

Women's History

MAGAZINE

Issue 54, AUTUMN 2006

Issn 1476-6760

*Emma Ferry on
Domesticity, Empire and
Lady Barker*

*John Thomas McGuire on
Molly Dewson and
Democratic Party Politics*

*Susan Hogan on
Madness and Maternity*

Plus

Six Book Reviews

Book Prize and Clare Evans

Prize

Committee News

Women's Library News

Conference Reports/Notices/

Calls for Papers

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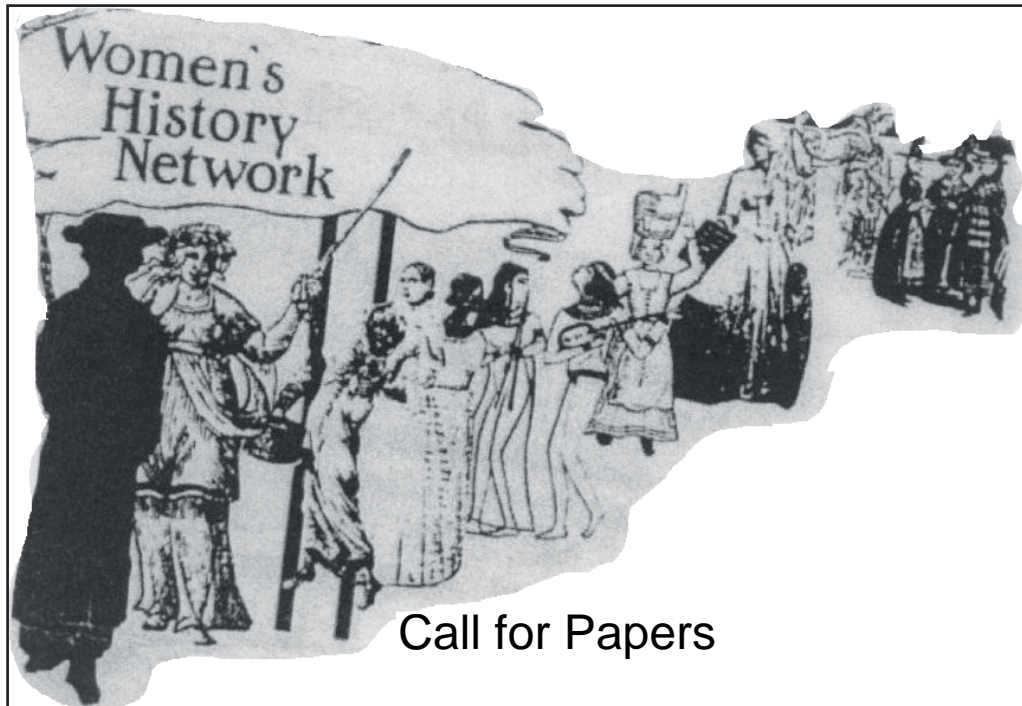
Collecting Women's Lives

16th Annual Conference

7th- 9th September 2007

West Downs Conference Centre, University of Winchester

'Collecting Women's Lives' can be interpreted in a number of ways. It enables us to focus on telling the stories of women and woman in the past and engage with the challenge of using an eclectic mix of documentary sources, visual and material artefacts, and the 'voices' of the women themselves. We can explore the construction of the archive, and those methodologies that have illuminated the experience of women in the past.



Papers are welcomed on the following themes:

Everyday lives

Working lives

Material culture

Oral history

Theory and historiography

For further information please contact one of the organisers (Joyce Goodman, Andrea Jacobs, Zoë Law, Camilla Leach or Stephanie Spencer) at the address below.

Please submit a 200 word synopsis by 5th March (1st call) or 4th June (2nd & final call) 2007 to:

The Centre for the History of Women's Education,

Faculty of Education,

University of Winchester,

Hampshire, SO22 4NR, UK

email: chwe@winchester.ac.uk telephone: 01962 841515

The image from the early Women's History Network Newsletters highlights WHN's endeavour to gather like-minded women together in order to collect women who have been 'hidden from history'

Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn edition of *Women's History Magazine*. This issue sees some minor changes to our typeface and layout, improvements aimed at 'freshening up' the look of your magazine and making it easier to read. We hope you approve.

