a Slavish Condition, they will always have a right to preserve what they have not a Power to part with …. (Locke, 1988, p. 367)

Astell's most powerful argument was the Platonist one, that if one accepts the rule of the stronger on the grounds that might is right, then ethical arguments are out the window and the game is over. She is particularly scathing of the hypocrisy of those who preach democracy in the public sphere but are happy to allow tyranny in the family, targeting John Milton by name. Milton (1608–1674), anti-Royalist poet and pamphleteer, had in

1641 produced three pamphlets vehemently attacking the Church. In 1643, he married a seventeen-year-old girl, a marriage that lasted only a month, leading Milton to write on the need for divorce, which further angered the clergy. His *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), defending the right of the people to judge their rulers, appeared soon after the King's death, prompting the newly formed Council of State to invite Milton to become their Latin secretary. Pamphlets written by Milton in this period show that he favoured republicanism against monarchy, complete separation between Church and state, and the permanent rule of Cromwell's Chiefs of the Army and the Council. Astell had multiple reasons then for attacking Milton, whom she includes among 'those Mercenary Scriblers whom all sober men condemn',[6] and whose attack on Charles I, 'the martyr King', deeply offended her. Milton, democrat and defender of divorce on the grounds of freedom for men, declared, 'in vain does he prattle about liberty in assembly and market-place who at home endures the slavery most unworthy of man, slavery to an inferior'.[7] Astell turned against him his own argument of the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, that freedom is a God-given right. No one, Milton maintained, 'can be so stupid to deny that all men naturally were borne free, being the image and resemblance of God himself'.[8] Just so, she argued, and it holds equally for women. Realizing the seditious force of her arguments even in the first drafting of *Reflections*, Astell concludes, 'perhaps I've said more than most Men will thank me for, I cannot help it, for how much soever I may be their Friend and humble Servant, I am more a Friend to Truth', going on to insist that she does men 'more Honour than to suppose their lawful Prerogatives need any mean Arts to support them':

> If they have Usurpt, I love Justice too much to wish … continuance to Usurpations, which tho' submitted to out of Prudence, and for Quietness sake, yet leave every Body free to regain their lawful Right whenever they have Power and Opportunity. I don't say that Tyranny *ought*, but we find in *Fact*, that it provokes the Oppress'd to throw off even a Lawful Yoke that sits too heavy: And if he who is freely Elected, after all his fair Promises and the fine Hopes he rais'd, proves a Tyrant, the consideration that he was one's own Choice, will not render more Submissive and Patient, but I fear more Refractory. (78–79)

The law of God does not rule on earth. But were it to, it would require consistency in both public and private domains. In the paean to Queen Anne that concludes the preface, Astell hails a future heaven on earth: 'those Halcyon, or if you will *Millennium* Days, in which the Wolf and the Lamb

[i.e., men and women] shall feed together, and a Tyrannous Domination which Nature never meant, shall no longer render useless if not hurtful, the Industry and Understandings of half Mankind!' (31).

What is perhaps most remarkable about Astell's *Reflections* is the degree to which she self-consciously responds to the political polarization brought about by the rising bourgeoisie and reflected in the developing party system. Like other contemporary female pamphleteers, Astell was staunchly Tory and High Church, finding the support of the Earl of Shaftesbury and Locke for the Dutch king William seditious to the point of treason, on the grounds that in a land in which the sovereign was also head of the established church, dynastic change could also be treated as heretical! To some extent the critique by these women of Whiggism and freedom of opinion as seditious was a failure of imagination in a Tory age. But, the same could not be said of Astell's social criticism, and particularly her critique of marriage customs, foundational in any society, a critique which was economically grounded, thoroughgoing and generalized to the political level.

4

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Women's Coffee House

Vicki A. Spencer

I was in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress… there were two hundred women, and yet none of those disdainful smiles or satirical whispers that never fail in our assemblies when anybody appears that is not dressed exactly in fashion.… [They] all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed. Yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them. They walked and moved with the same majestic grace which Milton describes of our general mother. There were many amongst them as exactly proportioned as ever any goddess was drawn by the pencil of Guido or Titian, and most of their skins shiningly white, only adorned by their beautiful hair divided into many tresses,… perfectly representing the figures of the Graces.… To tell you the truth, I had wickedness enough to wish secretly that Mr Gervase could have been there invisible. I fancy it would have very much improved his art to see so many fine women naked, in different postures, some in conversation, some working, others drinking coffee or sherbet… In short, 'tis the women's coffee house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented etc.… The lady that seemed the most considerable amongst them entreated me to sit by her and would fain have unaddressed me for the bath. I excused myself with some difficulty, they being however all so earnest in persuading me, I was a last forced to open my shirt, and show them my stays, which satisfied them very well, for I saw they believed I was so locked up in that machine, that it was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband.[1]

On 2 August 1716, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762) set off from London to the Ottoman Empire with her husband, Edward Montagu, who had been appointed British ambassador to the Turkish court. Already well known

among the London literati for her poetry, during her travels she wrote a series of letters based on her daily journal that she later edited into a linear account of her experiences. The preface to the text, written by Mary Astell (see Chapter 3 in this volume), suggests Montagu intended publication following her death,[2] and in 1763, it first appeared in the *London Chronicle*. This extract comes from the letter she wrote in Adrianople to an unidentified Lady about her visit to the Turkish baths in the Bulgarian city of Sofia. Although a European country, Bulgaria was colonized by the Ottoman Empire, and it is evident from Montagu's description of the bath house preceding this extract that she had entered an entirely different cultural landscape.

Here I explore the implications contained in Montagu's depiction for the gendered binary between the public and private. In my reading, the letter's most insightful feminist moment lies in her challenge to the dominant assumption that gender exclusivity renders the bath house a privatized site exemplifying female oppression in the Ottoman Empire; instead, she depicts it as an important public site of sociability. Her comparison with the male-dominated English coffee house cleverly disrupts the logic entailed in seeing the distinction between segregated male and female spheres as an opposition between the public and private, social and non-social, and freedom and confinement. Montagu creates an alternative image of the bath house as a place of civility and conversation where public opinion is formed, and of the women within it as agents in possession of freedoms strikingly unavailable to her as an early eighteenth-century, British, aristocratic woman.

To re-conceptualize the Ottoman bath house as a site of sociability, Montagu must first desexualize this exclusive female space that male travel writers had depicted as a hot house of rampant sexual promiscuity. The extract shows her employing a number of literary and artistic allusions to reinforce her claim that the women's naked state is absent any sexually suggestive actions. She equates their graceful movements with the innocence and majesty of the divine beauty attributed to Eve's nakedness in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.[3] Next, she visually transports the scene with her reference to the Italian painters Guido Reni and Titian. The references to goddesses and the women's 'shiningly white' skin suggest a familiarity with Titian's mythological series on Diana, goddess of the hunt and moon, or his portraits of Venus, goddess of love and beauty. Titian's idealized goddesses have skin that takes on the appearance of porcelain. They therefore possess an ethereal quality, and yet their voluptuous figures, generous buttocks and rounded stomachs ground them in the physicality of this world. The profane and divine coexist in

Titian's work. His mythological paintings are typically seen to possess an erotic dimension, but Montagu subverts any eroticism with the further invocation of a divine aesthetic in her final reference to 'the figures of the Graces'. These minor Greek and Roman divinities were personifications of beauty, joy and flowering. In sculptural and pictorial forms, they were represented as three naked figures, but their lack of clothing did not diminish the purity of the love and harmony they represented. In Montagu's bath scene, nudity, decorum and civility act in concert.

A potentially more salacious dimension enters the scene when Montagu confesses her secret desire for the artist, Charles Jervas,[4] to have been there in invisible form. The 'wickedness' (59) of this thought, as she candidly describes it, exists at several levels. The impropriety of the idea of a man viewing so many naked women based on eighteenth-century British standards of modesty is to be expected. It was even more wicked from the perspective of Turkish morality since the artist, if not invisible, would have been put to death (60). The presence of an invisible man would also have violated the women's space, a point emphasized by critics who argue that the scene is resexualized by Montagu's insertion of the male gaze that reduces the women to an erotic object.[5]

This voyeuristic male gaze was later realized in artistic form in Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres's neoclassical painting, *Le Bain Turc* (1862). The keyhole he used to frame his depiction of naked women in various sensual poses with one woman in the foreground holding another's breast was based on notes he took fifty years previously from Montagu's letter. His painting style recalls Titian's, but Ingres replaces the powerful mythological goddesses of Titian's paintings with an exotic eroticism characteristic of nineteenth-century Orientalism. A connection with Montagu's allusion to the invisible artist is undeniable in Ingres's keyhole effect. However, the sexually overt gestures and poses in Ingres's bath house provide a vivid contrast to Montagu's letter. Ingres does not re-present Montagu's images as if he were there, invisible, to capture her bath scene through a camera lens; rather, he reinterprets them so that his painting is the product of his own erotic imagination and invention.

The satirical intention of her wicked thought is, moreover, revealed in the next sentence when Montagu surmizes that the sight of the naked female form in such a variety of poses with the women conversing, taking refreshments, working and braiding hair would have significantly enhanced Jervas's artistic ability. As Jervas had painted her as a shepherdess in 1710, the slight on his ability is mockingly playful. Given that the artist is invisible and the women in the bath house entirely unaware of her secret thought, he possesses no power

to turn the women into passive objects. Instead, Montagu takes authorial control of Jervas's representation. To be sure, in recounting her experience, she constructs a depiction of the women over which they have no control. However, most significant for Montagu's representation of the women is that immediately after her criticism of Jervas's skill, she compares the bath house with the English coffee house.

Since women's coffee houses did not exist, the reference deliberately undercuts any erotic association with the women's nudity and elevates the bath house's status to that of a well-known male institution. Coffee houses originated in the Ottoman Empire and first appeared in London in 1652. By the time Montagu departed for her journey, as many as 500 to 600 existed in London and Westminster. Women were not formally barred, nor entirely absent from them, with the coffee-woman typically the manager of daily operations and sometimes the owner. On occasion, a woman might enter as a customer to engage in specific business; some evidence exists that certain aristocratic women did attend, but only rarely. As Astell confirms in her preface, they were not a 'public place' that 'virtuous women', who wanted to be regarded well, would visit. Where they were included, it was not as equals. The sociability of the coffee houses, based on drinking coffee, reading newspapers and conversing about politics was confined by convention to men.[6]

Jürgen Habermas and other sociologists associate the English coffee house with the rise of a new public sphere that created the foundations for democratic participation. Hierarchies, at least between male customers, were set aside as men came together from different social positions to debate as equals. Though recent scholars argue that this image of a 'civil' society is at best a polite fiction, the relevant point to take from Habermas's analysis is the intermingling of the public and private in this new realm. Despite its private, intimate nature, the coffee house was well recognized as an arena for public discourse about politics. Some eighteenth-century coffee houses had direct links to parliament through the formation of lobby groups, as they were meeting places for people with common work interests. Montagu's 'coffee house' did not possess this direct connection to formal political institutions. However, this link was not necessary for the coffee houses to act as a significant site of sociability. In the late seventeenth century, when the English parliament had not sat for years, coffee houses in London acted as the main arenas in which the city's public opinion was aired and formed.[7]

Likewise, in the bath house, reputations could be made or broken and 'scandal invented'. By employing the comparison with the male-dominated

coffee house rather than the English ladies' tea-table, Montagu suggests the bath house is a place for public discourse rather than the private, petty gossip typically associated with the latter. Yet this public discourse/private gossip divide is largely an artificial contrivance. The Ottoman women possess the power to form public opinion by inventing scandal and making reputations, as was also known to occur in the men's coffee houses. In the eighteenth century, the image of men inventing scandal and gossiping maliciously contended with the image of the polite, urbane coffee house constructed by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele in the periodical, *The Spectator*.[8] Montagu emphasizes the power of the Ottoman women, like that of the men in English coffee houses, to affect the wider public sphere with her reference to scandal. However, her depiction of women sharing news in an environment of civility, conversation and sociability strongly parallels *The Spectator*'s coffee house.

In both cases, the images are idealized constructions, but their function as a significant meeting place for each gender was real. Though a private intimate space only women could attend, Montagu suggests the bath house, like the English coffee house, was an important institution in the public realm. Gender segregation did not diminish its significance as a public place or the value of the activities of the women within it any more than was the case for the men in an English coffee house. For Montagu, they are equally significant sites of sociability.

The behaviour of the bath house women emulating the civility of *The Spectator*'s coffee house is also strengthened with the contrasting negative image of gossip in Montagu's reference to European women's 'disdainful smiles' and 'satirical whispers' towards anyone not fashionably dressed. Their concerns appear trivial, and their behaviour is vain and belittling towards others compared to the civil, obliging reception Montagu receives from the Ottoman women. She thereby undercuts any moral superiority European readers might smugly assume from the Ottoman women's nudity. But Montagu further revels in the advantages for female sociability in this segregated space. The competition between women vying for male attention in European courts is replaced by the self-assuredness of women without qualms about revealing to one another 'any beauty or defect' they might have. The gender segregation and confinement of the baths enabled one to show one's body in an atmosphere of polite sociability without fear of judgement.

The difference between the liberties of the Ottoman women and Montagu in her riding habit is striking. She notes during her description of the steam emanating from the baths that it was 'impossible to stay there with one's

clothes on' (58), and yet she does not undress. Her refusal to bathe has been seen to reinforce her position as an unassimilated viewer who objectifies the women.[9] However, she is no less a participant in the scene; indeed, her strangeness makes her an object of attention and subject to the gaze of the Ottoman women. In the bath house, Montagu is not in a position of privileged power; rather, she is the obvious outsider whose acceptance is entirely dependent upon the women she encounters. The 'extraordinary' (58) sight of Montagu dressed in her riding habit underlines her oddity and alien status. She is the one who is deprived of the freedom to engage in the naturalness of the women's nudity.

Montagu's life is, in contrast to theirs, one of convention and artifice. As Isobel Grundy indicates, as a British Ambassador's wife it would have been scandalous for Montagu to undress.[10] Even attending the baths was risqué; to disguise her station, she went 'incognito' by taking a Turkish coach entirely covered in cloth that hid anyone inside it (57–58). Her lack of freedom is reinforced when she feels the formidable presence of the lady who entreats her to join them. Montagu is not powerless, but she is 'forced', however politely, to unbutton her shirt thereby revealing her stays.[11] Thus, her confinement by social conventions with her inability to engage in the naturalness and freedom of undress that the Ottoman women experience is dramatically verified with her stays appearing so abhorrent to her viewers that they assume her husband had imprisoned her. Her use of the term 'machine' to describe her underwear emphasizes its mechanical artifice compared to the divine 'grace' she attributes to the Ottoman women's nudity. While Turkish convention enabled the Ottoman women fully to experience the advantages of the bath house, British convention literally locked Montagu up; it was she, and not the Ottoman women, who suffered as a consequence of gender confinement. She thereby reverses the western view that Ottoman women were subordinated and oppressed.

Some commentators emphasize erotic overtones in the unveiling of Montagu's stays; and indeed, for one author, it invokes an image of medieval chastity belts even if her description is not quite one of 'whips, chains, and handcuffs'.[12] Yet, contrary to the assumption of her viewers in the bath house, we know her husband played no part in her bondage, and presumably, it was not for his benefit. It is also important to recall that her original reader was an English woman subject to the same restraints. It is thus far more likely a satirical comment on the very real bondage that women wearing stays – and later corsets – experienced due to the social convention to conform to women's fashion no matter how unpleasant it might have been. Above all, what is

evident from the vividness of her description is how uncomfortable Montagu must have been. It is no coincidence that, on the day she wrote this scene, she composed a letter to her sister in which she describes in detail the Turkish habit that she wore for subsequent excursions. In this letter, too, she first disparages the foolishness of male travel writers for their abject failure to recognize the greater liberty afforded to Ottoman woman over that enjoyed by their British counterparts (69–72).

Meaning is always the co-production of reader and text, and when it comes to a description of either 200 naked women or Montagu's underwear, some readers evidently find it impossible not to sexualize the content of her letter. Yet Montagu employs literary and artistic allusions to evoke images of graceful and powerful women. She describes women who are naked but modest and civil, women who drink coffee and converse in a private, intimate and yet public space, and women who are segregated from men and confined but free of small-minded judgement, petty competition and the social constraints that inhibit her from undressing. Her letter is an account of her experience where she is alternately viewer and viewed, and in which she delights in drawing out the paradoxes of these juxtapositions. She might present an idealized image of a 'women's coffee house', but it is no more idealized than the model of civility in the English coffee houses that Addison and Steele created in *The Spectator*. In Sofia, Montagu discovered an alternative model of gender segregation that stands in stark contrast to the oppressive effects she earlier described of the Catholic convent on the beautiful nun she visited in Vienna (27–28). She is by no means an unequivocal advocate for gender equality, but with her coffee house analogy, Montagu constructs a life-affirming vision of female sociability that skilfully subverts European perceptions of female subordination, confinement and freedom, and the gendered binary of the public and private.

5

Justice and Gender in Revolution: Olympe de Gouges Speaks for Women

Joseph Zizek

MAN, are you capable of being just? It is a woman who poses the question; you won't deprive her of at least that right. Tell me: Who gave you the sovereign empire to oppress my sex? Your strength? Your talents? Observe the creator in his wisdom; survey nature in all its grandeur, which you seem to want to emulate, and offer me, if you dare, an example of this tyrannical empire….

DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN AND OF THE FEMALE CITIZEN

To be decreed by the National Assembly in its last sessions, or in those of the next legislature:

PREAMBLE

The mothers, the daughters, the sisters, {female} representatives of the nation demand to be constituted in [a] national assembly. Considering that ignorance, forgetfulness, or scorn for the rights of woman are the sole causes of public misfortunes and of the corruption of governments, [they {the women}] have resolved to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of woman, so that this declaration, constantly present to all members of the social body, may ever remind them of their rights and their duties, so that the acts of the power of women and those of the power of men may be compared at any moment with the purpose of every political institution [and] be the more respected, [and] so that demands of the female citizens, founded henceforth on simple and incontestable principles, may always serve the maintenance of the constitution, good morals, and the happiness of all.

Therefore, the sex that is [as] superior in beauty as it is in courage in the pains of childbirth recognizes and declares, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen …[1]

The pointed question that begins this excerpt – 'MAN, are you capable of being just?' – comes to us from a snapshot in time: Paris, France, September 1791. People living through that moment felt caught up in a whirlwind of change. From mid-1789, contemporaries had begun to speak of a 'Revolution', whose like and rapidity they claimed never before to have witnessed and which unmade in scant months an absolute monarchy hallowed by time and tradition. An unprecedented legislative body, the National Assembly, defiantly claimed on behalf of the nation to share authority with King Louis XVI, while massive uprisings in city and countryside – most famously the assault on the Bastille on 14 July 1789 – revealed the impotence of royal authority and mobilized millions of ordinary French people. From August 1789, France's new legislators embraced the challenge of transforming subjects into citizens, abolishing the hierarchy of legal privilege that had long divided French society into three distinct 'orders' of clergy, nobility and commoners. They promulgated instead the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen', which established principles that we today understand as equality before the law, the sovereignty of the nation, security of private property and freedom of speech. By the time the nation's legislators completed France's new Constitution, accepted by Louis XVI on 14 September 1791, some contemporaries even proclaimed a happy terminus: 'The revolution is over.'[2]

Yet, this gendered query about justice – 'It is a woman who poses the question' – carried with it an insistence that the revolution was not at all finished. It appeared in a short pamphlet entitled *Les Droits de la femme* [*The Rights of Woman*], published in September 1791, when contemporaries were aware that they stood on the cusp of a new political order. What made the question radical was the pamphlet's conception of a 'female citizen' (*une citoyenne*), a conception new to the prevailing revolutionary understanding of political rights. Not only was the 1791 Constitution far from democratic (it included a property qualification), but it (and all subsequent revolutionary constitutions) restricted formal political participation – voting, standing for election, holding office – exclusively to men.[3]

In recent decades, Olympe de Gouges has enjoyed celebrity and attention denied her during life. Baptized in May 1748 as Marie Gouze, daughter of

a Montauban butcher, she took the name Olympe de Gouges when the death of an elderly husband left her a young widow; whether this act of renaming was creative 'self-fashioning' or simply a mundane rearranging of given names remains in dispute. She repeatedly claimed to be (and almost certainly was) the unrecognized illegitimate daughter of Le Franc de Pompignan, an aristocratic man of letters. She declined ever to remarry, yet achieved financial independence through an intimate relationship with a military contractor. By the 1780s, she had nurtured an identity as playwright and author, no small achievement for a woman whose first language was Occitan and to whom French fluency came relatively late in life. With the outbreak of Revolution, de Gouges became a patriotic activist and pamphleteer, eventually to die on the scaffold in November 1793 accused of royalist sympathies. Across the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth, she was forgotten, or dismissed as eccentric, before being rediscovered in the 1980s and 1990s by scholars who persuasively argued her historical and intellectual significance to revolutionary gender politics and to modern feminism. Encountering her today means participating in an ongoing but disputatious historical recovery, which attempts to understand the life and work of an individual variously described as a humanist, Rousseauist, staunch monarchist, or even 'feminist' *avant la lettre*.[4]

There is no need here to resolve the tug-of-war between these facets of de Gouges's identity, or even to decide whether such resolution is possible or desirable. Rather, this complexity reminds us that de Gouges's demands on behalf of women were part of an extensive authorial presence, which eventually produced upwards of sixty political pamphlets, thirty theatrical works, dozens of legal briefs and voluminous private correspondence. Understood in its historical context, *The Rights of Woman* is consistent with a wider body of writing that spoke to the revolutionary moment and its possibilities for changing lives. Her pamphlet is not a systematic treatise of political theory, but a quasi-playful, impassioned exploration of how nature and history, inequality and injustice, differently affected the lives of French men and women. It represents a 'feminist moment' in which de Gouges proffered an aetiology of sexual domination and showed how this domination coloured the revolutionary present, yet hopefully described a liberated future available to women *and* men should they have the courage to choose it.

What was it like for contemporaries to read de Gouges? We cannot properly reconstruct the experience of her eighteenth-century reader, but to modern

audiences, the twenty-four pages of *The Rights of Woman* offer a strange, seemingly chaotic structure. The pamphlet opens with a brief dedicatory epistle – 'To the Queen' – a sympathetic, patriotic, yet slightly threatening apostrophe to Marie-Antoinette, whose loyalty to the revolution was highly suspect by September 1791.[5] Then comes the famous 'Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen' (from which our excerpt derives), whose structure of preamble followed by seventeen articles mirrors the National Assembly's 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen' of August 1789. De Gouges follows her 'Declaration' with a substantial 'postamble', which offers a stinging critique of contemporary mores and leads into a corrective 'Social Contract for Man and Woman'. In the penultimate section of the pamphlet, de Gouges invites the reader to join her daily life, narrating a visit to her Parisian printer, a consequent fare dispute with a cab-driver (*cocher*), and its humiliating resolution by a male magistrate. The pamphlet concludes with a 'P.S.' that apologizes for the rushed circumstances of its publication and celebrates Louis XVI's acceptance of the Constitution of 1791 (thereby allowing us to date its composition with a degree of precision).

The language and style of the pamphlet hint at the myriad ways it was embedded in eighteenth-century literary culture as well as the revolutionary moment. Contemporaries would have recognized, in the 'Social Contract for Man and Woman', an allusion to the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, of whom de Gouges repeatedly claimed to be a disciple. Much of her *oeuvre* reveals a very Rousseauian interest in natural morality, education and the corrupting effects of civilization.[6] The pamphlet's content and style make it a *pièce de circonstance* attuned to the specific conjuncture of 1791. That specificity helps explain the pamphlet's preface to the Queen and its closure with the disputed cab episode – what John Cole has dubbed the 'great and lesser embarrassments' bracketing the Declaration – which, in turn, might explain why modern audiences often encounter de Gouges's writing in heavily abbreviated extracts, which strip away seemingly extraneous material.[7] At the extreme, de Gouges's apparently unsystematic style gave generations of hostile interpreters excuses to disparage her literary quality, ability as a writer and intellectual capacity. Yet, such disparagement is anachronistic if not misogynistic. Unsystematic presentation and a highly colloquial tone were commonplace features in revolutionary ephemera, while many of the compositional practices and rhetorical techniques de Gouges employs – ranging from self-deprecation to proleptic self-defense – were considered unexceptional in the eighteenth century when adopted by male authors.[8]

This excerpt exposes the attribute of de Gouges's writing that was most shocking to contemporaries, but which resonates most powerfully for us today: an assertive, self-referential female voice. It is not just a woman speaking. It is a woman addressing powerful individuals – such as Queen Marie-Antoinette – and claiming the freedom to speak in public. In effect, de Gouges rhetorically assumed on behalf of all women the auto-constitutive power that male deputies had already arrogated unto themselves. The preamble of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen in August 1789 spoke of 'the representatives of the French people, constituted as a National Assembly', a declarative formula that de Gouges mirrored and transformed into a desire of all women: 'The mothers, the daughters, the sisters, the [female] representatives of the nation demand to be constituted in [a] national assembly' (30).

De Gouges's claim to public activism has rightly been seen as a window into her conceptualization of feminine autonomy; her achievement lies in articulating the persona of the woman who claims the right to address the public, the *citoyenne* denied political rights who nevertheless embraces the opportunity to reason publicly and criticize openly. This underlies one of the most celebrated of de Gouges's passages, Article X of her Declaration, which would become a nineteenth-century slogan of feminist consciousness: 'Woman has the right to mount the scaffold; she must also have that of mounting the Rostrum [*la Tribune*]' (32). De Gouges lived out this dictum during the Revolution, paying from her own purse to publish pamphlets, plastering them on Parisian walls and ultimately facing arrest and execution for her political activity in writing.

De Gouges's claim to female activism also underpins her pamphlet's message of moral renewal and mutual justice between men and women. To read her closely is to be struck, not just by how she exposes and seeks to rectify the deficiencies of the 1789 Declaration of Rights, but how she appropriates a discourse of transparency, equity and morality in order to make it speak to women's situation. Take, for example, her diagnosis of the sources of oppression: de Gouges uses identical catch-phrases to the legislators who promulgated the 1789 Declaration. Both speak of how 'public misfortunes and the corruption of governments' grew out of 'ignorance, forgetfulness, or scorn' for natural rights. Both try to undo such corruption by making newly proclaimed rights visible to all; to declare rights is to place them before the 'social body', so individuals may reason actively, criticize publicly and compare present behaviour with rights recovered from nature.[9] In de Gouges's case,

however, that corruption includes the oblivion into which women's rights have fallen. Rescuing women's rights by public declaration thus stands as her attempt to correct the existing constitutional order, to supplement it to address women as well as men.

Some observers see an inherent paradox in de Gouges's demand for justice and her tenuous assertion of equality; both are grounded in the presumption of an essential distinction between women and men, suggesting that she is effectively pursuing what Joan Scott calls in modern terms equality-versus-difference.[10] Yet, it is not necessary to resolve this paradox to grasp de Gouges's moral diagnosis. Although she recognizes differences between men and women, she resolutely denies that they should structure civic rights and obligations. Instead, she repeatedly points out the corrupting power that time and history have exercised upon nature; evoking the 'appalling spectacle of what you [women] have been in society', she identifies 'constraint and dissimulation' as the feminine lot (35). The 'vices' of the Old Regime, she suggests, fostered illicit feminine behaviour, rewarding beauty and charm rather than virtue, making immorality and deception the avenue to survival.[11] Previously, women were effectively kept, hindered from understanding how to better themselves; under the 'trade in women' that characterized the old order, de Gouges suggested, 'every other way to fortune is closed to the woman whom a man buys like a slave on the coasts of Africa' (36). Simply liberating women was, therefore, insufficient: she would be little more than an exhausted 'slave' without resources and unused to freedom. De Gouges insisted that women could only become moral agents and equal parties if they partook of material goods as well as political rights with men: 'What laws, then, remain to be made in order to extirpate vice to its roots? That of sharing wealth between men and women, along with public administration' (36).

For de Gouges, the lack of this foundational equality explained the vices of present-day marriage – 'the tomb of trust and of love' – and justified the adoption of the new, mutual 'Social Contract between the Man and the Woman', which endorsed mutual ownership of property, recognition of the legitimacy of children and equal inheritance in case of death or dissolution (37). The point here is not the practicality of de Gouges's prescription for dividing resources more equitably between men and women, nor recognition of her insistence on the relationship between property and independence – to view her, in other words, as an eighteenth-century analogue to Virginia Woolf – but that, like Rousseau, she offered this 'social contract' as the solution to a *moral* as well as a political problem.

Ultimately, de Gouges insisted that revolutionaries had to recast the relationship between the sexes because that relationship was the fruit of injustice and domination, the product of a long period of historical degeneration in which arbitrary sexual differences had overwritten an equality that should be based on the 'simple and incontestable principles' of nature. She could thus suggest, perhaps scandalously but certainly with radical intent, that married women of high society were more depraved than prostitutes because, for her, true depravity consisted not in physical license but in the use of sexuality for familial or financial gain, yet another indication that women and men had left behind the 'primitive morals' of a beneficent nature (38).

De Gouges's pamphlet defies simple categorization as either political tract or philosophical treatise; instead, it enables a different voice, one that communicates the intermingling of personal morality and political oppression to an imagined public. We say 'imagined' public because, although de Gouges conjured seemingly appealing societal alternatives, she signally failed to sway the real audiences of her era. Her *Rights of Women* exerted negligible influence on contemporaries and played no discernible role in revolutionary debates over civic or political rights – even highly aware contemporaries that are sometimes seen as part of the same feminist current, such as Mary Wollstonecraft (see Chapter 6 of this volume), seem not to have known of de Gouges's 'Declaration'. It would be a truism to say that the fate of her call for justice was redolent of the distinctive limits and possibilities of women's experience in the eighteenth century, but it would also be too simplistic to reduce her efforts to that experience. De Gouges's *Rights of Woman* was not merely a futile attempt to indict the Revolution's exclusion of women from political participation. She does lodge this indictment with brio; but she also does much, much more. Ultimately, she engages with the eighteenth century's lexicon of political universals – the justification of social distinction, the foundations of equality, the nature of property and the freedom of speech and conscience – and offers a vision of how these might operate if liberated from the strictures of sexual difference. It was a powerful vision of how men and women might become equal while remaining sexed as men and women; it did not necessarily presume that sexual complementarity required separate and distinct roles for men or women.[12]

For de Gouges, any possibility of liberation meant recognizing, exposing to view and changing the corrupted gender relations bequeathed by the past, a change that called upon the agency of the oppressed themselves. Her repeated

apostrophes to women to recognize the injustice inflicted upon them, to remedy their lot, was (like the revolution itself) meant to be an assertion of independence: 'Whatever may be the barriers that they [men] raise against you, it is within your power to overcome them: You only have to will it' (35). *The Rights of Woman* remains a startling attempt to un-think the relationship of nature and history, rights and sex and gender and subordination. Its ultimate importance lies not in its contemporary impact, but in what it reveals to us about the sense of possibility in time of revolution. The author who mordantly invited her reader to retrace a casual act of unfairness – 'So it's true that no one can escape her fate. I found that out today' (39) – surely deserves better than anachronistic idealization or historical minimization. The 'feminist moment' incarnated by de Gouges exists as a perpetual tug-of-war between the past and the present. We best respond to her two-century-old cry for justice when we keep in mind the complex, provocative, original legacies that she has bequeathed to us.

6

Radical Spirituality and Reason in Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

Kari Lokke

The stamen of immortality, if I may be allowed the phrase, is the perfectibility of human reason; for, were man created perfect, or did a flood of knowledge break in upon him, when he arrived at maturity, that precluded error, I should doubt whether his existence would be continued after the dissolution of the body. But, in the present state of things, every difficulty in morals that escapes from human discussion, and equally baffles the investigation of profound thinking, and the lightning glance of genius, is an argument on which I build my belief in the immortality of the soul. Reason is, consequentially, the simple power of improvement; or, more properly speaking, of discerning truth. Every individual is in this respect a world in itself. More or less may be conspicuous in one being than another; but the nature of reason must be the same in all, if it be an emanation of divinity, the tie that connects the creature with the Creator; for, can that soul be stamped with the heavenly image, that is not perfected by the exercise of its own reason? Yet outwardly ornamented with elaborate care, and so adorned to delight man, 'that with honour he may love,' the soul of woman is not allowed to have this distinction, and man, ever placed between her and reason, she is always represented as only created to see through a gross medium, and to take things on trust. But dismissing these fanciful theories, and considering woman as a whole, let it be what it will, instead of a part of man, the inquiry is whether she have reason or not. If she have, which, for a moment, I will take for granted, she was not created merely to be the solace of man, and the sexual should not destroy the human character.[1]

In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft builds her case for women's rights on the foundational assumption that all human beings possess reason. In this passage, Wollstonecraft presents the heart of her argument for the equality of men and women: both possess the God-given faculty of reason. Though the presence of reason may be more evident in certain individuals than in others, 'the nature of reason must be the same in all' (167). In privileging the faculty of reason, Wollstonecraft joins the mainstream of European Enlightenment philosophers, from John Locke to Voltaire to Immanuel Kant. But what exactly does Wollstonecraft mean by reason? Her conceptualization of reason is distinctive and unique, just as, according to William Godwin, 'her religion was almost entirely of her own creation'.[2] Although nominally Anglican, Wollstonecraft developed her own religious creed, asserting the immortality of the soul while dispensing with the need for divine retribution or punishment in the afterlife. Similarly, she conceives of reason in an entirely positive and forward thinking, if eclectic, manner. Reason is 'the simple power of improvement', 'an emanation of divinity' and the tie that connects 'the creature with the Creator' (167). Integrating Neo-platonic ideas of humanity as emanating from a single Godhead with Judeo-Christian notions of creation and Enlightenment belief in human perfectibility, Wollstonecraft suggests that the purpose of life on earth is to prepare human beings for a reunion with the Divine after death through self-improvement grounded in the exercise of their reason.

Her metaphor of reason as 'the stamen of immortality' (166) is telling. We witness here both the precision and the suggestiveness of Wollstonecraft's terminology. The first meaning of 'stamen' in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is the fixed, vertical warp of a textile fabric through which the woof is cast.[3] In other words, for Wollstonecraft, reason is, metaphorically, upwardly directed, pre-existing, innate and permanent in human nature. The experience of questioning, searching and overcoming error represents the woof that weaves through this stable warp as humans wind their way towards death. The second entry defines 'stamen' in a threefold manner. (A) 'Stamen' can designate the thread spun by the Fates, the length of which determines one's life span. The ideas of death and the possibility of life after death may thus also be implicit in the choice of the word 'stamen'. (B) It is a 'germinal principle' in which future characteristics of any nascent existence are implicit. Thus, Wollstonecraft's choice of metaphors suggests that reason is inextricable from human capacity for change and growth and that it directs that development. Stamen then becomes (C) 'the fundamental or essential element of a thing'. Immortality

cannot be conceived of, Wollstonecraft emphasizes, without the concept of reason. The third OED entry for 'stamen' is the meaning most common today: 'the male or fertilizing organ of a flowering plant'. This definition was also current in the intellectual discourse of Wollstonecraft's day, so pervaded by botanical terminology. If, indeed, reason is a universal human attribute, then, in contemporary feminist or psychoanalytic parlance, Wollstonecraft might be suggesting, perhaps unconsciously, that the phallus and its fertility are not sex specific.

Wollstonecraft, however, is certainly not unique among Enlightenment thinkers in defining reason in relation to divinity and accompanying religious concepts like faith, inspiration and revelation. Eighteenth-century philosophers could not avoid positioning themselves in relation to the enormous ideological power of the Christian church. Thus, Locke, for example, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, defines reason as 'natural *revelation*, whereby the eternal Father of light, and fountain of all knowledge, communicates to mankind that portion of truth, which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties'.[4] Locke argues that one must employ these natural faculties to establish proof of the truth of an assertion, through a painstaking search for and examination of evidence even if that assertion appears to be the product of revelation. Once reason steps in, Locke's focus is here on earth rather than on 'the eternal Father of light'.[5] Voltaire, much more polemically, sets reason in opposition to theological dogma, institutionalized religion and fanaticism. Reason, for Voltaire, is a kind of common sense that is unfortunately anything but common. Thus, in the chapter on enthusiasm from the *Philosophical Dictionary*, he claims, as a matter of fact, as if it were completely self-evident, that, unlike the ecstatic visions of Christian saints or Hindu fakirs, '[r]eason consists in constantly perceiving things as they really are'.[6] Voltaire's subsequent entry 'Reason' tells the tale of the quintessentially reasonable, and thereby unfortunate, man. The Pope imprisons him for explaining that the pontiff's power and wealth make him an anti-Christ. The Doge of Venice also locks him up for holding the Ascension Day ritual of Venice's marriage to the sea up to rational scrutiny. Ultimately, Voltaire's reasonable man is executed by Muslims in Constantinople, when he calls the Koran 'a rehash of Judaism and a tedious collection of fairy tales'.[7]

As Genevieve Lloyd has demonstrated in *The Man of Reason*, the western philosophical tradition, from the time of Plato and Aristotle, has been a masculinist tradition that defined reason through transcendence of traits culturally coded as feminine.[8] Thus, the ideal of sovereign reason was itself

gendered and constructed in opposition to the feminine. Even when reason was in theory defined as universal and beyond sex, women were in practice excluded from mainstream philosophical debate by virtue of their association with the mundane, the particular, the childlike and the natural. With the rise of the bourgeois family, the ascendency of the doctrine of separate spheres and two-sex complementary models of biology in eighteenth-century England, ideological pressure for this exclusion intensified. Wollstonecraft meets this challenge not by claiming woman's right to a masculine standard of rationality and order as critics often suggest. Instead, she radically redefines reason as moral and spiritual effort, a search for truth, fuelled by emotional and passionate conflict and instilled in humanity by the Creator. Furthermore, she renders evident the illogic of limiting this God-given capacity of reason to one half of the human race.

Unlike Locke and Voltaire, then, Wollstonecraft makes immortality, the existence of the soul after the dissolution of the body, key to her definition of reason. Her focus on the disembodied soul shifts the emphasis away from biological differences of the sexes and allows Wollstonecraft to argue for the potential absolute equality of the sexes. Thus, religious belief is central to her understanding of reason. Furthermore, her disquisition on reason does not directly address the nature of revelation, question its reality or seek to define instances in which claims to inspiration may be valid. Instead, she avoids the quagmire of these murky questions that preoccupied the European Enlightenment by simply making it clear that attaining physical adulthood is obviously not synonymous with revelatory spiritual maturity; no 'flood of knowledge' that precludes error suddenly breaks in upon the individual. Like many of her fellow Romantic era writers, Wollstonecraft was fascinated by questions of the nature of genius, yet here she acknowledges that even 'the lightening glance of genius' (167) is often baffled in the face of weighty moral questions. Neither intellectual nor poetic inspiration, then, provides dependable and direct access to the truth. This human frailty is paradoxically, for Wollstonecraft, proof of the immortality of the soul as well as of the divine provenance of the faculty of reason. 'Can that soul be stamped with the heavenly image that is not perfected by the exercise of its own reason?' (167), she asks. In other words, the search for truth, guided by reason, is the essential purpose of life on earth, and it is this search that opens the door to life after death. The knowledge gained in this search, she asserts in a later passage, is based on the power of drawing comprehensive, generalized ideas from individual observations. In an intriguing metaphor that sums up her train of thought,

she describes this fund of comprehensive ideas or conclusions as preparation for eternal life, 'the store laid up that is to clothe the soul when it leaves the body' (169). Metaphors of ornamentation, drapery and veiling abound in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* almost always with overwhelmingly negative connotations of waste, superficiality, superfluity, vanity and deceit. Thus, for example, in her critique of a standing army, she describes the polished manners and gallantry of military men as 'render[ing] vice more dangerous, by concealing its deformity under gay ornamental drapery' (123). Similarly, she sets 'the real dignity of man' in opposition to the 'gaudy hereditary trappings' of the aristocracy (129). Wollstonecraft thus embeds her critique of women's socialized preoccupation with adornment and fashion in a web of metaphors prominent throughout her text. Here, in contrast, she imagines a disembodied soul clothed only in the comprehensive ideas it has, in a sense, *earned* in its life on earth.

Wollstonecraft's definition of reason is, furthermore, distinctive in its emphasis upon progress and perfectibility; '[r]eason is the simple power of improvement' (167), she writes. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is above all else a manifesto for change, for progress in women's cultural, economic, civil and political position in western society. Her targets are tradition, custom, prejudice and the status quo in both socioeconomic and gender relations. Accordingly, Wollstonecraft argues from beginning to end for the necessity of the *progress* of knowledge and liberty *and* for woman's right and duty to participate in this progress. The improvement Wollstonecraft seeks is both individual and collective; as the process of development prepares each person for the afterlife, so it also improves the moral and spiritual tenor of life on earth. Wollstonecraft takes the word 'perfectibility' from Jean-Jacques Rousseau who coined the term in his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1754). For Rousseau, human perfectibility is the capacity for self-improvement that, along with free will, distinguishes humanity from animals and makes possible a sense of history and self-awareness or self-reflection. Far from being an unequivocally positive attribute that leads humankind towards perfection, perfectibility for Rousseau is the source of modern humanity's greatest scourges: pride, vanity, competition, egotism, possessiveness and greed. In order to expose the deleterious influence of the human capacity for 'progress', Rousseau posits a hypothetical, idealized state of nature as a critique of the corruptions of civilized society brought on by the human drive towards improvement. Wollstonecraft purposely turns Rousseau's critique on its head by naming reason, the 'simple power of improvement' as the highest good

and 'an emanation of divinity' (167). In an earlier memorable formulation, she articulates her differences with both Rousseau's regressive idealization of a state of nature and with conservative apologists for the status quo: 'Rousseau exerts himself to prove that all *was* right originally; a crowd of authors that all *is* now right; and I, that all will *be* right' (121; emphasis in original). Here, Wollstonecraft joins her contemporaries Condorcet, Germaine de Staël, Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Schiller in transforming Rousseau's perfectibility into a vision of unending human progress, both individual and collective. Wollstonecraft's conclusion is, however, distinctively and unequivocally utopian: 'all will *be* right' (121), she claims.

Wollstonecraft's ongoing debate with Rousseau throughout *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* highlights its cosmopolitan philosophical context. Along with *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, published two years earlier in 1790, it was written quickly in response to French Revolutionary ferment and to the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, in particular. Like Olympe de Gouges (see Chapter 5 of this volume), Wollstonecraft considered it an injustice, an absurdity, in fact, that 'the rights of man' were not extended to women. In her opening address to the French diplomat Talleyrand, Wollstonecraft writes that her 'affection for the whole human race … leads [her] earnestly to wish to see woman placed in a station in which she would advance, instead of retarding, the progress of those glorious principles that give a substance to morality' (101). Talleyrand had recently presented a report on state-supported public education to the French Revolutionary National Assembly. Wollstonecraft seeks to compel him to rethink the short-sighted recommendation that schooling for girls should continue only until eight years of age, after which they would be confined to domestic duties in the paternal home, a recommendation undoubtedly influenced by the gender complementary pedagogical programme spelled out in Rousseau's *Emile*. Rousseau believed that female and male virtues are essentially different and names 'sweetness' (*douceur*) as the foremost female virtue. Women, he suggests, must cultivate this quality because, as weak and delicate beings, they are formed to obey man, an imperfect being full of vices and faults. If wives suffer even injustice and wrongs inflicted by their husbands without complaining, their sweetness and passivity will eventually win the day. When Wollstonecraft concludes this passage by affirming that woman 'was not created merely to be the solace of man, and the sexual should not destroy the human character' (167), she is explicitly refuting Rousseau's assertions that woman's purpose is to provide alluring, comforting and supportive companionship to man.

Accordingly, Wollstonecraft's chapter 'On National Education' argues forcefully that women historically have not been and cannot be confined to domestic life, and that they should therefore be free to participate in the ongoing self-improvement inherent in all mankind. Whereas in the past women have gained enormous power through the devious means of cunning and manipulation, direct and honest access to civil and economic power would be far better for them and for society as a whole, she asserts. Her earlier chapter on 'unnatural' social distinctions furthermore argues that women should gain self-sufficiency through employment as doctors, nurses, farmers, business managers and direct participants in representative government. Thus, Wollstonecraft emphasizes that the perfectibility of men and that of women are interdependent and that currently this interdependence takes the form of a master/slave relationship degrading to both. 'Make [women] free, and they will quickly become wise and virtuous, as men become more so; for the improvement must be mutual, or the injustice which one half of the human race are obliged to submit to, retorting on their oppressors, the virtue of man will be worm-eaten by the insect whom he keeps under his feet' (320). Most emphatically, Wollstonecraft concludes her treatise with an urgent plea to the 'men of understanding' among her readers: 'Let woman share the rights and she will emulate the virtues of man; for she must grow more perfect when emancipated, or justify the authority that chains such a weak being to her duty' (343).

Wollstonecraft's appeal to male authority and to masculine standards as well as her veiled contempt for her fellow women have troubled feminists today, but one must remember that this appeal is calculated and rhetorical; Wollstonecraft is well aware that men in her day hold the power to make institutional and political change. In fact, Wollstonecraft's disquisition on reason culminates in her emphatic rejection of the notion, which she attributes to both Rousseau and John Milton, that women's access to reason, truth and virtue should be mediated by men. If 'man, [is] ever placed between her and reason, she is always represented as only created to see through a gross medium, and to take things on trust' (167). As beings endowed with reason, women should be free 'to unfold their own faculties and acquire the dignity of conscious virtue' (134). This aim, and not the duties of daughter, wife and mother in relation to men, should be the foremost goal of their earthly exertions. Woman, contrary to Biblical and British legal tradition, is not a part of man but a whole unto herself.

Wollstonecraft's definition of reason as 'an emanation of divinity', a capacity for self-improvement, implies an explicit individualism; '[e]very

individual is this respect a world in itself' (167). This is not the bourgeois, possessive individualism so well described by C. B. Macpherson in his classic study.[9] After all, Wollstonecraft considered respect for private property 'a poisoned fountain' from which flow 'most of the evils and vices which render this world such a dreary scene to the contemplative mind' (277). The elucidation here of the spiritual foundation of her faith in rational thought instead corroborates current redefinitions of her feminism as rooted in 'religiously inspired utopian radicalism' rather than bourgeois liberalism.[10] Wollstonecraft emphasizes that each individual woman is a spiritual and moral microcosm, who should be free to develop her reason and virtue independently. It is clearly wrong that man should 'ever [be] placed between her and reason' (167). Reason for Wollstonecraft means self-determination, 'the divine indefeasible earthly sovereignty breathed into man by the Master of the universe' (343). In this way, she mounts a direct attack on the spiritual subordination of women voiced by Milton's Eve when Eve indicates her willingness to defer to Adam's judgement in questions of divine law: 'To whom thus Eve with perfect beauty adorned. / My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst / *Unargued* I obey; so God ordains; /God is *thy law, thou mine*: to know no more / Is Woman's *happiest* knowledge and her *praise*' (PL 4. 634–38; Wollstonecraft's italics).[11] Similarly, she quotes with ironic contempt Raphael's admonition to Adam that he love honourably rather than carnally ('that with honor he may love'), given Adam's simultaneous preoccupation with Eve's irresistible seductiveness and his conviction of her mental inferiority. Appropriately, Wollstonecraft's critique of *Paradise Lost* is clothed in metaphors of celestial light. She writes, 'For if it be allowed that women were destined by Providence to acquire human virtues, and by the exercise of their understandings, that stability of character which is the firmest ground to rest our future hopes upon, they must be permitted to turn to the fountain of light, and not forced to shape their course by the twinkling of a mere satellite' (127). The spirited dialogue with Milton and Rousseau that Wollstonecraft sustains in this passage and throughout *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* clarifies the feminist resonances of her use of the Enlightenment terms reason and perfectibility and places them in the context of her belief in providential design and rational religion.

7

Giving Voice to Feminist Political Theory: The Radical Discourse of Anna Doyle Wheeler and William Thompson

Jim Jose

Black slaves are not insulted with the requisition to … vow obedience to their masters … . For white slaves – parcelled out amongst men (as if to compensate them for their own cowardly submission … to … political power), … – … is reserved this gratuitous degradation … of kissing the rod of domestic despotism … . Was it not enough to deprive women, by the iniquitous inequality of the marriage, or white-slave, code, of all the attributes of personal liberty? … without the cruel mockery of exacting from her trained obsequiousness the semblance of … devotedness to her degradation? … Are not the laws, supported first by the individual strength of every individual man … , and next … by the united strength of all men, sufficient to control … this helpless creature? Would not the pleasure of commanding … be complete, without the … banquet of despotism …? Would not the simple pleasure of commanding be sufficient, without the gratification of … taunting the victim with her pretended voluntary surrender of control …?

Woman is then compelled, in marriage, … by the positive, cruel, partial, and cowardly enactments of law, by the terrors of superstition, by the mockery of a pretended vow of obedience, and to crown all, and as the result of all, by the force of an unrelenting, unreasoning, unfeeling, public opinion, to be the literal unequivocal slave of the man who may be styled her husband … I say emphatically the slave; for a slave is a person whose actions and earnings, instead of being, under his own control, liable only to equal laws, to public opinion, and to his own calculations, … are under the arbitrary control of any other human being, … This is the essence of slavery, and what distinguishes it from freedom. A domestic, a civil, a political slave, in the plain unsophisticated sense of the word – in no metaphorical sense – is every married woman.[1]

This passage is taken from *Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women: Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain Them in Political, and Thence in Civil and Domestic, Slavery; in Reply to a Paragraph of Mr. Mill's Celebrated 'Article on Government'* first published in 1825. Officially, William Thompson (an Irish landowner, socialist utilitarian and feminist who lived mostly in London) was listed as the author, though he had an uncredited collaborator, Anna Wheeler (a modestly well-to-do upper-class woman born in Ireland in 1785, who by 1825 was also a London resident).[2] As the title suggests, the book responded to a claim made in James Mill's 'Essay on Government'[3] that women did not need voting rights because such rights could be subsumed under those of their fathers or husbands. Although Mill's claim was relatively conservative, he was part of a circle of thinkers subsequently known as Philosophical Radicals who championed liberal utilitarianism, and whose ideas developed serious challenges to the prevailing orthodoxies. Across Europe, liberal utilitarianism, variations of socialism and various strands of cooperative thought all competed for influence within the dominant intellectual circles.[4] To this unstable and changing mix, Thompson and Wheeler added a distinctly feminist voice.

The central point in this passage from the *Appeal* is that women were slaves in every sense of the word 'slave'. A woman's freedom was totally circumscribed by the authority of a man; she was deemed to have no mind of her own; her body was not hers to command, being the property of her father (or guardian) and, on marriage, that of her husband who was empowered to use it and command it at will.[5] Granted there were class differences that meant in practice working-class women were sometimes less constrained than their wealthier counterparts, but this did not really affect their legal status.

For Wheeler and Thompson, the condition of women was even worse than that of slaves because slaves did not volunteer to become slaves, they were captured and forced on pain of death to obey. Women on the other hand entered into an apparently voluntary contract, namely marriage, a fate for which they were groomed and educated from a very young age. To emphasize the difference, Wheeler and Thompson invoked an extremely provocative sexual metaphor, namely 'kissing the rod of domestic despotism',[6] an act they described as 'gratuitous degradation'. While Wheeler and Thompson were well aware of the degrading conditions slaves commonly endured, the point they wanted to accentuate was that women were obliged to go further in acknowledging their status. Women had to pay homage to that which symbolized their enforced obedience.

Wheeler and Thompson were not the first to invoke the terminology of slavery to describe the condition of women. Wollstonecraft and others had used similar terminology.[7] However, the earlier usage was mostly figurative, whereas Wheeler and Thompson appear to have been the first to insist on its literal application. Their book was produced at about the same time that the anti-slavery movement in England had begun to gain momentum. The Anti-Slavery Society had been formed in 1823,[8] and the memory of the temporarily successful slave rebellion in Haiti (1791–1803) would still have been fresh in the minds of many English thinkers.[9] By invoking the imagery of slavery, Wheeler and Thompson were tapping into an already existing discourse that they could invoke to lend resonance to their arguments.

Underscoring the slavery theme, and in some ways even more radical, was Wheeler and Thompson's framing of women's social and political position in terms of a deeply embedded sexual subordination. In their view, this sexual subordination was the *a priori* basis for men's political, legal and social privileges: it ensured men's access to women's bodies as a matter of right, a right that subtended all subsequent rights and privileges. That is, the sexual subordination of women was for them the means whereby sexual difference was transmuted into political difference, a point made with some power 160 years later by Carole Pateman and her idea of the 'the sexual contract'. For Pateman, the 'sexual contract', (what she called 'the law of male sex right'), was 'a story of subjection' which created 'men's freedom and women's subjection' such that it 'establishe[d] men's political right over women'.[10] A similar contention was very much the central theme of Wheeler and Thompson's critique, but unlike Pateman, for Wheeler and Thompson the idea of a contract was a misnomer. Women could not consent to hand over their power to others since they were not free agents to begin with. There could be no contractual agreement of any sort – social, political or sexual – between a free and an unfree being. This was one of the key political points underpinning Wheeler and Thompson's appeal to the language of slavery. A second and equally important point was their exposure of the hypocrisy of the language of contract.

Any doubt about the sexual basis for women's subordination was clearly dispelled by their sexually explicit metaphor about 'the rod of domestic despotism'. This obvious double entendre was a bold rhetorical move at a time when sensibility and propriety were at a premium. Yet, it was far more than a double entendre. Going much further than Mary Wollstonecraft (see Chapter 6 of this volume) or other predecessors arguing for women's rights, Wheeler and Thompson made explicit the symbolic place of the phallus in ordering social

relations between women and men and the essentially patriarchal nature of their society. Women were trained to ignore their feelings and desires; instead what passed for women's education 'trained her to be the obedient instrument of man's sensual gratification', denied her 'any gratification for herself' and forced her to conceal 'her natural desires' (64). Rather a woman 'must have no desires: she must always yield' and 'must blush to own that she joys in his generous caresses, were such by chance ever given' (64). In short, they spoke the reality of women's sexual experiences in which women's pleasure could only be legitimized in terms of pleasing their men. This is a recurring theme of the *Appeal* (64 and *passim*), and it informed their argument.

Thus far in this discussion, Wheeler has been given equal authorial status with Thompson, yet her name does not appear on the title page. So what grounds are there for giving Wheeler equal authorial status with Thompson? As noted, Wheeler lived in London and hosted an intellectual salon. In that capacity, she was able to occupy a semi-public space within which she could foster and legitimately participate in the exchange of ideas between philosophers, radical thinkers and political reformers.[11] It is unclear how she came to meet Thompson, but both were frequent participants in Jeremy Bentham's intellectual circle, and they attended similar public meetings and intellectual gatherings.[12]

In the first place, Thompson himself points us in that direction in the opening section of the book, entitled 'Letter to Mrs Wheeler', by referring directly to her contribution. Thompson pointed out that she was neither muse nor patron. In his view, 'the days of dedication and patronage' had passed (vi). In a radical move, Thompson explicitly rejected here the gendered roles implied by the artist/muse relationship, namely that of active, masculine creator and passive, feminine inspiration. Likewise, he also rejected the active/passive (though not necessarily gendered) relationship between artist and patron. Thompson was not dependent upon Wheeler for financial support, though he clearly was for her contribution to the substantive ideas within the *Appeal*. He was most explicit that the letter was a 'debt of justice' that acknowledged the contribution and importance of her ideas to the finished work, even though, as he noted, the actual words physically penned by Wheeler amounted to just a few pages. He was adamant that the work as a whole was in effect 'our joint property' (vii), and he felt obligated to acknowledge that fact because he 'love[d] not literary … piracy' (vi).

Taylor has speculated that Wheeler's poor spelling and grammar might have been a reason 'why Thompson took the initiative in writing the *Appeal*, rather than Wheeler'.[13] However, it is probably more plausible to attribute it to the

fact that, as Thompson himself claimed, her crippling neuralgia affected her spelling and grammar since much of her handwriting was often barely legible. But another, equally plausible, reason was a concern to avoid the sort of public opprobrium often levelled against women writers of the period, particularly infamous ones like Wollstonecraft whose name had become synonymous with improper behaviour and social disgrace. While ideas about women's emancipation did not disappear entirely from public discourse at the turn of the century, within respectable circles their proponents needed to be circumspect in advancing them. As a modestly well-to-do upper-class woman living independently, her activities as a salonnière notwithstanding, Wheeler would have been very mindful of protecting her reputation. The fact that she used a pseudonym, 'Vlasta', to publish writing that was about 'very personal or highly sensitive issues' would seem to support this interpretation.[14] Given that the *Appeal* canvassed many personal and sensitive issues not usually aired in polite society, it is not surprising that Wheeler deferred to Thompson's authorship.

While the authorship question ultimately might be undecidable, it is clear that Wheeler's voice has a presence. That much is affirmed by Thompson himself. Dooley has noted that Wheeler's style as exhibited in her other writings can be found in various passages throughout the *Appeal*, in particular her habit of being 'direct and personal', contrary to the prevailing literary conventions in which authors were expected to avoid references to personal and emotional experiences. There was also Wheeler's penchant for using various grammatical foils such as 'emphases, exclamations and upper case letters' to get her point across as clearly as possible in terms of its content, as well as enabling her to amplify the level of emotional commitment to her ideas.[15] This is particularly pronounced in the concluding pages of the *Appeal* which Cory argues displays the 'typical characteristics of [Wheeler's] work: the passionate, vivid language; the frequent use of italics and exclamation points; and an indignant and ironic tone'.[16]

The book's final twenty pages are significant for two reasons, both of which bear on placing Wheeler's voice at the heart of the *Appeal*. First, these pages served in the book as a rousing call to arms typical of the type of public address for which Wheeler was renowned. It was written in the form of a direct address to readers in which Wheeler 'inhabited the conventionally male role of public speaker' and used a range of oratorical techniques to deliver its message.[17] This would be consistent with what is known about her practices as a public speaker. She often drew on personal experience to frame her political views in her lectures.[18] In this way, she could convey pathos to and evoke sympathy

in her audience and in so doing draw them into her manner of thinking and understanding. Moreover, in the concluding pages of the Appeal, the speaking position of the writer was one of mutuality and sympathy with the readers. The writer did not adopt a position of superiority but rather, through a range of oratorical techniques, projected a relationship that was 'equitable rather than hierarchical'.[19] In this way, the text served to model a way of speaking the future, of providing a vision of future social relations that were non-hierarchical and non-exploitative. Again, this is consistent with what is known about Wheeler's politics and other writings and speeches.[20] While the same might be said about Thompson on this point, Cory has amply demonstrated that even though his 'Letter' placed him in the role of scribe, of amanuensis, thus subverting the then prevailing gendered writing conventions (in particular that of man author-woman scribe), he nevertheless left the position of scribe and author intact and hence their inherent power relationship remained unchanged.[21] Clearly, Wheeler was not simply the minor contributor in terms of composing the text as might be understood from Thompson's 'Introductory Letter'.

While the concluding pages of the *Appeal* give the most sustained examples of the rhetorical features of public speaking, and hence of Wheeler's contributions to the text, such examples can be found throughout the book as a whole. This is amply illustrated in various ways within the excerpted passage. Consider the following sentence.

> Woman is then compelled, in marriage, … by the positive, cruel, partial, and cowardly enactments of law, by the terrors of superstition, by the mockery of a pretended vow of obedience, and to crown all, and as the result of all, by the force of an unrelenting, unreasoning, unfeeling, public opinion, to be the literal unequivocal slave of the man who may be styled her husband (66).

Here, Thompson and Wheeler summarize their view of women's lot in marriage. They also invest that view with a powerful emotive force that sets up their concluding point in this passage: namely that women are slaves, not just figuratively or metaphorically, but literally.

Four key clauses are laid out, each one beginning with 'by'. Each clause highlights how women's compulsion within marriage is implemented. Of considerable power is the deferral between the third and fourth clauses. There, Wheeler and Thompson inject a pause with: 'and to crown all, and as the result of all'. This builds a sense of suspense by deferring the expected denouement of the sentence. But the deferral was not gratuitous. These two phrases perform the important function of highlighting the point of their message about women's lack of rights, their lack of humanity. The crown symbolizes sovereign authority,

the entity ruling over the rest and imposing order and meaning on them. Women's lot in marriage is also the product of the combined effects of all the other factors, the issue (in the legal sense) of their conjunction. Finally, there is the repetition of the 'un' suffix to emphasize the negative sentiment being highlighted and to set up the use of a fourth word beginning with 'un' several words later, 'unequivocal'. In this one sentence, Wheeler and Thompson marshal the emotional power behind their argument to ensure that the theme of woman as slave is delivered with maximum impact.

The rhetorical power of the passage is reinforced by the use of a series of questions following the 'rod of domestic despotism' metaphor. The paragraph is largely structured around these questions. The first asks why it is necessary to rub the salt of extracting a pledge of 'devotedness to her degradation' into the wound of 'the iniquitous inequality of marriage'. The second asks why the laws that men as a sex have conspired to implement to keep women in their unfortunate place are insufficient for the task. A third question asks why the 'banquet of despotism' is needed to support the 'pleasure of commanding', and a fourth why men need to supplement their power by 'taunting the victim with her pretended surrender of *voluntary* control' (66). These last two questions begin with the phrase 'would not the pleasure of commanding' which contributes to the rhetorical rhythm of the passage. The sequential arrangement of these questions reflects again a style of writing more attuned to oral delivery, of building and teasing audience expectations towards a particular conclusion. The effect of the paragraph structure is to enable their political punchline to be delivered with powerful effect, namely that married women are slaves 'in the plain unsophisticated sense of the word' (67). In its structure and rhythm, this paragraph suggests that it was written by someone whose forte was oral delivery. It demonstrates that Wheeler's input was not restricted to just a few pages of their work.

The two excerpted paragraphs encapsulate the radical nature of the discourse of Wheeler and Thompson. At a time when gender equality was all but non-existent and rarely discussed in polite company, they formulated an in-depth critique of the prevailing gender order. At the centre of their analysis was the recognition that the sexual subjugation of women underpinned and justified their subordinate social status and lack of political rights. From this central proposition, they developed an extended argument for women's liberation. In so doing, they gave feminist political theory a voice, one that is as radical today as it was in 1825.

8

‘Supposed to be very calm generally’: Anger, Narrative and Unaccountable Sounds in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*

Alexandra Lewis

Who blames me? Many no doubt; and I shall be called discontented. I could not help it: the restlessness was in my nature; it agitated me to pain sometimes. Then my sole relief was to walk along the corridor of the third story, backwards and forwards, safe in the silence and solitude of the spot, and allow my mind’s eye to dwell on whatever bright visions rose before it – and certainly they were many and glowing; to let my heart be heaved by the exultant movement which, while it swelled it in trouble, expanded it with life; and best of all, to open my inward ear to a tale that was never ended – a tale my imagination created, and narrated continuously; quickened with all of incident, life, fire, feeling, that I desired and had not in my actual existence.

It is in vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquillity: they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it. Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot. Nobody knows how many rebellions besides political rebellions ferment in the masses of life which people earth. Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex.

> *When thus alone, I not unfrequently heard Grace Poole's laugh: the same peal, the same low, slow ha! ha! which, when first heard, had thrilled me: I heard, too, her eccentric murmurs; stranger than her laugh. There were days when she was quite silent; but there were others when I could not account for the sounds she made.*[1]

Is *Jane Eyre* a feminist text? Many, no doubt, may 'blame' me for asking: for what is the passage above but an explosive articulation of the 'suffering' and 'stagnation' that results from social, cultural and by extension political and legal inequality perpetuated by 'custom' (125–26) on the basis of gender? This perennially popular novel, which helped introduce a new, intensely subjective narrative style into nineteenth-century fiction, has garnered a varied history of feminist response. Like Jane's pacings along the corridor, criticism of *Jane Eyre* has moved 'backwards and forwards' (125) on the question of feminism since 1847: this is no simple trajectory towards critical consensus. Is Jane's famous assertion of women's needs a feminist manifesto (as for Adrienne Rich in 1973), a proto-feminist statement (Cora Kaplan, 2007) or, as in Robert Martin's 1966 view, a pre-feminist plea not for 'political, legal, educational, or even intellectual equality between the sexes' but only for 'a recognition of woman's emotional nature'?[2] In 1855, Margaret Oliphant identified the novel's 'wild declaration of the "Rights of Woman" ', shown through its revolutionary – and for Oliphant irresponsible, as unrealistic in contemporary courtship – aspect of 'furious love-making'.[3] However, for late-nineteenth-century critic Peter Bayne – writing amid 'vociferous debate' that heralded the New Woman phenomenon – *Jane Eyre* fell short of advocating 'perfect equality': 'No man could have a right to bait and badger a woman like [Rochester did]; and if Jane had been a little more strong and a little more proud, she would never have favoured him with another look of her face'.[4] From initial reception, through Virginia Woolf's 1920s intervention, *Jane Eyre* survived to be adopted as iconic text by 1970s second-wave Anglophone feminism. Readings since the 1980s have challenged its feminist credentials on the basis of inattention to issues of class, race and imperialism, yet the novel enjoys enduring centrality within debate about the existence of multiple different feminist ideologies. Brontë's work has certainly not suffered from 'too rigid a restraint' (125) upon analysis. Rather, it continues to open up the 'life, fire, feeling' of discussion of what feminism might mean, and how it might look within different historical and cultural contexts.

When Virginia Woolf, in her magisterial essay on women and writing *A Room of One's Own* (1929), makes reference to the 'genius' of Charlotte Brontë, it is a genius that will never be 'expressed whole and entire':

> Her books will be deformed and twisted. She will write in a rage where she should write calmly. She will write foolishly where she should write wisely. She will write of herself where she should write of her characters. She is at war with her lot. How could she help but die young, cramped and thwarted?[5]

Woolf, commenting upon the passage from *Jane Eyre* extracted above, finds the 'break' between men's reported laughter at rebellious women and the 'slow ha! ha!' that alludes to the imprisoned Bertha Mason 'awkward': 'it is upsetting' to the reader that 'the continuity is disturbed'.[6] The sale of her novels' copyright 'outright for fifteen hundred pounds' may make Brontë seem the 'foolish woman' of Woolf's reckoning,[7] but the conflation of author and character lapses into the kind of reductive analysis that Brontë encountered in contemporary reviews and had sought – using the pseudonym Currer Bell – to avoid. The disturbance of continuity might be seen, rather, as a conscious manifestation of literary genius – Brontë indicating through fine detail what Jane does not yet know she knows about the extent of the containment of women, and gesturing also towards the importance of listening to apparently unaccountable sounds. Awkwardness is key to *Jane Eyre*: the 'break' is nowhere near so discomfiting as Brontë's dedication of the novel to Thackeray, whose own wife was (unbeknownst to Brontë) held in a London asylum.

In Woolf's view, 'anger' and 'ignorance' were 'tampering with the integrity' of the novelist:

> She left her story, to which her entire devotion was due, to attend to some personal grievance. […] Her imagination swerved from indignation and we feel it swerve. […] The portrait of Rochester is drawn in the dark. We feel […] a rancour which contracts those books, splendid as they are, with a spasm of pain.[8]

But the bitter assertion of a flawed, 'rotten' core at the heart of many nineteenth-century women's novels, in contrast to which Woolf would place her own knowing, modernist aesthetic, works against her broad claim that 'Literature is open to everybody', and that 'there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of [a woman's] mind'.[9] Woolf critiques the 'now grumbling, now patronizing, now domineering' voice of the male critic which drags 'even into the criticism of poetry criticism of sex'[10] but falls into a similar trap in judging *Jane Eyre*'s anger. She holds, first, that anger is necessarily a 'swerve' from

effective narrative, and second, that such a swerve must be read biographically. This interpretive framework delimits, for Woolf, Brontë's artistic success. Brontë's titular character is keenly aware of limitation: prior to the rhetorical question 'Who blames me?' Jane has 'longed for a power of vision which might overpass' her horizon of employment as governess, 'which might reach the busy world, towns, regions full of life I had heard of but never seen: […] I desired more of practical experience than I possessed' (125). Woolf transmutes this fictive sentiment into evidence of the author's own life and blames not Jane but Brontë: 'in those words she puts her finger exactly not only upon' the realization of potential withheld from 'her sex at that time' but also upon 'her own defects as a novelist'.[11] Female anger, like madness, becomes another kind of monstrosity that is best locked away. But ought narrative, like the stunted women of Jane Eyre's analysis, really 'be very calm generally' (125)?

For other writers, expressions of disruptive, impassioned belief are precisely the means by which *Jane Eyre* inaugurates a literary tradition concerned to ensure that women will no longer be 'cramped and thwarted'.[12] Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) and Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) placed *Jane Eyre* at the forefront of a (respectively) 'feminine' or 'rebelliously feminist' tradition of women's writing. Gilbert and Gubar cite approvingly the novel's violation of codes – of proper feeling and behaviour – observing that it was 'less the coarseness and sexuality of *Jane Eyre* which shocked Victorian reviewers' than 'Jane's anger', with the threat it poses to the order of society.[13]

Uncontainable dangers of independent mind such as had 'overthrown authority and violated every code human and divine abroad, and fostered Chartism and rebellion at home,' were seen by early reviewer Elizabeth Rigby in *Jane Eyre*. Rigby attacked the novel as a 'proud and perpetual assertion of the rights of man';[14] and Brontë's consciousness of links between class- and gender-based oppression is evident in the movement of Jane's mind from reference to other 'political rebellions' to the 'ferment' (125) felt by women. Jane quietly establishes a basic presumption of equality from the beginning of her observations on dissatisfaction: her initial adoption of the category 'human beings' quickly becomes the claim that there are 'millions' of women who will – like their male counterparts – 'make [action] if they cannot find it' (125). The diction bespeaks restraint: the finality of 'condemned' suggests that a 'stiller doom than mine' remains the inevitable course for many women of Jane's generation; the revolt, after all, is largely 'silent'; the 'privileged' and 'narrow-minded' men described politely as

merely 'thoughtless' in the harm they cause women. The revolutionary potential and 'thrill' of such a train of thought, however, is clear.

Voice and self-expression are important here, as throughout the novel. By allowing her 'inward ear' to open and her 'mind's eye to dwell on whatever bright visions rose before it' – without the censorship of self or others – Jane is alive to the 'many and glowing' possibilities of imagination. Acknowledging the physical 'pain' of discontent ensures that the 'trouble' that swells her heart will also expand it 'with life'. But of the desired freedoms that Jane 'had not in my actual existence': are these 'narrated continuously' as a kind of escapist fantasy (in which case the revolt is doomed to remain 'silent') or as a mode of directing her mental impulses towards making viable an alternative future? Women as angels of the house are 'supposed' – both expected and, as a result of their adherence to this expectation, presumed – 'to be very calm', but this stance (perpetuated in many nineteenth-century advice books) sits uneasily atop Jane's sense of her more passionate 'nature' (125), and she is elsewhere alive to the need to counter 'the insinuation of helplessness and distraction' (430) so often used punitively against assertive women. Echoing Jane's rejection of an enclosed life of 'tranquillity' (though she requires 'solitude' for reflection, this should be elected not imposed) (125), and subtly layering in a glimmer of pathologization and medical control, St John's later exhortation 'you must really make an effort to tranquillize your feelings […] your head becomes confused' is dismissed by Jane as 'Nonsense!' (431). Where others advise her to *be* 'composed' (430), Jane scorns affective falsehood and instead moves towards an existence where she *can* compose: recording the experiential truths of her own life narrative in a way that demonstrates – ahead of twentieth-century second-wave feminism – how the personal is political.

Yet, for all its subversive potential, *Jane Eyre* has been criticized for upholding reductive typologies (beautiful/plain, virgin/whore) and appeasing gendered convention, at worst undermining its own feminist impulses in Jane's and Rochester's final union. The heart of the problem appears to be the uncomfortable intersection of romantic love and personal independence. In a psychoanalytic reading which invokes French feminist theory on the role of language in perpetuating patriarchal oppression, Jean Wyatt argues that the text's lucid advocacy of women's autonomy is sabotaged by its 'unchecked' quest for 'that most restrictive of all female spaces, the bubble of bliss promised by romantic love'.[15] But despite Jane's assertion that to be deprived of the people and places she loves (not just Rochester, but also Helen Burns) is 'like looking on the necessity of death' (283), she also convinces her reader that '*I* care for

myself. The more solitary […], the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself' (356). Jane's life force springs not from any 'bubble' of romance but from her spiritual conviction and the possession of 'an original, a vigorous, an expanded mind': 'I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will' (283–84). Structurally, as Jane's exploration of her own limited horizons takes up the plight of 'millions' (a form of collective or communal analysis) (125), so the relative seclusion of her later married life expands to considerations of broader social harmony and even St John's missionary ventures in India. A married, maternal Jane those ten years later may likely be 'making puddings and knitting stockings' (126) – this irony is not lost on the reader – but the suggestion is that her life is not 'confined' to these elements alone. Vitally, in Rochester's company Jane feels 'as free as in solitude' (500), so we might imagine that although she speaks of being 'my husband's life as fully as he is mine', she yet retains that unceasing narrative of her own imagination, so glowing to her mind's eye and inward ear. With a chastened Rochester, she can share her narrative on equal terms (in so far as this is possible under coverture within the marriage contract), whereas with St John she would have been ensnared as helpmeet devoid of enlivening love.

But it is, fundamentally, with a chastened Rochester that union is possible: and this is key to much feminist discontent with Brontë's delineation of Jane's trajectory. Jane's sense of morality ensures that she resists inappropriate advances (encompassing both the language of ownership and Rochester's attempted bigamy). Jane had viewed the imbalance of social and financial power between them as threatening her identity. But is it not the case that the conditions in large part making possible their eventual 'equal' partnership – her inherited fortune and his physical incapacitation – rely on fairy-tale-like improbability, raise problematic symbolic resonances and (with Diana and Mary Rivers also freed from dependency by Jane's shared fortune) gloss over the repressive conditions for women, and particularly the liminal figure of the governess, in wider Victorian society? Rochester's conversion from amorous tyrant to grateful recipient of Jane's now freely-given love relies in part upon his 'seared vision!' (493), and his own interpretation of his 'crippled strength' (where he must submit to another's 'guidance' (495)) coheres with Showalter's reading of his 'symbolic immersions' in 'feminine experience'.[16] If an equation of women with weakness perseveres within the text despite Jane's self-assertions, also troubling is the idea that blindness might be a metaphor for castration (as some feminist critics have suggested): the text, on this view, plays into normative gender hierarchies even as it averts its gaze from the reality of disability.[17]

Gilbert and Gubar's influential identification of Bertha as Jane's double, an embodiment of the imprisoned rage within every woman (or 'Everywoman') in Victorian society, at once 'ushered feminist criticism into a new age of maturity'[18] and opened debate about essentialism and the uneasy relationship between allegorical interpretation and realist narrative. The reduction of Bertha's 'madness' to an aspect of Jane's psychic life has dangerous implications: such a reading shifts attention away from Rochester's mistreatment of mental illness and also from the issues of race and imperialism threatening the text's borders. Gayatri Spivak's 1985 reading of *Jane Eyre* critiqued the imperial tendencies of western feminism, calling into question the text's dehumanization of the racial other.[19] There can be no 'Everywoman' when Bertha's entitlements to the kinds of equality sought by the English governess are so firmly and fatally eroded.

Other writers have sought to reconcile Brontë's feminism with postcolonial criticism, situating Jane and Bertha as 'oppressed rather than opposed sisters'.[20] Rochester's threat to 'try violence' if Jane does not 'hear reason' (340) recalls the conquering 'force' (357) of colonialism, and Jane employs the discourse of enslaved subject when she resists the costumes imposed upon her, threatening to 'stir up mutiny' among Rochester's (presciently imagined) 'harem inmates' (302). But, if there is such a sisterhood, it is vital to note that Rochester's teasing threat to 'attach [Jane] to a chain' is presented as 'figuratively' spoken (303), whereas the 'wild animal' Bertha is literally 'bound' with 'rope' (328). If the 'eastern allusion' bites Jane with a sense of 'annoyance and degradation' (301), she is strangely quiescent on the issue of a woman kept 'in a room without a window' (327), forced to seek expression by laying her teeth to Rochester's cheek (for how can Bertha sustain her own 'inward ear' and 'bright visions' (125) in such captivity?). Where Bertha has been 'mastered' (328) beyond salvation, Jane can declare 'I am my own mistress' (483) and is seemingly satisfied with an individualist triumph enabled by what Spivak calls Bertha's self-immolation. But this is fictional autobiography (*Jane Eyre. An Autobiography*. Edited by Currer Bell), and Jane's and Brontë's perspectives are not synonymous. As Susan L. Meyer has asserted, the novel 'betrays Brontë's lingering anxiety about British imperialism' and about her own literary treatment of associations between resistance to the ideologies of male and imperialist domination, respectively.[21]

Criticism, as Cora Kaplan has argued, 'has an emotive history': 'the fact that *Jane Eyre* continues to incite a highly charged contentious response […] so full of present feeling that it seems out of sync with the novel's historical

status, suggests that its narrative condenses unresolved questions in and for feminism today'.[22] *Jane Eyre*'s descriptions of gendered 'nature' and 'custom' (125–26) as well as its explorations of attitudes to marriage, desire, property, work and independence have made it an iconic text, both shaped by and strongly shaping the historical tradition of feminist thought in literary analysis. What is the place of anger, love and individualism in feminist ideology? Fortunate are we that Charlotte Brontë rose above the advice of poet laureate Robert Southey to forget her aspirations: 'Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be'.[23] Brontë's novel at once asserts a female desire for change and acknowledges the difficulty in bringing that change into view, let alone into being. If Jane Eyre's 'bright visions' gestured, through their very limitations, towards the material conditions making equality a distant prospect, they yet inspired a vibrant, continuing tradition of feminist criticism concerned to look beyond existing structures the better to hear and understand apparently 'eccentric murmurs' or the 'slow ha! ha!' (125–26) of oppressed voices. Sounds registered as unaccountable when first uttered might coalesce into necessary and effective 'rebellions' (125). The restless, agitated drive to creativity seen by Woolf as a kind of deformity gives rise to some of *Jane Eyre*'s (and Jane Eyre's) finest feminist moments.

9

‘Something Akin to Freedom’: Harriet Jacobs and the Feminist Tradition

Susan Hays Bussey

[I]t chanced that a white unmarried gentleman had obtained some knowledge of the circumstances in which I was placed. He knew my grandmother, and often spoke to me in the street … He expressed a great deal of sympathy, and a wish to aid me. He constantly sought opportunities to see me, and wrote to me frequently. I was a poor slave girl, only fifteen years old.

So much attention from a superior person was, of course, flattering; for human nature is the same in all. I also felt grateful for his sympathy, and encouraged by his kind words. It seemed to me a great thing to have such a friend. By degrees, a more tender feeling crept into my heart. He was an educated and eloquent gentleman; too eloquent, alas, for the poor slave girl who trusted in him. Of course I saw whither all this was tending. I knew the impassable gulf between us; but to be an object of interest to a man who is not married, and who is not her master, is agreeable to the pride and feelings of a slave, if her miserable situation has left her any pride or sentiment. It seems less degrading to give one’s self, than to submit to compulsion. There is something akin to freedom in having a lover who has no control over you, except that which he gains by kindness and attachment. A master may treat you as rudely as he pleases, and you dare not speak; moreover, the wrong does not seem so great with an unmarried man, as with one who has a wife to be made unhappy. There may be sophistry in all this; but the condition of a slave confuses all principles of morality, and, in fact, renders the practice of them impossible (46–47).[1]

Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* appeared in 1861 after several years seeking a publisher, and met with favourable reviews but limited sales. Despite the preface and editorial efforts of well-known abolitionist and

author Lydia Maria Child, the outbreak of the American Civil War made Jacobs' story less pressing – she missed the moment for telling a slave's experience. The work was largely forgotten or dismissed as fiction until 1981, when, through the dual operation of the emergence of the women's movement and the efforts of Jean Yellin, who was able to both prove Jacobs' authorship and verify some of the unlikely events the text described,[2] this pivotal work was rediscovered and newly reread. The popularity and strength of *Incidents* in today's canon suggests that Jacobs' story functions in ways male slave narratives cannot: her acts of sexual independence and dedicated motherhood are in direct defiance of the traditional narrative of the female slave, raped and denied her children. Furthermore, her text presents a definition of womanhood accessible to her as a formerly enslaved African-American whose past made it difficult to adopt the behaviours and attain the status associated with the white feminine ideal commonly known as the cult of true womanhood.[3] Jacobs' narrative seeks to reach a white and middle-class readership, and on the surface, she affirms the values of that patriarchal bourgeois social system; nonetheless, she frames her experiences in a way that challenges not only slavery but the normative ideal available to free women at the time.

Jacobs begins her narrative with a wistful account of the happiness of her childhood. Although born in an enslaved family, Jacobs' grandmother enjoyed some independence and respect in the white community: she belonged to the same white family that owned all her children and their children, but she also had her own business baking crackers and lived free from any abuse. Likewise, Jacobs recalls living with her parents and brother as a nuclear family during her early years, unusual in American slavery where the plantation system frequently separated children from parents after infancy and also required many house servants like Jacobs' mother to live adjacent to the owner's residence. Despite this seemingly positive beginning, Jacobs acknowledges how her relatives were one by one sold away from their family, and no saving by her grandmother could ever meet the high price of her children and grandchildren.

This contradiction between a normalized, relatively humane childhood and the inhumane abuses occasioned by slavery establishes a primary theme of Jacobs' story. She demonstrates for the reader her family's ability and desire to live according to the nineteenth-century social mores that were held up by patriarchal white society as both morally necessary and foundational to citizenship. For example, her father is industrious and commanding, insisting on obedience from his children; mother and father live 'together in a comfortable home' (9). Jacobs' description of her grandmother as an

'indispensable personage in the household, officiating all duties', (9) notably ties her to the idealized woman of the nineteenth century, which Jane Tompkins describes in her *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction 1790–1860*.[4] These familial depictions give readers the impression of Jacobs as a child of what was then considered a morally superior domestic situation, where a woman's role in the home is socially important and influential. The opening of Jacobs' narrative establishes that she understands these values, but that her understanding will be rendered moot by her constricted status as a slave. As she reveals her experiences, she not only illustrates how she is denied the ability to participate in the white domestic hierarchy, but also questions whether that system is desirable for women after all.