Our authors this month offer a selection of articles which range across continents and span the nineteenth century to the 1930s and 40s. While two of the articles provide analyses centred on individual women who lived extraordinary lives of great achievement, the third explores the lives of everyday women, common but no less extraordinary, and the ways in which their childbirth experiences were interpreted medically and psychologically.

Lady Barker was a prolific traveller and writer, a colonial daughter and (twice-married) wife whose tales of Empire intermingled themes of domestic advice with imperial adventure. But the stereotypes and clichés usually associated with the historical genre of women's travel writing should stop there. Instead of interpreting Barker's texts in any 'realist' or simplistic autobiographical way, Emma Ferry offers a more sophisticated analysis which highlights the ways in which gender is subtly subverted in Barker's narratives, and how the tensions of colonial ideology and racial difference become explicit.

Although less well known (to a British audience at least) than her close friend Eleanor Roosevelt, Mary (Molly) Dewson's political skills were no less formidable and she became an influential figure in US Democratic Party politics in the years leading up to WW2. John Thomas McGuire's meticulous exploration of Dewson's 'social justice feminism' illustrates how, from the early 1930s, her efforts marked a significant turning point for women's activism and for social legislation. Refusing to view 'women's issues' as beyond the political mainstream, Dewson used gender as a vanguard for bringing all workers under state protection through federal laws and, in so doing, deepened women's involvement in Democratic Party politics at a national level.

The link between women and madness has a long history within English culture, an association which has been explored in seminal texts by writers such as Gilbert and Gubar (*The Madwoman in the Attic*, 1979) and Showalter (*The Female Malady*, 1987). Susan Hogan offers another perspective by examining the putative links between maternity and madness in the Victorian and Edwardian period. Her empathetic account of the experiences of women undergoing childbirth provides insights into the way scientific, medical and psychological discourse constructed parturition as the fulcrum of women's instability.

It was lovely to see so many members at our annual conference at Durham University last September. Thanks must go Sarah Aiston, Maureen Meikle and Jean Spence for making the event such an enjoyable experience. One of the many highlights was the presentation of the WHN Book Prize and the Clare Evans Prize. Both competitions are now open for next year and we warmly encourage you to submit your work (or to encourage your postgraduate students to do so). Full details can be found in this issue.

Next year's conference, our sixteenth, will be 'Collecting Women's Lives' and will be held at the University of Winchester on 7 – 9 September 2007. Please see the Call for Papers (adjacent) and begin working on your abstracts now!

This time of year is tinged with sadness for the steering committee as it is when a number of officers stand down after completing their terms of office. Full details are in the Committee News on page 45. This year we also say goodbye to Joyce Walker, who has served the Network so well as administrator. We would like to extend our thanks to Joyce on behalf of all members, and wish her well for the future.

The Women's History Magazine Editorial Team

Gerry Holloway, Mary Joannou, Claire Jones, Jane Potter and Debbi Simonton

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Front cover: Eleanor Roosevelt, London, 1951, courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Digital Archives.

Home and Away: Domesticity and Empire in the work of Lady Barker

Emma Ferry

University of Kingston, London

The work of Lady Barker is a fascinating blend of colonial adventure and domestic advice. Beginning her literary career with the publication of *Station Life in New Zealand* in 1869, this now-forgotten Jamaican-born writer was well known for publications that recorded her experiences across the British Empire. Having made homes in diverse geographical locations that included an army tent at Lucknow; a prefabricated sheep station in New Zealand; Government House in Perth; and a tropical 'palace' in Trinidad, Lady Barker was *the* authority on domestic aspects of colonial life. However, her work on the domestic was not confined to the colonies. A twice-married mother of six children,¹ Lady Barker was also the first female superintendent of the National School of Cookery; the editor of a family magazine; and, of the twenty books she wrote, three were domestic advice manuals.

Given Lady Barker's achievements it is not surprising that, since the late 1950s, her colonial experiences have been the focus for several female authors writing from the former 'white Dominions' of New Zealand, Australia and South Africa.² As an English design historian whose research focuses on the late-Victorian interior, my interest in Lady Barker relates to her writings on the domestic; focusing in particular on her contribution to Macmillan's 'Art at Home Series', *The Bedroom and Boudoir* (1878). It is beyond the scope of this article to offer a detailed analysis of that text, and instead, here I aim to present a brief biography and to highlight the themes of domestic advice and colonial adventure that co-exist in her books.