From the relative childhood stability that characterizes the opening of the text, the narrative changes drastically, relating three separate deaths that turn Jacobs' life into one of a typical slave. Jacobs' mother dies when Jacobs is 6, and she is removed from what was, at least superficially, a family home (for no home vulnerable to the sudden sale of its members can truly be such). Like most household slaves, Jacobs is now required to live with her owner, a woman who teaches her to read and write. That loving owner dies when Jacobs is 12, bequeathing her to a young niece. In this way, on the edge of womanhood, Jacobs finds herself living with Dr Flint and family. Now considered the property of Flint's 5-year-old daughter, Jacobs becomes the de facto property of the male head of household, Dr Flint. Jacobs recounts her time with them as a period full of mistreatment and degradation. When her father dies, she is forbidden to go to his bedside, and she worries for her rebellious brother. Over the first few chapters, she provides stories of Flint's cruelty to her own family along with various tales of local brutality, communicating a sense of owners as unattached to their slaves and herself as isolated. Her voice in these opening chapters is effectively childlike: she tells her brother that 'we must be good' and expresses confusion rather than malice as a response to her mistress's cruelty.

In adopting this innocent tone, Jacobs aligns her position with that of women unprepared for abuse and sheltered from any knowledge of sexual impropriety in their own society; she adopts a voice which would speak directly to the white women who would have been her primary audience.[5] Her strategy is not to use the worldly, knowing voice that, in the light of her later experiences, she might well have appropriated, but instead a tone of assumed naivety, within which framework she tells how when she reaches the age of 15, she experiences a new level of privation and despair. Flint, at that time, 'began to whisper foul things in my ear' (26); Jacobs' explanation

of this sexual aggression from her master is oblique, for even acknowledging sexual suggestions was bold from a female author in the time when she wrote: male slave narratives often gave graphic accounts of violence and addressed the issue of rape, but the small number written by women tended to avoid the issue.

Jacobs reveals the first-person experiences of a woman who is expected to serve a man's physical desires without consent or redress. She depicts her owner as a man who wants female subjugation to be complete: while Flint could legally rape Jacobs, he also requires her mental submission to his control. She portrays Flint tormenting her with attempts at seduction: 'He tried his utmost to corrupt the pure principles my grandmother had instilled. He peopled my young mind with unclean images, such as only a vile monster could think of' (26). Rhetorically, this suggestive lacuna, where Jacobs tells us the nature of the image ('unclean') but not its content, aligns her reader with the position of the young narrator: her reader must fill in the blank with her own imagination, just as the adolescent Jacobs must make sense of 'unclean images', unwanted and unfamiliar sexual ideas.

In the excerpt from chapter X, Jacobs addresses her readers directly to ask for forgiveness and understanding and then confesses to her own act of sexual impropriety. She describes the actions of the white, unmarried Mr Sands (who will become the father of her illegitimate children) in terms which resonate with the conventions of courtship: he speaks to her on the street, he writes to her frequently, he is 'educated and eloquent' and his attention 'flatters her'. Much of her description of him here echoes the tropes of nineteenth-century literary narratives of courtship, just as, on the surface at least, Jacobs' modesty might appear to mirror the conventional self-deprecation thought appropriate to the female voice from Christine de Pizan and Anne Bradstreet on.[6] This apparent adoption of literary convention, however, is complicated in Jacobs' case by an underlying economic reality: Jacobs is literally, not figuratively, 'a poor slave girl'. On the one hand, this reminder might seem to indicate a distance in status that could make Sands's attention more flattering, rather than unsavoury, since nineteenth-century fiction is filled with scenarios of modest, relatively unprivileged young women capturing the eyes of proper gentlemen: in many narratives, female beauty, charm and especially purity overcome social status to result in marriage.[7] Jacobs has already related how her courtship with an African-American freeman was ended by Flint's orders, and this new male suitor seems to fall into place in a marriage plot

narrative; her descriptions of his attention reflect the norms of a courtship novel. 'Of course I saw whither all this was tending', she warns – but some of her readers might have failed to understand the inevitable outcome of what has been presented as a romantic prelude. Could we hope that this *unmarried* white man had honest intentions and could free Jacobs from Flint's predatory ownership? Any such illusion is dispelled by the introspective yet shamed tone of the explanation that follows. There will be neither proposal nor wedding, and Jacobs thereby changes tone from the shared confusion of a girl to the imparted experience of a slave from whom illicit sexual acts will inevitably be required. All her potential future *will* be degrading, rather than rewarding; therefore, she finds it 'less degrading to give one's self, than to submit to compulsion'. Her previously confessional voice now shifts to one of authority as she explains the impossibility of condemning her moral choices at the same time that she acknowledges them as wrong.

Jacobs' act of adultery goes against the key requirement of purity for nineteenth-century womanhood, but it simultaneously serves as a proto-feminist declaration to seize what control is available to the female in an oppressive patriarchal system. As several early critics have pointed out, Jacobs' relationship with Sands gives her, for example, a crucial measure of control over the children she bears him, since he buys the children and her brother, and eventually the children are freed.[8] Jacobs does not frame her act as one of power – she terms it a 'sin' multiple times – but she fully acknowledges how it is an act of defiance *against Flint*, who is both her owner and the male figure who represents the sexual crimes of slavery. When he confronts her about her pregnancy with Sands's child, she defies him: ' "I have sinned against God and myself," I replied; "but not against you" '.

Jacobs demonstrates the difference that her slave status makes to her life choices, but she rejects the idea that sexual submission is the defining difference between white and black. Instead, Jacobs' choice to succumb to an *out-of-wedlock* sexuality separates her experience from that of the hegemonic female. The feminist historian Catherine Clinton has argued that both black and white females of the antebellum South were subject to oppression related to property: while the black slave female must produce capital, the white female was bound in a duty to produce heirs to that property.[9] Jacobs declares the limits of her power as a slave while exposing the limits of power for all women with her confession and its rationalizations. Comparing her relations with Sands to what might have been with Flint, Jacobs indicates Sands is a

better sexual choice because he does not 'control' her, but that such a lover can only offer 'something akin' to freedom, because in a slave's case that control still operates elsewhere, in the form of her owners.

But, this in turn raises questions for free, married women. Even a Northern white woman could not claim to be fully in control of her own life, and while she might speak against her husband's treatment, that would not guarantee protection from abuse. Jacobs' reflection on her illicit affair as a freedom, even a false one, potentially posits an advantage over the women caught in the hegemonic cult of true womanhood, with their personhood and property legally bound to fathers and husbands. Jacobs' situation seems unusual and extreme, and both she and her editor Childs introduce her story as an 'indelicate' one. Yet, the oppression she experiences has its correlation in the situation of nineteenth-century women who attempted to wrest some measure of control by elevating the importance of the domestic sphere. Jacobs' avoidance of Flint and attachment to Sands exposes the way in which 'purity' was an impossible standard by which to measure a woman. Jacobs manages a similar negotiation of conventional morality on the matter of childrearing. The remainder of her narrative focuses on protection of her children against all odds, where, again, she appears initially to embrace the hegemonic notion of domestic ideology but proceeds to illustrate not only how it is in practice unavailable to her, but also fundamentally flawed, even for free women.

Jacobs' efforts to protect her children exemplify ideal motherhood, wherein women exist to raise the future citizens of their society, but since Jacobs knows her children will not be citizens, but chattels, her goal must shift accordingly: in her peculiar case Jacobs must abandon her children in order to save them. Her time as the concubine of Mr Sands is brief: he marries a white woman, leaving Jacobs and their children, Ellen and Ben, as the possessions of the Flints. Ellen and Ben increasingly run the risk of abuse from Flint, so Jacobs decides to 'escape' by hiding herself in an attic crawl space at her grandmother's, a decision she characterizes as dangerous, traumatic and absolutely necessary.[10] According to Jacobs, only by disappearing can she convince Flint to sell her children, who, once put up for sale, can fall into possession of their father, who promised to free them. As Hazel Carby explains, 'Jacobs developed an alternative set of definitions of womanhood and motherhood in the text which remained in tension with the cult of true womanhood.'[11] Jacobs explains her deep attachment to her children in terms that endorse accepted standards of white women's domestic duties, but she simultaneously must revise those duties to meet the strictures

of enslavement: not only does she face the loss of her children through sale, she is also disadvantaged by her lack of legal attachment to any male, including the father of her children. When acting as a mother, she does so as the only parent they have.[12]

Jacobs' means of escape – intense confinement – is again an event with literary precedents: a discourse of confinement marks much nineteenth-century female writing.[13] And in this confinement, as with her acceptance of Sands, Jacobs chooses one type of submission over another she considers worse. She accepts a trapped, isolated and physically crippling life so as to oversee the safety and eventual manumission of Ellen and Ben. Through conniving false letters that manipulate Flint into trips North seeking her recapture, Jacobs eventually succeeds in getting the children into their father's possession. Jacobs expresses her complete devotion to the cause of freedom for her children once the sale she has engineered through cunning is complete: 'The darkest cloud that hung over my life had rolled away. Whatever slavery might do to me, it could not shackle my children. If I fell a sacrifice, my little ones were saved' (88). Jacobs hereby not only fulfils her own wishes to see her children freed from male owners, but also fulfils expectations of maternal duty central to true womanhood, resisting one set of immoral and patriarchal laws to fulfil a singularly feminine moral duty.

Throughout the narrative, Jacobs follows just this proto-feminist pattern. She shows herself to be obedient and submissive to a female code, always respectful of her grandmother, and trying hard to meet the requests of her white mistresses. In contrast, she directs resistance and defiance to the men who seek to control her, notably Flint but also Sands when he is slow to act in the interests of their children. The later sections of the text feature a well-defined and adult voice in full contrast to the naïve girl who seemed at a loss for how to resolve her situation. In fact, she rebuffs suggestions that she move to Canada for safety when it would separate her from Ellen. Jacobs also tells of refusing (unsuccessfully) to let her freedom be purchased legally, since 'to pay money to those who had so grievously oppressed me seemed like taking from my sufferings the glory of triumph' (155).

When she concludes the narrative with a direct address, Jacobs points out to readers that her story ends with 'freedom; not in the usual way, with marriage' (156). She thus offers a subtext that an ending of marriage could not offer exactly the freedom she desires – it seems the 'principles of morality' that she finds most useless are those that oppress her not just as slave, but as female.

Marriage is the 'usual way' to end a woman's story, a traditional literary closure, but her account demonstrates that that ending is antithetical to 'freedom'. Like the other feminine ideals depicted in white sentimental fiction and embraced by the white culture that oppresses her – sexual purity, pious practice, nuclear and financially stable motherhood – marriage would be a false promise: false because an African-American female cannot expect marriage under the same terms, and also false because marriage offers no real freedom even to the women who are permitted it.

10

On the Enslavement of Women's Minds: John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women*

Katherine Smits

All causes, social and natural, combine to make it unlikely that women should be collectively rebellious to the power of men. They are so far in a position different from all other subject classes, that their masters require something more from them than actual service. Men do not want solely the obedience of women, they want their sentiments. All men, except the most brutish, desire to have, in the woman most nearly connected with them, not a forced slave but a willing one, not a slave merely, but a favourite. They have therefore put everything in practice to enslave their minds. The masters of all other slaves rely, for maintaining obedience, on fear; either fear of themselves or religious fears. The masters of women wanted more than simple obedience, and they turned the whole force of education to effect their purpose. All women are brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal of character is the very opposite to that of men; not self-will, and government by self-control, but submission, and yielding to the control of others. All the moralities tell them that it is the duty of women, and all the current sentimentalities that it is their nature, to live for others; to make complete abnegation of themselves, and to have no life but in their affections.[1]

When liberal philosopher and Radical MP John Stuart Mill published *The Subjection of Women* in 1869, almost a decade after he began drafting it, and only four years before his death, the British House of Commons had recently debated and rejected for the first time the controversial issue of women's suffrage and property rights. Mill, who as a Member of Parliament had proposed an amendment to the Reform Bill of 1867 substituting the term 'person' for man, had delayed publication in the hope that his book might appear in a more auspicious climate and exert some persuasive force.

Although it would be almost another fifty years before women were granted the right to vote in Britain, *The Subjection of Women* was a key catalyst for the emerging women's suffrage movement. It offered the most detailed and powerful sustained argument for women's equality made before the twentieth century; one in which Mill describes the subordination of women as one of the chief obstacles to human and social improvement. The granting of full equality would result in an 'unspeakable gain in private happiness to the liberated half of the species' (212). Mill appealed not only to utilitarian arguments for women's equality, but also to broader social progress.

Mill asserted in *The Subjection* the political, civil and property rights of women, their right to be educated and to choose their own occupation (although he assumed the majority would still choose motherhood), their equal rights to divorce and their rights against rape in marriage. The text was a comprehensive attack on patriarchy not only as it was embodied in law and social practice in Victorian Britain, but also as it was justified in the system of social and moral beliefs we now call patriarchal ideology. The importance of deeply held conviction and belief in maintaining social and political power structures was signalled at the beginning of *The Subjection*: Mill observed that the stronger the feeling is about an opinion, the less likely it is to be shifted by the weight of evidence. Feeling about the status of women, and relations between the sexes, is so intense and deeply rooted, he continued, that it has been little altered by 'the progress of the great modern spiritual and social transition' (120). Like other advocates for women's rights in the nineteenth century, Mill had been a strong supporter of the abolition of slavery and invoked similar arguments for women's freedom and equality. He recognized, however, that the intimate relationships between men and women and the fundamental role of patriarchal ideas in private and public life posed greater challenges than convictions of race and class inferiority. He marshalled a range of powerful arguments to support his claim that women should be treated equally to men, but acknowledged that inherent and illogical belief as to their inferiority remained difficult to shift – not only in the minds of men, as we shall see, but also in those of women.

The Subjection was received by Mill's male friends and readers with a sense of dismay that reflected the controversial nature of his political claims and a lack of enthusiasm that has persisted through generations of critics. His first biographer, Alexander Bain, suggested that Mill contradicted himself in postulating the mental equality of women 'against the experience of the least biased observers'.[2] Many saw Mill's text as an intemperate polemic against the

established order and blamed it on the untoward influence of his wife, the radical feminist Harriet Taylor. As the equality of women has become accepted, Mill scholars have for the most part dismissed *The Subjection* as inferior to his philosophical writings, a text of merely historical interest dealing with the legal disabilities of women in Victorian Britain, or, at best, a practical application of his arguments for individual freedom in *On Liberty*. As Julia Annas commented in 1977, 'the predominant view seems to be that *The Subjection of Women* is obviously right but of little importance.'[3] In Alan Ryan's revised study of Mill's philosophy (1987), there is not a single mention of *The Subjection;* nor is there any reference to it in John Skorupski's recent *Why Read Mill Today?*[4]

Since the emergence of the second-wave women's movement, however, *The Subjection of Women* has been recognized as a key text in the history of western feminism. It has been interpreted as a defence of liberal feminism, focussing on the civil and political rights of individual women, the potential radicalism of which is undercut by Mill's assumption that if given the choice, most women would choose to make care of the family their occupation. Only the exceptionally talented, Mill suggested, would choose a career outside the home – although the rights of women to make their choice must be protected. But, *The Subjection* introduced themes, evident in this extract, which are central to radical feminism and to continuing feminist debates over the construction of women's identity under patriarchy, over the status of women's cultural practices and affective relations, and over the relationship between sex and freedom. Mill's analysis of the ways in which women are socialized to accept and embrace the ideal of character prescribed for them by men helps to explicate women's continued resistance to feminism. His discussion of the role of sentimentality in this socialization illuminates the role currently played by popular, 'women-centered' culture in shaping women's identities, and his critique of sexuality presages continuing feminist debates about sex and freedom for women under conditions of inequality.

Mill's argument that ideas, ideology and values play a key role in circumscribing human action had already been established in *On Liberty*, his famous defence of individual freedom, published in 1851. Here, Mill argued that the greatest threat to individual freedom is no longer repressive state law, but rather the conformity of ideas expressed in public opinion and imposed through the tyranny of the majority.[5] In *The Subjection*, he developed a more complex analysis, arguing that hegemonic social values have an impact not only upon individual behaviour, but also upon the ways in which dominant groups maintain their power over the subordinated. The only actual reason,

he suggested, for the original subordination of women was the greater physical strength of men, but this has long been replaced by men's settled conviction of their intellectual and moral superiority. This conviction, long inculcated into women, had come to be shared by at least the majority of them, shaping and circumscribing their beliefs about their own capacities and potential, and making them complicit in their own subjection. The emancipation of women required, Mill thought, not only the overturning of dominant values and beliefs, but also women's own settled ideas about their shortcomings and limitations.[6] He regarded women's acceptance of their subordination not as evidence of their weak minds, but rather of their limited options: 'To those to whom nothing but servitude is allowed, the free choice of servitude is the only, though a most insufficient alleviation' (149).

Mary Wollstonecraft had made an argument about the shaping of women's characters by their circumstances in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (see Chapter 6 in this volume), but for Mill, this was part of a broader analysis of the ways in which social circumstances in general, and relations of power in particular, work on the minds of the subjugated. Women's view of themselves was socially constructed, as was all aspects of human character – 'character' being the term Victorians used for what we now understand as identity. Mill argued that character was profoundly shaped by membership in social formations, from the family, to social communities and classes, up to the nation. (He advocated a systematic study – 'ethology' – of the way influences worked to shape character.) In particular, character was shaped by membership in ascribed groups which were arranged in structures of power. In this context, women's characters, Mill argued, were not natural, but rather the products of socialization – although as we see here, he did not entirely dispense with the idea that in the absence of power relations, a 'natural' character might exist:

> I deny that anyone knows, or can know, the nature of the two sexes, as long as they have only been seen in their present relation to one another .... What is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing – the result of forced repression in some directions, unnatural stimulation in others. It may be asserted without scruple, that no other class of dependents have had their character so entirely distorted from its natural proportions by their relation with their masters ... (138).

The idea that femininity is learned rather than inherent, and that men's domination of women's consciousness must be overturned, would become a central tenet for second-wave feminists; this is, fundamentally, the meaning

of the slogan 'the personal is political'. As Simone de Beauvoir wrote in *The Second Sex* (1952): 'one is not born, but rather becomes a woman'[7] (see Chapter 17 of this volume). De Beauvoir emphasized women's need to transcend their own internal dependence: 'The fact is that the traditional woman is a bamboozled conscious being and a practitioner of bamboozlement; she attempts to disguise her dependence from herself, which is a way of consenting to it. To expose this dependence is in itself a liberation … '[8] De Beauvoir argued that the choice of women to pursue freedom requires the determined overcoming of socialization, and other second-wave feminists have openly criticized women's complicity in their own subordination. In 'The Enemy Within' (1970), radical American feminist Susan Brownmiller wrote 'it was men who made the arbitrary rules of masculine/feminine that we suffer under, but it is women who continue to buy the stereotypes.'[9]

The second-wave focus on consciousness-raising emphasized the necessity for women to realize the objective nature of their position, thereby liberating themselves from male definitions of their identity and interests. Consciousness-raising transforms women's sense of their own experience as personal and individual into something collectively experienced and structurally caused. This constitutes the liberation of women from the false assumption that their situation is unique or natural or their own fault; it frees them from domination and enables their autonomy. While the situation of women has undoubtedly improved enormously in political, legal and economic terms since Mill published *The Subjection*, the much-documented and publicly lamented lack of confidence among girls in their ability to lead independent and self-determining lives suggests that internal subordination has been more difficult to dislodge.[10] The continued unpopularity of the term 'feminism' with young women today is evidence of the reluctance of women, particularly young women active in the heterosexual marketplace to admit to any identity which might alienate them from men.[11]

Mill points to the role of sentimentality in convincing women that love is their highest calling and must consume their attention; a view summed up by Byron in *Don Juan* as 'Man's love is of man's life a thing apart/'tis women's whole existence'. It is easy to see in Victorian popular culture the role of sentimentality in persuading women that it was natural for them to discount themselves and serve the needs of others – to be, as Mill's contemporary Coventry Patmore put it in a poem of the same title, 'the angel in the house'. Mill was not alone in his critique of sentimentality: Marx and Engels assumed

it was in fact a cloak for the reduction of the family under capitalism to 'a mere money relation'.[12] But, while Marx and Engels focused on the way sentimentality maintains capitalist social structures, Mill, as is consistent with his broader analysis of power relations, was concerned rather with the role it played in ensuring women's willing acceptance of their subordinate role. This is a particularly important feminist critique today, given the emergence of a pervasive and commercially lucrative popular women's culture in modern liberal democracies, which works effectively to emphasize women's attachment to sentiment, feeling and the needs of others. 'Chick-lit' and 'chick-flicks' feature women expressing and discussing their feelings about their relationships with men and their children, commodifying their experience and veiling their interpellation in heterosexual structures and norms not in sentimental religiosity, as in the Victorian era, but rather in a rhetoric of female expression and bonding.[13] Women's popular consumer culture draws its legitimacy from the claim that it empowers women through self-expression and creates a shared space for female bonding, but the role of heterosexual sentimentality in it also reinforces women's deferral to the claims of others and to an ideal of sentiment itself. Moreover, it celebrates women's identities and practices as they have been constructed under the constraints of patriarchy, rather than calling for their reformation in conditions of liberty. Women's public spaces promote sharing, feeling and sentimentality, rather than drawing attention to the need for fundamental social change: they are, as Lauren Berlant has pointed out, at best ambivalent about politics.[14]

While Mill established effective and durable critiques of women's internalized subordination and the role of sentimentality in *The Subjection*, his distinction in this passage between self-control and submission to the will of others is more challenging. On the surface, his claim is consistent with his argument for women's freedom (and for freedom in general) as argued in *On Liberty*. Understood as a form of positive liberty, liberty for women, as for men, meant governing themselves by their own wills. But, freedom thus defined means control over appetite and desire, and this must be interpreted in the context of Mill's broader thinking to refer to control over sexuality. There are many dismissive and critical references across his writings to sexuality as a debased animal instinct – typical of the public rhetoric of the Victorians. We might conclude that this dismissal represses female (as well as male) sexuality, paradoxically reinforcing women's association in Victorian thinking with

the moral high-mindedness characteristic of the 'angel in the house'. Susan Mendus argues that Mill's insistence on marriage as based on friendship and moral commonality rather than sex is consistent with the distinction in his utilitarian thinking between the 'higher' and 'lower' pleasures and implies a 'deeply depressing and distorted' view of women.[15]

However, Mill did not single out female sexuality for criticism – unlike Rousseau, for whom sex as a dangerous and corrupting influence was associated with women and must be controlled through modesty and shame.[16] In fact, in much of Mill's writing on the subject, sex was defined as something done by men to women, an exercise of power performed in order to reinforce their domination: '… however brutal a tyrant [a wife] may unfortunately be chained to – though she may know that he hates her, though it may be his daily pleasure to torture her, and though she may feel it impossible not to loathe him – he can claim from her and enforce the lowest degradation of a human being, that of being made the instrument of an animal function contrary to her own inclinations' (148). Mill was a fervent critic in his newspaper articles of marital rape and sexual violence against women and consistently argued that the laws of marriage made it sexual slavery. This view of sex might be contrasted unfavourably with a contemporary feminist understanding of the importance of sexual self-expression, as a fundamental human capability and liberty. Mill's critique of sexuality must be situated, however, like all of his analysis of women's lives, in the real context of deforming power relations. In this sense, his argument is quite distinct from conventional Victorian puritanism and resembles more closely the critique of heterosexual sex as an expression of patriarchal power made by Andrea Dworkin and other contemporary feminist opponents of pornography and the sex industry (see Chapter 20 of this volume).

Critical studies of Mill as a liberal philosopher have for the most part missed the point and the force of his arguments in *The Subjection of Women*, which is as powerful a text analysing power, freedom and autonomy as the much more extensively discussed *On Liberty*. But, as Mill scholars have overlooked the power of the text, so too have feminists underrated its critical reach, consigning it to the category of liberal feminism and taking it to be limited in its concerns to the legal and civil impediments to the freedom of individual women under capitalism. This assessment reflects what we now might see as an outmoded division in second-wave thinking between 'socialist' and 'liberal' as defining categories of feminism. For

the radicalism of Mill's text is apparent now not only in its critique of the bourgeois institution of the family, but also in its foreshadowing of a post-Marxist analysis of the workings and effects of power. In its exploration of the construction of women's identity and subject consciousness, and its exposure of patriarchy's covert operation through commerce and popular sentimentality, and overt and deforming expression in sexual violence, *The Subjection of Women* anticipates essential concerns of feminist theory and politics in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

11

German Maternalist Socialism: Clara Zetkin and the 1896 Social Democratic Party Congress

Catherine Dollard

The liberation struggle of the proletarian woman cannot be similar to the struggle that the bourgeois woman wages against the male of her class. On the contrary, it must be a joint struggle with the male of her class against the entire class of capitalists. She does not need to fight against the men of her class in order to tear down the barriers which have been raised against her participation in the free competition of the market place. Capitalism's need to exploit and the development of the modern mode of production totally relieves her of having to fight such a struggle. On the contrary, new barriers need to be erected against the exploitation of the proletarian woman. Her rights as wife and mother need to be restored and permanently secured. Her final aim is not the free competition with the man, but the achievement of the political rule of the proletariat. The proletarian woman fights hand in hand with the man of her class against capitalist society. To be sure, she also agrees with the demands of the bourgeois women's movement, but she regards the fulfillment of those demands simply as a means to enable that movement to enter the battle, equipped with the same weapons, alongside the proletariat (77–78).[1]

At the 1896 Gotha congress of the Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD), Clara Zetkin (1857–1933) delivered a speech that boldly asserted: 'Only in Conjunction with the Proletarian Woman will Socialism be Victorious'. The head quote is drawn from that speech, a work that is seminal in the history of European socialism. The Gotha speech succinctly laid out the Marxist explanation of the impact of capitalism on female oppression, demonstrated how women's experience of subjugation was highly differentiated by social class, and set the agenda for female socialist activism. Zetkin provided a signal feminist moment

in calling for proletarian women to join in the class struggle. This passage occurs at the midpoint of the speech, after Zetkin had described the distinctive class-based effects of capitalism on women and before she reflected on specific ways proletarian class-consciousness might be inspired among working women. The passage effectively summarizes the core beliefs that would guide the nature of women's engagement both in the SPD and in the Second International.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Clara Zetkin was the most important woman in the most powerful socialist movement in the world, embodied in the SPD. From 1890 (the year that Germany's Anti-Socialist Law expired) through the onset of World War I, Zetkin's work in the SPD spanned the roles of organizer, activist, editor and ideologue. Zetkin's reach extended well beyond Germany; in 1889, she served on the organizing committee of the Second Socialist International and in 1907 became Secretary-General of its first women's section.[2] In 1917, after continuous and vociferous opposition to SPD support of the war, Zetkin left the party she had helped to create; she became a founding member of the German Communist Party (KPD) in 1918. She represented the party in the Reichstag throughout the duration of the Weimar Republic and, as the assembly's eldest member, opened the last session of the last freely elected Weimar legislature in 1932.[3] During her final years, Zetkin spent a great deal of time in the Soviet Union and died there just months after the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. Buried at the Kremlin Wall Necropolis, Zetkin became an iconic figure in twentieth-century European socialist societies, especially in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), where a street in central Berlin bore her name and the ten-mark note featured her likeness.

Today the GDR is gone, the currency eradicated, the street name changed. Because she was celebrated in the Eastern bloc and the most significant scholarly writing about her work (in both East and West) occurred in the decades of the Cold War, Zetkin's historical standing has diminished in the years since 1989. Even before the fall of the Berlin Wall, historian Richard Evans noted that Zetkin tended to be overshadowed in the annals of Communist history by Russian Alexandra Kollontai, whose 'theory of sexual freedom and emancipation … [gave] such fascination for later decades', and by fellow German Rosa Luxemburg, whose 'martyr's death … lent a posthumous glow'.[4] But Luxemburg's life work did not focus on women's liberation in the way that Zetkin's did, and Zetkin's views were formative to Kollontai's approach to feminist socialism.[5] The evolution of European thought on the relationship between socialism and the women's movement cannot be understood without assessing the work, ideas and organizational acumen of Clara Zetkin.

Zetkin's key ideological legacy is simple: socialism trumps feminism. This tenet had been set forth in the early works on women and socialism by August Bebel and Friedrich Engels.[6] But she moved beyond these towering figures not only in terms of her work as an organizer but also in terms of ideology. She sharpened the differentiation between feminist socialist activism and the bourgeois women's movement, a crusade towards which she thought Bebel extended too much sympathy.[7] Zetkin placed more emphasis on the proletarian woman as fighting 'hand in hand with the man of her class', thus placing her world view closer to that of Engels, especially in her explanation for the evolution of women's subjugation and her focus on mass movements as the key to female liberation (78). In his 1884 work, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels linked the subjugated status of women in the family to the evolution of inheritance law and the growth of patrilineal wealth.[8] Zetkin's leadership role necessitated putting such ideas in action. In devoting her life to inspiring the socialist sensibilities of women and convincing her male compatriots of the importance of including women in the socialist movement, she naturally developed a much more extensive reading of feminist socialism than did Engels's more anthropological approach to women and the family.[9] Zetkin expanded upon the groundwork provided by Bebel and Engels in articulating the foundational vision of women's socialist engagement.

The 1896 Gotha speech was groundbreaking in asserting that vision. My analysis of Zetkin's 1896 Gotha speech assesses the text in two ways. First, it investigates Zetkin's case for the divergent struggles of proletarian and bourgeois women, which emphasizes how the working woman had been 'relieved' of the fight against the men of her class. Second, it explores Zetkin's conception of the proletarian 'wife and mother'. These two elements join together in forming Zetkin's agenda for female socialist engagement. At their core is an orthodox Marxist understanding of capitalist exploitation instilled with a maternalist sensibility central to the women's activism of Zetkin's time.

Why should the proletarian woman not 'fight against the men of her class?' For Zetkin, Marx and Engels, the answer rested in the origins of the concept of female social illegality – the legal restriction of women's rights – which 'coincided with the creation of private property' (72). Inequality within the family emerged with the legal establishment of the role of a male proprietor who held rights of inheritance – and thus the 'wife as non-proprietor', barred from inheritance. Engels's *Origin of the Family* fixes this development in 'prehistoric times'[10], but Zetkin's 1896 interpretation gives greater emphasis to the female experience in contemporary terms and does not delve into origins. Critical to her case was the

historical assertion that, prior to capitalism, women were not conscious of their inequality despite the limitations placed upon their opportunity and potential. Only 'the capitalist mode of production … created the societal transformation that brought forth the modern women's question by destroying the old family economic system which provided both livelihood and life's meaning for the great mass of women during the pre-capitalistic period' (72). The destructive forces of capitalism made social class central to female experience. Thus Zetkin focused her discussion on how the ravages of the industrial era differently affected bourgeois and proletarian women.

Among the bourgeoisie, the 'concomitant symptoms of capitalist production' hurtle them 'further and further towards their destruction'. Zetkin expanded on this Marxist maxim by elucidating the consequences for bourgeois matrimony. Marriage prospects dimmed: 'the number of marriages is decreasing; although on the one hand the material basis is worsening, on the other hand the individual's expectations of life are increasing, so that a man of that background will think twice or even thrice before he enters into a marriage … Thus within the bourgeois circles, the number of unmarried women increases all the time.' These women searched fruitlessly for meaningful occupation, 'pushed out into society so that they may establish for themselves their own livelihood which is not only supposed to provide them with bread but also with mental satisfaction'. The dearth of opportunities caused middle-class women to band together in search of social and economic change. The bourgeois women's movement emerged from the strivings of uprooted females who had been made conscious of their social illegality due to the destabilizing effects of capitalism. Bourgeois men feared this movement, because they were apprehensive about 'the battle of competition' that could potentially disrupt working life and were also immersed in the privileges of dominance and the freedom of life outside marriage (75–76).

In this narrative of displacement, movement and resistance, Zetkin made the case for separating the 'liberation struggle of the proletarian woman' from that of her bourgeois compatriots. The marriage crisis she described did not plague the proletariat, as working men in the industrial era were not hesitant to marry, and working women did not suffer from lack of occupation.[11] Indeed, an overabundance of work most afflicted Zetkin's target audience: 'As far as the proletarian woman is concerned, it is capitalism's need to exploit and to search incessantly for a cheap labor force that has created the women's question' (76). Thus there would be no battle between proletarian men and women analogous to the bourgeois conflict, as no barriers had been 'raised against her participation

in the free competition of the market place'. Proletarian women worked in order to support the family, while bourgeois women needed to work because family had eluded them. Their struggles differed in essence, and no women's movement could bring them together.

But Zetkin's speech made clear that the proletarian woman did struggle. The working woman 'wanted to bring prosperity to her family, but instead misery descended upon it'. Such misery resulted from the distance that grew between mother and family as she entered the labour force. Exploitative employers benefited from the cheaper labour of females as 'the machine rendered muscular force superfluous … [thus] the capitalists multiply the possibilities of women's work' (77).

Capitalism had made the proletarian woman conscious of her social illegality through her exploited status as a labourer. Zetkin's language conveyed the particular conditions of female oppression: thwarted in her attempt for prosperity, separated from family, used as cheap labour and, above all, submissive to her exploitation. Only 'hand in hand with the man of her class' could she seek change. And, as the title of the speech (and subsequent pamphlet) indicates, 'only in conjunction with the proletarian woman will socialism be victorious'. This was true not only in the idealistic terms of a movement that sought to liberate humanity from exploitation, but also in practical terms: cheap and submissive female labour was an essential means of capitalist predominance. Zetkin's agenda was clear: 'The main task is, indeed, to awaken the women's class consciousness and to incorporate them into the class struggle.' Class struggle trumped the feminist struggle: 'the petty, momentary interests of the female world must not be allowed to take up the stage. Our task must be to incorporate the modern proletarian woman in our class battle!' (79).

In both her description of the exploitation of the female proletariat and her rejection of the bourgeois women's movement, Zetkin draws upon the pulls of home – evoking dreams of a 'sunny and pleasant life for her children', and seeking justice through the 'rights as wife and mother [being] restored and permanently secured'. The Gotha speech reflected the maternalist ideology of its time. As described by historian Ann Taylor Allen, maternalism celebrated the importance of 'the world as a mother-centered household, centered on an egalitarian male-female couple and pervaded by maternal values of nurture, compassion, and individualized concern'.[12] Allen's work has been pivotal in demonstrating that maternalist thought was germane to both moderate bourgeois feminism and the radical activism of reformers such as Lily Braun, Ruth Bré and Helene Stöcker. Maternalist ideology suffused Zetkin's radicalism as well.

While she was a thoroughly committed socialist, she came from bourgeois stock. Trained as a schoolteacher and governess in the 1870s at a seminar headed by early moderate women's rights advocate, Auguste Schmidt, Zetkin came of age in an environment that emphasized maternal service as the foremost way in which women could contribute to society and perhaps transform it.[13] Zetkin championed the maternal role in the Gotha speech:

> It must certainly not be the task of Socialist propaganda among Socialist women to alienate the proletarian woman from her duties as mother and wife. On the contrary, she must be encouraged to carry out these tasks better than ever in the interests of the liberation of the proletariat. The better the conditions within her family, the better her effectiveness at home, the more she will be capable of fighting. The more she can serve as the educator and molder of her children, the better she will be able to enlighten them so that they may continue to fight on … When a proletarian exclaims: 'My wife!' he will add mentally, 'Comrade of my ideals, companion of my battles, mother of my children for future battles' (81–82).

Zetkin's words evoke a harmonious familial scene, characterized by enlightened children, a companionate marriage and a purposeful wife and mother at the bedrock. These happy households would promote socialist activism and perhaps even offer a conduit to socialism's triumph.

Engels's *Origin of the Family* served as a forerunner to Zetkin's idealization of the proletarian marriage. In it, Engels contended that, 'since large-scale industry has moved the woman from the house to the labor market and the factory, and made her, often enough, the bread-winner of the family, the last remnants of male domination in the proletarian home have lost all foundation – except, perhaps, for a bit of that brutality towards women which became firmly rooted with the establishment of monogamy.'[14] The bit of conjectured brutality aside, Engels presented a vision of equality in the proletarian household. Yet, as Lise Vogel has observed, his vision 'vastly underestimates the variety of ideological and psychological factors that provide a continuing foundation for male supremacy in the working-class family'.[15] Engels's presentation of women's work prior to industrialization is also somewhat idealized. Sociologist Josette Trat notes, 'Going out to work was not completely new for women … Nostalgic images of an ideal woman at her household's service had little in common with reality'.[16]

Zetkin, too, has been criticized for romanticizing the condition of the proletariat in her appeals for a unified socialist movement. Another sociologist, Tania Ünlüdağ, has argued that Zetkin 'based the content and aims of her

feminist activities on a theoretical construct, particularly on a construct of the proletarian woman that had little in common with the social and economic situation of the actually existing proletarian woman in Imperial Germany'.[17] Vogel is similarly critical, maintaining that in the 1896 Gotha speech, 'Zetkin's picture of the working-class woman constitutes an abstraction that verges on caricature'.[18] Certainly, in her description of comrades-in-marriage facing life's battles together, Zetkin evokes an archetype rather than a real relationship. But, the 1896 text was a speech, intended to garner a reaction and enlist support for a specific agenda of female activism. In an 1899 pamphlet titled *Der Student und das Weib* [The Student and the Woman], Zetkin argues for the expansion of female education, especially at the highest levels. Most of the pamphlet focuses on the nature of education in Germany and explores the ways in which female study might best be structured. But, the text also describes the value of education in developing women into fully rounded human beings. An educated woman 'surely would be able to give with more complete, more mature strength the best of her being and endeavors, the being and endeavors of a beloved spouse, raising healthy children and excelling in oneself'. Such a mother would raise her children well, inspiring them to the heights of 'powerfully unfurled humanity'.[19] The new epoch had created new demands but also new possibilities: 'The modern person seeks in love, marriage, and family life, a higher, more versatile, and richer substance than did his ancestors. If a woman wants to meet the higher responsibilities of wife and mother, she must not only be a strong and harmoniously developed personality, but also have the possibility to prosper in the family.'[20] The pamphlet closes with an image of enriched partnerships, similar to the relationship described in the Gotha speech: 'When two strong, free personalities find themselves in love marriage will … elevate the individual personalities in mutual giving and receiving beyond themselves … The social revolution creates the social preconditions for full female humanity … and places by the side of the citizen a collaborative, coequal partner.'[21] The 1899 text expands upon the maternalist ideals set forth in the Gotha speech, demonstrating their resilience in Zetkin's thought.

Both Marxism and maternalism drive towards a different and better future. Zetkin's activism prioritized socialism; thus the Gotha speech set forth the Marxist doctrine that female liberation could only be achieved by means of eradicating capitalism. This is affirmed in the penultimate paragraph of the 1896 speech that asserts, 'the incorporation of the great masses of proletarian women in the liberation struggle of the proletariat is one of the prerequisites for the victory of the socialist idea and for the construction of a socialist

society' (83). Yet Zetkin believed that such a society was also one in which distinctly maternal qualities would thrive. As her final paragraph concludes, 'only a socialist society will solve the conflict that is nowadays produced by the professional activity of women … [then] the woman will become an equally entitled, equally creative … companion of her husband; her individuality will flourish while at the same time, she will fulfill her task as wife and mother to the highest degree possible' (83). According to Clara Zetkin, socialism would only be victorious in conjunction with the proletarian woman – and that woman could only achieve her maternalist calling in a socialist society.

12

How Turn of the Century Feminism Finds Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper"

Shirley Samuels

It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please!

I don't want to go outside. I won't, even if Jennie asks me to. For outside you have to creep on the ground, and everything is green instead of yellow.

But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way.

Why there's John at the door!

It is no use, young man, you can't open it!

How he does call and pound!

Now he's crying for an axe.

It would be a shame to break that beautiful strong door!

'John dear!' said I in the gentlest voice – 'the key is down by the front steps, under a plantain leaf!'

That silenced him for a few moments.

Then he said – very quietly indeed – 'Open the door, my darling!'

'I can't,' said I. 'The key is down by the front door under a plantain leaf!'

And then I said it again, several times, very gently and slowly.

I said it so often that he had to go and see, and he got it of course, and came in.

He stopped short by the door. 'What is the matter?' he cried. 'For God's sake, what are you doing!'

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.

'I've got out at last,' said I, 'in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!'

Now why should that man have fainted?

But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him![1]

At the end of 'The Yellow Wallpaper', a work that has both mobilized feminist attention and served to frighten readers, quite short paragraphs appear from a narrator who seems to have descended into madness. As she crawls around the walls of the room with the eponymous wallpaper, she makes her way over the prone body of her husband. Addressing him, or perhaps the reader, she declares, 'I've got out, in spite of you and Jane'. As it produces a sense of being haunted by crawling women, 'The Yellow Wallpaper' also asks about what it is for women to be visible. The motif of visibility encouraged by the narrator's attention to what can be seen in the room includes the question of what can be seen out the window. What happens to make a yellow smudge at the height of a shoulder all around the room? When does the narrator start crawling? How does it happen that the woman she sees crawling becomes a woman to be rescued from behind the wallpaper? The ambiguities of the story have, since the time of its first magazine publication in 1892, marked it as the place to turn for a number of questions about genre. Is it a horror story, a ghost story or, perhaps, a feminist awakening? Since the story was published around the time of Kate Chopin's similarly ambiguous novel *The Awakening* (1899) and since it was followed by Gilman's defiantly utopian novel *Herland* (1915), it has become a standard classic in literary classrooms that pay attention to feminism. The further details about Charlotte Perkins Gilman's life, including her significant non-fiction treatise *Women and Economics* and her work as a travelling spokesperson for women's financial independence, have made the story subject to intense scrutiny.

In presenting the relation between the crawling woman and the fallen man at the end of the story, I want to ask about the ambiguity of the final sentences as well as to present a somewhat different enquiry into the genre of the story, asking especially what might connect this story to the fallen men of the American Civil War. That is, in addition to the resonance of the domestic space as a fraught space of writing, what concepts of mourning and motherhood resonate through its pages in relation to the great agony of the war? Named in the story, as well as

in its author's life story, is the so-called 'rest cure' developed by S. Weir Mitchell to treat what we now recognize as post-traumatic stress suffered by veterans of the Civil War. Subsequently applied to women, the rest cure was blamed by Charlotte Perkins Gilman for her own descent into terrible depression, and the story displays Gilman as the genius of neurasthenic imagining. Neurasthenia, the nineteenth-century label for forms of depression, could be the diagnosis for this woman who is never named, so that the name of 'Jane' operates as a potential self-naming as well as a potential name for a domestic servant. The anonymity of a narrator who has recently given birth but is herself confined to a 'nursery' at the top of a seemingly haunted house presents her as a potential agent as well as subject, as a writer, since she presents the story as smuggled writing, and as written by someone who wants to tear the paper from the walls of the home. This essay suggests that, in addition to the yellow paper covering the domestic space, the meanings of paper in the text might include the yellow paper packets used to send home the personal effects of dead soldiers during wartime, a connection that threatened the memories of mothers in the still-potent territory of loss in this suggestive story.

The story refers to the American Civil War through the genealogy of the rest cure, a recently developed treatment for traumatized soldiers, but it takes place within the consciousness of a woman confined at home, and its references to the battlefield hinge simply on the doctor named in the story. The treatment of 'nerves' that S. Weir Mitchell's 'rest cure' entailed invokes wounds that are invisible, wounds that we now associate with post-traumatic stress disorder. The rest cure in the story is designed to cure a mental wound; such an invisible wound implies an effect caused by having a child. By treating the mother as a patient, the story repudiates the form of the family that her act of giving birth might be seen to represent – because the mother, not the child, inhabits the nursery. The question of labour suggests labour as multivalent – the labour of writing becomes at once birth and the work associated with inappropriate feminine desires, work that the husband, also a doctor, attempts to prevent. The husband becomes an inert body in the narrator's crawling path at the end of the story, but he is also substituting his prone body for the previously prone body of the narrator who has been told to rest in that same room, and who has now either disappeared behind the wallpaper or managed to get 'out'. What has happened within the story might make the 'rest cure' something portable from the bodies of wounded Civil War soldiers to the post-partum bodies of women. The oddity within the story is that it produces a form of a corpse – the ambiguous casualty

of the man's body that the narrator needs to crawl over. What is it for a woman to crawl as she makes that disturbing last enquiry: 'Now why should that man be lying there?'

Outside the window, during the story, the lingering question remains about the other bodies that appear at the edge of the garden. An apparent menace clings to them, yet by the end of the story, in addition to the narrator, there are many women crawling. The narrator first sees a woman 'always creeping, and most women do not creep by daylight'. She turns to see her: 'I often wonder if I could see her out of all the windows at once' (46). A story about a woman confined to a room might lead an alert reader to expect some form of home invasion. The space of the home since the invention of the eighteenth-century gothic novel has invoked violence and mysterious passages behind the walls. What is the configuration that makes the walls of the home still a place that inhabitants leave from and return to? As the narrator continues to look out of the window, she sees 'so many of those creeping women and they creep so fast' (50). Their presence seems linked to the woman that she finds inside the wallpaper at the end of the story when she peels the paper away. After reading this story, the reader sees the home as the site through which the world can be seen, its walls somehow transparent. The woman behind the wallpaper becomes 'that poor thing who began to crawl and shake the pattern. I got up and ran to help her.' What happens when they peel the paper together is a chiasmic structure of entangled longing: 'I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper' (48).

Throughout 'The Yellow Wallpaper', paper becomes entangled with feminist motifs as an aspect of writing, domesticity and intimacy. The use of paper as both an element for writing and a way to decorate houses overlaps in the story, and the overlap engages an aspect of trust. The narrator asks the reader for trust but clearly withholds information. For instance, she complains that, after he has confined her to the nursery, her husband refuses to change the paper: 'He said that after the wallpaper was changed it would be the heavy bedstead, and then the barred windows, and then that gate at the head of the stairs, and so on' (28). It does sound like a reasonable sequence. But, why do the windows have bars on them? Who has bitten the furniture or the bedstead that has been 'fairly gnawed'? The furniture that was to stay outside the body becomes something that can be ingested. The space that was to be a solid edge to the room becomes permeable. The narrator resorts to personification: 'This paper looks to me as if it knew what a vicious influence it had' (30). Her husband believes there can be no reason for her unease: he 'knows there is no *reason* to suffer, and that satisfies him' (28). His dissatisfaction with reason

emerges even as he explains, 'I am a doctor and I know'. The limits of his knowledge appear in a temporal zone: 'If I don't pick up faster he shall send me to Weir Mitchell in the fall' (32).

A certain ambiguity persists about the emergence of other women in the story. Noting the smudges along the wall, the narrator protests, 'Most women do not creep by daylight'. And yet, the narrator quickly informs the reader that 'I always lock the door when I creep by daylight'. A woman off in the distance catches her eye: 'I have watched her sometimes away off in the open country, creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a high wind' (46). And, we are told of the woman behind the wallpaper that 'she just takes hold of the bars and shakes them hard' (44). By the end of the story, 'there are so many of those creeping women, and they creep so fast' (50).

Interpretations of the story have traditionally drawn on biographical details from Gilman's life. After her father walked out on them, the family relied in part on the resources of his aunts, including the prominent writers Harriet Beecher Stowe and Catharine Beecher. In addition to her bestselling abolitionist work *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe had co-authored, with her sister Catharine, an advice manual on domestic concerns, *The American Women's Home*. The introduction to this work addresses the need to train women for their lives at home. Gilman's later authorship of *The Home: Its Work and Influence* might be traced to the popularity and effect of the earlier book written by her aunts. In *The Home*, Gilman might also be seen to reflect back on 'The Yellow Wallpaper' as she answers the question (what is the idea of home?) with the bleak statement: 'The man free, the woman confined'.[2] In this more sociological work, Gilman explores the idea of home as a prison for women. In her still later reflections in *The Man-Made World: Our Androcentric Culture* (1911), Gilman concludes with this last sentence: 'an economic democracy must rest upon a free womanhood; and a free womanhood inevitably leads to an economic democracy'.[3]

The fictional treatment of the home in 'The Yellow Wallpaper' includes the theatrical space of the nursery. To adapt the formulation of Nancy Cott, what are the bonds of womanhood in this home?[4] Who performs the labour of the home and the garden? In addition to the cryptic and elliptical references to a child crying, the narrator describes moving into a space that seems to have been appropriated for the use of a family after having been an institution. The narrator exists within a hierarchical structure of the family that nonetheless alludes to companionate marriage. Yet, not only does the story implode that structure, that is, not only does it erode boundaries, it also inverts structures and empties spaces perceived as solid.

Above all, the narrator insistently returns to the form of paper that inhabits the home. Paper to write on is something that she has to hide, while the paper to decorate the walls of the home becomes something to attack. At the end of the story, she works hard to peel it off the walls, even as the act of writing is ambiguously inserted into her apparent insanity. Paper exists in the boundary between the room and the outside world as well as in the relation between utility and decoration. It leaves a smudge on her body even as she attacks it. No wonder her husband cannot allow this message into his consciousness. In fainting, he returns to the status of the enervated casualty of war, in this case a war of the household order and of the separation of the spheres. 'Now why should that man have fainted?' Now that she has to crawl over him – and now that he lies directly in her path, the man who could once say with such authority, 'I am a doctor and I know' – the narrator produces the final act of unsettling the authority of the medical profession and rearranging the status of the home.

The publication of *Women and Economics*, subtitled *A Study of the Economic Relation between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* and first published in 1898, marked Gilman as someone to turn to for serious grappling with the conditions of the lives of mostly middle-class women in turn of the century Europe and North America.[5] At the same time, following on the work of writers like Margaret Fuller who, in *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1848), presented a more philosophical rendering of the conditions that might limit such women's lives, the work contains literary and philosophical excursions along with its serious call for women to abjure the economic and social conditions that restricted their activity to the home.[6] The preface to *Women and Economics* calls for an audience made up of 'thinking women' who will consider 'not only their social responsibility as individuals', but also the 'measureless racial importance' they have 'as makers of men'.[7]

When Gilman refers to race, she imagines the human race, yet within that last phrase lie some ingredients of the criticisms that have been made against her work for its elitism and embedded racism, especially in the utopian envisioning of her later novel *Herland* (1915).[8] *Herland* presents a group of women who have been isolated in a remote walled off region positioned oddly in South America and have learned to reproduce through parthenogenesis. When they are discovered by male explorers, the description indicates an Anglicized community whose racial composition seems to have little to do with the continent where they are living. Nonetheless, the work shows that the surprise expressed by the male explorers centres on the ability of the women to carry out all the occupations that their intruders imagine to belong solely to the capacities of men.

In *Women and Economics*, Gilman states her premise early on: 'We are the only animal species in which the female depends on the male for food, the only animal species in which the sex-relation is also an economic one'.[9] The ability of women to make a living, asserts Gilman, depends solely on the social conditions that restrict women to the home and bar them from professions. She acknowledges that 'peasant women' work, but notes pointedly that their ability to profit from their labour depends on men. Besides, as she asserts, 'the women who do the most work get the least money, and the women who have the most money do the least work'.[10] Further, it is 'held to be their duty as women to do this work' and indeed, Gilman argues, in this view 'motherhood is an exchangeable commodity given by women in payment for clothes and food'.[11]

The surprising lack of sentimentality about motherhood may affect how 'The Yellow Wallpaper' imagines the post-partum existence of a woman who has recently given birth but seems to have little or no relation to the baby heard crying in the house where she has been confined to the 'nursery'. As the story moves towards its disturbing end, the narrator imagines women crawling everywhere, confined behind the wallpaper, beneath the bushes in the garden; the reader might imagine that they are the ghosts of the economic circumstances Gilman describes in *Women and Economics*. That work presents an extended comparison of human families to the factors that lead to economic choice and ends by looking to apartment buildings that have communal kitchens and nurseries, an early call for the style of communal living promulgated in some current progressive communities. According to the social circumstances Gilman depicts, the condition of motherhood unfits women for other work. But, she asks starkly, does 'the human mother, by her motherhood, thereby lose control of brain and body, lose power and skill and desire for any other work?'[12] In 'The Yellow Wallpaper', Gilman first answered that question with an emphatic no.

13

Ecology and Virtue in Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain, *Sultana's Dream*

Maitrayee Chaudhuri

You see the big balloon and pipes attached thereto. By their aid we can draw as much rainwater as we require. Nor do we ever suffer from flood or thunderstorms. We are all very busy making nature yield as much as she can. We do not find time to quarrel with one another as we never sit idle. Our noble Queen is exceedingly fond of botany; it is her ambition to convert the whole country into one grand garden.

The idea is excellent. What is your chief food?

Fruits.

How do you keep your country cool in hot weather? We regard the rainfall in summer as a blessing from heaven.

When the heat becomes unbearable, we sprinkle the ground with plentiful showers drawn from the artificial fountains. And in cold weather we keep our rooms warm with sun heat.

She showed me her bathroom, the roof of which was removable. She could enjoy a shower (or) bath whenever she liked by simply removing the roof (which was like the lid of a box) and turning on the tap of the shower pipe.

You are a lucky people! Ejaculated I. you know no want. What is your religion, may I ask?

Our religion is based on Love and Truth. It is our religious duty to love one another and to be absolutely truthful. If any person lies, she or he is…

Punished with death?

No, not with death. We do not take pleasure in killing a creature of God- especially a human being. The liar is asked to leave this land for good and never to come to it again.

Is an offender never forgiven?

Yes, if that person repents sincerely.

Are you not allowed to see any man, except your own relations?

No one except sacred relations.

Our circle of sacred relations is very limited, even first cousins are not sacred.

But ours is very large; a distant cousin is as sacred as a brother.[1]

Rokeya Hussain's *Sultana's Dream* describes life in 'Ladyland', a land where 'virtue herself reigns'. It is run by women, and men are kept 'in their proper places', shut 'indoors' for streets are 'not safe as long as there are men about' (8–9). The text, barely eleven pages long, written in the first person, reads as a conversation in a dream between 'Sister Sara'[2] and the protagonist Sultana who had fallen asleep while 'thinking lazily of the condition of Indian womanhood'[3] (7). The conversation is carried on while the protagonist, a 'purdahnishin woman' who is not 'accustomed to walking about unveiled' is led through the bustling town, visiting the 'good Queen', who 'liked science very much', and the 'famous universities, factories, laboratories and observatories' (18). She is viewed by the people in Ladyland as 'mannish', 'shy and timid like men' feeling 'very shy' walking on the streets in broad daylight (8). *Sultana's Dream* offers a satirical critique of the enforced practice of seclusion, 'purdah'.

Ladyland however is not just a land where women are free to explore their full potential. It is about a good society where its inmates 'do not covet other people's land' (17), where there is 'no crime or sin', where they do not want any 'magistrate to try criminal case', where 'fields were tilled by means of electricity' and where neither 'street nor railway accidents occur', nor 'floods and thunderstorms' (15). The world in *Sultana's Dream* reflects both a society witness to a colonial rule of rapacious greed and the many hazards of a poor country. The themes that surface prominently in the chosen extract are: (i) want, scarcity and technology; (ii) labour, idleness and sloth; (iii) the public, private and the sacred; (iv) and religion, love, law and justice.

Sultana's Dream is perhaps an unexpected text, written by a Muslim woman from colonial South Asia who understood purdah as an insider. Hussain had

also written a series of accounts of life in purdah titled *The Secluded Ones* and described seclusion as a 'silent killer like Carbon monoxide gas' (20). A hundred years later, the use of the veil by Muslim women has acquired different meanings: assertion of identity, a convenient way to assess public spaces and individual choice. In Hussain's world, the practice of seclusion meant total confinement of women to the household. This would deprive women of healthy and natural growth (47). Similar ideas are raised in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's later text *Herland* (1915); the existence of both counters Shulamith Firestone's 1970 claim that 'There is not even a utopian feminist literature in existence'[4]. Given the domination of western texts in literary canon, it is not surprising that *Sultana's Dream*, published in 1905, was discovered in the global knowledge circuit much later. It shares with *Herland* a playful depiction of a 'good society' run by an all-female community harnessed by technology, and living in peace, sharing, sustainability and solidarity. Both texts radiate with the quiet confidence of strong women who betray neither the aggression nor the cruelty usually associated with power. *Herland* offers 'a land in a state of perfect cultivation, where even the forests looked as if they were cared for; a land that looked like an enormous park, only it was even more evidently an enormous garden'.[5] In *Sultana's Dream*, the 'whole place looks like a garden' (8) and 'every creeper, every tomato plant, was itself an ornament' (11).

In both texts, women are interested in science and invent marvellous new technologies that help manage natural resources and enable perfect ecological equilibrium. A central theme in both, evident in the extract chosen, is the historical engagement of humans with the matter of want, scarcity and technology. Most descriptions of paradise share the idea of abundance where people are 'lucky' for they 'know no want'. Egalitarian movements of different hues have all crafted the demands of distributive justice into an economic strategy. In Hussain's India, as in Gilman's *Herland*, it was science and technology buttressed by collective organization, that was the panacea for want. It is particularly useful here to invoke J. C. Davis's argument that what sets utopias apart from other ideal world narratives is that in them, neither humanity nor nature is idealized.[6] Organization is the utopianist device to manage issues of supply (of satisfactions) with those of demand (of human desires). Efficient management of natural resources (solar heat and water balloons) and time (for unlike men they do not dawdle away time smoking) (10) is what makes this utopia possible. The managed order where women 'control all social matters' is however not frightening. For present through the text is an avowed critique of 'power' and celebration of love and beauty. Feminist views on technology have been varied. The radical

tech-utopian Firestone argued that advances in science would change material conditions to make equity possible. Cybernetics would eliminate the need for work; new reproductive technologies would eliminate the need for giving birth.[7] Development since the Second World War saw incredible advances in science and technology, bringing unimaginable amenities, better living conditions and possibility of sexual revolution. But it also brought in its wake new risks. A recent commentator, located in the West has read *Sultana's Dream* as a science fiction and an eco-feminist text but is critical that 'Rokeya's utopian women were abusing nature's bounty' so 'prominent in the text'.[8] Roushan Jahan, Hussain's biographer and translator, who is located in Bangladesh on the other hand, has a very different take on Hussain's use of technology. She writes how 'extraordinary things' that happen in Ladyland are 'all explained in terms of advanced technology' which 'serves human needs to beneficial ends'. Jahan notes that 'an India of horse-drawn carriages, gaslights, smelly, smoke-filled kitchens, dusty streets, natural disasters, famines and epidemics, cockroaches and mosquitoes-all the big problems and petty nuisances of Indian everyday life' is the context that enables one to appreciate Hussain's trust 'in the power of science and technology' (4). I invoke the two commentators: one located in South Asia and the other in the West, to emphasize that contexts matter, a point that I develop later in this chapter. Many of the themes Hussain raises remain relevant, for agriculture in South Asia is still largely dependent on the monsoons: 'The rainfall in summer [is] a blessing from heaven' (16). And even now 'when the heat becomes unbearable, we sprinkle the ground' though not from Hussain's imagined 'plentiful showers drawn from the artificial fountains'. And solar energy, rain harvesting, clean fuel, river cleaning, food security, water saving and reuse remain a concern just as women's toilets do.

Common to *Sultana's Dream* and Gilman's *Herland* is a second theme: a quiet celebration of labour and productivity and disapproval of idleness and sloth. Ladyland too disapproved of sitting idle for 'We are all very busy making nature yield as much as she can. We do not find time to quarrel with one another as we never sit idle' (15). The two sentences though placed together summon two different points. The first refers to the relationship between '[m]an' and nature; the second refers to idleness. Here, the 'we' is women who are 'making nature yield as much as she can'. They 'are all very busy' engaged in productive work unlike (one presumes) women in purdah who 'sit idle' and have all the 'time to quarrel'.[9] Hussain's emphasis on labour suggests that she believes that it is through material production that humanity comes to be what it is. Therefore, purdah by foreclosing women from productive work

forecloses the realization of their full human potential. In *Herland*, the women are astonished at the idea that humans need 'stimulus to industry'. They ask 'But don't you like to work?'[10]

We turn now to the third theme of the public, private and the 'sacred'. Rules of marriage, family and kinship in South Asia are intimately bound up with the ways that women are socialized within the family and thereby excluded from rights in the public domain. Norms of gender-based segregation ensure an all-male public domain, making it not just difficult but often dangerous for women to enter public spaces. The practice of cross-cousin marriages meant that even within the family a girl child would not be free to interact indiscriminately with male cousins. Hussain inverts the idea of the 'sacred' to critique the taboos that existed.

> Are you not allowed to see any man, except your own relations?
> No one except sacred relations.
> Our circle of sacred relations is very limited, even first cousins are not sacred.
> but ours is very large; a distant cousin is as sacred as a brother (16).

There are a couple of meanings that one can read here. The idea of the 'sacred' is redefined and extended: to reach out to a wider world beyond the family, to break any necessary association with prohibition of sexual relationships and to allow free interaction between men and women. This has been a recurrent theme for feminism: radical second-wave western feminists imagined a new world of the private without the tyranny of biological reproduction and monogamy. Hussain also imagines a world for women free from the constraints of society, although the context here is not romantic love but purdah.

The fourth theme of religion and love, law and justice is as relevant if not more in the twenty-first century world where sectarian conflicts have acquired a scale and intensity that few could have imagined as a characteristic of a 'modern' world. The statement that 'Our religion is based on Love and Truth' and 'it is our religious duty to love one another and to be absolutely truthful … ' at one level can be read as reflective of a specific South Asian context, where violent conflicts on grounds of religion are an intrinsic part of its history. At a more universal level, it articulates a vision of the good world where religion unites. In *Herland*, fears of afterlife do not haunt the women for 'we have no punishments in life, you see, so we don't imagine them after death'.[11] Expressing very similar sentiments Hussain states, ' … We do not take pleasure in killing a creature of God – especially a human being. The liar is asked to leave this

land for good and never to come to it again' (16). The international academic division of labour presumed for a long time that theorization (both explanatory and normative) is the preserve of western expertise and that there is an active lack of interest in non-western societies where the sheer urgency of our people's problems demands immediate alleviation. Recent years have, however, seen efforts to redress this. Both the choice of Hussain's *Sultana's Dream* as a text and myself as a commentator in the present collection can be seen in this light. This inclusion is however not unproblematic. Though the native is speaking back, in the contemporary global context the 'native scholar' resides both in the West (often as leading intellectual voices of a burgeoning postcolonial scholarship) and also in the non-West. The differential location (institutional, intellectual and everyday) and not the 'identity of origin' of 'native' scholars perforce imply very different articulations. It is in this regard that I had sought to highlight the markedly different takes of Hasanat and Jahan on Hussain's use of science and technology.

Pushing this matter of locations further, I would like to refer to the turn towards intersectional analysis within feminism in the West. In the South Asian context, the women's question was from its very moment of inception inextricably interlinked with: colonialism and nationalism, tradition and modernity, caste and religion and class and multiple identities. These concerns, which postcolonial studies have articulated in western academia, have been long-standing in these parts. South Asian feminism was invariably intersectional (though the term itself like 'postcolonial' entered our lexicon only after its emergence in the West). In that tradition, *Sultana's Dream* too addresses not just an undifferentiated patriarchy but one that intersects with religion and community; family and kinship; and nature, ecology and development. Intersection here is not about multiple identities alone.

As a sociologist, I am prone to emphasize contexts: whether of production, circulation or reception. The text is a necessary, though not the sole key to its own meaning, even though histories of different intellectual pursuits are marked by some 'fairly stable vocabulary' variously associated with social justice and peace.[12] Yet, contexts do play out in the way that the themes are articulated. Hussain lived in a colonized India. British control is dated from the victory in the Battle of Plassey in 1757, even though the British state formally took over only in 1857. Bengal, where Hussain was born in 1880, was already under British influence for more than a century. The influence of English education is unmistakable in *Sultana's Dream*. But, its most

tangible evidence is that this delightful fable was written in English. 'Rokeya's motivation to write was partly to demonstrate her proficiency in English to her non-Bengali husband, who encouraged her to read and write English, and who was her immediate and appreciative audience.' (1) Hussain's husband was so impressed with the story, that he sent it to his friend Mr McPherson, the British divisional commissioner of Bhagalpur, for comments who wrote that 'the ideas expressed … are full of originality and … written in perfect English … ' (2). Readers located elsewhere may not fully fathom the colonized mind's ambiguous relationship with English: a cultural capital one aspired to acquire and yet wanted to reject for colonialism rendered one's own culture, language and religion inferior in one's own country. It may be relevant here to mention the English Education Act of 1835 and the colonial vision 'to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect'.[13]

I would like to emphasize this point, for even in a multicultural, informed West, this location of the 'native' rendered 'alien' in her own land and situated at once in multiple cultural sites within an extraordinarily diverse society is not adequately appreciated. English was the fifth language that Hussain learnt, but she read classical texts in English: Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, for example, is a book she enjoyed a great deal. She lived in a Bengal which saw an extraordinarily rich public discourse on a range of issues including gender through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much of this was within Hindu Bengal, which both shared and differed from Muslim Bengal. Rokeya had to engage with both, just as she had to engage with English, Arabic and Persian apart from Urdu, which was the language of her husband and his family.

The story about supportive male members is also typical of the story of feminism in South Asia.[14] Feminist scholars in South Asia have dwelt on this matter and theorized the distinctiveness of a social context defined by: colonialism where women's organizations recognized early that women cannot be free as long as the nation was not free; relational selfhoods;[15] and multiple patriarchies.[16] One view has been that such efforts by men were solely to construct a 'new patriarchy' influenced by modern West's ideas of conjugal companionship and bourgeois domesticity. Even if it were so, a point that I have made earlier is that the very construction of 'new patriarchy' opened up possibilities for consequences that were not always intended.[17] Hussain's early life was spent in purdah. She had no formal education and was married at sixteen

to a man much older, a widower with children, but without whose support she 'might have never written or published anything'. And, she grew to be a tireless activist in promoting education for women even when she met stiff opposition from 'traditionalists' (40–41). Rokeya shared her faith in the liberating possibilities of education with social reformers and nationalists in colonial India. The same was not true for her beliefs about science and technology as Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* would suggest in its scathing critique of machinery and modern civilization. Rokeya's dream sits uneasily in today's South Asia. This is not because her understanding of ecology, seclusion, religion, scarcity and want, labour and sloth does not matter anymore. Indeed, they matter more than ever before. Rather, South Asian – like other – modernized nations no long welcome utopian fantasies which offer a standard by which to judge existing practices and imagine different and better societies.

14

Nazira Zeineddine: Pioneer of Islamic Feminism

miriam cooke

I will refute these shaikhs so that that the world will know that it is neither Islam nor men in general that deprive women of their rights. The problem is with the shaikhs who abuse their authority to make people believe whatever suits them … How impoverished is the nation in which only half the population is rational and, therefore, able to participate fully in its political and spiritual life. How impoverished is the man whose mother, wife, sister and daughter are said to be lacking! Gentlemen, you accuse us of lack of religion and reason. Why? Because you have blocked the paths of the intellect and you have cast us into an ocean of humiliation and ignorance … Can there be religion where there is ignorance? They have forbidden women all knowledge, even writing, and taught them to spin … the black all-enveloping cloth and the face veil were not enough of a veil for them; they wanted the veils to be the walls of the boudoirs to be left only for the grave … I believe that unveiling, knowledge and freedom are more conducive to honorability and chastity and preservation of the meaning of motherhood, the family, and the interest of society … Unjustly fettered by their veils and denied their freedoms and progress, mothers will be unable to secure their children's progress and happiness. To those who hold on to the veil, subjugate women, and preserve traditions: you have your beliefs, whereas we, who call for unveiling, the liberation of women, and the rejection of traditions, have our own.[1]

'I will refute these shaikhs', wrote a 19-year-old Lebanese Druze woman in 1928. In a context where women were not expected to assert themselves or even to speak in public, Nazira Zeineddine boldly used the personal pronoun 'I'. She did not pretend academic distance or impersonal objectivity but assumed the right to address the Islamic authorities, directly. Throughout

her two books, *Unveiling and Veiling* (1928) and its sequel *The Girl and the Shaikhs* (1929),[2] she addresses the shaikhs in the second person plural, often calling them 'Gentlemen' and sometimes, when angry at their insults, 'Shaikhly Opponents' or 'Slingers of Arrows'. These shaikhs held moral sway in the eastern Mediterranean and few dared to question their authority. Zeineddine did not merely want to address them, she wanted to refute them. She had reason to be outraged.

In the summer of 1927, some Syrian shaikhs had decreed that women should cover their faces when out in the streets. Zeineddine reacted immediately. In public lectures that she stipulated should not admit veiled women, she contended that these shaikhs, like their predecessors, had deliberately twisted the scriptures to privilege themselves and disempower women. She was determined to prove wrong their assertion that women were bound by Islamic doctrine to cover their faces: the Qur'an and the Sunna (the model of ideal comportment taken from the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad), she argued, did not call for women's faces to be covered.

Unveiling and Veiling came out in a critical decade when Middle Eastern women activists were becoming physically and discursively visible and therefore threatening the patriarchal status quo. In 1923 Egypt, the president of the Egyptian Feminist Union Huda Shaarawi made a spectacle of unveiling when she returned from the international meeting of feminists in Rome and showed her face to the welcoming crowd. Many Arab women followed suit. In Turkey, Ataturk's secularist social engineering project stigmatized the veil as emblematic of Ottoman backwardness. The Shah of Iran banned its use. In 1928, twenty-five journals edited by and for Arab women were in circulation. Many celebrated the new age that allowed women to make their own decisions about how to appear and act in public. It looked as though the face veil was disappearing; and with its disappearance, new opportunities and freedoms seemed to be opening up for women. The Syrian shaikhs tried to stop this process in its tracks, and Zeineddine tried to resist them.

Fluent in four languages, Turkish, Arabic, French and English, and educated in a Catholic school in Beirut with girls from the Lebanese Christian elite, Zeineddine had no formal religious training. It was her father who had taught her all she knew about Islam. Head of a minor feudal family from Mount Lebanon, Said Zeineddine was an Ottoman judge trained in nineteenth-century Istanbul, and the first president of the Lebanese Court of Appeals. At that time, all who studied and practised Sunni law were considered able to engage in polemics on

any subject of legal concern. Zeineddine took her cue from her father when she assumed the authority to speak out on behalf of Muslim women.

Everything Zeineddine had learned by the time she was 19 reinforced her belief that Islam, properly interpreted, gave women the same rights as men to freedom and equality in all domains. Plumbing scriptural sources, Zeineddine theorized the meaning of freedom beyond non-bondage to a natural freedom of will and thought equally distributed among men and women. Women need not demand freedom because it was given as part of God's grace. Muslim women, she insisted, are free to decide what they want to do and what they want to wear; they are free to think and, importantly, to decide what Islam means for them. And that is what she did: 'I gave my reason full liberty and I received from the Qur'an and the Sunna guidance concerning freedom and women's rights whose light was so intense, it would shame the brightness of the sun when it rises' (76).

She challenged the shaikhs to bring some word from the Qur'an about covering the face. Since she was convinced that they could not, there could be no mandate for it. Further, anyone who covers the face of a woman 'is committing a certain injustice'.[3] Acknowledging that people have different beliefs, she addressed herself to 'those who hold on to the veil, subjugate women, and preserve traditions: you have your beliefs, whereas we, who call for unveiling, the liberation of women, and the rejection of traditions, have our own'. She did not want to change their minds, she protested, but merely wanted the shaikhs to respect the opinion of those who called for unveiling, 'because one of us might be right' (61).

In fact, the Syrian shaikhs were reversing the advances that late-nineteenth-century reformers had made in their demands for removal of the veil and education for girls. For decades, Muslim women's rights had been hotly debated. Top of the list of issues were the veil and access to education. Women, with the exception of peasants and Bedouin, were expected to cover their faces; only the few who were able to afford private tutors at home received an education. Reformers argued that the face veil was connected with women's lack of education, and that this lack contributed to the backwardness of Muslim countries newly exposed to European scientific and technological advances.

Ironically and problematically, however, they were making the same argument as the British and French who had colonized their countries. It was not easy for the colonized to argue for women's rights while embedded outsiders were touting feminist principles as the way forward. Reformers risked the charge

of collaboration with the hypocritical colonizers, for it was no secret that the white men who were saving brown women from brown men, to cite Gayatri Spivak's apt formulation, were misogynists at home.[4] But, despite anxieties that the colonial powers might co-opt their demands, men and women reformers increasingly insisted on the need to change social norms and values so that women might participate fully in the public sphere.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some upper-class Egyptian women gathered in salons where they debated ways to advance their feminist ideals without provoking a backlash from the religious establishment.[5] The key to acceptance of women's rights discourse was to emphasize motherhood, and this is what Zeineddine did in 1928. 'I believe that unveiling, knowledge and freedom are more conducive to honorability and chastity and preservation of the meaning of motherhood, the family, and the interest of society,' Zeineddine wrote, 'Unjustly fettered by their veils and denied their freedoms and progress, mothers will be unable to secure their children's progress and happiness.' To emphasize motherhood implied that the rights to unveiling, knowledge and freedom that women sought were not being pursued by women because they wished to displace men in the public sphere or break up the family and its traditional hierarchy. Women who demanded these rights in their capacity as mothers in fact indicated their desire to strengthen age-old gender roles. The strengthening of these approved roles, especially that of mother, would enhance the welfare of a society in which the next generation could not be knowledgeable, happy and honourable if their mothers were not. Zeineddine often referred to traditions that cited the Prophet Muhammad's words, like 'Paradise is under the feet of mothers'. But the mothers of whom the Prophet of Islam spoke were free to mingle with men and to acquire knowledge. In fact, acquiring knowledge was an Islamic obligation. A few months after the Syrian shaikhs mandated the face veil, Zeineddine collected her lectures into a book that she dedicated to her father.[6] The first book about women's rights in Islam written by a woman, *Unveiling and Veiling*, shot her to prominence. Letters arrived from all over the world, and reviews appeared in numerous publications. For some she was a heroine and for others an apostate.

The book cited, detailed and analysed Islamic texts to uncover Muslim women's sacred rights. It outlined what some today call the feminist revolution that the Prophet Muhammad brought to the seventh-century Arabian Peninsula. Scholars have asserted that pre-Islamic Arabian tribes radically devalued women; several Qur'anic verses, by contrast, absolutely prohibit mistreatment

of women. One vivid example is female infanticide. Like today's abortion of female embryos, pre-Islamic Arabians often buried female infants at birth. The Qur'an explicitly forbids this practice (Qur'an 81: 8–14). The Islamic revolution, articulated in the Qur'an and in the Sunna, granted Muslim women important rights. For example, far from being men's property, as seems to have been the case before the seventh century, they were given sacred rights to property: property they earned, were given as a dowry or inherited was theirs. These rights Christian and Jewish women did not enjoy until the nineteenth century; even then it was not their religion that granted them those rights but the states in which they lived. Moreover, the Qur'an entitles women to sexual pleasure and if denied – either because the husband shuns his wife's bed or he is impotent – have legal recourse to divorce.

Despite Muhammad's urging to all Muslims to seek knowledge, women had historically been denied access to knowledge because, Zeineddine argued, being veiled confined them to 'the walls of the boudoirs to be left only for the grave'. She connected the face veil with the shaikhs' claim, derived from another saying of Muhammad, that women were lacking in religion and reason. Zeineddine blamed the shaikhs for this lack, not women's inborn inferiority. 'Gentlemen, you accuse us of lack of religion and reason. Why? Because you have blocked the paths of the intellect and … cast us into an ocean of humiliation and ignorance … Can there be religion where there is ignorance?' Because of an accident of birth, these shaikhs opined, girls were intellectually and spiritually inferior and thus not worth educating. Zeineddine argued rather that women's lack of religion and reason was due to lack of education, itself a consequence of lack of access to the public sphere and the imposition of 'the black all-enveloping cloth'. The lack, therefore, was not a biological fact but a cultural product engineered by the shaikhs. 'How impoverished is the nation in which only half the population is rational and, therefore, able to participate fully in its political and spiritual life. How impoverished is the man whose mother, wife, sister and daughter are said to be lacking!' The absence of active women in the life of the nation and the family cast a shadow on both nation and men. Both became diminished in value because the offspring of uneducated and inexperienced mothers could never achieve their full potential. The shaikhs' denial of reason and religion to women jeopardized their sacred role as mothers. Again, Zeineddine's argument revolved around the centrality of women's reason and therefore the need for education as essential to the welfare of the family and the nation.

Without knowing Mary Wollstonecraft, Zeineddine at times echoes her definition of reason as 'the simple power of improvement; or, more properly speaking, of discerning truth […] but the nature of reason must be the same in all, if it be an emanation of divinity, the tie that connects the creature to the Creator; for, can that soul be stamped with the heavenly image, that is not perfected by the exercise of its own reason?'[7] (see Chapter 6 of this volume). Likewise, Zeineddine's argument for equal distribution of reason and religion derives from a notion of shared grace. The face veil created a context in which religion could not flourish: 'Any Muslim woman who removes the cover from her eyes and vision will see the flood of freedom God has granted her' (39). The veil produced ignorance that deprived women of grace and knowledge about their freedoms that were enshrined in scripture.

Zeineddine's most virulent opponent was the powerful Shaikh Mustafa al-Ghalayini whom she had accused of contradiction and hypocrisy. Within a few months of the publication of *Unveiling and Veiling*, he had written a refutation of her book, claiming that no woman, especially not one so young, could have written it alone.[8] He accused her of naiveté for allowing missionaries to write a book whose cover she had decorated with her signature. Shortly thereafter, Zeineddine published yet another volume, *The Girl and the Shaikhs*, a full-scale attack on the shaikhs who had criticized her first book, a large part of which was devoted to Shaikh al-Ghalayini. She condemned his misogyny, most crudely exemplified in his comment that ugly women should be grateful for the mandate to cover their faces and his recommendation to Zeineddine that she take advantage of the veil.

How is it that such a powerful voice and thoroughly researched work should so soon disappear? Was it because she had been ruthless in her critique of the shaikhs, especially Shaikh al-Ghalayini? Yet, she was writing at a time when religious polemics were rife. Men insulted each other for their religious opinions, and few were castigated for exceeding the bounds of the appropriate. But they were men and she was a lone woman. She had even dared to advise the shaikhs that they, the experts who pontificated on the meaning of each verse of the Qur'an and the applicability of the Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, should read the scriptures before they pronounced on the veil. Further, she declared that the 'power you attribute to the veil has been woven on a loom of weak brains; it is a fantasy that you are weaving'.[9]

The disappearance of these two books and their author must also be connected to her religion. Her claim in 1928 to be a Muslim woman defending Muslim women's rights was less convincing after 1932 than it had been four

years earlier, for deeply political reasons. When the Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1923 and the French mandate was established by the League of Nations, the Druze lost their position of influence and power. In 1932, the French oversaw a confessional census to determine the size of the seventeen religious populations. These communities were then assigned political positions in accordance with their numerical importance. The contested census affirmed that the Druze were only the fourth most populous community, after the Maronites, Sunnis and the Shiites. Not only were the Druze displaced politically, they also ceased to be considered fully Muslim – rather, they became just one more religion. In the process, any claims to be Muslim, like Zeineddine's repeated claim that she was a 'Muslim girl', no longer held. Her books in defense of Muslim women's rights, authorized by that identity, lost their authority and became screeds by a sectarian. They passed into oblivion, as did she.

After 1932, Zeineddine's pen dried up. She seems to have been concerned that her outspokenness might jeopardize her husband's political ambitions.[10] Although her books remained talked about, they themselves could only be found in obscure libraries. Until 2008 and the celebration of the centenary of her birth in the Druze town of Baakline, no one outside her family knew what had happened to her. She was considered a pioneer of Islamic feminism, yet few knew what she had argued beyond some vague notion of women's rights in Islam. The shaikhs whom she had shamed took their revenge and ensured that this impertinent woman was silenced.

However, the revolution she had supported flourished. Except in very conservative societies like the Arabian Peninsula and poorer urban and rural places, women took off the face veil and the question of the veil went dormant for half a century. In the 1970s, it started to make a comeback. In Egypt, President Sadat's 1973 neoliberal Open Door Policy created an economic crisis that drove lower- and middle-class women to work to supplement dwindling family incomes. To overcome social reluctance, conservative women donned the veil, as a sign that they were chaste and honourable and no man could touch them. In 1978, Iranians opposed to the Shah and his westernizing policies turned the veil, called the chador, into a nationalist symbol. The crowds of black shrouded women out in the streets, some brandishing guns, became the face to the world of the Islamic Revolution that brought the hardliner Ayatollah Khomeini back from exile in Paris and into power in Iran. Subsequently, the veil, donned as a spectacular emblem of Iranian authenticity and nationalism, could not be removed. Until today, women in Iran, including western non-Muslim reporters, must wear the chador. In 1994, secular France was in an

uproar because three Muslim girls had gone to school with a scarf tied around their hair. The media made much of what came to be called 'l'affaire du foulard', or the affair of the scarf. Until today, the French left and right are fighting Muslim women and each other over this small piece of cloth. In many Arab countries, granddaughters are telling their mothers and grandmothers who had fought for the right to control their own bodies that they should cover. 9/11 brought a call to arms for Muslims everywhere to make themselves visible; in Muslim-minority countries veiled women became cultural ambassadors, some covering their faces for the first time. Muslim women remind their non-Muslim compatriots that they are there and to be reckoned with.

Theirs is not a return to the veil but the assumption of a religious, political symbol. Academics and activists, Muslim and non-Muslim, are fighting over its meanings: is the veil religious? Political? Social? Cultural? Is it voluntarily adopted? Are those who claim that they have chosen to cover suffering from false consciousness? Can a symbol so laden with patriarchal meaning ever liberate women? Is it coerced? Does it strengthen or weaken patriarchy? Over eighty years after Zeineddine wrote her retort to the shaikhs in Damascus, the controversy surrounding the veil remains heated. The veil continues to shape social relations even as its meanings have multiplied and complicated feminist thinking not only for Muslims but also for outsiders who have made the veil their business.