Written during the period of high imperialism, Lady Barker's books exemplify a genre that Sara Mills describes as: a mixture of the thoroughly enjoyable (adventure narratives depicting strong, resourceful, women characters in situations rarely found in the literature of the period) and the almost impossible (the racism, the concern to present the narrator as feminine, and the lengthy descriptions of the domestic).³

In *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (1991), Mills rejects a 'realist' reading of women's travel writing which treats these texts as 'simple autobiographies'.⁴ Instead, using an analytical framework that draws on the work of Foucault, Said and feminist theories, she identifies the tensions between the discourses of colonialism and femininity present in the travel writing of women. Mills stresses that this genre 'must be read as textual constructs emanating

from a range of discourses in conflict'.⁵ This model has been invaluable in interpreting the colonial writings of Lady Barker. Similarly, Jane Haggis in her essay 'White Women and Colonialism: towards a non-recuperative history', notes how the writings of white women from the colonies have been interpreted:

The recuperative drive to place women in the history of colonialism and imperialism takes the texts and reminiscences of white women as literal accounts of their experiences, authentic and significant in their meaning – a meaning directly available to the historian and providing a readily comprehensible and valid, if partial, account of the past.⁶

Haggis's critique of 'recovery' and 'recuperative' modes⁷ of writing the history of white women and colonialism demonstrates that these woman-centred approaches tend to represent white women either as:

patriarchal victims or as plucky feminist heroines, in both cases ignoring their racial privileges in colonial society, and to render white women visible at the expense of rendering the colonised invisible.⁸

Certainly, this has been the case with Lady Barker. Most of the scholars who have considered her work have treated her writings as straightforward autobiography and have used them to offer a 'recovered' history of an author who, to quote her earliest biographer:

was one of a small number of women who during the nineteenth century sailed, pen in hand, to the less-frequented parts of the world and set down their impressions for the stay-at-homes ...⁹

Of these biographies, the most comprehensive and celebratory is Betty Gilderdale's *The Seven Lives of Lady Barker* (1996).¹⁰ The sources that Gilderdale relies upon most heavily are Lady Barker's books and magazine articles, which she uses as straightforward 'historical' evidence. Gilderdale justifies this decision, stating:

Almost all her books, for children and adults, are autobiographical, based on her observations and experiences. Owing to the scarcity of other material, they necessarily form the main sources for her biography.¹¹

Thus, throughout *The Seven Lives of Lady Barker*, Gilderdale uses Lady Barker's writings to construct a linear biographical narrative, without ever questioning or analysing their content.¹² However, notwithstanding these methodological problems, Gilderdale's biography provides an invaluable starting point given that most of Lady Barker's personal papers were destroyed when the Harrod's Depository was bombed during the Second World War.

Despite the absence of primary documents, the public nature of Lady Barker's life has made researching her history comparatively straightforward. Indeed, the earliest published biographical information dates

from 1885, when Lady Barker was included in Frances Hays' *Women of the Day – A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Contemporaries*. Highlighting the co-existence of colonialism and domesticity in her writing, this entry focuses on Lady Barker's travels across the British Empire and lists her literary works to date. In 1884, Lady Barker's second husband, Frederick Napier Broome, received a knighthood, and she changed her title to Lady Broome, although she continued to publish as 'Lady Barker'.¹³ Thus, there are also biographical entries for 'BROOME (Mary Ann), Lady' in reference works such as *Who Was Who, 1897 – 1915* (1967). However, she remains best known as 'Lady Barker', as is evidenced by her most recent entry in the online *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*.¹⁴

Perhaps the most important source of autobiographical information appears in her last book, *Colonial Memories* (1904). Originally published as a series of articles for the *Cornhill Magazine* and one in the *Boudoir*, these *Memories* are prefaced with 'A Personal Story'.¹⁵ Written after an absence from the literary scene of almost twenty years, this introductory chapter describes the 'wandering up and down the face of the globe' that she had undertaken with both her husbands.¹⁶ It also acts as a reminder to readers 'who have perhaps read my little books in their childhood', and to whom she ventures 'to address these lines explaining as it were my personal story, with an entreaty for forgiveness if I have made it too personal'.¹⁷

'A Personal Story' is explicitly autobiographical and, reading with an awareness of its competing discourses, here it is treated as an historical rather than a literary source. Thus, supplemented with information gleaned from secondary sources, surviving personal papers and nineteenth century reviews and articles, it forms the basis of the following biography.