15

Virginia Woolf, Genre-Bending and Feminist Life-Writing: *A Room of One's Own*

Amber K. Regis

A very queer, composite being thus emerges. Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband.

It was certainly an odd monster that one made up by reading the historians first and the poets afterwards – a worm winged like an eagle; the spirit of life and beauty in a kitchen chopping up suet. But these monsters, however amusing to the imagination, have no existence in fact. What one must do to bring her to life was to think poetically and prosaically at one and the same moment, thus keeping in touch with fact – that she is Mrs Martin, aged thirty-six, dressed in blue, wearing a black hat and brown shoes; but not losing sight of fiction either – that she is a vessel in which all sorts of spirits and forces are coursing and flashing perpetually (56–57).[1]

Pondering the question of women and fiction, Mary Beton – the fictional narrator of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) – goes to her books in search of women in history. She finds an empty shelf and a striking contradiction: 'women have burnt like beacons' (55) in works of fiction but are 'all but absent' from the pages of history. Placing these books side by side, Beton imagines the hideous progeny of opposing traditions, the image of a woman emerging when one reads 'the historians first and the poets afterwards' (56). This woman is torn asunder: impossible, paradoxical, chimerical. Like Frankenstein's creature, she is pieced together from ill-fitting parts – 'a worm winged like

an eagle; the spirit of life and beauty in a kitchen chopping up suet' – and here, in turn, Woolf's text begins to rupture. Conjunctions are refused, inscribing dissonance. Sentences turn upon pivots of punctuation, with fiction and history facing each other across the neutral ground of a semicolon: presence in poetry versus historical absence, domination of kings versus marital slavery, eloquence and agency versus illiteracy and commodification. Woolf's text, like her subject, is a 'queer, composite being', an 'odd monster' whose importance lies in its return to the etymological root of monstrosity: *monēre*, to warn (*OED*). Of mythic proportions but practical insignificance, these monstrous subjectivities dramatize the extent to which women's lives are circumscribed by the narratives of others. As Mary Beton's research progresses through the centuries, she notes that women, with a few notable exceptions, are authored rather than authoring, elided from histories written by men and distorted in their fiction. Beton calls upon her Oxbridge audience to heed this warning; she challenges them to 'add a supplement to history', to fill the empty bookshelves not with more history but with some other form: 'calling it, of course, by some inconspicuous name so that women might figure there without impropriety' (58). Beton offers a clue to this different mode of representing women in her example of 'Mrs Martin', a figure who 'keep[s] in touch with fact', bounded by quotidian detail, but who does not '[lose] sight of fiction either'. Mrs. Martin is a 30-something in a blue dress, black hat and brown shoes, but she is also afforded a vital interiority: 'she is a vessel in which all sorts of spirits and forces are coursing and flashing perpetually'. To bring this woman 'to life', the breach between traditions of representation must be healed. Beton advocates a hybrid, genre-bending practice to reconcile fiction and history: 'one must […] think poetically and prosaically at one and the same moment'.

These sentiments are familiar to readers of Woolf. Her interest in life-writing was repeatedly marked by concerns with the limits and potential for mixing genres. In 'The New Biography' (1927), for example, Woolf explored a range of syntheses required to write a life. Truth and personality, fact and fiction, dream and reality-all should be held together in a fraught, oxymoronic, 'perpetual marriage of granite and rainbow'.[2] Putting theory into practice, Woolf produced a series of counterfactual and metafictive life stories throughout her career. Most famously in *Orlando* (1928), Woolf appropriated the novel form to produce a 'biography beginning in the year 1500 & continuing to the present day […]: Vita [Sackville-West]; only with a change about from one sex to another'.[3] With disquisitions on the social

inscription of sex, gender and writerly identity, *Orlando* employs fantasy to test the bounds of life-writing. This is particularly clear when Orlando transforms into a troublesome female subject; Woolf's narrator-biographer engages in meta-commentary, exposing the poor fit between women's lives and dominant (read: male) biographical traditions: 'the truth is that when we write of a woman, everything is out of place – culminations and perorations; the accent never falls where it does with a man'.[4] Here fiction and biography combine to produce a hybrid form of critical and creative practice, and while genre-bending is not exclusively feminist, Woolf demonstrates its particular usefulness, both politically and aesthetically, to women writers and subjects who are excluded from (or positioned on the margins of) the literary canon. We see this in *A Room of One's Own* as Mary Beton narrates her counterfactual biography of Judith Shakespeare. Fiction is employed to imagine the material conditions and gendered double standards that would lie in the path of such a figure:

> This may be true or it may be false – who can say? – but what is true in it, so it seemed to me, reviewing the story of Shakespeare's sister as I had made it, is that any woman born with a great gift in the sixteenth century would certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village, half witch, half wizard, feared and mocked at (63–64).

From the Stratford cradle to an unmarked London grave, Beton thinks 'poetically and prosaically', mixing literary forms and what is true and false, bringing Judith Shakespeare to life (and death). She does this in protest, filling the empty bookshelves and demonstrating the usefulness of genre-bending to forge new subjects and narratives. Beton identifies a literary precedent in the parallel rise of the novel and professional woman writer: 'The novel alone was young enough to be soft in her hands' (100); it had not yet 'hardened' (100) into a fixed tradition. She encourages her audience to renew this project of innovation; women writers must continue to manipulate literary forms, 'knocking that into shape for herself' (100) and providing 'some new vehicle […] for the poetry within her' (101).

These arguments enjoy a lasting legacy, and *A Room of One's Own* has proved a landmark text for feminist life-writing on several fronts. It has provided a theoretical framework to inform the creative practice of those who seek to write women's lives by experimenting with form. In biofiction and autofiction (neologisms coined in response to texts that trouble generic boundaries,) the *graphia* of life-writing adopts the form of fiction, and new auto/biographical

plots and subjects are crafted using the novelist's tools. Such creativity has also found its way into the academy, where feminist critics have increasingly turned to personal criticism – a seemingly intimate and avowedly subjective mode of academic writing. Creative and critical writers alike have followed Mary Beton's advice 'to think poetically and prosaically at one and the same moment', producing work that defies genre conventions and exploits the malleability of new and 'soft' literary forms to write women back into the life-writing canon twice over, both as subjects and critics.

Woolf's narrator, Mary Beton, enacts her own form of counterfactual biofiction in writing her life of Judith Shakespeare, and this practice is at the heart of her plea to 'bring [Mrs Martin] to life'. Fiction affords poetic license, for auto/biography, like those poetic and dramatic traditions outlined by Beton, has 'hardened' (100) into a dominant (read: male) tradition. Sidonie Smith characterizes this tradition, and the slavish adherence to its structures and strictures, as a 'patrilineal contract'.[5] Women reproducing these narratives in their life-writing perform a 'cultural ventriloquism'; they reinforce the 'privileged cultural fictions of male selfhood' and '[take their] place on stage, not as Eve, but as Adam'.[6] By contrast, autofiction and biofiction have provided the means to expose, defy and break this contract.

Woolf's experiments in biofiction – such as *Orlando* and *Flush* (1933), or earlier works such as 'The Journal of Mistress Joan Martyn' (1906) and 'Memoirs of a Novelist' (1909) – privilege exposure. In the case of 'Memoirs of a Novelist', Woolf integrates fragments of biofiction within the frame of a fictional book review; the narrator paraphrases and reproduces quotations from an imagined biography – of a woman, by a woman – but rails against its reticence. At the mercy of the biographer's hagiographical account of feminine 'virtue[s]', Miss Willatt, the eponymous novelist and biographical subject, is reduced to 'a wax work […] preserved under glass'.[7] But Woolf's narrator-reviewer espies an alternative narrative; it 'creep[s] out in the notes, in her letters' and 'discredits all the platitudes on the opposite page.'[8] She responds by turning to speculative storytelling: 'To imagine her then, as the sleek sober woman that her friend paints her, doing good wearily but with steadfast faith, is quite untrue; on the contrary she was a restless and discontented woman, who sought her own happiness rather than other people's.'[9] Thus reconceived, discontent lies not solely with Miss Willatt and the constraints of domestic ideology, but also with the narrator-reviewer who rejects the authority of 'official' biographical narratives. Here Woolf's defiant mixing of genres –

appropriating and combining fiction, review essay and biography – anticipates later theorizing of feminist life-writing practice. For Sidonie Smith, who takes her cue from second-wave French feminism – 'the *écriture feminine* of Hélène Cixous, the *womanspeak* of Luce Irigaray, the *jouissance* of Kristeva' – this 'shifting of generic boundaries' is at the heart of any emancipatory life-writing practice; she advocates genre-bending as the means to '[claim] the legitimacy and authority of another subjectivity […] a new system of values, a new kind of language and narrative form […], an alternative to the prevailing ideology of gender'.[10] And feminist writers have been quick to recognize the subversive potential of autofiction and biofiction. In *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933), for example, Gertrude Stein performs a species of inverted life-writing; she collapses the distance between self and relational 'other', making use of Toklas's appropriated and ventriloquized 'I' to inscribe and playfully encode their heterodox intimacies. More recently, and more explicitly, Jeanette Winterson has incorporated fantastical and carnivalesque interludes into her autobiographical novel, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985). This coming-of-age narrative, in which the protagonist, Jeanette, achieves maturity through sexual heterodoxy and an escape from familial authority, now sits alongside Winterson's more recent memoir, *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* (2011). A complex intertextuality results, with straight facts and queer fictions irrevocably intertwined.

Feminist life-writing criticism has followed suit, seeking to trouble genre as a means to break and reject Smith's 'patrilineal contract.' Responding to second-wave pronouncements that the personal was indeed political, feminist criticism in the 1980s and 1990s turned increasingly to autobiography as a locus of academic utterance. Encapsulating Cixous' demand in 'The Laugh of the Medusa' that 'Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, […] must put herself into the text', the emergence of personal criticism has performed a redoubled insertion of women's writing 'into the text'.[11] This practice takes the writing subject's life, from the anecdotal through to more extended autobiographical acts, and establishes it as a legitimate site for literary analysis and commentary. Recent developments in feminist personal criticism can be traced back to Jane Tompkins's 1987 essay 'Me and My Shadow', which meditates upon the false distinction between 'two voices' within her, public and private, professional and personal, where the latter term in each binary pair is relegated to some illicit hinterland beyond the academy.[12] Along the way Tompkins alludes to personal relationships, bodily

functions, her anger and emotions; she does this to expose the fiction, the 'authority effect', of depersonalized academic personae.[13] This privileging of one voice (public, professional) over another (private, personal) is necessarily ideological, and the result is a chorus of white, middle-class and heterosexual voices.[14] To join these ranks, the critic must 'take the stage as Adam' (to borrow the words of Sidonie Smith) and efface individuality. But the personal critic refuses to conform, favouring instead the modal and subjunctive, the embodied and subjective.

Personal criticism has thus proved a powerful and productive tool for those writing from positions of difference, and in their brief survey of 'Autocritical Practices', Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson draw upon black feminist, postcolonial and transgender narratives.[15] For Nancy K. Miller, reflecting upon the spectre of essentialism haunting feminism since the second-wave, personal criticism provides a significant opportunity to abdicate '*representativity*', alleviating anxieties over 'speaking *as* and speaking *for*' an undifferentiated category of woman.[16] The elided 'I' of academic discourse, with its pose of universality and objectivity, serves to erase difference. The personal 'I', by contrast, allows for diversity and inclusivity, seeming to revel in heterodoxy and heteroglossia.

Detractors, however, accuse personal critics of narcissism, of complicity with an emerging celebrity culture in academic life. Others object to an apparent repositioning of the reader as a disciple or devotee, languishing in the shadow cast by the personal critic's star of celebrity – a shadow replicating the erasures caused by that arid and foreboding 'straight dark bar' (130) bemoaned in *A Room of One's Own*.[17] But just as Mary Beton speaks of sex and gender while declaring the practice to be fatal, so her words are often at odds with her theory. Beton is a personal critic who employs the 'I', but her 'I' is explicitly performative: an effect of language and an acknowledged fiction. Comparable to Woolf's experiments with biofiction, Beton's 'I' privileges exposure, and her outspokenness is rooted in (albeit fictive) experience and reflection. Thus she adopts a speaking position outside conventional academic authority. Although Woolf's text is based upon lectures delivered at Newnham and Girton, and although her fictional narrator addresses an imagined Oxbridge audience at Fernham, Beton nonetheless rejects 'the first duty of a lecturer': she refuses to make any disingenuous claim to offer 'a nugget of pure truth' (4). In contrast to the 'straight dark bar' (130) – the 'I', perhaps, of Sidonie Smith's 'patrilineal

contract' – Beton's 'I' probes into absence and erasure, exploring the legitimacy of subjective speaking positions.

Accusations of narcissism mark the survival of standards of 'chastity' (64) and the continuing relevance of Beton's complaint against legacies of exclusion and invisibility. Concerning chastity, Beton reflects that 'publicity in women is detestable. Anonymity runs in their blood. The desire to be veiled still possesses them' (65). Narcissism is a product of these same anxieties; the narcissist is unchaste, a transgressor of convention, and when the narcissist is a woman, she defies the anonymity that is her rightful inheritance. And so, when personal criticism is practised by women, it has the potential to constitute a powerful feminist occasion (to borrow the title of Nancy K. Miller's 1991 work, *Getting Personal: Feminist Occasions and Other Autobiographical Acts*). It constitutes a refusal of silence, invisibility and ventriloquized (read: male) academic discourse. But this refusal in *A Room of One's Own* is limited and partial: Beton's 'I' remains fictive, and the result is a paradoxically impersonal form of personal criticism.[18] But just as there are discrepancies between Beton's theory and practice, so *A Room of One's Own* effaces its author while railing against this same desire for anonymity.

It is more difficult to heal the breach between personal criticism and *A Room of One's Own* when it comes to anger. Beton experiences anger – against a Beadle, for example, and against a library – but she is adamant that its expression is damaging: 'Her books will be deformed and twisted. She will write in a rage where she should write calmly' (90). For Beton, these distortions are the result of writing that bends and breaks while addressing the values and standards of others. By contrast, Nancy K. Miller detects an implicit (and sometimes complicit) misogyny in strictures that seek to silence female anger. Feminist personal critics, she argues, '[cross] the line into the dangerous zones of feminine excess' by 'slipping anger into the folds of the argument'.[19] Contra Beton and Woolf, Miller contends that readerly discomfort in the face of anger and excess 'is a sign that it is working'.[20] Reflecting upon her own acts of personal criticism, Miller admits to being 'attracted to pushing the limits of embarrassment' because previously this has been used as 'a paralyzing emotion' to limit women's agency and activity.[21] In 'My Father's Penis', for example, Miller plays fast and loose with social taboo as a challenge to the law of the eponymous father. She inscribes her touch upon his ageing, ailing body, the memory of holding his 'soft and […] clammy' penis while he urinates prompting reflections upon the relation between penis, phallus and patriarchal power.[22]

Where Mary Beton renounces anger, Nancy K. Miller relishes its expression. But there is, perhaps, one final rapprochement to be made between the genre-bending practices of personal criticism and *A Room of One's Own*. Both seek to question the authority and prestige of the speaking 'I'. In *A Room of One's Own*, the 'I' is reduced to 'a convenient term for somebody who has no real being' (5), while Miller celebrates the liberating potential for embarrassment to '[blow] the cover of the impersonal as a masquerade of self-effacement'.[23] The elided academic 'I' is just as fictive as Beton's personal 'I' – all, it seems, is performative. Whether masculine or feminine, impersonal or personal, 'authorial voice[s]' are 'spectacle'.[24] By making this spectacle visible, by challenging literary conventions and defying genre, the practice and criticism of feminist life-writing has been busy filling the empty shelves regretted by Mary Beton in *A Room of One's Own*. Autofiction, biofiction and personal criticism have sought to meet Beton's challenge: 'What one must do to bring her to life was to think poetically and prosaically at one and the same moment.'

16

‘Your sister in the ’gator and the ’gator in your sister’: Judgement in Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Glenda R. Carpio

Ships at a distance have every man’s wish on board. For some they come in with the tide. For others they sail forever in the horizon, never out of sight, never landing until the Watcher turns his eyes away in resignation, his dreams mocked by Time. That is the life of men.

Now, women forget all those things they don’t want to remember, and remember everything they don’t want to forget. The dream is the truth. Then they act and do things accordingly.

So the beginning of this was a woman and she had come back from burying the dead. Not the dead of sick and ailing with friends at the pillow and the feet. She had come back from the sodden and the bloated; the sudden dead, their eyes flung wide open in judgment.

The people all saw her come because it was sundown. The sun was gone, but he had left his footprints in the sky. It was the time for sitting on porches beside the road. It was the time to hear things and talk. These sitters had been tongueless, earless, eyeless conveniences all day long. Mules and other brutes had occupied their skins. But now, the sun and the bossman were gone, so their skins felt powerful and human. They became lords of sounds and lesser things. They sat in judgment.[1]

Thus read the opening four paragraphs of Zora Neale Hurston’s best-known and widely acclaimed novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Published in 1937, the novel was harshly criticized by Hurston’s contemporaries and all but ignored when Hurston went into obscurity in the early 1950s. By now, however, the

fact that Alice Walker's influential essay, 'In Search of Zora Neale Hurston', published in *Ms*. in 1975, led to a renaissance in Hurston scholarship and to a full reappraisal of her novel, has become literary lore. Since then, the novel has been repeatedly claimed as an African-American feminist classic. But just what kind of a feminist text is it? There is such an abundant amount of criticism on the novel and on Hurston's work overall – much of which romanticizes the novel and undervalues Hurston's complex, sometimes contradictory, but risk-taking artistry and research – that asking this seemingly simple question of the novel is in order.

Staging Janie Crawford's 'ripening from a vibrant, but voiceless, teenage girl into a woman with her finger on the trigger of her own destiny',[2] the novel embraces a particular feminist perspective from its opening two paragraphs. The heightened lyrical language of the first, with its implied references to journeying and destiny, places the narrative in the realm of the epic while that of the second suggests a turn to a different, because female, narrative. The third paragraph re-enforces the shift since it opens in an explicitly gendered Biblical mode: 'So the beginning of this was a woman … ' But here, the novel shifts again to a terrain largely obfuscated by Janie's narrative of emancipation: that Janie blooms *despite* gender violence, and that Hurston intertwines Janie's narrative of resilience and agency to a multilayered discourse on judgement. This discourse takes a philosophical-religious form, as implied by the novel's title and dramatized through the hurricane at the end of the novel, and a sociopolitical aspect, as staged most explicitly by the novel's court scene towards the end. In this way, Hurston avoids a facile sentimentalism of transcendence.

The third and fourth paragraphs, both of which end with the word judgement, introduce this multilayered discourse. If the people on the porch judge Janie as she returns to Eatonville according to their fantasies and frustrations, what or whom do the dead judge? Their God? Death's sudden grip upon them? And what is the relationship that Hurston implicitly draws by aligning these two forms of judgement? The fourth paragraph is less about Janie than about the people, about their use of Janie as a screen upon which to project their own desire for power. Besides her beauty, the characteristic that most distinguishes Janie is her ability to desire and attain that which is beyond mere survival, that which is beyond 'the horizon'. Her second husband, Joe Starks, seems to embody this when he appears before her gate, and later, when he makes himself the mayor of the all-black town of Eatonville, he comes to represent power realized for the people. He does not have to wait for 'the sun and the bossman' to be gone to feel powerful

because he *is* the bossman. But the effect upon the people is not unmitigated admiration: 'It was bad enough for white people, but when one of your own color could be so different it put you on a wonder. It was like seeing your sister turn into a 'gator. A familiar strangeness. You keep seeing your sister in the 'gator and the 'gator in your sister, and you'd rather not' (45). Hurston's witty language, never merely decorative, is here curiously gendered feminine even though the passage refers to Sparks and his success. But the association reveals a key conflict in the novel. Sparks gives the people pause because he, unlike them, has miraculously achieved the independence and power associated with white people. But Janie stops them in their tracks. If it is 'bad enough' for a black man to live beyond the horizon imposed by inequalities of race and class, intertwined as they are, a woman who wants to realize herself as a desiring subject is worse. She is aberrant: 'your sister in the 'gator and the 'gator in your sister'. And yet, she is also coveted because of it.

When Janie returns to Eatonville, the people see only the outward manifestation of her fulfillment. The men 'noticed her firm buttocks like she had grape fruits in her hip pockets; the great rope of black hair swinging to her waist and unraveling in the wind like a plume; then her pugnacious breasts trying to bore holes in her shirt' (2). The women, full of envy, judge 'the faded shirt and muddy overalls' that Janie wears and save the image as 'a weapon against her strength', hoping 'that she might fall to their level some day' (2). Janie's crime is twofold: she, like Starks, desires to *live*, even thrive and not merely survive. But unlike Starks, she sees emotional fulfillment as a crucial part of real living. The other aspect of her crime, less ponderous but not insignificant, is that, after Starks dies, she flauntingly breaks conventions of gender, class, and age by marrying Tea Cake, a man who is not only much younger than her but also poor. And so, the porch judges: 'Where all dat money her husband took and died and left her? –What dat ole forty year ole' oman doin' wid her hair swingin' down her back lak some young gal? … ' (2).

While the language and solemnity differ, 'Mouth-Almighty,' as Janie calls the people on the porch, echoes the judgement bestowed upon Hester Prynne in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* (1850) as Hester exits the prison door. Hester, like Janie, has broken sexual mores for which the women in the crowd, specifically the older ones, judge her harshly and yet the (male) narrator describes her as a tall, beautiful, powerful woman with 'dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam'.[3] Both Hester and Janie are no longer virginal maidens when they commit their crimes – while Janie is widowed, Hester is presumed to be so – but are judged for acting as if

women could be unfettered sexual actors and independent desiring subjects. If the judgement of the people on the porch, like that of the Puritan crowd that witnesses Hester's exit from the prison, has to do with harnessing feminine sexuality, what of the judgement of the dead? Its presence in the opening paragraphs of Hurston's novel signals a realm of meaning not particularly concerned with gender. And yet, the fact that it is wedged between paragraphs that are decidedly focused on feminist issues should make us curious.

One way to pursue this line of enquiry is to further explore the connections between Hawthorne and Hurston. In her excellent essay, 'Revisiting Hawthorne's Feminism', Nina Baym shows not only that in *The Scarlet Letter* 'oppression or rejection of women, rather than surrender to them' leads to 'male downfall' but also that at its centre is Hester Prynne's consciousness through which we explore the 'recalcitrant reality of human nature' and meditate on what it would take to reconstruct the social system to create 'better forms of human intimacy', especially across differences of gender.[4] Hurston's novel operates similarly, as it too places its concerns with gender inequality within a broad context that questions humanity's relationship to the divine.[5] The 'sudden dead' with 'their eyes flung wide open in judgment' silently question that connection. As critics have noted, the hurricane that takes their lives is both a natural disaster and 'a symbolic event', that is 'almost on the order of the Biblical Flood'.[6] It operates as a catalyst that brings into sharp relief conflicts of gender and race while also adding a sense of scale in which humanity's struggles with power become small, though not immaterial, by comparison to the power that the natural world has over humanity.

The epic-like qualities of the novel reinforce this reading. As Mary Jane Lupton notes, the novel is, like epic poetry, based on oral narrative (it is a mix of third-person narrative and free indirect discourse), and 'patterned on the journey and on the tensions created between the call to adventure and the return to the homeland'.[7] Within this broad scale, humans figure as both the microcosm of the natural world and of the divine and as tiny entities. 'She didn't read books,' the narrator states, 'so she didn't know that she was the world and the heavens boiled down to a drop. Man attempting to climb to painless heights from his dung hill' (72). The hurricane exposes the conflicts at the level of the 'dung hill'. The biggest challenge to Janie as questing heroine arises when she is forced to kill Tea Cake, the love of her dreams who nevertheless is uncomfortable with her financial independence, gambles away her money and hits her when he becomes insecure in her affection. While saving Janie from drowning during the hurricane, he is bitten

and infected by a rabid dog that, to Janie, seems to embody 'pure hate' (158). Two weeks later, when he attempts to kill her, she defends her life against his. Despite love then, Janie must fight Tea Cake whose aggression is both inherent and reinforced by his infection. Does this reflect the 'recalcitrant reality of human nature'? Is human intimacy, especially between socially unequal subjects, bound to be compromised by conflict? The hurricane also brings to the fore racial tensions that, for the majority of the novel, remain off stage. In the aftermath of the hurricane, white guards force miserable, 'sullen men, black and white' to segregate the bodies of the dead, even though it is difficult to distinguish race among the bloated bodies, so that the white can get proper burial while the black get dumped in a hole (162). The deep irony is not lost to Tea Cake who exclaims, 'look lak dey think God don't know nothin' 'bout de Jim Crow law' (163). The hurricane, understood in the novel as a manifestation of God, does not of course discriminate; it in fact wreaks havoc among men and women, black and white and animals and humans alike. People can only wonder at that higher power, straining their eyes 'against crude walls and their souls', as they face the storm, 'asking if He mean[s] to measure their puny might against His' and later, when they perish, they stare in 'wide open' judgement of that might, a last act of agency (151).

The novel's scale suggests that the social problems the hurricane highlights may be embedded in human nature, which at its core desires power and control precisely because it does not have any in the face of the divine. But the novel is also rooted in the social and the political – in the specific manifestation of that desire for power in conflicts of gender, race, and class – and offers Janie, as a questing heroine, as an actor who wants to reconstruct the social system, who wants to make the 'dream the truth'. She returns to the people that so harshly judge her, as Hester also returns to the Puritan community that imprisoned her, in order to share what she discovered through her journey and thus effect social change. While often romanticized in the novel's post-1975 reception, that journey entails a great deal of hardship – not only is she forced to kill her love, Janie must also stand trial for his death in front of an all white, all male jury and, though she is acquitted, she must weather the virulent judgement of the black community that witnesses the trial and believe her guilty nonetheless. The novel hardly gives the questing heroine a conventional happy ending. Rather than obscure this fact, we should see it as a mark of Hurston's unconventional but incisive vision, which in the process of claiming her as a proto-feminist black icon has been rendered opaque.[8] As Lupton notes, 'Hurston critics tend either to ignore the disturbing fact of the

shooting or glide over it in summary, as if to shoot one's dreamed-for lover were some minor chord in an otherwise romantic symphony' (49).

Hurston was anything but predictable. A brief look at what she was reading in 1934 can attest to that. In a letter to a critic in 1934, she lists the following as her favourite books: 'George Eliot, *Adam Bede*; Darrell Figgis, *The Return of the Hero*; Anatole France, *Penguin Island*; Fannie Hurst, *Back Streets*; James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way*; Pearl Buck, *The Good Earth*; Willa Cather, *My Ántonia*; Robert Nathan, *Jonah*'.[9] Hurston has certainly proven a slippery subject of criticism. While she embraced her Southern roots, she also spent considerable time in New York (where she lived on and off from and 1925 through 1940) and abroad (the Bahamas, Haiti, Jamaica and Honduras), a fact that is often obfuscated by the settings of most of her fiction. She was trained as an anthropologist and folklorist at Barnard College and Columbia University, where she was admitted in 1925, and where she studied under Franz Boaz and Ruth Benedict, as well as with fellow anthropology student Margaret Mead. But, while critics have acknowledged the effect of her fieldwork on her fiction (i.e. that she wrote *Their Eyes Were Watching God* after a trip to the American South where she collected folktales and songs while on fellowship from Barnard and during a Guggenheim research trip in Haiti; that she based the hurricane on her research on the 1928 Okeechobee hurricane; that she collected one of the first non-commercial recordings of a song about the hurricane, 'God Rode on a Mighty Storm' with Mary Elizabeth Barnicle, and Alan Lomax) the fullness of that effect is only now being explored.[10] Her politics were often surprising. She thought Reconstruction was a deplorable period, favoured Booker T. Washington over W. E. B. Du Bois even decades after Washington's death, and opposed the New Deal. In 1954, she opposed the US Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* because she did not see it as a productive way of combatting Jim Crow. Owing to her complex and varied political views, Ernest Mitchell remarks, Hurston has been assigned 'a bewildering array of affiliations: republican, libertarian, radical democrat, reactionary conservative, black cultural nationalist, anti-authoritarian feminist, and woman-hating protofascist.'[11] As Mitchell puts it, 'the woman who once called herself "Everybody's Zora" has been made all things to all men (often wrongly), and the ongoing controversy has paid little attention to the full corpus of her political writings.'[12]

Hurston published four novels, over fifty short stories, essays and plays, but she is often discussed only in the context of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Perhaps for this reason, her feminist practices have been curiously

oversimplified. She was quite capable of highlighting male oppression of women, as is clear from an early and brilliant story, 'Sweat' (1926), in which a woman kills her abusive husband. But, she also explored more ambiguous aspects of femininity through the women characters in *Jonah's Gourd Vine* (1934) and *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (1939) who wrestle with opposing impulses of loyalty and rebellion against male figures. These novels, unlike *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, also focus on male protagonists. With similar nuance, Hurston depicts marital strife (in *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, even divorce), laying bare the often contradictory and self-destructive aspects of the players involved. These texts, like 'Monkey Junk,' the recently rediscovered short story, challenge a simplistic feminist mantle. At the centre of the story are the foibles of a Southern migrant to the North who is undone not by urban life, as one might expect, but by feminine guile during a divorce. A satire, rendered in broad comic modes, the story focuses on the fact that a woman is able to use her sexuality to get her way, first with her husband and, after milking him for his money and cheating on him, in court.[13] If one were to define feminist writing as that which represents only heroic figures of transcendence, Hurston's oeuvre as a whole would not classify. And neither would *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. But Hurston boldly explored the many facets of women's lives, including those who were flawed and those with imperfect or unclear allegiances and trajectories with a joyous sense of humour and a willingness to experiment with form even at the risk of producing uneven results or becoming the object of scorn. Hurston's contribution to a feminist legacy might just be her fearless embrace of the freedom to explore that complexity, both in her own life as well as in the lives of her protagonists.

17

‘One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’: The Sex-Gender Distinction and Simone de Beauvoir’s Account of Woman: *The Second Sex*

Céline Leboeuf

> *One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychic, or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society; it is civilization as a whole that elaborates this intermediary product between the male and the eunuch that is called feminine. Only the mediation of another can constitute an individual as an* Other. *Inasmuch as he exists for himself, the child would not grasp himself as sexually differentiated. For girls and boys, the body is first the radiation of a subjectivity, the instrument that brings about the comprehension of the world: they apprehend the universe through their eyes and hands, and not through their sexual parts.*[1]

It would be hard to imagine a sentence in feminist theory more often cited than Simone de Beauvoir’s ‘One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.’ To borrow an image from Beauvoir scholar Nancy Bauer, to intone this sentence at the beginning of a work of feminist theory is tantamount to genuflecting at the family pew.[2] And yet, despite the reverential intonations of Beauvoir’s iconic sentence, it has typically been misunderstood. Some feminist theorists trace the sex-gender distinction that would be made in later decades to originate in this claim. On such readings, Beauvoir might be said to describe the transition between two states: the state of the newborn who has a biological sex but no gender identity yet (‘who is not a woman’) and that of the grown person who, having been socialized, has both a sex and a gender identity (‘who has become a woman’). I will dispute such readings on two grounds. First, they typically imply that Beauvoir is a social determinist and fail to recognize the place she accords to human freedom. Second, when they do not make this mistake, they nevertheless misinterpret her conception of the human body.

The Second Sex is devoted to a single question: What is a woman? The answer Beauvoir seeks is not a definition of woman, a list of the conditions according to which a person counts as a woman. Instead, she wishes to introduce a new problem into our philosophical consciousness. When philosophers ask 'What is a man?', one of the problems they have in mind is the nature of our rational faculties, and this is captured in such definitions as 'man is a rational animal'. Now, the philosophical tradition has often assumed that only men can live up to the norms of rationality it discovers, and the implicit standard for a philosopher is male. Indeed, Beauvoir notes that no one would accuse a man of thinking the way he does because he is a man: a man's body is not a particularity, while a woman's body is an 'obstacle' for philosophizing (5). Therefore, when Beauvoir introduces the question 'What is a woman?', her aim is to challenge the exclusion of women from philosophy; it is a bold rejoinder to the perennial question 'What is a man?' At the same time, her question invites us to think more generally about sexual difference: Why has being a woman been cast as a particularity?

The sentence 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' is situated at an important juncture in *The Second Sex*. In the first part of her work ('Facts and Myths'), Beauvoir criticizes biological, psychological and economic accounts of the social status of women. She finds them all deficient because they only offer deterministic explanations of the place of women. They fail to consider the significance *for* women of the factors they cite in their explanations. For example, Freudian psychoanalysis invokes the castration complex to explain women's subordination. This explanation, however, misunderstands the significance of the penis to little girls. The sight of a brother's penis would not itself breed a sense of inferiority were it not for the prior privilege of her brother. By ignoring the experiences of girls and women, biological, psychological and economic theories ultimately misunderstand their subordinate status. The remainder of the first part presents a history of the subjection of women and an account of the myths that have perpetuated this subjection. The second part of the work ('Lived Experience') responds to the deterministic explanations of the first part. In this part, Beauvoir describes the experiences of girls and women at different stages in life and the attitudes they adopt to cope with their situation. She concludes with reflections on changes which might offer new possibilities for women.

Beauvoir's sentence opens the first chapter of 'Lived Experience', which is devoted to descriptions of childhood experience. According to these descriptions,

infants at first do not experience themselves as sexually differentiated. Infant girls and boys apprehend the world similar ways, through their senses – not their sexual organs. There is no difference in the manner in which young girls and boys react to being separated from their caregiver or to the birth of a younger sibling. Yet, they quickly come to behave in different ways and to be perceived as sexually differentiated. Adults are more likely to indulge the tears of girls than those of boys. At the same time, the expectation that boys should behave in a more grownup fashion than girls privileges them. Boys are raised in a manner that favours their maturation into independent adults. Telling a boy 'be a man' might curtail his childhood, but it also signifies that he can eventually live up to the standards that characterize adult men; in particular, he can become independent. In contrast, little girls are allowed to behave in a childlike manner for a longer time, and this expresses the idea that they are destined to be more dependent on others than men are. These differences in treatment and expectations grow throughout childhood and increase sharply at puberty. Now, one might wonder whether Beauvoir's descriptions support making a distinction between sex and gender. Do they offer an account of the stages through which naturally sexed newborns become gendered? Before addressing this question, let me introduce the sex-gender distinction as it emerged in the 1960s.

While the phrase 'gender role' began to circulate in the 1950s, the work of psychoanalyst Robert Stoller in the 1960s first caught the attention of feminists. In his 1968 book *Sex and Gender: On the Development of Masculinity and Femininity*, Stoller restricted 'the term *sex* to a biological connotation' and broke gender, which he referred to as having 'psychological or cultural rather than biological connotations', into two components: gender identity and gender role.[3] On the one hand, sex includes those anatomical, hormonal and chromosomal features in virtue of which one is female or male. On the other hand, gender encompasses the identity and the behaviours acquired on the basis of social expectations about what is appropriate for females and males; this identity and these behaviours make one a woman or a man. One of the purposes of the distinction was to make sense of the experience of transsexuals, whose gender identity does not align with that expected on the basis of their sex. Thus, a person with a male sexual anatomy might identify as a woman. In that case, this person would have a different gender than that presumed on the basis of her sex features.

The sex-gender distinction was appropriated by feminists, most notably by Gayle Rubin in her 1975 essay 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex'.[4] The sex-gender distinction was useful to feminists eager to

challenge biological determinism regarding sex, which is the view that the place of women and men is determined by their biology, because it suggested that the psychological traits in virtue of which women were deemed inferior were nothing more than the result of social forces. Any social change that transformed gender traits would challenge gender hierarchies. This, in turn, would affect the social status of women. While sex might lie beyond the reach of social change, gender did not. In short, decoupling sex from gender allowed feminists to argue that biology does not dictate social arrangements.

Although initially attractive, the sex-gender distinction was later challenged by feminists. One of the concerns they expressed was that the distinction presupposes a neat segregation between natural and cultural properties. Sex belongs on the side of nature, gender on the side of culture. But it was not clear that sex was really beyond the reach of culture. What if our scientific understanding of sex, the understanding in virtue of which humans are classified as male or female, was influenced by social norms, and in particular by ideas about femininity and masculinity? Would the condition of being female or male itself be merely natural or would it be cultural?[5] Another worry, raised by Judith Butler, was that sex is a category that is used in order to legitimate certain sexual desires: the norm of heterosexuality produces a binary division between genders (the division between men and women), and the category of sex is invoked to legitimate this binary.[6] Therefore, the claim that genders are constructed from natural sexes merely serves to normalize heterosexuality. In the wake of these criticisms and others, feminists began to question the nature/culture divide implicit in the sex-gender distinction. Beauvoir would have sympathized with them.

Let me consider a first interpretation of *The Second Sex* in terms of the sex-gender distinction: social constructionism about sex and gender. According to a social constructionist about sex and gender, every person has natural characteristics which form his or her sex, and on the basis of these characteristics, he or she is socialized into acquiring certain behaviours and identities, that is, into becoming of a certain gender. To become gendered is, then, to be determined by social forces to acquire the identity and behaviours characteristic of one sex or another. There is a line in our excerpt that lends itself to interpreting Beauvoir as this type of social constructionist: 'it is civilization as a whole that elaborates this intermediary product between the male and the eunuch that is called feminine' (283). Beauvoir's language here indicates that social forces act on a newborn in order to develop a *product*: woman. This suggests that her aim is to reconstruct the process by which a genderless but

sexed newborn becomes a woman, that is, an individual of a certain gender. Moreover, the expression 'elaborating a product' seems to imply a form of social determinism. By 'social determinism' I have in mind the view that social forces act in a deterministic fashion to turn a natural entity into a socially constructed entity. If this is what Beauvoir's language implies, then her account of becoming a woman would erase the possibility of agency in shaping the way in which one becomes a woman. Becoming a woman would amount to being moulded by social forces. Despite this language, interpreting Beauvoir as the type of social constructionist I have described here would conflict with her understanding of what it is to be human.

How does Beauvoir characterize humans? In 'Biological Data', Beauvoir notes that human beings are distinct from other animals in that we make ourselves who we are; some aspects of our selves are shaped by our own actions and not by natural causes. Beauvoir has this characteristic of human beings in mind when she describes us as 'historical' beings (45): unlike other animals, we interpret ourselves in light of our past. Furthermore, human beings can be described in a way that differs from that of the natural sciences, which, according to Beauvoir, only offer deterministic theories. She argues that any attempt to explain the condition of women by relying solely on biological concepts would only admit a deterministic understanding of women, one which runs contrary to the possibility of interpreting women as self-making beings. Therefore, Beauvoir rejects biology as a science that could give a full account of the condition of women. But this is not to say that biological facts about women are irrelevant to understanding their condition. An adequate account of woman would characterize the way in which women experience the givens biology describes. Consider, for example, the experience of pregnancy, which Beauvoir also discusses in 'Biological Data'. In a society which provides birth control and accommodations for pregnant women, pregnancy might not be experienced to be as burdensome as in a society which does not. These differences would affect how a woman lives her body. For Beauvoir, what determines *how* biology matters is how women live their bodies, and this is inflected by social norms and by women's choices. The place Beauvoir gives to human agency conflicts with a social constructionist reading of *The Second Sex*, if by 'social constructionism' one has in mind the social determinist version I just sketched. Therefore, I think that the deterministic ring to the lines immediately following 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' ought to be downplayed. That said, my argument so far has not completely ruled out interpreting Beauvoir as advocating a distinction between sex and gender. In

what follows, I will consider whether a non-determinist reading of Beauvoir's sentence in terms of the sex-gender distinction is still acceptable.[7]

A non-determinist reading of Beauvoir would need to recognize not only that our bodies are interpreted in terms of the norms of a culture, but also that the we, or better yet our bodies, have the capacity to interpret and reinvent ourselves in light of these cultural interpretations. Such a reading would make sense of Beauvoir's claim in 'Biological Data' that the body is a 'situation' (46). The concept of a situation, as Beauvoir understood it, concerns the way in which one's freedom is exercised in light of one's circumstances. As a result, to claim that the body is a situation is to acknowledge the body's role in its transformations and its responsiveness to cultural interpretations. At the same time, this claim precludes interpreting Beauvoir in terms of the sex-gender distinction. The circumstances that characterize the body as a situation include the body's past and place in society. Therefore, part of what it is to say that the body is a situation is to say that the body bears a history of its socialization, and this socialization begins from birth – indeed, from the moment that a baby is declared to be a boy or a girl. The interpretations adults give of a child's body set the stage for her own interpretations of her body. Thus, to make a distinction between a woman's natural, or bodily, features (her sex), on the one hand, and her identity and psychological traits (her gender), on the other hand, would belie Beauvoir's thesis that the body is a situation. For Beauvoir, the human body is not a natural entity, but the repository of a social history.

Beauvoir's remarks in 'Biological Data' indicate that becoming a woman does not mark the transition from a biological state to a cultural state. Instead, from the moment of birth, the newborn's body bears a social significance. The second part of *The Second Sex* should be read as a description of the unfolding of this significance, as a narrative about the way in which children come to understand the social significance of their bodies and act on this significance. Thus, we should interpret Beauvoir's line about the fact that 'civilization develops this product [the human female]' not as a statement about the construction of gender from sex, but as a reference to the role civilization plays in the child's understanding of himself or herself as sexually differentiated. Civilization mediates the development of this self-understanding from the moment that the child is identified as a boy or a girl (or as having ambiguous genitalia) and continues to influence this development through its differential treatment of boys and girls. Therefore, there is no 'sex' unmediated by culture and no ground for interpreting Beauvoir in terms of the sex-gender distinction.

Civilization, for Beauvoir, encompasses the customs and laws that govern our conceptions of masculinity and femininity. But customs and laws are contingent. Civilizations can be transformed, as can our conceptions of masculinity and femininity. *The Second Sex* invites us to envision changes in women's condition, to imagine what would constitute women's liberation and to reflect on the solidarity women and men can cultivate as they work towards this liberation.

18

Betty Friedan's Feminist Critique of Suburban Domesticity

Rebecca Jo Plant

The problem lay buried, unspoken, for many years in the minds of American women. It was a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning that women suffered in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States. Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies, lay beside her husband at night – she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question – 'Is this all?'

For over fifteen years there was no word of this yearning in the millions of words written about women, for women, in all the columns, books and articles by experts telling women their role was to seek fulfillment as wives and mothers. Over and over women heard in voices of tradition and of Freudian sophistication that they could desire no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity. Experts told them how to catch a man and keep him, how to breastfeed children and handle their toilet training, how to cope with sibling rivalry and adolescent rebellion; how to buy a dishwasher, bake bread, cook gourmet snails, and build a swimming pool with their own hands; how to dress, look, and act more feminine and make marriage more exciting; how to keep their husbands from dying young and their sons from growing into delinquents. They were taught to pity the neurotic, unfeminine, unhappy women who wanted to be poets or physicists or presidents. They learned that truly feminine women do not want careers, higher education, political rights – the independence and the opportunities that the old-fashioned feminists fought for. Some women, in their forties and fifties, still remembered painfully giving up those dreams, but most of the younger women no longer even thought

> *about them. A thousand expert voices applauded their femininity, their adjustment, their new maturity. All they had to do was devote their lives from earliest girlhood to finding a husband and bearing children.*[1]

Published in 1963, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* is widely credited with inaugurating the resurgence of feminism in the United States. Just three years after the book's publication, Friedan became the first president of the newly formed National Organization for Women, that sought to combat sexual discrimination, particularly in the workplace. Envisioned as a kind of NAACP for women, NOW went on to become the best known and arguably the most successful feminist organization in post–Second World War America. Because Friedan played such a central role in its founding, accounts of second-wave feminism often draw a straight line from *The Feminine Mystique* to NOW. But, as a careful reading of Friedan's surprise bestseller reveals, to interpret the book in light of subsequent events is to grant it a more radical and explicitly political agenda than it actually articulated.

In fact, *The Feminine Mystique* offers little in the way of a policy-oriented agenda: its appeal lay less in Friedan's blurry vision of the future than in her laser-like critique of the recent past. With the end of the Second World War, she argued, a whole generation of American women, weary of economic hardship and war, had made a 'mistaken choice' (153–72). Turning their backs on the hard-won achievements of the suffragists and early feminists, they abandoned educational and career ambitions, plunged headlong into early marriage and motherhood and produced an extraordinary baby boom. Popular writers and experts of various stripes fuelled these trends by arguing that well-adjusted women derived fulfilment only through motherhood and domesticity. This was the spurious ideology – the 'feminine mystique' – that Friedan sought to demolish.

The first two paragraphs of *The Feminine Mystique*, quoted above, showcase Friedan's effective writing style, preview some of her major claims and expose her tendency to universalize the experiences of suburban wives and mothers. They also gesture towards Friedan's historical interpretation of American women's uneven social and political progress in the twentieth century – an interpretation that would have an outsized impact on the soon-to-emerge field of US women's history. Placed within its broader intellectual, social and political context, this extract introduces the book's central arguments, while also revealing some of its limitations as a foundational text of liberal feminism.[2]

The very first lines of *The Feminine Mystique* establish Friedan's voice and signal her imagined audience. After identifying an unspoken yet pervasive sense of dissatisfaction afflicting 'American women', the passage immediately shifts to describing the daily routine of a typical 'suburban wife' (9). Employing literary skills honed as a journalist and magazine writer, and drawing on her personal experiences as a suburban wife and mother, Friedan referenced details (peanut butter sandwiches, station wagons and matching slipcovers) that would have been familiar to many of her readers. While this approach lent her work authenticity, her authorial stance as an exposé writer revealing a previously unrecognized social ill seized readers' attention from the outset.

If a wide swathe of American women saw themselves reflected in the book's pages, however, many others did not. By conflating 'American women' with suburban wives and mothers, Friedan seemed to imply that all the nation's women were white and middle class. In one of the many letters Friedan received in response to *The Feminine Mystique*, Gerda Lerner – who would subsequently help to pioneer the field of women's history – praised Friedan's 'splendid book', yet criticized its narrow focus. To leave working-class women and black women 'out of consideration … or to ignore the contributions they can make toward its solution', she argued, 'is something we simply cannot afford to do'.[3] Similarly, feminist theorist bell hooks later noted that Friedan wrote as if working-class women and women of colour 'did not exist', making 'her plight and the plight of white women like herself synonymous with a condition affecting all American women'.[4]

Such critiques are by no means unusual in the history of feminism; many advocates of racial and economic justice have accused feminists of privileging the concerns and interests of white and middle- or upper-middle class women over those of less privileged women. But in Friedan's case, the neglect of working-class women is surprising, given her formative political experiences. As a Smith College student in the late 1930s and early 1940s, she was drawn to left-wing ideologies and supported attempts to unionize the college's workers. Later, in the 1940s and early 1950s, she worked as a journalist for the labour press; among the issues she addressed were the specific challenges facing women workers. Historian Daniel Horowitz has theorized that Friedan purposefully sought to mask this chapter of her past, fearing (not unreasonably) that critics would try to discredit her and her arguments by accusing her of communist sympathies.[5] Although Friedan herself strongly rejected Horowitz's interpretation, it would help to explain not only her focus

on suburban women, but also her neglect of the economic structures that supported women's relegation to the domestic realm.[6]

Indeed, for all its rhetorical punch, *The Feminine Mystique* is clearly a reformist rather than a radical work. This is apparent when one compares the book to an earlier feminist classic, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, a sprawling analysis of women's subordination that weds existentialist philosophy to a particular interpretation of Marx (See chapter 17 in this volume).[7] Though Friedan read *The Second Sex*, which was translated into English in 1953, she did not adopt its arguments concerning economic dependence as a central component of women's subordination. Instead, she was primarily drawn to de Beauvoir's existentialist interpretation of housework. The French philosopher portrayed housewifery as repetitive, unrewarding labour that produced nothing and achieved nothing beyond sustaining daily existence. Friedan did not go quite this far, but her book's protagonists – mired in the quotidian details of homemaking and haunted by the question, 'Is this all?' – were clearly afflicted with a form of existential dread. According to Friedan, the women who experienced such emptiness would find relief only by making a 'lifelong commitment to an art or science, to politics or profession' (287). Yet, while she urged women to seek employment outside the home, Friedan never argued that they needed to be economically independent of men to be truly emancipated. Nor did she suggest that women's emancipation depended on the overthrow of capitalism.

Friedan did, however, explore the ways in which businesses benefitted from the media construct of the ideal American housewife. She devoted much attention to describing how advertisements in women's magazines created absurd expectations in regard to homemaking. (Her derisive comments about advice to housewives concerning 'how to buy a dishwasher, bake bread, cook gourmet snails, and build a swimming pool with their own hands', are a case in point (9).) Because advertisers and their clients benefitted when women embraced the consumer-oriented role of housewife, she argued, they tried to make housework expand to 'fill the time available'. Yet, if Friedan astutely critiqued advertisers' attempts to mystify domestic labour, she did not ask why it was women who were held responsible for homemaking in the first place. Nor, aside from promoting publicly funded childcare, did she resurrect the arguments of early-twentieth-century feminists like Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who thought that domestic labour should be collectivized, professionalized and outsourced.[8] In other words, Friedan wanted suburban women to be less

consumed with housewifery, but she did not broach fundamental questions about the private character and gendered construction of domestic labour.

Friedan's emphasis on cultural messages aimed at women (rather than the economic or legal aspects of women's oppression) situates her within a long tradition of feminist criticism, dating back to at least 1792, when Mary Wollstonecraft published her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (See chapter 6 in this volume). Wollstonecraft decried the inferiority of girls' education, arguing that it produced vain, vapid women who threatened to stymie the 'progress of knowledge and virtue'.[9] Similarly, Friedan lambasted social conditions that she saw as fundamentally corrosive of women's mental health, but she ended up portraying those she hoped to liberate in strikingly harsh terms. For instance, she reiterated the claims of post-war psychiatrists who blamed American mothers for everything from the mental problems of US veterans to 'the homosexuality that is spreading like a murky fog over the American scene' (267). By warning against the dangers of maternal psychopathology, Friedan hoped to forward a feminist agenda: she argued that husbands and children also benefitted when women pursued work and interests beyond the home. But, her highly unflattering depiction of the typical suburban housewife offended many women, and scholars have subsequently critiqued *The Feminine Mystique* for perpetuating mother-blaming and for stigmatizing homosexuality.[10]

Friedan's extensive appropriation of psychological and social-scientific findings regarding maternal pathology is at odds with her reputation as a trenchant critic of post-war expertise on women and the family. To be sure, she was highly sceptical of psychologists who courted a popular audience by advising women on everything from 'how to breastfeed children and handle their toilet training' to 'how to keep their husbands from dying young and their sons from growing into delinquents' (9). She reserved particular animus for those who invoked Freudian concepts to define femininity in a manner that stigmatized women with ambitions beyond the home as 'neurotic, unhappy, and unfeminine'. Arguing that the feminine mystique 'derived its power from Freudian thought', she devoted an entire chapter ('The Sexual Solipsism of Sigmund Freud',) to exposing Freud as a 'prisoner of his time' when it came to his views on women (166–95).

Yet, Friedan always differentiated between Freudian theory and its clinical application, and her disdain for popularized Freudianism never translated into a wholesale rejection of psychoanalytic therapy or psychological

thinking. *The Feminine Mystique* cites the work of numerous psychological experts, but it is particularly indebted to the psychoanalyst Abraham Maslow. Extending his notion of 'self-actualization' to women, Friedan insisted that a woman could become truly self-actualizing only by escaping the culture's narrow definition of femininity. Such arguments reflect her extensive and long-standing engagement with psychological thinking and therapeutic culture.[11] After majoring in psychology at Smith College, Friedan spent a year (1942–1943) in a graduate programme in psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, where she studied with psychoanalyst Erik Erikson. She also twice underwent psychoanalysis, first in the 1940s and again in the 1950s, which she found immensely helpful. Indeed, among the most fascinating revelations in Friedan's autobiography is that she initially asked her former psychoanalyst if he would collaborate with her on what became *The Feminine Mystique*, believing that the name of an 'eminent male psychoanalyst' would lend the book 'more authority'. In the end, her editor ruled out the idea.[12] But, this little-known detail should lead scholars to reassess Friedan's relationship to psychological expertise, for it flies in the face of her reputation as an ardent foe of psychoanalysis.

As all this suggests, the transformations that Friedan called for in *The Feminine Mystique* were largely personal and psychological ones; the book does not explicitly call for a feminist revival. In fact, Friedan's chapter on the US suffrage movement strikes a curious note. Here she challenged the 'unquestioned perversion of history' that led many Americans to view the suffragists as 'man-hating, embittered, sex-starved spinsters' (134). Emphasizing the fact that many of the movement's leaders were wives and mothers, she repeatedly referred to their feminine attributes, describing Antoinette Brown as 'pretty', Lucy Stone as 'a little woman, with a gentle, silvery voice', Angelina Grimké as 'lovely' and Julia Ward Howe as 'beautiful' (137–65). Needless to say, such conventional praise of feminine charm is unexpected in a book devoted to critiquing the ways in which American culture pressured women to embody 'femininity'. Moreover, whereas Friedan clearly wanted to recover and celebrate the history of the suffrage movement, she did not argue that a new generation should take up the unfinished work of these political foremothers.

Yet, just three years after publishing *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan drafted NOW's original Statement of Purpose, which detailed the ways in which American women remained oppressed and outlined how true equality could be achieved. To anyone familiar with her book, the document would have a familiar ring. It asserts, for instance, that women should have opportunities

to 'develop their fullest human potential' and denounces the 'false image of women now prevalent in the mass media'.[13] But at the same time, the NOW Statement of Purpose reflects how much had changed in the intervening years. With the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination in employment based on race, colour, religion, sex or national origin, American women had unexpectedly gained a new tool to challenge inequality in the workforce – a tool that many had readily seized. This helped to introduce new concepts and phrases such as 'sex discrimination', which appear in the NOW manifesto but have no antecedents in *The Feminine Mystique*.

The NOW Statement of Purpose also challenged the notion that any problems a mother and wife might experience in trying to simultaneously manage her domestic responsibilities and participate in the larger social and economic order were 'the unique responsibility of each individual' to solve. Yet, this was essentially the message that one would derive from reading the final chapter of *The Feminine Mystique*, tellingly entitled 'A New Life Plan.' Friedan did look hopefully to a future when women with children would begin demanding 'maternity leaves or even maternity sabbaticals, professionally run nurseries, and other changes … necessary' to facilitate their greater participation in the workforce. She also proposed the notion of a government programme similar to the GI Bill to provide assistance to homemakers wanting to return to school (370–78). But most of the chapter consists of stories of remarkable women who had independently figured out ways to pursue fulfilling careers without forgoing marriage and motherhood. Friedan seemed to be suggesting that, with ingenuity and determination, her readers could reject society's definition of femininity and forge new and more rewarding paths for themselves without the assistance of government programmes.

To the extent that people mistakenly remember *The Feminine Mystique* as calling for a new political movement to redress women's oppression, its influence on second-wave feminism has been somewhat exaggerated. But, it would be hard to overstate the book's impact on the then still nascent field of US women's history. Based on her analysis of popular women's magazines, Friedan argued that images of plucky and self-sufficient women had been commonplace in the 1930s and early 1940s but declined sharply after the Second World War. Numerous historians subsequently adopted Friedan's chronology and her interpretation of the post-war era, portraying it as a time of backlash against women's social and economic gains. But in the past twenty-five years, scholars have questioned the accuracy of this narrative. Historian

Joanne Meyerowitz has shown that many women's magazines celebrated not only homemaking, but also 'non-domestic activity, individual striving, public service, and public success', while Eva Moskowitz has unearthed a 'discourse of discontent' that anticipated Friedan's arguments in *The Feminine Mystique*.[14] In sum, recent scholarship has drawn attention to the numerous ways in which the book echoed and built upon ideas and arguments already circulating within American culture.

Still, it would be wrong to downplay the powerful – in some cases, life-changing – impact of *The Feminine Mystique*.[15] Today, Friedan's ideas may appear less original than long assumed, but she made the case against post-war domesticity and in favour of women's pursuit of meaningful work more powerfully than anyone before her. There is no denying that the book helped to raise many women's consciousness about the insidious cultural messages directed at them, while also validating their desires for a life beyond the home. As for Friedan herself, she quickly moved beyond the biting critique of the 'happy housewife heroine' that made *The Feminine Mystique* such a sensation. By the time she penned NOW's founding manifesto, she believed that women's advancement would require not only incisive social criticism and personal transformation, but also collective political action.

19

‘Writing as Re-Vision’: Female Creative Agency in the Poetry of Adrienne Rich

Claire Hurley

I came to explore the wreck.
The words are purposes.
The words are maps.
I came to see the damage that was done
and the treasures that prevail.
[…]
the thing I came for:
the wreck and not the story of the wreck
the thing itself and not the myth
the drowned face always staring
towards the sun
[…]
This is the place.
And I am here, the mermaid whose dark hair
streams black, the merman in his armored body
I am she: I am he
[…]
We are, I am, you are
by cowardice or courage
the one who find our way
back to this scene
carrying a knife, a camera
a book of myths
in which
our names do not appear.[1]

In this seminal poem, *Diving into the Wreck* (1973), US poet Adrienne Rich demonstrates that achieving female agency is a political *and* imaginative labour. The poem, conjured from the voice of a direct female subject, begins by acutely acknowledging its own position in the literary canon: 'First having read the book of myths' (53). From its opening line, Rich promises a fresh and urgent poetic experience – not to reiterate stale versions of womanhood – but instead to journey into undiscovered, and potentially dangerous, zones of female being. This daring quest will be led by an unidentified female stranger/ survivor – the lyric 'I' of the poem – as Rich asks the reader to put their trust in this unknown figure. The journey is into 'the wreck' (53). But what this wreckage symbolizes remains powerfully indeterminate: the ruins of human history after female experience has been erased, the latent female identities pushed down and concealed within, or even the foreignness of the female body. The purposeful ambiguity around the 'wreck' is only clarified by the decisive nature of the speaker's intention: 'the thing I came for:/ the wreck and not the story of the wreck/ the thing itself and not the myth' (54). This urgency to reveal 'the thing itself' is the driving force behind the poem, yet no definitive answer is ever disclosed. However, through the undulating processes of the exploratory stanzas, the quest itself – the desire and commitment to discover and transform the female condition – gives the poem its legitimacy.

Written at the pivotal moment of second-wave Feminism, Rich's poetry is both testament to the idea that 'the personal is the political', while delving deeper into questions of mythology, sexuality and female complicity in systems of patriarchy.[2] Rich's most influential poetry emerged through reflections on her own life experiences – as a daughter, a wife and a mother. Born in Baltimore in 1929, Rich's evolving feminist consciousness is chronicled in her numerous poetry collections, as she struggled to juggle divergent aspects of her own identity: 'I felt that I had either to consider myself a failed woman and a failed poet, or to try to find some synthesis' (173). In her poetically charged autobiographical confessions, Rich was a pioneer at fusing literary craft with personal and political mediation. It is in the synthesis of these two (traditionally) oppositional modes, intimate daily life and active political dissent, that her poems emerge. Reclaiming the space where women could write – in the political sphere – was itself a radical move. As Jan Montefiore persuasively argues, feminist poetry, 'encouraged women to write … as a political process of consciousness raising'.[3] The burgeoning politicization of poetry in the 1970s encouraged and facilitated larger political actions. Feminist poetic utterances promoted lively resistance against the disabling societal pressures of femininity

and provided the opportunity for deep thinking about women's identities. During this empowering historic moment, the world was being widely re-imagined in feminist terms. Multiple and sonorous voices of dissent took on the challenge of reconstructing the foundations of female experience. It was in this mid-70s context that Rich partook in more extreme and public actions of opposition: she became an advocate for the Women's Rights Movement, as well as aligning herself with the anti-Vietnam war campaign, the Peace Movement and Civil Rights groups. In 1974 Rich declined to accept the National Book Award for Poetry for *Diving into the Wreck* as an individual recipient. Instead alongside the other feminist poets nominated, Alice Walker and Audre Lorde, the trio accepted it on behalf of all women, 'whose voices have gone and still go unheard in a patriarchal world'.[4]

This gesture of female community and solidarity expresses Rich's aims in the collection, particularly apparent in the title poem *Diving into the Wreck*. The poem poses a set of fundamental questions for women's writing: where are women's roots in literature? What is the fabric, the basis for their creativity? And how do we negate the false mythologies of women, and replace them with honest and authentic accounts? As the speaker affirms: 'I came to see to the damage that was done/ and the treasures that prevail' (54). The mission here is dualistic: to expose and analyse the destructive representations of women, 'the damage that was done', and to locate and celebrate buried female achievements, 'the treasures that prevail'. After the repression of the 'tranquilized fifties' in the United States, the void around women's experiences had hardened into a set of fabricated conventions.[5] It was regarded as normal for women to appear as object, rather than subject in literature, or indeed to be absent altogether. Romantic myths of femininity also persisted: 'She finds a terror and a dream, she finds a beautiful pale face, she finds La Belle Dame Sans Merci' (171). Yet, in order to counter these damaging images, the poetic speaker of *Diving into the Wreck* must first familiarize herself with their potency: 'carrying … a book of myths/ in which/ our names do not appear' (55). Rich identifies the foundation of women's self-imposed fragmentation; by passively accepting or encouraging destructive imagery, women became objectified as, 'part legend, part convention' (11). Rich maintains that women have been complicit in representations of themselves, purely by their own inaction. Yet, there is a building momentum in the poem not only to recognize these stereotypes, but to reclaim them: 'the drowned face always staring/toward the sun' (54). The archetypal figure of the woman on the front of a ship – classically immobile and objectified – is subverted by her expression of hope, 'staring/toward the sun'.

Rich cleverly inverts women's traditionally subjugated position to authority here, as she goes underneath the surface to reveal a covert strength. It is this action, of retaking autonomy over female depiction, that Rich honours.

The means by which the persona of *Diving into the Wreck* enacts this autonomy is catalogued by the equipment she uses: 'the body-armor of black rubber/the grave and awkward mask . . . . carrying a knife, a camera/ a book of myths' (53, 55). Mary DeShazer describes the equipment in terms of its figurative uses: the camera, to capture and record reality; the knife, to cut through illusion; and the suit and mask, to cover vulnerability.[6] Similarly, the unusual method by which the speaker descends, climbing down a ladder (rather than the aforementioned 'dive') places the reader in a strange dream-like confusion. 'This is the place', we are told (55), but it is unlike any place we could have envisaged; the submerged wreckage echoes conventional debris, 'the ribs of the disaster', yet transcends traditional classification with its dislocating seascapes (54). Unlike some of her earlier, more conventional poetic expressions, Rich is brilliantly fragmentary here. Her discontinuities are entirely purposeful, as they demonstrate, through a determined absence of conventional lucidity, the flaws and pitfalls in the logic of patriarchal culture. Language is knotted, disjointed and tense, while lines appear jagged and unpredictable in length, framing shards of confronting imagery: 'half-wedged and left to rot/we are the half-destroyed instruments' (55). As the poem reaches its conclusion, even basic punctuation melts away; the capital letters and the commas frequent in the first stanzas are forgotten in the urgency to elucidate the speaker's mounting empowerment.

In this poem, Rich, like Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and other post-structuralist theorists, is attempting to deconstruct the framework behind patriarchal language forms. Writing often about the 'dead' oppressors' language, she recognized that the historic associations of words were a key political issue. Through the disruption of normative poetic construction, Rich takes apart and destabilizes the logic implicit in traditional modes. Such deconstruction prompts an active and positive reconstruction of values, a reconstruction that will place feminist thought and procedure in a central position. Alicia Ostriker agrees that Rich generates a new feminist myth in the poem, by rebuilding and reformulating a feminist consciousness in the mind of the poetic speaker.[7] As part of the revisionist mythmaking of post-60s women poets, Rich looks to forgotten or erased female exemplars, 'the treasures that prevail' (54). Throughout the poem, Rich makes reference to those women who have traversed the path before her, the 'tentative haunters' of the wreck (54) who

have already 'used' the ladder (53). However her solitary figure must descend alone, 'there is no one/ to tell me when the ocean/ will begin' (54). Surrounded by silence, and a sense of lack, the sea, 'bluer and then green and then/ black' embodies the unknown absence of the contemporaneous female condition (54). But once submerged, 'the thing itself', the wreck, fills the empty space. What is encountered below the surface may in fact be Rich's exemplary women, resurrected and revived, their voices echoing resonantly – finally – through the ages. Rich frequently celebrates such women in other poems: Marianne Moore, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Dickinson and Sappho all appear throughout her oeuvre. Yet, Rich does not merely pay tribute. Instead, she engages in critical arguments with her literary ancestors, illuminating and re-energizing long-standing feminist debates. By assembling a female genealogy though a collection of fragments, Rich begins to connect her contemporary moment with a wider feminist lineage.

Rich articulates this strategy of 're-vision' in her groundbreaking essay, 'When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision' (1971). She explains, 'Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction – is for women more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival' (167). The essay emphasizes that the poetic tradition is itself an area of intellectual and political struggle. In order to replace myth, and re-establish contact with ourselves, women must actively revise prior definitions. Hence, Barbara Eckstein argues that 'what we acquire by diving into the wreck is not a place in the book of myths alongside other myths', but instead, 'a place in the on-going process of revisiting'.[8] The poem records this re-visioning process, and so the conclusion describes not a static ideal of lost womanhood, but rather: 'the necessity to dive again'.[9] As Rich herself argues, 'The awakening of consciousness is not like the crossing of a frontier – one step and you are in another country' (176). The 'ladder' of the poem – 'always there/hanging innocently' – symbolizes this gradual and incremental movement towards feminist self-discovery (53). Yet, what instigates the journey is an initial leap of faith, or in this case a 'dive' (53). The emphasis here on process and mutability, rather than definite and singular resolutions, became a trope common during second-wave feminism. As new versions of womanhood, sexuality and motherhood were articulated by the women poets of the era, such fluid forms of self-definition and self-inscription opened up the possibilities of 1970s feminist activism.

Rich's poetry outlines this steady development from the unconscious into the spoken, yet her ultimate aim is for her personal expressions to inspire

direct political actions.[10] In her confessional mode, there is little room for ambiguity or abstraction. In 'When We Dead Awaken', Rich discloses that at first her poetry emulated that of her male poetic forebears: 'Frost, Dylan Thomas … Stevens, Yeats' (171). This honesty is not only refreshing but also a calculated manoeuvre; we must stop lying to ourselves, Rich reasons, as in lying we falsify our own reality. As, 'a woman sworn to lucidity', her search for 'the thing itself' is uncompromising.[11] This was not the moment for subtlety or indirectness – Rich asserts that feminist poetry must pronounce the harsh realities of female-ness, as well as conceive of alternatives. As we share in the experiences of the poet, we join a tumultuous voyage of suffering, resistance and solidarity. There is a confidence and conviction in Rich's assertive use of the 'I', a conviction that would soon become unfashionable with the rise of language poetry in the United States. This literary movement, popularized in the 1990s, displaced or ignored poetic self-manifestation in favour of more abstract linguistic experimentation. Yet, even in our own epoch, Rich can be seen as invoking something daring, and even dangerous, in talking about herself so openly. By bearing out her own autobiography, she is able to actively reconfigure the fragments of her former selves. For Rich, this journey is terminally incomplete; the identities of Rich's poems are continually shifting, not lost, but rather transformed in the undulations of the poems themselves.

Diving into the Wreck concludes, 'I am she: I am he', which exemplifies Rich's innovative evocations of feminist possibility (55). Throughout the poem, we are offered female and male descriptors: 'the mermaid whose dark hair/ streams black, the merman in his armored body' (55). The verses offer up an emancipatory androgynous body, which is liberated from specific gender conventions: 'I am she: I am he'. While gesturing towards the illusion of gender-identity,[12] it is upon the reader that Rich ultimately places her optimism. Through its address, and use of pronouns, the poem draws us into collaboration with the submersive mission. By the close of the poem, the solitary female figure is not diving alone; the reader has become irrevocably imbricated. This is emphasized at the start of the final stanza, 'We are, I am, you are', a compelling invocation that unifies disparate female selves (55). Beginning with 'We are', Rich summons camaraderie and solidarity to establish and extend the female community. Acknowledging her own didactic and polemical position taking, 'I am', marks Rich as a leader and pedagogical instructor. Finally, 'you are' provokes the reader into meditation and action. Constructing the reader she wants to awaken, Rich's goals in this short line are unifying ('We are'), directing ('I am') and inciting ('you are'). There is also an understanding that

there are divergent routes into feminism: 'by cowardice or courage' (55). Hence, Rich's provocations are only ever a starting point: 'The words are purposes./ The words are maps' (54). Her words are 'purposes', as they have a political weight behind them; her words are 'maps', as they form a guide in which to navigate the poem individually. Rich does make direct feminist assertions, but her language remains open-ended; statements function as 'points of departure', ideas that should be read as stimuli for continued debate.[13] Rich encourages her readership to make new observations, to extend her thinking and to transgress her initial discoveries. By inviting the reader into the transaction of poetic meaning-making, Rich hopes to extend this participation into wider cultural involvement by women.

For Rich, the emergent need for active female self-construction – being able to define and inscribe versions of womanhood creatively and autonomously – went hand in hand with achieving wider political agency. As Rich expounds, 'If the imagination is to transcend and transform experience it has to question, to challenge, to conceive of alternatives' (171). Rich reaches into the expansiveness of the imagination and uses this latent creative potentiality to envisage new ways for women to exist in the world. Her feminist poetics of intervention work to help re-imagine the literal conditions of women's lives. By opening up the lacuna of female self-hood, Rich creates the possibility for an exigent and original, signifying space. Rich's poetry, unlike most of her male forebears, remains in a creative process; her ideas are active and malleable, and ultimately still exploratory. Her oeuvre, and particularly *Diving into the Wreck*, proclaims 'a way of becoming, rather than a narrowly defined end'.[14] Poetry provides the space for this discovery; Rich recognizes its capacity to become a revolutionary mode, as it combines linguistic power with a privileged relation to perception, experience and consciousness. Before it could be actualized in the wider culture, Rich's embodied poetic iterations glimpsed the potential for female agency. Above all, Rich dedicated her literary career to generating a sovereign space for women in poetry, enabling imaginative encounters between gender and identity to be advanced on the page and, through language and publication, on into the public arena.

20

Complicity and Resistance: Andrea Dworkin's *Intercourse*

Helen Pringle

Being owned and being fucked are or have been virtually synonymous experiences in the lives of women. He owns you; he fucks you. The fucking conveys the quality of the ownership: he owns you inside out. The fucking conveys the passion of his dominance: it requires access to every hidden inch. He can own everything around you and everything on you and everything you are capable of doing as a worker or servant or ornament; but getting inside you and owning your insides is possession: deeper, more intimate, than any other kind of ownership. Intimate, raw, total, the experience of sexual possession for women is real and literal, without any magical or mystical dimension to it: getting fucked and being owned are inseparably the same; together, being one and the same, they are sex for women under male dominance as a social system. In the fuck, the man expresses the geography of his dominance: her sex, her insides are part of his domain as a male … . This reality of being owned and being fucked – as experience, a social, political, economic, and psychological unity – frames, limits, sets parameters for, what women feel and experience in sex. Being that person who is owned and fucked means becoming someone who experiences sensuality in being possessed: in the touch of the possessor, in his fuck, however callous it is to the complexity or the subtlety of one's own humanity. Because a woman's capacity to feel sexual pleasure is developed within the narrow confines of male sexual dominance, internally there is no separate being – conceived, nurtured somewhere else, under different material circumstances – screaming to get out. There is only the flesh-and-blood reality of being a sensate being whose body experiences sexual intensity, sexual pleasure, and sexual identity in being possessed: in being owned and fucked.[1]

For Andrea Dworkin's feminism, objectification is fundamental in thinking through questions of who I am, who you are, who we are, as persons – or, as women, as other and less than persons. Objectification for Dworkin involves being defined in terms of your sexual use and being used in that way. At the heart of objectification is 'the fuck'. The violence of the word reflects how objectification works as probably 'the most singly destructive aspect of gender hierarchy, especially as it exists in relation to intercourse' (177). Dworkin argues that understanding 'the fuck' is a central task of a feminist account of justice, that is, giving to others what is their due as humans. In our world, it is now often assumed that having more intercourse is a sign of greater freedom, of sexual liberation (and pleasure). For Dworkin, however, more fucking is not the path to greater freedom, at least not for women.

Dworkin argues that gender is not simply difference between men and women but that it is a relation of domination and subordination, which marks out women as what can be sexually used and abused. She goes beyond noting that those who have political and economic power are more likely to be men, and that power has been biased to uphold men's status; she makes the claim that power in its very form in our world is exercised as male power. The very language of identity, knowledge and justice is that of male sexuality, in which women appear as objects for use. That male language is the only tongue there is. There is no other:

> We know only this one language of these folks who enter and occupy us: they keep telling us that we are different from them; yet we speak only their language and have none, or none that we remember, of our own; and we do not dare, it seems, invent one, even in signs and gestures. Our bodies speak their language. Our minds think in it. The men are inside us through and through. We hear something, a dim whisper, barely audible, somewhere at the back of the brain; there is some other word, and we think, some of us, sometimes, that once it belonged to us (170–71).

How we speak, how we see and what we do: all these work themselves out in male terms. Objectification is a form of cognition, of knowledge of ourselves, through which we come to know ourselves as the things called women. The crucial point here is not only that sexual difference is constructed rather than natural, although it is, and not only that sexual difference is constructed in male terms, although it is. Sexual difference takes shape in terms of domination and subordination, a hierarchy that is itself erotic. Through the making of women as objects, men are aroused to dominance (I fuck, therefore I am).

For Dworkin's feminism, the objectification of women is not primarily accomplished as repression acting on some previously existing freedom, space or body. The construction of gender involves making accomplices in oppression, such that the harm thereby created becomes invisible, or at least mystified. Objectification is what *constitutes* us as women. We are rewarded for doing this to ourselves, for shaping and presenting ourselves in certain ways. This harm of objectification is so difficult to see because it is primarily accomplished through sex itself.

That is, the detriment or harm to women at issue *is* sex – which, as Dworkin points out, everyone now wants to get much more of, much more of the time. She suggests, 'In Amerika [Dworkin's spelling], there is the nearly universal conviction … that sex (fucking) is good and that liking it is right: morally right; a sign of human health; nearly a standard for citizenship' (59). Our allegiance to sex is like a loyalty oath, from which dissent and ambivalence are not permitted (60, 169–70). This loyalty oath to 'more sex' as liberation fails to understand how intercourse works as performance of domination and as dramatization of subordination. In *Intercourse*, Dworkin analyses the making of women and men in the acts and institution of sex, through an exploration of various literary works.

Pornography is at the heart of how objectification works as domination. We live in a pornographic society and culture, not only in the sense that men's ('girlie') magazines exist, or that those magazines and other media *reflect* an unequal treatment of women *elsewhere*. Dworkin argues that pornography *is* the treatment of women, not its reflection and not harmless fantasy. She does not understand pornography along the model of contagion (man reads rape, man rapes women). Rather, her argument is that 'Pornography is the theory, pornography is the practice'.[2] It is a *practice* of sexual subordination through which women are constructed. Pornography runs a masquerade that it is about the appreciation of women, and about setting them free, but for Dworkin it is a modality of the fuck as sexual possession.

By 'possession' is meant here not only abuse through rape, but the way in which '[t]he normal fuck by a normal man is taken to be an act of invasion and ownership undertaken in a mode of predation' (79). Being taken possession of in this way is for women a normal everyday reality:

> … women feel the fuck – when it works, when it overwhelms – as possession; and feel possession as deeply erotic; and value annihilation of the self in sex as proof of the man's desire or love …. [B]eing possessed is phenomenologically real for women; and sex itself is an experience of diminishing self-possession, an

> erosion of self. That loss of self is a physical reality, not just a psychic vampirism; and as a physical reality it is chilling and extreme, a literal erosion of the body's integrity and its ability to function and to survive (84).

Women's complicity in the fuck of possession is not natural or biological. It is born from our desire to live. Complicity is a survival mechanism that proceeds to a more complete annihilation of the self, while masked as the giving (and sometimes even the experience) of pleasure.

In order to live, women transform ourselves into an object to be desired; we construct *ourselves* as a beautiful and fuckable thing, in a palpably physical sense. This is the terrible damage done through collaboration in women's possession as objects, confirmed in the act of fucking itself:

> It is especially in the acceptance of object status that her humanity is hurt: it is a metaphysical acceptance of lower status in sex and in society; an implicit acceptance of less freedom, less privacy, less integrity. In becoming an object so that he can objectify her so that he can fuck her, she begins a political collaboration with his dominance; and then when he enters her, he confirms for himself and for her what she is: that she is something, not someone; certainly not someone equal (178).

From complicity through to collaboration, women become objects that are not human 'in any sense related to freedom or justice' (179). Our identity is thereby estranged from personhood and from the freedom of persons. As complicit objects, women are 'these so-called persons in human form but even that … not exactly, who cannot remember or manifest the physical reality of freedom, who do not seem to want or to value the individual experience of freedom' (179–80). An incalculable injustice is done, every bit as material, and as real, as oppression at work.

Dworkin's argument in regard to the fuck of possession rests on seeing the violence of subordination as intimately connected to sexual pleasure. She thereby challenges the making (in our world, the only one we have) of any clear distinction between sex and violence. Dworkin takes seriously the notion that we are socially constructed, presenting a radically non-biological theory of what it means to be man or woman. This entails that there is nothing that I could call 'my true sexuality' as some natural instinct or impulse striving to be released from its prison of social puritanism. Male power is not biological, not a power externally imposed, even though it is so encompassing and successful that it is easy to say, 'that's the way the world is'.

In the seeming totality of this system, the question becomes: what could freedom mean for the possessed, those who are owned and fucked? Dworkin writes, 'The political meaning of intercourse for women is the fundamental question of feminism and freedom: can an occupied people – physically occupied inside, internally invaded – be free; can those with a metaphysically compromised privacy have self-determination; can those without a biologically based physical integrity have self-respect?' (156). Or, how could we gain freedom where our very bodies are shaped by a complicity that begins in the destruction of 'self-respect, the capacity for self-determination and freedom – readying the body for the fuck instead of for freedom'? (180).

From Dworkin's perspective, a theory of sexuality is feminist in treating sexuality as a social construct of male power. Women are not *excluded* from this male-defined world; they are incorporated into it as its targets (its victims), but even more as its accomplices. In this world, women are not autonomous but are embodiments of male power (I am fucked, therefore I am, an object). The unfreedom of women differs significantly from other forms of unfreedom, because it involves complicity and moreover a complicity in pleasure. Oppression takes the space and name of freedom in positioning women to initiate their own destruction:

> Whatever intercourse is, it is not freedom; and if it cannot exist without objectification, it never will be. Instead, occupied women will be collaborators, more base in their collaboration than other collaborators have ever been: experiencing pleasure in their own inferiority; calling intercourse freedom. It is a tragedy beyond the power of language to convey when what has been imposed on women by force becomes a standard of freedom for women: and all the women say it is so (181).

This system of male power poses the question to feminism of who it is possible to be and how one can live in a culture that tortures women into shape like this. If you are created as an object, if you take form as a woman through objectification, how can you speak from the position of subject, as other than object? For Dworkin, feminism confronts the very impossibility of *being* human, for the thing called woman.

The political face of this impossibility is the apparent consent of many women to practices built on objectification: women's consent in forceful sex, in prostitution, in the making and use of pornography. This consent is not a point *against* Dworkin's analysis. Acknowledging women's consent is integral to her analysis of how male power exercises itself through the distribution of pleasure.

Pornography holds a privileged place in the pleasure economy, that is, pornography *as* sex, which creates the object woman, and whose possession and use *is* sex in the male system. Pornography invents women in its investiture of power in men. Pornography does not stand outside or against law, but is central in the law of sexual dominance, whose purpose is 'to promote the power of men over women and to keep women sexually subjugated (accessible) to men'. The central principle of the law of dominance is the creation of women as less human – and less free – than men (189). We live in a pornographic world, in which pornography is the public face of male social order, not private illicit entertainment.

What then is to be done? How can the objects be free? How can they even speak, as themselves and in their own voice? One of Dworkin's most innovative proposals, with Catharine MacKinnon, approached pornography as a civil rights violation (analogous to racial discrimination, say), allowing those hurt by (pornographic) subordination to speak of their detriment and claim correlative damages. The proposal used the definition, 'Pornography is the graphic sexually explicit subordination of women'.[3] After hearings that gathered evidence from experts and from women and men who claimed their lives had been wounded by pornography, Dworkin and MacKinnon proposed amending US city ordinances in line with this view that pornography *is* 'a practice of civil inequality on the basis of gender'.[4]

As part of the law of sexual order, pornography delineates who is fuckable and how. The old law of who and how changed radically in the 1960s and 1970s, but Dworkin warned that a generalization of access to fucking did not herald a new freedom for women. Her suspicion of the liberating power of normal sex was viewed by some of her critics as opposition to sex itself. It was once a common slur that Dworkin had said that all sex is rape. This criticism is easily refuted by the absence of any such statement in her work.[5] However, Dworkin *did* argue that it is often difficult to distinguish sex from rape in the system of subordination that passes as pleasure, where rape resembles what passes for the (normal) sex by which men assert possession of women. Speaking of Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Dworkin writes that 'It takes a human consciousness, including a capacity for suffering, to distinguish between a rape and a fuck. With no interior life of human meaning and human remorse, any fuck is simply expressive and animalistic, whatever its consequences or circumstances' (57). However, Dworkin conveyed with characteristic humour her confidence that there is indeed a difference to be discerned: 'I think both intercourse and sexual pleasure can and will survive equality.'[6]

Dworkin sees sexual subordination as a question about injustice, of how some live and breathe at the expense of others. Women do not *live* in this order or in this world. And this is, and justly is, our aim: to live well and to flourish. When our pleasure is a complicity or a stake in our subordination, we are not living. Our life is not 'our own'. To become a woman in the form of an image of male pleasure is to live out an injustice, to live your life as a *reflection* of male power.