Mary Ann, Lady Barker: Author

Born on 29th May 1831¹⁸ in Spanish Town, Jamaica, Mary Anne Stewart was the eldest child of Susan Hewitt and the Honourable Walter George Stewart, 'the last "Island Secretary"'.¹⁹ Much of her childhood was spent in the homes of relatives in Ireland and England: she and her younger sister also lived in Paris for a short time.²⁰ Indeed, in *Colonial Memories* she commented 'I began to wander to and from England before I was two years old and had crossed the Atlantic five times by 1852'.²¹ She returned to Jamaica in December 1847, and later used her childhood experiences as the basis for several children's stories.

In 1851 she met Captain George Barker R.A., the *aide-de-camp* to the Governor of Jamaica. They were married in Spanish Town Cathedral in 1852 and in August of that year returned to England.²² While Mary Ann Barker (Annie) spent the next eight years in London facing the practical difficulties of home making and childbearing, her husband fought in the Crimea, where he rose rapidly to the rank

of Colonel.²³ Sent to India during the Mutiny, Barker was instrumental in the relief of Lucknow, and consequently, he was 'created KCB for services in the field' and offered the command of the Royal Artillery in Bengal.²⁴ In October 1860, leaving her two surviving sons with relatives in England, Lady Barker undertook the journey to meet her husband in Calcutta.²⁵ Travelling north from Lucknow to Simla, Lady Barker later used the domestic concerns of 'camp life' experienced during this four-month military promenade in *Stories About*. However, it was at Simla that George Barker died.²⁶ Lady Barker returned alone to her family in England, where for the next four years she records that, she 'lived quietly with my two little sons among my own people'.²⁷

In 1865 she met Canadian-born, Frederick Napier Broome, 'a young and very good-looking New Zealand sheep farmer'.²⁸ Broome, who was eleven years her junior, had been working as a cadet farmer in New Zealand.²⁹ He persuaded Lady Barker to marry him and leave England for a sheep station on the Canterbury Plains. She wrote:

I often wonder how I could have had the courage to take such a step, for it entailed leaving my boys behind as well as all my friends and most of the comforts and conveniences of life.³⁰

They married in the summer of 1865,³¹ and sailed immediately for New Zealand to establish their own sheep station – 'Broomielaw' – in the Malvern Hills, forty-five miles from Christchurch, on the Canterbury Settlement in the South Island of New Zealand. In *Colonial Memories*, Lady Barker describes this period as 'three supremely happy years which followed this wild and really almost wicked step on our parts'.³² This experience was to form the basis of her two best-selling books, *Station Life in New Zealand* (1870) and its sequel *Station Amusements in New Zealand* (1873), which according to the preface written by her husband:

Simply record the expeditions, adventures and emergencies diversifying the daily life of the wife of a New Zealand sheep-farmer; and, as each was written while the novelty and excitement of the scenes it describes were fresh upon her, they may succeed in giving here in England an adequate impression of the delight and freedom of an existence so far removed from our own highly-wrought civilization.³³

For the most part, this remains the popular interpretation of Lady Barker's earliest books. For instance, Fiona Kidman describes *Station Life* as, both:

a superbly written account of the way people lived on Canterbury's back-country sheep stations during the 1860s [and] a classical chronicle of the adventures of a remarkable woman.³⁴

However, in a short, but insightful, essay titled 'An English Lady in the Untamed Mountains' Nelson Wattie offers

a more sophisticated analysis of Lady Barker's *oeuvre*. Identifying major themes of New Zealand literature but focusing on the class and colonial content of her work, significantly, he notes:

In New Zealand, Lady Barker's books are still being read, but it may be doubted whether the full ironic range of her talent is always appreciated, since the standard opinion holds that her books are no more than 'still a valuable source for social historians of early Canterbury'. Such a judgement, it seems to me, is far too limited, both in its geographical and in its literary range.³⁵