For Dworkin, we commonly identify what we see as sex in this world with what sex could be in another world. We identify what we have to settle for as sex and as passion. But fucking could be more. Fucking could be redemption in and of the world, as Dworkin writes in discussing James Baldwin:

> In fucking, one's insides are on the line; and the fragile and unique intimacy of going for broke makes communion possible, in human reach – not transcendental and otherworldly, but an experience in flesh of love. Those broken too much by the world's disdain can become for each other, … 'the dwelling place that each had despaired of finding' (64).

Sex promises us an 'astonishing grace', the possibility 'of being known, being seen and known in all one's awful trouble and shabby dignity, having a witness to what one is and why' (65). An astonishing grace, although rebuffed by our fear: 'With this grace, fucking can be communion, a sharing, mutual possession of an enormous mystery; it has the intensity and magnificence of violent feeling transformed into tenderness' (76). In *Intercourse* and her other work, Dworkin offers a morality of sex, against its corruption in a pornographic world, in a rape culture tainted by '[c]heap, propagandistic views of fucking' (67).

Dworkin did not see more fucking as the benchmark of women's freedom. She knew from her own life and experience that trying to imagine a sex of mutuality between equals could earn for a woman the name of an enemy of sex itself. Dworkin suggests that critiques of rape, pornography and prostitution are labelled 'sex negative', 'perhaps because so many men use these ignoble modes of access and domination to get laid, and without them the number of fucks would so significantly decrease that men might nearly be chaste' (61).

However, fucklessness does not by definition equal being an alien, and it does not equal being unfree. Dworkin cites the 'rebel virginity' of Joan of Arc, whose refusal to be fucked (over) was not prudery or weakness but 'harmonious with the deepest values of resistance to any political despotism' (118). Joan refused 'sexual accessibility to men' in the same gesture as she refused 'civil insignificance', in a rejection of 'the social meaning of being female in its

entirety .... Her virginity was a radical renunciation of a civil worthlessness rooted in real sexual practice' (106). Dworkin's analysis of the fuck as a social and political 'institution' (not simply a set of individual acts) enables us to see how resistance to the fuck, in our world, can be a political gesture of great power. Rather than a cowering from freedom, such resistance can constitute a refusal in the very name of civil standing and significance – and of freedom.

At the heart of Dworkin's feminism was a wild and extravagant optimism that subordination was not natural, not inevitable, and that it could come to an end through such intransigence and 'crazy' resistance as that of Joan of Arc. Dworkin's feminism was a wager on that possibility:

> The boys are betting on our compliance, our ignorance, our fear .... The boys are betting that their depiction of us as whores will beat us down and stop our hearts. The boys are betting that their penises and fists and knives and fucks and rapes will turn us into what they say we are – the compliant women of sex, the voracious cunts of pornography, the masochistic sluts who resist because we really want more. The boys are betting. The boys are wrong.[7]

And if the boys are wrong? Dworkin's epigraph to *Intercourse* is taken from Yeats' tender paean to the 1916 Easter uprising: 'All changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born'. For Dworkin, feminism was the possibility of that terrible beauty in our lives, nothing less. Nothing less than a world transformed by the rising of its objects.

21

Before Her Eyes: On Luisa Valenzuela's *Bedside Manners*

Valeria Wagner

Operation Identity is being carried out with great speed, order and decorum. There was initial confusion when the ADC came up with the idea of using burnt cork and promptly sailed off to the officers' mess where he found a good supply. Battle camouflage was the order of the day, but as the day wore on, a touch of vanity entered the proceedings.

The Señora almost expects them to ask her if they can borrow her eyebrow pencil, but no, they don't go that far, although they are looking lovely. They make each other up almost affectionately. One says to his companion: Put a bit more black here to make my nose look thinner; another cries: No, no, wipe that off, I can't abide symmetry. They all crowd and shove each other in front of the large wardrobe mirror, someone says: Hasn't any one got a hand mirror? I want to see how I look from the back. The Señora is enjoying herself. She's considering offering them her eyebrow pencil anyway so that they can draw lines around the black smudges on their faces […] Fortunately, she's distracted by a voice to her left, that of the television, which is no longer the cooing voice of a few moments ago, but that of an alarmed announcer, intercut with the hiss of interference.

'Military uprising/in regiment eight/of the infantry recen/tly billeted/for security reasons in/the country club Las/Ranas.'

[…]

The Señora tries to get her brain into gear in order to jumpstart the neurons that deal with historical reconstruction or with constitutional law or whatever it is that she needs if she's to see clearly. She closes her eyes tight shut and is possibly on the verge of getting a glimmer of something that might help her

> *explain the events she's an involuntary witness to – the cyclical pattern of horror, as she seriously suspects – when the phone rings and shatters her concentration.*[1]

Asked in an interview to comment on the relationship between feminism and femininity, Luisa Valenzuela discards their opposition as 'fallacious' and even 'perverse' and their mutual exclusion a 'complex trap' that forces women to choose between two equally constraining positions and to follow, unwittingly, the 'patriarchal mandate'.[2] In her view, both characterizations 'pigeonhole' women in general and writers in particular, imposing a series of certitudes and views on the world that blind gender issues to more inclusive political issues, and vice versa. Feminism and femininity should, instead, be thought together: the former firmly anchored in the feminine body and in the position it occupies in society and history, and the latter informed by feminist discourse and visions of society. If these intricate relationships are acknowledged today, they are yet to be fully accepted and critically explored: *Bedside Manners* can be read as such an exploration, articulated through the device of an eminently feminine character, whose eminently feminine position provides eminently feminist, and more generally political, insights. As we will see, a Sleeping Beauty type of heroine, functioning as an allegory of her post-dictatorship country, will induce readers to think about the perspective and make-up (construction, masquerade and cosmetics) – of narratives of the nation.

The novel (in Spanish *Realidad Nacional desde la cama – National Reality from the Bed*) features a middle-class Argentinean exile who falls prey to an irresistible apathy when she returns to her post-dictatorial country. 'The woman needs rest', observes a discreetly opinionated, but rather well-disposed narrator, '[…] she finds it hard to fit into this new reality which is so alien […] She lies in bed and perhaps recomposes her thoughts, relives and reconstructs as best she can' (3). Urged by an acquaintance who finds she looks like a zombie, the woman agrees to 'intern herself' (2) in a 'very private and exclusive' country club (3), where she remains bedridden in a room with curtains drawn, uninterested in her surroundings. This is where we find her at the beginning of the narrative: 'Suspecting nothing of the superimposition of different planes of reality, unaware of the existence of the military camp or the shanty town, a woman has gone to seek refuge in a certain far-flung country club' (1). As the narrator's comments anticipate, however, this multilayered external reality soon filters into the room, and the prostrated protagonist, forced into a position

of involved spectatorship, discovers its 'superimposed' nature as events unfold under, on and around her bed.

This initial situation – woman in bed in a room in a country club – becomes increasingly absurd[3] as the narrative advances: soldiers train in the room, jumping over the woman's bed 'like the sheep you count to get to sleep' (96); a fugitive conscript hides first under and then in her bed; hungry hands surge from below to serve themselves to her provisions; the military headquarters of a rebellious military faction are set up in front of it; and the leader-to-be of the resistance slips in and out of it. However incongruent such scenes are, Argentinian readers would recognize in them references to the uprisings (1987–1990) of the *carapintadas* (literally, painted faces – a military faction who opposed the post-dictatorial constitutional governments' trials against the Juntas of 1976–1983), as well as to the personal situation of the author, herself a returned exile when she wrote the book. Valenzuela herself explains that the novel elaborates her return and 'immersion in national reality':

> there was hyperinflation; they were raiding the supermarkets; the soldiers in the rebellious regiments had painted their faces; everything was happening at the same time. So that's why I wrote *Bedside Manners*. I really wanted to withdraw to bed and forget about it. But there is no way not to be under a politics, because it hits you everywhere […].[4]

The novel thus stages a desire to 'withdraw' as well as its impossibility, further suggesting that the acknowledgment of both is a condition for understanding political agency. Valenzuela takes up this point elsewhere: 'Everything that happens sneaks into your private space […] When one accepts that the horror is also in one's own space, then one can do something to defend oneself or not let oneself be totally manipulated'.[5]

But, what interests us here is the staging of the action around the bedridden woman, and how it questions the make-up of dominant accounts of reality – in particular, as the novel's original title suggests, of 'national' reality. Indeed, as the bedroom becomes, literally, a scene of politics and of military operations, the oppositions often central to narratives of the nation – public and private spheres, military and domestic spaces, active and passive subjects, men and women – are blurred and rearranged according to the explicitly gendered and class-specific standpoint of the 'embedded' woman. This horizontal, female and apparently narrow perspective interestingly inverts that of official versions of events, elaborated from an implicitly male, vertical and panoramic perspective: male, because the universal or neutral standpoint is historically modelled on that of

men (and more specifically, well-to-do, educated men of European descent); vertical, because this standpoint is authoritative, and its narrative hierarchically organized (events are sorted out by their importance, relevance and centrality); and panoramic, because it is addressed to the public at large. In a sense, the woman in bed, who perceives events from the private and intimate space and has no authority over them, mirrors the position of the orator in a pulpit, righteously spreading the word in the public space.

The figure of the woman in bed is thus worth considering in more detail, as it is the subject and frame, to and through which the multilayered complexity of reality will be revealed. She is in fact a complex, heavily connoted figure: her title, *Señora* – as the narrator begins to call her after a maid enters the scene, situates her in the empowered pole of the higher social classes, while the fact that she is a returned exile suggests left-wing political allegiances, and at the very least a disagreement with the previous military dictatorship. As for her prostrated condition, it on the one hand literalizes and elaborates the metaphor of the sick nation for whose recovery the military Junta 'extirpated' the subversive elements that consumed it,[6] and on the other, it epitomizes feminine passivity, alluding as it does to the fairy-tale figure of the sleeping heroine.[7] In the first case, the Señora's post-dictatorial malaise suggests that the national body is now sick from democracy and, more specifically, from (and of) the denial of the past that the country's transition to democracy entailed: like the Señora, who constantly complains of her lack of memory and tries (in vain) to gather her thoughts, the country suffers from amnesia and should be given time to reassemble its past and present parts. The political import of the Señora's attempts to remember can be measured by the threat she receives right after the fragment on which we will focus: 'We're gonna get you […]', says a voice on the phone, 'You're after memory, but we're gonna get you first' (95). In the second case, the woman fails to achieve the degree of unconsciousness and passivity of the heroine in a proper fairy tale, although – and partly because – she willingly endorses one such role – 'The Señora used to like acting […], and when she saw the bed she knew at once the role for her: Sleeping Beauty in the forest' (8).

The Señora's conscious identification with the Sleeping Beauty type of heroine responds, above all, to her desire to be left alone to sleep, in the hope that she will understand things better when she awakes. It is in defense of this rather innocuous project that she becomes involved in a confrontation with the maid, who is bent on showing her the 'cheery images on the screen' (12) and on keeping the French windows shut. It will turn out that the maid is a spy for

the insurgent military faction, and her mission is to make the Señora forget: 'After all, that's why people come to this club, to rest. To forget all their problems. It's the ideal place for forgetting. Exactly what you need, Señora' (8). For once, however, the Señora imposes her will: the TV is shut off, the French windows opened, and reality seeps in as various men enter in orbit around her bed.

In tune with her role, the Señora receives her visitors in bed: some she barely tolerates (the militaries), others she welcomes and even introduces under the sheets. In this sense, it can be said that she acts out the subtext of her bedridden and feminine fairy-tale condition, radicalizing its erotic and social mandates. Thus, she not only accepts, but actively solicits the sexual advances of the 'charming prince' character – who is, alternately, a caring doctor, an attentive psychiatrist, a sexist taxi driver and idealistic revolutionary. Similarly, she is not only willing to play mother to the fugitive conscript who seeks refuge in her bed, but eventually her awakened maternal instincts extend, as we will see, to all of the conscripts that cross her room. Finally, although the Señora does get out of bed to dance with her 'savior' at the end of the book, it is not in anticipation of her wedding, but to celebrate the victory of the poor and righteous over the rebellious military faction: 'Now the club is ours!' says the would-be-prince, 'stamping on the weapons' (121), while people around them applaud. But at this point – end of the book, end of the 'fairy-tale', end of the fiction – the Señora comes to herself, raising the question that the other characters have forgotten – or are unable – to ask: ' "And the country?" asks she, ever the realist' (121).

Leaving the Señora's 'realism' aside for the moment, the story suggests, so far, that her feminine role not only fails to protect her from 'reality', but turns her instead into a potentially critical witness of events, capable of insights inaccessible to others. Most importantly, the Señora's position and role give her insights into the absurdity of events. This is apparent at the beginning of the fragment under consideration, when the Señora observes the soldiers making 'each other up affectionately'. At this stage, the Señora has considerably changed her attitude to her invading militaries: indeed, whereas at the beginning of the novel she is quite understandably terrified by their presence in the club – 'If there are soldiers around here, I'm going to have to go' (30), she tells Maria when she first finds out their existence – she now observes them fearlessly, increasingly sympathizing with them. In Chapter 15, she already sees in the troops that have invaded her room 'a pack of panting dogs perhaps, begging for a sugar lump', and even finds them 'touching' (89). Still hoping 'her memory will […] help her understand a little of this whole

incongruous business', the Señora is resigned to being a 'captive audience' and consoles herself with the thought that what she will now view can only be better than actual TV. It is in this state of mind that she watches the soldiers paint their faces with burnt corks, so as to achieve the 'battle camouflage' (93) meant to identify them as a group of 'a new type of soldiers' (91).

The woman's perception of the soldiers' operation of camouflage and group identification is patently a function of her various, feminine, stereotyped roles – the coquette in her assimilates the military operation to a make-up session; her motherly vein identifies their infantile vanity in their efforts to look good; the whole procedure becomes a game, even a show, in her eyes. In this sense, her feminine position provides political insight into the military uprising, revealing it as a masquerade: in terms of the historical situation, a manoeuver to distract attention from the backstage negotiations to exonerate the members of the Junta; in terms of gender roles, a process of construction of the military – and national – masculinity parallel to that of the nation's prostrated femininity. But the Señora's complacency also blinds her to the ulterior motives of this 'show' until her feminization of the soldiers is complemented with the subsequent reversal of the planes of reality between the television screen and the stage of the bedroom. As the narrator clarifies, she is about to offer her eyebrow pencil to the soldiers – and thus become accomplice to the operation – when she is 'fortunately distracted' by the news on TV, announcing the uprising in the country club. This is in fact the first time that the TV appears to be transmitting something close to the 'real' 'national reality'. Until then, as the initial conflict between the Señora and the maid indicates, the TV screen diverts the gaze from 'reality', which is outside, behind the French windows. Whenever the Señora is forced to watch it, she is taken over by a sense of unreality, and by the suspicion that 'something' is being hidden from her. Hence, when the news finally announces that what she had seen coming in her own room is actually taking place – that her bedroom, in short, *is* the outside, and that what had been hidden from sight previously, is *in* it, the connection between the present and past horror becomes apparent, its 'cyclical pattern' revealed.

The woman is thus propelled, as it were, from the bed to the front of the action, or at least, to a civic mission of 'historical reconstruction […] or whatever it is that she needs if she's to see clearly' (94). The phone call that subsequently interrupts the incipient process of reconstruction and of re-visioning will confirm the reasonable grounds of this impulse to see even more clearly. The threat uttered earlier ('You're after memory, but we're

gonna get you first' (95)) terrorizes the Señora, but it also reminds her of the necessity of recovering her 'power of speech' (96), which, as her concluding, illuminating question ('And the country?') suggests is intimately linked to that of clear-sightedness. At the end of the novel, the Señora is the only character who seems to be able to question the assimilation of the country to the country club, and to quell the reductive, naïve triumphalism of the combatants. In this sense, her 'realism' is not affirmative; it consists, rather, in questioning and undermining certitudes on the basis of her insights into the various fictionalizations of reality, including those involved in her own role-playing.

It should be stressed at this point that although the novel advances the proposal that a feminine standpoint is necessary to see through national politics and narratives, it also suggests that this perspective is not in itself sufficient to disclose the 'superimposed' nature of reality. Indeed, in spite of her conscious acting-out of the paradigmatic feminine role of the Sleeping Beauty, the Señora almost slips into complicity with the militaries and the patriarchal power they represent. As we saw above, she is saved from such involuntary connivance with the powers from which she had flown in the past by the TV news, which introduces a salutary distance with respect to her in-room reality. But a returned exile, in fact, the woman suffers from a distance from, and double vision of, the 'national reality' from the outset. 'This new city isn't the one I used to know' (80), thinks the Señora, comparing her memories to the images on TV; 'I came back to find *that*, not *this*. I came back to recover my memory and they steal it from me, erase it' (78). The estrangement proper to her situation thus allows her to realize that something is denied or remains unacknowledged in the official versions of reality: informed by the gap between *that* and *this*, she can identify silences, erasures and impostures. In particular, and in spite of her state of confusion, this gap alerts her to the continuation of the dynamics of dictatorship in the midst of democracy, even before the phone call at the end of our fragment: 'now the enemy's no longer there, or at least he says he isn't, but he is' (78).[8] Holding on to her double vision – of the *that* and (in) the *this* – the protagonist eventually recognizes the need of a series of 'readjustments' of and to reality: 'I thought I was coming to this country club to rest, to readjust. Perhaps there's something else too …' (83). The Señora's insights into the doublings and gaps of reality only acquire a properly critical dimension with this realization: that is, when she realizes that what needs to be 'readjusted' – and interpreted – is not herself, but the country, the nation, and versions of reality.

At the very beginning of the novel, when the 'woman' is just being introduced, the narrative voice specifies that she was born 'under the sign of the Question' (1). We find out throughout the narrative that she is indeed a questioning character: she questions herself, she questions the various set-ups of reality and she questions the readers. And perhaps we can conclude, now, that the critical force of her questioning stems, not only from the double visions which all questioning to some extent generates, but also, and most importantly, from the interaction between the standpoints of the self-conscious fairy-tale heroine – a gender role which all women are under some social pressure to conform to – and of the returned exile for whom reality is always full of gaps. The interaction between these two standpoints ultimately corresponds to that between feminine stereotypes and those historical moments, or sociopolitical contexts, that take women (and men) out of themselves, either allowing them or forcing them to think about the tensions they experience in relation to normative accounts of reality and of themselves. In the novel, this interaction is figured by the return from exile: a movement whereby the feminine perspective acquires feminist overtones that produce political insights.

Postscript: Feminist Revisions of Political Thought

Susan Bruce and Katherine Smits

Women's voices and perspectives are conspicuously absent from the canon of western political thought. As it is taught in universities all over the world, as it is represented in textbooks and as it shapes the intellectual scope of political ideas, that canon includes very few texts either written by women or addressing their political status: Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* are notable exceptions. A broader view might stretch to include Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies* and Olympe de Gouges's *Declaration of the Rights of Woman*, but even these are usually relegated to the margins of western political thought. All of these texts are discussed in this collection which locates them as central to the development of a trajectory of thinking about women's political and social claims, expressed not only in political and philosophical works, but also in novels and poems. We believe that feminism changes the way we think about politics. Feminism broadens our recognition of the spaces where politics emerges: not just in philosophical and polemical texts, but also in the political dimension of the fantastical, the fictional and the poetic. Politics arises wherever power relations, domination and subordination are addressed, and wherever claims to freedom and equality and rights are made – that is, in the public sphere, in civil society, in the home, in the family and in the bedroom. The second-wave feminist claim: 'the personal is political' aims not so much, as critics have suggested, to break down all barriers between public and private life, but rather to demonstrate that power inequalities must also be addressed in that sphere of life we call private.

Women's voices have been largely absent from political thought because women themselves have been, until the last 100 years or so, restricted to the private sphere in western societies. Their experiences and concerns have

been identified with the household and the family, rather than public life, and deemed outside the proper subject of political discourse. This exclusion of women from the public, and their consequent legal and civil subordination, has until the twentieth century been consistently legitimized by political thinkers across a range of philosophical perspectives. In the classical Aristotelian origins of western political ideas about gender, women are confined to household concerns and defined in terms of their reproductive biology.[1] In the contractualist theory of early modern political thinkers, individuals in the state of nature freely agree to enter into civil society and the state, and yet once there are assumed to be male: as Carole Pateman has argued, women are taken to have entered into subordinating sexual contracts in the state of nature, prior to society and politics.[2] The authors in this collection respond to and challenge this extraordinarily consistent dismissal of women from public life and concerns. The presence of power relations in private life and the difficulties in clearly separating private life from public are a recurring theme in these essays – expressed in anxieties over women's dress, their bodies, their occupation of space and the social relations in which they engage. The protagonist of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* is driven to madness by her confinement in her bedroom. Other women writers have insisted that the personal and familial dimensions of women's experience must be legitimate matters for public discourse: in Anne Bradstreet's and Adrienne Rich's poetry, in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, where the title character claimed the right to record the experiential terms of her life in her own passionate voice and in Virginia Woolf's life writing. In the more overtly polemical terms of her analysis of 'the feminine mystique', Betty Friedan urges American women to recognize that their sense of malaise and dissatisfaction was not individual and personal, but rather shared and political.

Feminist writers have insisted on women's rights to participate in mainstream civic life. Mary Astell questions the separation of public and private sphere concerns and values in the early modern period, arguing that the same standards of liberty and right that apply in the public should apply in the private, to the women confined in that sphere. Olympe de Gouges chooses the revolutionary moment to argue for the equality of women. Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill insist on women's rights and capacity to participate in public discourse. Nazira Zeineddine's objections to enforced veiling reflect the view that these restrictions on dress are aimed at enforcing privacy upon women even as they

move through the public. But some have dealt with the problem by imagining or recounting quite different civic publics, occupied by women and animated by their concerns. Mary Wortley Montagu and Rokeya Hussain describe or imagine women-only spaces and worlds, arguing that social relations and discourse within them are public and political in their aims and concerns. In yet another feminist reinterpretation of public and political space (which we might compare to *The Yellow Wallpaper*), Luisa Valenzuela adopts the female narrator's bed as the central viewpoint and her bedroom as the stage for the drama of nationalist imaginary in her *Bedside Manners*.

The division of public and private reflects another which is central to western thinking: that between the rational mind and the non-rational body. This distinction in western political philosophy originates in Platonic Idealism, and the association of politics and civic life with rationality has been a persistent theme in the canon of western political thought. From the classical origins of political theory, through Christian thinking and into the modern period, women were regarded as irrational, determined and limited always by their reproductive biology; unable to participate in rational processes of deliberation, self-improvement and – for early liberals – capital accumulation. To define women as irrational was to exclude them from the public sphere. Some of the texts in this collection explicitly challenge the claim of female irrationality. This is suggested first by Christine de Pizan, who argues that women are intellectually equal to men, and is central for Wollstonecraft, Mill and Nazira Zeineddine, all of whom insist upon women's rationality and consequent capacity for self-cultivation and self-determination.

Other feminists have focused on challenging the assumption that politics is concerned only with rational deliberation and processes and not with embodied experience. In early modern political thought, the control of bodies and physical violence by rational political arrangements and institutions underpinned Hobbes's argument that fear of others legitimized the handing over of absolute power to the state. Feminist authors contest women's alleged irrationality and the exclusion of a full-range of bodily experience – not just fear of death – from political meaning, exposing the political significance of embodied experience by pointing out men's efforts to control women's bodies. Such an agenda, some of them (such as Zeinnedine) have claimed, lies not only behind the injunction to veil, but also behind the control of women's sexuality more broadly. Mill argues that men feel

empowered to force sex upon women and use it to control them, and Andrea Dworkin develops a sustained argument along these lines, arguing that the act of sex itself imposes, maintains and reinscribes women's subordination. But feminist arguments about the relationship between sex and power are complex: many also suggest that sexual self-assertion is an important aspect of self-determination and liberation, as we see in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Like Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, this text reminds us that the deployment of sex as an instrument of control is also often shaped by racial politics. But, it also suggests that freedom and autonomy are the goals – and rights – of women as embodied human beings. Women experience their bodies, Simone de Beauvoir argues, not only partly through social norms, but also through their own autonomous choices.

Whether sex is seen to constitute only the imposition of male control, or is held to operate as a field of self-expression that may be seized by women, it is a central feminist claim that the control of women's bodies and their own participation in this control is a fundamental aspect of politics and regimes of power. This expands our understanding of who the subjects and objects of political power are – i.e. who wields political power, and upon whom? Throughout the history of western political thought, rulers, and later the state, have been assumed to exercise political power. The emerging concept of the individual in the early modern period meant that individual rights and liberties had to be reconciled with state power (wrested from the Church); this was the project of social contract theory. Until the nineteenth century, the state was assumed to be the key actor in politics, negotiating with and acting upon individuals, the Church, social groups and classes. Marx's analysis of class relations has been widely recognized as a major challenge to this assumption, but so too were the feminist arguments that emerged at around the same time. Feminism, of course, opposes state control over women, but it sees the source of that control in the power of men as a class and patriarchy as an ideological and social system. Moreover (as Marx also pointed out in a different context), political power is exerted over minds, as well as bodies. Because ideology, values and ideas shape women's consciousness as well as that of men, feminists have pointed to the way in which patriarchy exerts control over the very minds of its objects, turning them at least with some success into willing supporters of male domination. Several of the authors in this collection, from Astell in the seventeenth century to Rich and Dworkin

in the twentieth, point to ideology's role in producing women's complicity in their own subordination.

Feminist authors since the nineteenth century have recognized that the subordination of women is connected and related to that of other social groups, groups constituted along racial, class and sexual lines, among other aspects of identity. In their political activism, first-wave feminists like the Suffragettes (with whom this collection began) compared the situation of women to that of slaves. They were inspired by the movement to abolish slavery – the most influential social reform movement of the first half of the nineteenth century – and also by socialism's promise of justice and equality. Both the slavery comparison and the socialist context are explicit in the work of Anna Wheeler; Mill also compares women to slaves. Later in the century, as leftist movements gathered strength, socialist feminists located women's rights in the context of broader economic inequalities and the capitalist system that sustained them. Clara Zetkin argues that women's social and political positions could not be addressed independently, and that capitalism subordinated women differently depending on class. The two African-American authors in this collection, Hurston and Jacobs demonstrate that women's subordination and sexual exploitation are the instruments of racist as well as patriarchal ideology, which deforms both the dominant white society and African-American communities, and against which women of colour struggle to assert themselves. In colonized societies, women's claims for equality and justice were part of a complex response to imperial rule and to processes of modernization, as we see here in the work of Hussain and Zeineddine. Contemporary political theory's recognition of intersectionality – the analysis of power relations in terms of the complex social axes of domination and subordination – reflects feminist arguments that women's experience of subordination is shaped also by their race, ethnicity, class and sexuality.

Finally, feminism has changed not only the way in which we theorize politics, it has also changed the ways in which we think about the relationship between political theory and lived experience. Most of the authors represented in this collection were not philosophers – but all, from philosophers, through housewives to former slaves, saw themselves as speaking on behalf of women, drawing their arguments from women's experience, and aiming to change that experience for the better. Feminism's contribution to political theory is a work in progress – young authors and thinkers continue to speak and write about women's

subordination wherever, and in whatever form, it is found. But feminism's most fundamental achievement has been to insist that all political theories, as well as all social practices, ethical principles and institutions confront the same, crucial, question: what are their consequences for the experience of the women, in all their diversity, who live under them?

Notes

Introduction

1 E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette: A History of the Women's Militant Suffrage Movement, 1905–1910* (New York: Sturgis and Walton Company, 1911), 243–44 (https://archive.org/details/suffragettehisto00pankuoft). Page numbers to this edition will be given in parentheses throughout the text of this chapter.

2 A similar argument occurred in the United States over the relation between the women's movement and demands for racial equality.

3 The phrase 'second-wave feminism' was first used in print by Marsha Lear in a 1968 article for *The New Yorker*. 'First' and 'second' wave denote organized movements rather than individual interventions; as this collection shows, many women spoke out prior to first-wave feminism. Recently, the term 'third-wave' (and even 'fourth wave') feminism has been used to describe post-1990s feminisms, which, for example, sometimes operate online and often have links with LGBT organizations. There is debate on whether the wave metaphor is useful and what precisely it implies or occludes. See Astrid Henry, *Not My Mother's Sister: Generational Conflict and Third Wave Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); and Charlotte Kroløkke and Anne Scott Sørensen, *Gender Communication Theories and Analyses: From Silence to Performance* (London: Sage Publications, 2006).

4 See, for example, Judith Butler and Joan Wallach Scott eds., *Feminists Theorize the Political* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Virginia Held ed., *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995); Carole Pateman and Mary Lyndon Shanley eds., *Feminist Interpretations and Political Theory* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991); Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985); Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl eds., *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

5 Joseph Swetnam's *The Araignment of Lewde, Iidle, Froward and Vnconstant Women* (1615), for instance, wove together a patchwork of biblical and classical misogyny to lodge the argument that almost all women were strumpets, whose beautiful exteriors concealed rotten cores, occasioning ripostes such as the pseudonymous

Esther Sowernam's *Esther hath Hang'd Haman*' and Rachel Speght's *A Mouzel for Melastomus* (1617). Swetnam's and Sowernam's texts are available online at http://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/objects/lse:sim568qag'; Speght's at http://pages.uoregon.edu/rbear/rachel.html. A controversy on cross-dressing was conducted through the pamphlets *Hic Mulier* and *Haec Vir* (the 'Man-woman' and the 'Womanish Man'), https://archive.org/stream/hicmulierormanwo00exetuoft#page/26/mode/2up

6 *Patriarchal Moments*.

7 'Mr Mill' refers to the Utilitarian political theorist James Mill, not his more famous son John Stuart Mill.

8 For a useful discussion of this issue, see Leila Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011).

Chapter 1

1 From (spelling Americanized) Rosalind Brown-Grant trans., introduction and notes, Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 15–16. For others, see Angus J. Kennedy, *Christine de Pizan, A Bibliographical Guide* (London: Grant & Cutler, 1984) and supplements 1, 2 (1994, 2004), esp. 1:163.

2 See Glenda McLeod, *Virtue and Venom: Catalogs of Women from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991).

3 R. Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women: Reading beyond Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 172–73.

4 See Brown-Grant's note 3 to her *City of Ladies*, 241.

5 See V. A. Kolve, 'The Annunciation to Christine: Authorial Empowerment in The Book of the City of Ladies', in *Iconography at the Crossroads*, ed. Brendan Cassidy (Princeton, NJ: Index of Christian Art/Princeton University, 1993), 171–96; and Louise D'Arcens, 'Petit estat vesval: Christine's Grieving Body Politic,' in *Healing the Body Politic*, eds. Karen Green and Constant J. Mews (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005), 201–26; here, 211–12.

6 Maureen Quilligan, *The Allegory of Female Authority: Christine de Pizan's 'Cité des Dames'* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 58. For the Rose Debate, see David F. Hult ed. and trans., *The Debate of the 'Romance of the Rose,'* The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe Series (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

7 For Thomas as patron saint of architects and masons, New Testament Apocrypha, Acts of Thomas, 2, see Richards, no. 15 (in Willard, *Writings*, 209) and Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, ed. *The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan* (New York & London: W. W. Norton, 1997), 126: no. 9.

8 Quilligan, Allegory of Female Authority, 58–59 – even though, we remember, Thomas's trademark incredulity centred not on himself but on recognizing the resurrected Jesus (John 20: 24–29).
9 Quilligan, *Allegory of Female Authority*, 59–60.
10 For further research on the City's reception and dissemination, see pertinent sections in Kennedy, *Bibliographical Guide*.
11 Brown-Grant, *Moral Defence*, 164–65.
12 See Susan Groag Bell, 'Christine de Pizan (1364–1430): Humanism and the Problem of the Studious Woman', *Feminist Studies* 3 (1976): 173–84.

Chapter 2

1 Anne Bradstreet, 'The Author to Her Book', The Poetry Foundation (http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/172953). Several of Bradstreet's poems are in the public domain on the Poetry Foundation website; all those mentioned in this essay can also be found in *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. Jeannine Hensley, foreword Adrienne Rich (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010). Page numbers to the poems as they appear in Hensley's edition are given in parentheses throughout the text.
2 John Berryman's 'Homage to Mistress Bradstreet' can be found on the Poetry Foundation website at http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/177880.
3 Timothy Sweet, 'Gender, Genre and Subjectivity in Anne Bradstreet's Early Elegies', *Early American Literature* 23 (1988): 170.
4 Susan Wiseman, *Conspiracy and Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3.
5 Catharine Grey, *Women Writers and Public Discourse in Seventeenth-Century Britain* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 7.
6 See for instance Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).
7 Mitchel Breitweiser, *National Melancholy: Mourning and Opportunity in Classic American Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 78.
8 See, for example, the coaching available to male-to-female transgender individuals, which involves among other things encouragement to speak in a rising intonation so as to disavow the implicit claims to authority signified by 'male' tone and locution so as to model instead a hesitant deference more 'appropriate' to 'female' speech.
9 For Elizabeth's speech at Tilbury, see the British Library's 'Learning Timelines: Sources from History' page at www.bl.uk

Chapter 3

1 Mary Astell, *Reflections upon Marriage, to Which Is Added a Preface in Answer to Some Objections*, 3rd edn (London, 1706), pp. x–xi. Reprinted in Patricia Springborg, *Mary Astell (1666–1731), Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 18–19. Page numbers both to the original and to my edition are given in parentheses throughout.
2 Judith Drake, Astell's contemporary, was author of *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex* (1696), often attributed to Astell, even by Locke.
3 For the rise of market society in this period, see Christiane Eisenberg, *The Rise of Market Society in England, 1066–1800*, trans. Deborah Cohen (New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2013).
4 John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* [1690], ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 284.
5 Mary Astell, *The Christian Religion* (London, 1705), §139, p. 133.
6 Mary Astell, *A Compassionate Enquiry into the Causes of the Civil War* [1704], republished in Springborg, *Mary Astell (1666–1731), Political Writings*, 29/163.
7 John Milton, *Second Defense*, reprinted in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 7th rev. edn, ed. Robert W. Ayers (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 1. 625.
8 John Milton, *Political Writings*, ed. Martin Dzelzainis, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1.

Chapter 4

1 Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*, ed. Malcolm Jack, with an introduction by Anita Desai (London: William Pickering, 1993), letter # XXVII, 58–60. Page numbers to this edition will be given in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.
2 Mary Astell, 'Preface', in Mary Wortley Montagu, *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M… y W… y M… e; written, during her travels in Europe, Asia and Africa, to Persons of Distinction, Men of Letters, & c. in different Parts of Europe. Which contain, Among other Curious Relations, accounts of the Policy and Manners of the Turks; from Sources that have been inaccessible to other Travellers* (London: Printed for T. Becket and P. A. De Hondt, 1763).
3 It is noteworthy that Milton contrasts Eve with the character of Sin and equates her with the goddess of love, Venus. See Mandy Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve* (Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).
4 The Irish portrait painter, Charles Jervas (Gervase), c. 1675–1739.

5 Felicity A. Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Baltimore, MD and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 140; Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 90–91. For the opposite perspective, see Mary Jo Keitzman, 'Montagu's Turkish Embassy Letters and Cultural Dislocation', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900: Restoration and Eighteenth Century* 38, no. 3 (1998): 537–51; Billie Melman, *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), esp. 86–95.

6 Markman Ellis, 'An Introduction to the Coffee-House: A Discursive Model', *Language and Communication* 28 (2008): 156–64; Astell, 'Preface'.

7 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity, 1989); Alison Olson, 'Coffee House Lobbying', *History Today* 41, no. 1 (1991): 35–41; Markman Ellis, 'General Introduction', in *Eighteenth-Century Coffee-House Culture*, vol. 1, *Restoration Satire*, ed. Markman Ellis (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2006), xi–xxxi at xii–xix.

8 Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 225–44.

9 Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 46.

10 Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Comet of the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 39.

11 In Robert Halsband's version of the text, ed., *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol. 1, *1708–1720* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), he replaces 'shirt' (see Montagu, *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady*, 101) with 'skirt' (314) without explanation. Opening Montagu's skirt would not have revealed her stays; 'shirt' was used in male dress in the eighteenth century, which women's riding habits emulated, while 'blouse' only came into use in the nineteenth century: I have therefore concluded Halsband's version is an error.

12 Srinivas Aravamudan, 'Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in the *Hamman*: Masquerade, Womanliness, and Levantinization', *English Library History* 62, no. 1 (1995): 69–104 at 84.

Chapter 5

1 Excerpted from 'The Rights of Woman', translated by John Cole, *Between the Queen and the Cabby: Olympe de Gouge's Rights of Women* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 28–41, excerpt from 30–31. Interpolations

in [] are Cole's. I have chosen Cole's translation since it is the only English version of the complete pamphlet and best captures de Gouges's colloquial, irreverent tone; parenthetical page numbers in this essay refer to Cole. For clarity, I have inserted the English term 'female citizen' wherever *citoyenne* appears in the original. Among the many alternative (partial) translations of de Gouges, see Susan G. Bell and Karen M. Offen eds., *Women, the Family, and Freedom: 1750–1880* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1983) and Lynn Hunt ed., *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History* (Boston, MA: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996).

2 For influential appraisals of 'closure', see François Furet ed., *Terminer la Révolution. Mounier et Barnave dans la Révolution française* (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1990).

3 Willam J. Sewell Jr., '*Le Citoyen, La Citoyenne*: Activity, Passivity, and the French Revolutionary Concept of Citizenship', in *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, vol. 2, *Political Culture of the French Revolution*, ed. Colin Lucas (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988), 105–25. The Constitution of 1791 hedged political rights with property qualifications that remained in place until late 1792.

4 This process of recovery has divided scholars: some endorse biographically grounded examinations of her career, while others adopt theoretically informed, 'feminist' interpretations. For the former, see Olivier Blanc, *Marie-Olympe de Gouges, une humaniste à la fin du XVIIIème siècle* (Paris: Vienet, 2003); for the latter, Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996). In this essay, I have followed Scott's suggestion to privilege the historical processes structuring gender and power over individual biography; see Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

5 On the likelihood that contemporaries reacted negatively to de Gouges's 'reckless' dedication, see Cole, *Between the Queen and the Cabby*, 65–67, 82.

6 See Erica Harth, *Cartesian Women: Versions and Subversions of Rational Discourse in the Old Regime* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 215–24.

7 Cole, *Between the Queen and the Cabby*, 5. Recent attention to de Gouges should not obscure the fact that Cole's is the first-ever English translation of the entire pamphlet (in other words, it only took 220 years). Much of the pamphlet would seem irrelevant to a modern editor focused on political issues or on the antecedents of feminist thought.

8 See Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 53–55; Olivier Blanc ed., *Ecrits politiques, 1788–1791* (Paris: Côté-femmes, 1993), 24ff; and also Doris Y. Kadish and Francoise Massardier-Kenney eds., *Translating Slavery: Gender and Race in French Women's Writing, 1783–1823* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1994), 72. For a critique of the long tradition of misogynistic interpretation, see Carol Sherman, *Reading Olympe de Gouges* (New York: Palgrave, 2013), 12–15.

9 Dale Van Kley ed., *The French Idea of Freedom: The Old Regime and the Declaration of Rights of 1789* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).
10 Joan Scott takes this 'paradox' to represent the predicament of modern feminism, born of attempts to fabricate gender equality in a world where political difference remains sexually embodied. See Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 32–33.
11 As Lynn Hunt and others have shown, the rhetorical condemnation of feminine political activity was widespread in the Revolution and remains one of the key ideological components of the pessimistic reading of revolutionary gender politics. See Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 89–123.
12 Kadish and Massardier-Kenney eds., *Translating Slavery*, 78.

Chapter 6

1 Mary Wollstonecraft, 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman', in *The Vindications*, eds. D. L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2001), 166–67. Page numbers to this edition will be given in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.
2 William Godwin, 'Memoirs of the Author of "The Rights of Woman"', in *A Short Residence in Sweden and Memoirs of the Author of 'The Rights of Woman'*, ed. Richard Holmes (London: Penguin, 1987), 215.
3 J. A. Simpson and E. S.C. Weiner eds., *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, vol. XVI (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 477.
4 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Roger Woolhouse (London: Penguin, 1997, 2004), 616.
5 In their Introduction to *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Macdonald and Scherf provide a fine, succinct comparative discussion of Wollstonecraft and Locke.
6 François Marie Arouet de Voltaire, 'Enthusiasm', from *A Philosophical Dictionary*, in *The Works of Voltaire: A Contemporary Version*, vol. VIII, eds. Oliver Leigh and John Morley, trans. William F. Fleming (Paris and London: E. R. DuMont, 1901), 241.
7 Voltaire, '"Reason," from *Philosophical Dictionary Selections*', in *The Portable Voltaire*, ed. Ben Ray Redman, trans. H. I. Woolf (London and New York: Penguin, 1977), 186–87.
8 Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).
9 C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Philosophy of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).
10 Barbara Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 12.
11 John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler, 2nd edn (London and New York: Longman, 1998), 257–58.

Chapter 7

1 William Thompson [and Anna Wheeler], *Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women: Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain Them in Political, and Thence in Civil and Domestic, Slavery; in Reply to a Paragraph of Mr. Mill's Celebrated 'Article on Government'* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), 65–67. Page numbers to this edition will be given in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.

2 For further biographical details about Wheeler, see the excellent study by Dolores Dooley, *Equality in Community: Sexual Equality in the Writings of William Thompson and Anna Doyle Wheeler* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), ch. 2.

3 James Mill [1820], 'Essay on Government', in *Selected Political Writings*, ed. Terence Ball (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

4 Michael St John Packe, *The Life of John Stuart Mill* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1954), 91. See also Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

5 For some discussion of the legal condition of women in marriage in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Jill Elaine Hasday, 'Contest and Consent: A Legal History of Marital Rape', *California Law Review* 88 (2000), 1372–505; Reva B. Siegel, ' "Rule of Love": Wife Beating as Prerogative and Privacy', *The Yale Law Journal* 105 (1996): 2117–207.

6 In the early nineteenth century, the multiple meanings of 'rod' included (1) 'power or tyrannical sway' and, more colloquially, (2) 'The penis, the erect member'. See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, eds. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, vol. XIV of XX volumes (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 28–29.

7 Mary Wollstonecraft [1792], *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Miriam Kramnick (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), and nearly eighty years earlier, Mary Astell, with her ironic quip against John Locke: 'if all men are born free, how is it all women are born slaves?' Mary Astell, [1700], 'Reflections Upon Marriage', in *Astell: Political Writings*, ed. P. Springborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 18. (See Chapters 6 and 3 of this volume.)

8 Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Race, and History* (London: Verso Books, 1992), 116, fn. 132.

9 C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2001).

10 Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (London: Polity Press, 1988), 2 and passim.

11 Dooley, *Equality in Community*, 73.

12 Ibid., 79.

13 Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, 63.

14 Dooley, *Equality in Community*, 71.
15 Ibid., 69.
16 Abbie L. Cory, 'Wheeler and Thompson's Appeal: The Rhetorical Re-Visioning of Gender', *New Hibernia Review* 8 (2004): 115.
17 Ibid., 119.
18 Dooley, *Equality in Community*, 89–90.
19 Cory, 'Wheeler and Thompson's Appeal', 120.
20 Dooley, *Equality in Community*, 90.
21 Cory, 'Wheeler and Thompson's Appeal', 119.

Chapter 8

1 Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847; London: Penguin, 2003), 125–26. Page numbers given in parentheses.
2 Robert B. Martin, *The Accents of Persuasion* (London: Faber, 1966), 93–94.
3 Margaret Oliphant, 'Modern Novelists – Great and Small', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 77 (May 1855), 554–68, 557.
4 Peter Bayne, *Two Great Englishwomen* (London: Clarke, 1881), 290–92.
5 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas*, introd. Hermione Lee (London: Vintage, 2001), 59.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 62.
9 Ibid., 63–64.
10 Ibid., 64.
11 Ibid., 59–60.
12 Ibid., 59.
13 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), 2nd edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 338.
14 Elizabeth Rigby, 'Review', *Quarterly Review*, 15 (April 1848), in Miriam Allott, *The Brontës: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 109–10.
15 Jean Wyatt, *Reconstructing Desire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline Press, 1990), 39.
16 Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 152.
17 See further David Bolt, Julia Miele Rodas, and Elizabeth J. Donaldson eds., *The Madwoman and the Blindman* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012).
18 Helene Moglen, 'Review', *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 35, no. 2 (1980): 229, cited in Marlene Tromp, 'Modeling the *Madwoman*: Feminist Movements and the

Academy', in *Gilbert & Gubar's The Madwoman in the Attic after Thirty Years*, ed. Annette R. Federico (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009), 34–59, 52.

19 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1985): 243–61, 248–49.

20 Laura Donaldson, *Decolonizing Feminisms* (Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline Press, 1992), 31.

21 Susan L. Meyer, *Imperialism at Home* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 95.

22 Cora Kaplan, *Victoriana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 25.

23 Robert Southey, 12 March 1837, in *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë*, ed. Margaret Smith, 3 volumes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995–2004), vol. I, 166–67.

Chapter 9

1 Harriet Jacobs, 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl', in *A Norton Critical Edition*, eds. Nellie Y. McKay and Frances Smith Foster (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), 46–47. Page numbers to this edition will be given in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.

2 Jean Fagan Yellen, 'Written by Herself: Harriet Jacobs' Slave Narrative', *American Literature* 53, no. 3 (1981): 379–486.

3 McKay and Foster explain how Jacobs addresses an implied white audience bound by strict gender codes in their introduction to the Norton Critical Edition.

4 Tompkins describes how women's fiction and homemaking manuals place moral and political power in the domestic sphere (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

5 Yellin discusses letters between Jacobs and Child that reveal the extent to which they understood white Northern women to be the most likely readers of the narrative.

6 Examples of this are easily found, but a particularly telling one comes from a letter from Harriet Beecher Stowe, who explained her composition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: 'I feel now that the time has come when even a woman or a child who can speak a word for freedom and humanity is bound to speak.'

7 While the majority of these rags-marries-riches plots of course feature white protagonists, American literature included notable mixed-race versions, including William Wells Brown's *Clotel* (1853). Post-reconstruction would see a wave of such 'racial discovery plots' with characters unknowingly passing for white, such as William Dean Howells's *An Imperative Duty* (1891) and Frances Harper's *Iola Leroy* (1892).

8 Valerie Smith outlines multiple ways Jacobs' and other slave's narratives present a discourse of subversion and identity formation in *Self-Discovery and Authority*

in Afro-American Narrative (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987). Her discussion of Jacobs in particular is excerpted in Jacobs, Norton Critical Edition, 222–36.

9 Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), 6–8.

10 She spends nearly seven years in a space not much larger than a double bed and only three feet high, exposed to all weather and unknown to her children, who believe she has run away.

11 Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 56.

12 Sands buys their children but is slow to actually free them – indeed, at one point there is even the suggestion that he has 'given' his daughter to a relative like a present, rather than entrusting her to familial care.

13 Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar famously depict this imagery as reflective of the historical restraints placed on women in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979).

Chapter 10

1 John Stuart Mill, 'The Subjection of Women', in J. S. Mill, *On Liberty and Other Writings*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 132. Page numbers to this edition will be given in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.

2 Alexander Bain, *John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections* (London: Longman's Green, 1882), 131.

3 Julia Annas, 'Mill and the Subjection of Women', *Philosophy* 52 (1977): 180.

4 Alan Ryan, *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*, 2nd edn (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987); John Skorupski, *Why Read Mill Today?* (London: Routledge, 2006).

5 John Stuart Mill, 'On Liberty' in Mill, *On Liberty and Other Writings*, 8.

6 Mill's account of women's acceptance of their subordination resembles both Hegel's earlier analysis of slave consciousness (the Master/Slave dialectic) in *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807), and Frantz Fanon's later analysis of the mentality of the colonized under western colonialism in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). In both Hegel and Fanon, the liberation of the subordinated depends in part upon their rejection of the identities prescribed for them.

7 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 267.

8 Ibid., 709.

9 Susan Brownmiller, 'The Enemy Within', in *Radical Feminism*, ed. Barbara A. Crow (New York: NYU Press, 2000), 120.

10 See, for example, Mary Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* (New York: Penguin, 1994).
11 For a discussion, see Pamela Aronson, 'Feminists or "Postfeminists"? Young Women's Attitudes toward Feminism and Gender Relations', *Gender and Society* 17 (2003): 903–22. There are now signs that this might be changing. The 'Everyday Feminism' project has attracted a massive following on a range of social media sites.
12 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party', in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd edn, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), 476.
13 For a powerful assessment of this, see Lisa Hogeland, 'Fear of Feminism: Why Young Women Get the Willies', *Ms Magazine* (November/December 1994).
14 Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), x.
15 Susan Mendus, 'The Marriage of True Minds: The Ideal of Marriage in the Philosophy of John Stuart Mill', in *Mill's The Subjection of Women*, ed. Maria H. Morales (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 137.
16 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), Book V.

Chapter 11

1 Clara Zetkin, 'Only in Conjunction with the Proletarian Women Will Socialism Be Victorious', speech at the Party Congress of the SPD, 16 October 1896; in Clara Zetkin: *Selected Writings*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: International, 1984), 72–83. Page number to this edition will be given in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.
2 Gisela Notz, 'Clara Zetkin und die internationale sozialistische Frauenbewegung', in *Clara Zetkin in ihrer Zeit*, ed. Ulla Plener (Berlin: Karl Dietz, 2008), 9–14.
3 Gilbert Badia and Clara Zetkin: *Eine neue Biographie* (Berlin: Dietz, 1994), 271–73.
4 Richard Evans, *Comrades and Sisters: Feminism, Socialism, and Pacifism in Europe, 1870–1945* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987), 16.
5 Raya Dunayevskaya and Rosa Luxemburg, *Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, 2nd edn (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1991): 89–97; Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia*, 2nd edn (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1990), 250–51.
6 August Bebel, *Women under Socialism*, trans. Daniel DeLeon from 33rd German edn (New York, 1904; reprint, New York: Source Book, 1970; orig. pub. 1879); Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (London: Electric Book, 2001; orig. pub. 1884).
7 Jean Quataert, *Reluctant Feminists in German Social Democracy, 1885–1917* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1979), 69.

8 Engels, *Origin of the Family*, 66.
9 Engels's discussion of the origin of the family was based upon the work of American anthropologist Lewis H. Morgan; see Paul Bowles, 'Millar and Engels on the History of Women and the Family', *History of European Ideas* 12, no. 5 (1990): 595–610.
10 Engels, *Origin of the Family*, 65–67.
11 The demographics behind the Ehefrage [marriage question] in turn-of-the-century Germany were complex; Zetkin's speech provided a conventional take on a central concern of the bourgeois women's movement. On the marriage discussion, see Catherine Dollard, *The Surplus Woman: Unmarried in Imperial German, 1871–1918* (New York: Berghahn, 2009).
12 Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800–1914* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 1991), 1.
13 On Zetkin's training as an educator and views on educational reform, see Christa Uhlig, 'Clara Zetkin als Pädagogin', in *Clara Zetkin in ihrer Zeit*, ed. Ulla Plener (Berlin: Karl Dietz, 2008), 28–40.
14 Engels, *Origin of the Family*, 86–87.
15 Lise Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 1983), 85.
16 Josette Trat, 'Engels and the Emancipation of Women', *Science & Society* 62, no. 1 (1998): 97.
17 Tania Ünlüdağ, 'Bourgeois Mentality and Socialist Ideology as Exemplified by Clara Zetkin's Constructions of Femininity', *International Review of Social History* 47 (2002): 37.
18 Vogel, *Marxism*, 111.
19 Clara Zetkin, *Der Student und das Weib* (Berlin: Verlag der Sozaialistischen Monatshefte, 1899), 4.
20 Ibid., 12.
21 Ibid., 17.

Chapter 12

1 There is some controversy about the right text to use when reading the classic short story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. The manuscript version of 'The Yellow Wallpaper' has been compared with its first appearance in 1892 in *The New England Magazine*, and a reasonably strong case has been made for following the manuscript, still extant, in the author's hand. Arguments for and against this conclusion, as well as both versions of this very short story, are to be found in '*The Yellow Wallpaper*': *by* Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *A Dual Text Critical Edition*,

ed. Shawn St. Jean (Columbus, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006), 48, 50. Page numbers to this edition are given in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.

2 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Home: Its Work and Influence* (New York: Charlton, 1903), 6.

3 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Man-Made World; Or, Our Androcentric Culture* (New York: Charton Company, 1911).

4 Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: 'Woman's Sphere' in New England, 1780–1835* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

5 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (Boston, MA: Small, Maynard & Company, 1898).

6 Margaret Fuller, *Women in the Nineteenth Century and Kindred Papers Relating to the Sphere, Condition and Duties, of Women*. Available online at Project Gutenberg, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/8642/8642-h/8642-h.htm [accessed 13 February 2015].

7 Gilman, *Women and Economics*, vii.

8 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland*. Available at Project Gutenberg, http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/32 [accessed 13 February 2015].

9 Gilman, *Women and Economics*, 5.

10 Ibid., 14–15.

11 Ibid., 15.

12 Ibid., 4.

Chapter 13

1 Rokeya Hussain, 'Sultana's Dream', in *Sultana's Dream and Selections from The Secluded Ones*, ed. Roushan Jahan (New York: The Feminist Press, 1988), 15–16. Introduction by Roushan Jahan. Future references to this edition will appear in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.

2 Sister Sara is an obvious reference to a Christian missionary educationist. Early English education in India was often initiated through missionary institutions.

3 The women's question was central to nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century public discourse in India.

4 Noah Berlatsky, 'Imagine There's No Gender: The Long History of Feminist Utopian Literature', *The Atlantic*, 15 April 2013, http://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/04/imagine-theres-no-gender-the-long-history-of-feminist-utopian-literature/274993/ [accessed 17 October 2014].

5 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* [1915] Chapter 1. ebook released 25 June 2008, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/32/32-h/32-h.htm [accessed 6 October 2014]. It is unlikely that Gilman knew of Hussain's work.

6 James Colin Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society: A Study of English Utopian Writing 1516–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). See also Susan Bruce, introduction to *Three Early Modern Utopias: Thomas More: Utopia/Francis Bacon: New Atlantis/Henry Neville: The Isle of Pines* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
7 Berlatsky, 'Imagine There's No Gender'.
8 Hasanat Fayeza, 'An Ecocritical Reading of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's *Sultana's Dream*', *Asiatic* 7, no. 2 (2013): 122.
9 In Rabindranath Tagore's *Ghar Baire*, the 'meanness' of women confined to their homes is compared to the 'disfigured' and 'small' feet of Chinese women whose feet were bound forcibly.
10 Gilman, *Herland*, ch. 8.
11 Gilman, *Herland*.
12 Teresa Bejan, 'Quentin Skinner on Meaning and Method', *The Art of Theory: Conversations in Political Philosophy*, http://www.artoftheory.com/quentin-skinner-on-meaning-and-method/ [accessed 29 June 2014].
13 Thomas Babington Macaulay, 'Minute on Indian Education', in *Selections from Educational Records, Part 1 (1781–1839)*, ed. H. Sharp (Calcutta: Superintendant, Government Printing, 1920).
14 Vina Mazumdar, 'Whose Past, Whose History, Whose Tradition: Indigenising Women's Studies in India', *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 7, no. 1 (2001): 133–53.
15 Maitrayee Chaudhuri ed., *Feminism in India* (Zed, Palgrave: 2004), xxx–xxxv.
16 Suma Chitnis, 'Feminism: Indian Ethos and Indian Convictions', in Chaudhuri, *Feminism in India* (Zed, Palgrave: 2004), 8–25.
17 Chaudhuri Maitrayee, *The Indian Women's Movement: Reform and Revival* (Delhi: Palm Leaf, 1993/2011).

Chapter 14

1 Nazira Zeineddine 1998 (1928) *Al-sufur wa al-hijab. Muhadarat wa nazarat fi tahrir al-mar'a wa al-tajaddud al-ijtima'i fi al-'alam al-islami* [Unveiling and Veiling. Lectures and Views concerning the Liberation of Women and Social Renewal in the Islamic World] (Damascus: Dar al-Mada), 37, 77–82, 136, 227, 279. Page numbers to this edition will be given in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.
2 Nazira Zeineddine 1998 (1929) *Al-fatat wa al-shuyukh. Nazarat wa munazarat fi al-sufur wa al-hijab wa tahrir al-'aql wa tahrir al-mar'a wa al-tajaddud al-ijtima'i fi al-'alam al-islami* [The Girl and the Shaykhs. Views and Debates about 'Unveiling and Veiling' and the Liberation of the Intellect and the Liberation of Women and Social Renewal in the Islamic World] (Damascus: Dar al-Mada.)

3 Zeineddine, *The Girl and the Shaykhs*, 189.
4 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1993), 93.
5 For extracts from such salon gatherings, see Margot Badran and miriam cooke eds., *Opening the Gates. An Anthology of Arab Feminist Writing* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).
6 Several detractors claimed, in a familiar move to discredit a woman author, that her father was in fact the real author of the book, cf. Anna Doyle Wheeler in this volume. (See Chapter 7.) But, would a highly respected judge not be proud to sign his own work? And, would he dedicate such a book to himself?
7 Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 167.
8 Zeineddine, *The Girl and the Shaykhs*, 16.
9 Ibid., 55.
10 I gathered information about her life after 1932 from numerous conversations with her sons Arij Halabi and Nabil Halabi, see miriam cooke, *Nazira Zeineddine: A Pioneer of Islamic Feminism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010).

Chapter 15

1 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas*, ed. Morag Shiach (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Page numbers to this edition will be given in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.
2 Virginia Woolf, 'The New Biography', in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Andrew McNeillie, 6 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1986–2011), IV (1994), 473–80, 478.
3 *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, eds. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie, 5 vols (San Diego, CA: Harcourt, 1977–1984), III (1980), 161.
4 Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography*, ed. Rachel Bowlby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 297–98.
5 Sidonie Smith, *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 52.
6 Ibid., 52, 53.
7 Virginia Woolf, 'Memoirs of a Novelist', in *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Susan Dick (San Diego: Harcourt, 1989), 69–79, 74.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 75.
10 Smith, *Poetics of Women's Autobiography*, 58, 59.
11 Hélène Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', trans. by Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs* 1 (1976): 875–93, 875.

12 Jane Tompkins, 'Me and My Shadow', *New Literary History* 19 (1987): 169–78, 169.
13 Ibid., 175.
14 See Carol Boyce Davies and others, 'Forum: The Inevitability of the Personal', *PMLA* 111 (1996): 1146–60, 1154.
15 Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, 2nd edn (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 229–31.
16 Nancy K. Miller, *Getting Personal: Feminist Occasions and Other Autobiographical Acts* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 20.
17 See Ruth Perry and others, 'Forum: Problems with Personal Criticism', *PMLA* 111 (1996): 1160–69, 1166; and Anne Fernald, '*A Room of One's Own*, Personal Criticism, and the Essay', *Twentieth-Century Literature* 40 (1994): 165–89, 175.
18 See Fernald, '*A Room of One's Own*, Personal Criticism, and the Essay', 177, 187.
19 Miller, *Getting Personal*, 23.
20 Ibid., 24.
21 Nancy K. Miller, Kathleen Green and Laura Roskos, 'Packaging the Personal: An Interview with Nancy K. Miller', *Discourse* 15 (1992–1993): 51–63, 61.
22 Miller, *Getting Personal*, 144.
23 Ibid., 24.
24 Ibid.

Chapter 16

1 Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* [1937] (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 1. Page numbers to this edition will be given in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.
2 See, *The Big Read*, http://www.neabigread.org/books/theireyes/ [accessed 30 June 2014].
3 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* [1850] (New York: Penguin Enriched eBook Classic, 2008), 111 of 655. eBook.
4 Nina Baym, 'Revisiting Hawthorne's Feminism', in *Hawthorne and the Real: Bicentennial Essays*, ed. Millicent Bell (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005), 108–09, 124.
5 For a similar connection, see playwright Suzan-Lori Parks' brilliant appropriation of Hawthorne's novel in 'In the Blood' (1999) and 'Fucking A' (2000), known collectively as *The Red Letter Plays*.
6 Adam Gussow, *Seems Like Murder Here: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 267–69.
7 As 'Odysseus reveals his past to Alcinous, so Janie relates hers to her friend Pheoby'. Mary Jane Lupton, 'Zora Neale Hurston and the Survival of the Female', *The Southern Literary Journal* 15, no. 1 (Fall 1982): 48.

8 Henry Louis Gates has written glowingly about the canonization of Hurston as a proto-feminist. See Louis Gates, 'Afterword', *Their Eyes Were Watching God* [1937] (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 186–87.
9 *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters*, ed. Carla Kaplan (New York: Random House, 2007), 303.
10 See, for instance, *Zora Neale Hurston, Haiti, and Their Eyes Were Watching God*, ed. La Vinia Delois Jennings (Chicago, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013), which offers essays that show how Haiti, specifically Hurston's research on Haitian Voudoun, informed the characterization, plotting, symbolism, and theme of her novel. See also, Luigi Monge, 'Their Eyes Were Watching God: African American Topical Songs on the 1928 Florida Hurricanes and Floods', *Popular Music*, 6 (January 2006), 129–40.
11 Ernest Julius Mitchell II, 'Zora's Politics: A Brief Introduction'. *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 5, no. 1 (2013): 2, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/38356082 [accessed 27 June 2014]. In a 1942 curriculum vitae for *Twentieth Century American Authors*, Hurston offers an unlikely list which includes authors with political views she did not share, from pro-Soviet Maxim Gorky, pro-Hitler Anne Lindbergh, to pro-Confederate Robert E. Lee.
12 Ibid.
13 See Glenda R. Carpio and Werner Sollors, 'The Newly Complicated Zora Neale Hurston', *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (2 January 2011), http://chronicle.com/article/The-Newly-Complicated-Zora/125753/ and Glenda R. Carpio and Werner Sollors eds., *African American Literary Studies: New Texts, New Approaches, New Challenges, Amerikastudien/American Studies* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2010).

Chapter 17

1 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. C. Borde and S. Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 283. Page numbers to this edition are given in parentheses within the text. Here, I have slightly modified the translation so that it reads 'One is not born, but rather becomes, *a* woman.' Borde and Malovany-Chevallier omit the article 'a' to capture the fact that Beauvoir does not use an article (*On ne naît pas femme: on le devient*). Yet, the addition of the indefinite article makes the translation more readable, while it still conveys the sense that Beauvoir is speaking of women in general.
2 Nancy Bauer, *Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, and Feminism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 172.
3 Stoller's words are quoted in Toril Moi's *What Is a Woman? And Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 22.

4 Gayle Rubin, 'Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex', in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 157–210.
5 The question raised here is explored in Anne Fausto-Sterling's *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).
6 Judith Butler makes this argument in *Gender Trouble*: *Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).
7 This is the type of interpretation Judith Butler offers in her 1986 article 'Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*', *Yale French Studies* 72 (1986): 35–49.

Chapter 18

1 Betty Friedan, 'The problem that has no name', in *The Feminine Mystique*, eds. Kirsten Fermaglich and Lisa M. Fine (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013, orig. 1963), 9. Page numbers to this edition will be given in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.
2 By 1970, *The Feminine Mystique* had sold well over a million copies. Judith Hennessee, *Betty Friedan: Her Life* (New York: Random House, 1999), 78.
3 Gerda Lerner to Betty Friedan, February 6, 1963, MC 575, box 57, folder 715, Betty Friedan Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
4 bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1984), 1–3.
5 Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of "The Feminine Mystique": The American Left, the Cold War and Liberal Feminism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998).
6 Betty Friedan, *Life So Far: A Memoir* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000). See also Daniel Horowitz, 'Preface to the Paperback Edition', in *Betty Friedan and the Making of "The Feminine Mystique": The American Left, the Cold War and Liberal Feminism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), ix–xiii.
7 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011). On Friedan's "Americanization" of *The Second Sex*, see Sandra Djikstra, 'Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan: The Politics of Omission', *Feminist Studies* 6, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 290–303. On the notes Friedan made when reading *The Second Sex*, see Alexandra Dianne Harwin, '"Occupation: Houseworker": Second Wave Feminist Evaluations of Housewifery, 1963–1981" (Honors Thesis in History, Harvard University, 2007).
8 See especially Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Home: Its Work and Influence* (New York: McClure, Phillips & Company, 1903) and *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (Boston, MA: Smally, Maynard & Company, 1898).

9 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Boston, MA: Peter Edes, 1792), vi.
10 Rebecca Jo Plant, *Mom: The Transformation of Motherhood in Modern America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).
11 Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), ch. 10; and Eva S. Moskowitz, *In Therapy We Trust: America's Obsession with Self-Fulfillment* (Baltimore, MA: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), ch. 6.
12 Friedan, *Life So Far*, 121–22.
13 National Organization of Women, Statement of Purpose, 1966, http://now.org/about/history/statement-of-purpose/ [accessed 20 August 2014].
14 Joanne Meyerowitz, 'Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946–1958', *Journal of American History* 79 (March 1993): 1455–82 (quotation, 1456); and Eva Moskowitz, 'It's Good to Blow Your Top: Women's Magazines and a Discourse of Discontent, 1945–1965', *Journal of Women's History* 8, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 66–98. See also Jessica Weiss, *To Have and to Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom and Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), ch. 2; and Susan Hartmann, 'Women's Employment and the Domestic Ideal in the Early Cold War Years', in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945–1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994), 84–100.
15 Stephanie Coontz, *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

Chapter 19

1 Adrienne Rich, 'Diving into the Wreck', in *A Norton Critical Edition: Adrienne Rich's Poetry & Prose*, eds. Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi and Albert Gelpi (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1972), 53–55. All subsequent references to Rich's poems and poetics will come from this edition, and will be indicated by parentheses within the text.
2 Rich had an acute awareness of the power of history to shape consciousness, so in 1956 she began to date every poem she composed.
3 Jan Montefiore, *Feminism & Poetry: Language, Experience, Identity in Women's Writing* (London & New York: Pandora, 1987), ix.
4 Adrienne Rich, 'Speech for the National Book Awards, National Book Foundation', 1974, http://www.nationalbook.org/nbaacceptspeech_arich_74.html#.VCi5PJXXHG5 [accessed 19 August 2014].
5 Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1963), 17.

6 Mary DeShazer, *Inspiring Women: Reimagining the Muse* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1988), 156.
7 Alicia Ostriker, 'The Thieves of Language: Women Poets and Revisionist Mythmaking', in *The New Feminist Criticism*, ed. Elaine Showalter (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 320.
8 Barbara Eckstein, 'Iconicity, Immersion and Otherness: The Hegelian "Dive" of J. M. Coetzee and Adrienne Rich', *Mosaic* 29, no. 1 (1996): 57.
9 Ibid., 57.
10 Craig Werner, *Adrienne Rich: The Poet & Her Critics* (Chicago & London: American Library Association, 1988), 4.
11 Adrienne Rich, 'I Dream I'm the Death of Orpheus', in *The Will to Change: Poems 1968-1970* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1971), 19.
12 Rich would later retract her commitment to the androgynous, declaring it useless as it would not help women feel themselves as women. This is a clear example of Rich's oscillating feminist ideas, which would shift and evolve over time.
13 Charles Altieri, *Self and Sensibility in Contemporary American Poetry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 347.
14 Judith McDaniel, *Reconstituting the World: The Poetry and Vision of Adrienne Rich* (Argyle, NY: Spinsters Ink, 1978), 320.

Chapter 20

1 Andrea Dworkin, *Intercourse*, new ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2006 [first published 1987]), 82–84. Page numbers to this edition will be given in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.
2 As quoted in Catharine A. MacKinnon, 'From Practice to Theory, or What is a White Woman Anyway?', in *Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed*, eds. Diane Bell and Renate Klein (Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 1996), 53.
3 Andrea Dworkin and Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Pornography and Civil Rights: A New Day for Women's Equality* (Minneapolis, MN: Organizing against Pornography, 1988), 36, and *In Harm's Way: The Pornography Civil Rights Hearings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
4 Dworkin and MacKinnon, *Pornography and Civil Rights*, 31.
5 See *Intercourse*, 1995 Preface (xxxii), and Catharine A. MacKinnon, 'Pornography Left and Right', *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review* 30, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 146.
6 Andrea Dworkin, 'Fighting Talk', interview with Michael Moorcock, *New Statesman & Society*, 21 April 1995, http://www.nostatusquo.com/ACLU/dworkin/MoorcockInterview.html [accessed 3 February 2015].
7 Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (New York: Penguin, 1989), 224.

Chapter 21

1 Luisa Valenzuela, *Bedside Manners*, trans. Margaret Jull Costa (London, New York: High Risk Books, 1995) (1990), 93–94. Page numbers to this edition will be given in parentheses throughout the text of this essay.
2 G. Díaz, M. I. Lagos, *La palabra en vilo: la narrative de Luisa Valenzuela* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Cuarto Propio, 1996), 27. My translation.
3 Valenzuela insists on the term 'absurd' as opposed to 'surreal' to characterize the events in her novel, because the latter has apolitical connotations, whereas absurdity retains a strong link to Brechtian critical distance and to the 'theater of the absurd' of the twentieth century.
4 L. Valenzuela, 'Trying to Breathe', in *The Writer in Politics*, eds. W. H. Gass and L. Cuoco (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), 107.
5 Ibid., 42–43.
6 The Military Junta used the metaphor of the nation's 'cancerous growth' to refer to the activities of the political groups that opposed it. The body of the nation also recalls the literary tradition of foundational romances that marked – and consolidated – the national imaginaries of the young Latin-American countries of the nineteenth century. See Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1991).
7 The rewriting of fairy tales and of traditional feminine roles is an important feature of western feminist traditions.
8 This sense of impending danger will be corroborated by Lucho, the conscript in hiding, who warns her against seeing too much – 'No, you don't see anything […] If you do see anything, they'll kill you' (82).

Postscript

1 See Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. T. A. Sinclair, revised edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), 68–69. Plato famously defended 'Philosopher Queens' in *The Republic*, but these arguments had no discernible influence on subsequent thinkers.
2 Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988).

Feminist Moments: Further Reading

Christine de Pizan

Altmann, Barbara K. and Deborah L. McGrady eds., *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*, Routledge Medieval Casebooks, New York: Routledge, 2003.

Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Renate ed. and trans., and Kevin Brownlee trans., *The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan: New Translations, Criticism*, Norton Critical Editions, New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997.

Brown-Grant, Rosalind, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women: Reading beyond Gender*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Kennedy, Angus J., *Christine de Pizan: A Bibliographical Guide*, Research Bibliographies & Checklists, 42, London: Grant & Cutler, 1984; Supplement 1 (42.1), London: Grant & Cutler, 1994; Supplement 2 (n. s. 5) Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer/ Tamesis, 2004.

Margolis, Nadia, *An Introduction to Christine de Pizan*, New Perspectives on Medieval Literature, 1, Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2011.

Willard, Charity Cannon, ed. and trans. (with various others), *The Writings of Christine de Pizan*, New York: Persea, 1994.

Anne Bradstreet

Breitweiser, Mitchel, *National Melancholy: Mourning and Opportunity in Classic American Literature*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007.

Grey, Catharine, *Women Writers and Public Discourse in Seventeenth-Century Britain*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Sweet, Timothy, 'Gender, Genre and Subjectivity in Anne Bradstreet's Early Elegies', *Early American Literature* 23 (1988): 152–74.

Wiseman, Susan, *Conspiracy and Virtue*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Wright, Gillian, *Producing Women's Poetry 1600–1730: Text and Paratext, Manuscript and Print*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Mary Astell

Broad, J., *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Kolbrener, W. and M. Michelson eds., *Mary Astell: Reason, Gender, Faith*, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007.
Perry, Ruth, *The Celebrated Mary Astell*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
Springborg, Patricia and Mary Astell (1666–1731): *Political Writings, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
Springborg, Patricia, *Mary Astell's A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, London: Pickering & Chatto, 1997; and Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002.
Springborg, Patricia, *Mary Astell, Theorist of Freedom from Domination*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Mary Wortley Montagu

Grundy, Isobel, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Comet of the Enlightenment*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
Halsband, Robert, *The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956.
Melman, Billie, *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918*, 2nd edn, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995.
Montagu, Mary Wortley, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*, ed. Malcolm Jack with an introduction by Anita Desai, London: William Pickering, 1993.

Olympe de Gouges

Blanc, Olivier, *Marie-Olympe de Gouges, une humaniste à la fin du XVIIIè siècle*, Paris: R. Vienet, 2003.
Blanc, Olivier, *Olympe de Gouges: des droits de la femme à la guillotine*, Paris: Tallandier, 2014.
Cole, John, *Between the Queen and the Cabby: Olympe de Gouge's Rights of Women*, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011.
Scott, Joan Wallach, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.
Sherman, Carol, *Reading Olympe de Gouges*, New York: Palgrave, 2013.

Mary Wollstonecraft

Craciun, Adriana ed., *A Routledge Literary Sourcebook on Mary Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002.
Falco, Maria J. ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Mary Wollstonecraft*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.

Johnson, Claudia L. ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
Sapiro, Virginia, *A Vindication of Political Virtue: The Political Theory of Mary Wollstonecraft*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
Taylor, Barbara, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
Zaw, Susan Khin, 'The Reasonable Heart: Mary Wollstonecraft's View of the Relation between Reason and Feeling in Morality, Moral Psychology, and Moral Development', *Hypatia* 13, no. 4 (1998): 78–117.

Anna Wheeler and William Thompson

Dooley, D., *Equality in Community: Sexual Equality in the Writings of William Thompson and Anna Doyle Wheeler*, Cork: Cork University Press, 1996.
Pankhurst, R., 'Anna Wheeler: A Pioneer Socialist and Feminist', *The Political Quarterly* 24 (1954): 132–43.
Pankhurst, R., *William Thompson (1775–1833) Britain's Pioneer Socialist, Feminist and Co-operator*, London: Watts & Company, 1954.
Pateman, C., *The Sexual Contract*, London: Polity Press, 1988.
Taylor, B., *Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
Thompson, W. [and Wheeler, A.] [1825], *Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women: Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain Them in Political, and Thence in Civil and Domestic, Slavery; in Reply to a Paragraph of Mr. Mill's Celebrated 'Article on Government'*, New York: Burt Franklin, 1970.

Charlotte Brontë

Gilbert Sandra, M. and Gubar, Susan, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd edn, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979/2000.
Kaplan, Cora, *Victoriana: Histories, Fictions, Criticism*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.
Meyer, Susan L., *Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women's Fiction*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996.
Rich, Adrienne, 'Jane Eyre: The Temptations of a Motherless Woman' (1973), reprinted in *On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose 1966–1978*, New York: Norton, 1979: 89–106.
Showalter, Elaine, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977.

Harriet Jacobs

Carby, Hazel V., *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Doriani, Beth Maclay, 'Black Womanhood in Nineteenth Century America: Subversion and /Self-Construction in Two Women's Autobiogrpahies', *American Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (June 1991): 199–222.

Garfield, Deborah M. and Rafia Zafar, *Harriet Jacobs and Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: New Critical Essays*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Painter, Nell I., 'Three Southern Women and Freud', in Ann-Louise Shapiro ed., *Feminist Revision History*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994: 195–216.

Smith, Valerie. *Self-Discovery and Authority in Afro-American Narrative*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.

John Stuart Mill

Donner, Wendy and Fumerton, Richard, *Mill*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Morales, Maria H. ed., *Mill's The Subjection of Women: Critical Essays*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005.

Okin, Susan Moller, *Women in Western Political Thought*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979/2013.

Robson, Ann P. and Robson, John M. eds., *Sexual Equality: Writings by John Stuart Mill, Harriet Taylor Mill and Helen Taylor*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.

Shanley, Mary Lyndon, *Feminism, Marriage and the Law in Victorian England*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Clara Zetkin

Allen, Ann Taylor, *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800–1914*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 1991.

Plener, Ulla ed., *Clara Zetkin in ihrer Zeit*, Berlin: Karl Dietz, 2008.

Quataert, Jean, *Reluctant Feminists in German Social Democracy, 1885–1917*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1979.

Trat, Josette, 'Engels and the Emancipation of Women', *Science & Society* 62, no. 1 (1998): 88–105.

Ünlüdağ, Tania, 'Bourgeois Mentality and Socialist Ideology as Exemplified by Clara Zetkin's Constructions of Femininity', *International Review of Social History* 47 (2002): 33–58.

Zetkin, Clara, *Der Student und das Weib*, Berlin: Verlag der Sozaialistischen Monatshefte, 1899.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Berlant, Lauren, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998.
Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York: Routledge, 2006.
Cervetti, Nancy, *S. Weir Mitchell, 1829–1924: Philadelphia's Literary Physician*, University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2012.
Golden, Catherine, *The Captive Imagination: A Casebook on The Yellow Wallpaper*, New York: The Feminist Press, 1992.
Patterson, Martha, *The American New Woman Revisited: A Reader*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008.

Rokeya Hussein

Chaudhuri, Maitrayee, *The Indian Women's Movement: Reform and Revival*, Delhi: Palm Leaf, 1993/2011.
Chaudhuri, Maitrayee ed., *Feminism in India*, Zed: Palgrave, 2004.
Davis, J. C., *Utopia and the Ideal Society: A Study of English Utopian Writing 1516–1700*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
Jahan, Roushan, *Sultana's Dream and Selections from The Secluded Ones*, New York: The Feminist Press, 1988.
Tharu, Susie and Lalita, K. eds., *Women Writing in India: 600 B.C to the Present*. Volume 1: 600 BC to the Early Twentieth Century, New York: Feminist Press, 1991. Volume 2: The Twentieth Century. New York: Feminist Press, 1993.

Nazira Zeineddine

Amin, Qasim, *The Liberation of Women and The New Woman: Two Documents in the History of Egyptian Feminism*, Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2000.
Badran, Margot and miriam cooke, *Opening the Gates. An Anthology of Arab Feminist Writing*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990/2004.
cooke, miriam, *Nazira Zeineddine: A Pioneer of Islamic Feminism*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2010.
Gabriel, Theodore and Rabiha Hannan eds., *Islam and the Veil: Theoretical and Regional Contexts*, London: Continuum Books, 2011.

Virginia Woolf

Gilmore, Leigh, *Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Women's Self-Representation*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Heilbrun, Carolyn G., *Writing a Women's Life*, London: The Women's Press, 1989.
hooks, bell, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, Boston, MA: South End Press, 1989.
Miller, Nancy K., *Getting Personal: Feminist Occasions and Other Autobiographical Acts*, New York: Routledge, 1991.
Smith, Sidonie, *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
Stanley, Liz, *The Auto/Biographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/Biography*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992.

Zora Neale Hurston

Awkward, Michael ed., *New Essays on Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
Grewal, Gurleen, 'Beholding "A Great Tree in Leaf": Eros, Nature, and the Visionary in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*', in Deborah G. Plant ed., *The Inside Light: New Critical Essays on Zora Neale Hurston*, Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010: 103–12.
Jones, Sharon ed., *Critical Companion to Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Reference to Her Life and Work*, New York: Facts on File, Inc. 2009.
Lowe, John ed., *Approaches to Teaching Their Eyes Were Watching God and Other Works*, New York: Modern Language Association, 2009.

Simone de Beauvoir

Bauer, Nancy, *Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, and Feminism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
Butler, Judith, 'Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex', *Yale French Studies* 72 (1986): 35–49.
Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York: Routledge, 1990.
Fausto-Sterling, Anne, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*, New York: Basic Books, 2000.
Moi, Toril, *What Is a Woman? And Other Essays*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Betty Friedan

Coontz, Stephanie, *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s*, New York: Basic Books, 2011.

Fermaglich, Kirsten, '"The Comfortable Concentration Camp": The Significance of Nazi Imagery in Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963)', *American Jewish History* 91, no. 2 (2003): 205–32.
Hennessee, Judith, *Betty Friedan: Her Life*, New York: Random House, 1999.
Meyerowitz, Joanne, 'Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946–1958', *Journal of American History* 79 (March 1993): 1455–82.
Weiss, Jessica, '"Fraud of Femininity": Domesticity, Selflessness and Individualism in Responses to Betty Friedan', in Kathleen G. Donohue ed., *Liberty and Justice for All?: Rethinking Politics in Cold War America (1945–1965)*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012.

Adrienne Rich

DeShazer, Mary, *Inspiring Women: Reimagining the Muse*, New York: Pergamon Press, 1988.
Friedan, B., *The Feminine Mystique*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1963.
Montefiore, Jan, *Feminism & Poetry: Language, Experience, Identity in Women's Writing*, London & New York: Pandora, 1987.
Showalter, Elaine ed., *The New Feminist Criticism*, New York: Pantheon, 1985.
Werner, Craig, *Adrienne Rich: The Poet & Her Critics*, Chicago & London: American Library Association, 1988.

Andrea Dworkin

Dworkin, Andrea, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, London: Women's Press, 1981.
Dworkin, Andrea, *Letters from a War Zone: Writings, 1976–1989*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1989.
Dworkin, Andrea, *Heartbreak: The Political Memoir of a Feminist Militant*, New York: Basic Books, 2002.
Dworkin, Andrea and MacKinnon, Catharine A., *Pornography and Civil Rights: A New Day for Women's Equality*, Minneapolis, MN: Organizing Against Pornography, 1988.
MacKinnon, Catharine A., *Women's Lives, Men's Laws*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007.
Stoltenberg, John, *Refusing to Be a Man: Essays on Sex and Justice*, London and New York: UCL Press, 2000.

Luisa Valenzuela

Díaz, Gwendolyn, Lagos, M. I., *La palabra en vilo*: narrativa de Luisa Valenzuela, Santiago de Chile: Editorial Cuarto Propio, 1996.

Sommer, Doris, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Valenzuela, Luisa, *Bedside Manners*, trans. Margaret Jull Costa, London: High Risk Books, 1990/1995.

Valenzuela, Luisa, *Realidad nacional desde la cama*, México: UACM, 1990/2007.

Valenzuela, Luisa, 'Trying to Breathe', in William H. Gass and Lorin Cuoco eds., *The Writer in Politics*. Carbondale [u.a.]: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996: 85–109.

Index