Station Life and *Station Amusements* were actually written in London following the Broomes' return to England in 1869. Forced to sell 'Broomielaw' following a disastrous land venture and the loss of more than 4000 sheep in the snowstorm of 1867, they both turned to writing as a source of much-needed income. Frederick Broome wrote poetry and reviews for *Macmillan's Magazine*, and later became a Special Correspondent for the *Times*.³⁶ In *Colonial Memories*, with characteristic self-deprecating humour, Lady Barker records how she began to write:

Mr Alexander Macmillan, who was always kindness itself to both of us, [...] was responsible for putting the idea of writing into my head. At his suggestion I inflicted 'Station Life in New Zealand', as well as several story-books for children, on a patient and long-suffering public.³⁷

Between 1869 and 1876, Lady Barker wrote thirteen books. Her work falls into three main categories: those books that recount her experiences of life in the colonies; others best described as juvenile fiction; and three books that are domestic advice manuals.³⁸ She also wrote stories for *Good Words for the Young*; reviewed books for the *Times*; and, in 1874 became editor of the Church of England family magazine *Evening Hours*, which serialised several of her books.³⁹ Given her connections with *Evening Hours* and the religious feeling apparent in much of her writing, it is tempting to view Lady Barker's work as rectory literature. However, the publication figures held by the Macmillan Archive indicate that her books were widely read and contemporary reviews in the *Times* suggest they were well received.⁴⁰

In addition, during this prolific period of writing Lady Barker also gave birth to two more sons⁴¹ and, to her own 'deep amazement' having never cared what she ate 'provided it was "neat and clean"'⁴² became the first Lady Superintendent of Henry Cole's newly founded National School of Cookery.⁴³ The entry on Lady Barker in *Women of the Day* (1885) explains her appointment, and stresses the popularity of her best-selling book *The First Principles of Cooking* (1874), which:

had a very large circulation, and almost immediately after its appearance Lady Barker was appointed superintendent of the

National Training School of Cookery, South Kensington.⁴⁴

Throughout 1874, Lady Barker also contributed a series of ten articles entitled 'Notes on Cooking' to *Evening Hours*; and, in *Colonial Memories* she included an amusing chapter, 'A Cookery Memory' in which she describes the foundation of the School.⁴⁵

However, early in 1875, Frederick Broome began his diplomatic career, having been appointed Colonial Secretary to the Province of Natal.⁴⁶ Later that year, Lady Barker and her two youngest sons left their South Kensington home and went out to Africa to join her husband at 'poor sleepy Maritzburg'.⁴⁷ She recorded her experiences, again using the device of the letter 'home', in *A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa* (1877).⁴⁸

After a brief return to England in 1877, Lady Barker joined her husband in Mauritius where he served as Colonial-Secretary and later Lieutenant Governor.⁴⁹ However, in December 1882, Broome was appointed Governor of Western Australia. Expressing its surprise at the appointment, the *Western Australian* commented rather more on Lady Barker than the new Governor:

Mr Broome has had rather a chequered career, and was at one time a journalist on the staff of the *Times*. Mr Broome's literary style is said to be admirable, but the writings of his wife have been more widely read, for, to the world in general, he is best known as the husband of Lady Barker with whose delightful descriptions of New Zealand station life most readers are acquainted.⁵⁰

During Broome's governorship of Western Australia, Lady Barker was to write *Letters to Guy*, which was first published by Macmillan in 1885. This book also uses the epistolary form, this time to the Broomes' eldest son, Guy (who had remained at school in England) and describes the first year of their time in the colony.⁵¹

Leaving Western Australia in 1889, Broome was appointed Acting Governor of Barbados in 1891; and, finally Governor of Trinidad until just before his death in 1896.⁵² Having returned to England, the widowed Lady Barker (now titled Lady Broome) lived in straitened financial circumstances: the Broomes had always assumed that Frederick would survive his wife and had made no financial provision for her. At the end of 1897 the Government of Western Australia eventually awarded Lady Broome a widow's pension of £150 a year. In a letter to Sir John Forrest, the premier of Western Australia, she thanked the Legislature for their assistance:

which just makes it possible for me to have a little house of my own ... I am going at 65 years old, to start work as a practical worker again, and am begging all my friends to find me a place as housekeeper, or to take care of motherless children. This is all I can do ... What I fear is that no one will have anything

to do with so broken and shattered an old woman.⁵³

Despite the small pension, Lady Broome was obliged to supplement her income by writing and in 1904 published her last book, *Colonial Memories*. This, the only book to be published under the name 'Lady Broome', draws on all her experiences across the British Empire. Here she comments poignantly:

I often wonder which is the dream – the shifting scenes of former days, so full of interest as well as of everything which could make life dear and precious, or these monotonous years when I feel like a shipwrecked swimmer, cast up by a wave, out of reach of immediate peril it is true, but far removed from all except the commonplace of existence.⁵⁴

Following her death on 6th March 1911, Lady Broome's obituary in the *Times* recorded the careers of her father and husbands, but commented that 'She was a woman of no small ability'.⁵⁵

Domesticating Empire: The Literary Works of Lady Barker

Lady Barker's descriptions of life in the colonies should be considered as a type of colonialist literature, which Elleke Boehmer defines as that:

... which was specifically concerned with colonial expansion. On the whole it was literature written by and for colonizing Europeans about non-European lands dominated by them. It embodied the imperialists' point of view [and] was informed by theories concerning the superiority of European culture and the rightness of empire. Its distinctive stereotyped language was geared to mediating the white man's relationship with colonized peoples.⁵⁶

This description applies to all Lady Barker's colonial books, which are described as having 'achieved legendary status in their respective countries'.⁵⁷ Presumably, it is the descendants of white settlers who considered these texts to be legendary. For instance, Fiona Kidman, ignoring the Maori population, suggests that:

To Barker, New Zealanders owe a debt not only for drawing such an illuminating record of early colonial life but also for preserving the origins of much of our language.⁵⁸

Written for metropolitan readers, the stories are largely concerned with the experiences of European settlers and, in the case of the New Zealand stories, are marked by an absence of indigenous people. While there are human-geographical reasons for this, it should nonetheless be remembered that this book was written during a period that witnessed the Land Wars (1845-72) between the white settlers and the Maoris of the North Island. Indeed, in 1869, Frederick Broome contributed a political paper to *Macmillan's Magazine* titled 'The Crisis in New Zealand' that



Mary Anne Barker and her husband Frederick Napier Broome, courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand.

discussed this conflict from the perspective of a colonist. The only reference to any direct contact with the Maori population appeared much later in *Colonial Memories*. Here, rather scandalously, Lady Barker describes dancing 'the Lancers' at a ball with a Maori chieftain from the North Island, who was said to complain: 'Ah, if I might only dance without my clothes! No one could really dance in these horrid things!'⁵⁹ Thus, claiming that New Zealand 'has always been beautifully and distinctly English',⁶⁰ Lady Barker either ignores its indigenous peoples or represents them as tattooed savages who preferred to dance naked: in so doing she clearly contributes to colonial ideology.

Instead of absence, *A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa* describes the homes and customs of the black Africans whom Lady Barker observed. She devotes chapters to descriptions of 'The Kafir at Home', 'Zulu Witches and Witchfinders', and, 'Kafir Weddings and Kafir Kraals'. However, this was Africa and Africans as experienced, misunderstood and represented by an upper class 'English' lady:

I must say, however, that I like Kafir servants in many respects. They require constant supervision; they require to be told to do the same thing over and over again every day, and what is more besides telling you have to stand by and see that they do the thing; they are also very slow: but still with all these disadvantages they are far better than the generality of European servants out here, who make their luckless employers' lives a burthen to them by reason of their tempers and caprices. It is much better, I am convinced,



'Tom'. This image taken from *A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa*, Macmillan and Co., 1883 edition, shows 'Tom', Lady Barker's Kafir nurse-maid.

to face the evil boldly and to make up ones mind to have none but Kafir servants.⁶¹

The theme of racial difference is explicit in this book.⁶² Yet, often critical of the behaviour of low-class white immigrants 'who sit indoors, listless and discontented, grumbling, because the Kafirs won't come and work for them',⁶³ class differences are also apparent in her writing. Bemoaning the behaviour of her servants, black and white, Lady Barker happily entertains a Zulu Princess to afternoon tea.

Significantly, Lady Barker's own class status, and a conspicuous lack of other *ladies*, allowed her to transgress the socially defined gender role she would have played in England:

It may be strange to English ears to hear a woman of tolerably peaceful disposition, and as the advertisements in the *Times* so often state, 'thoroughly domesticated', aver that she found great pleasure in going after wild pigs.⁶⁴

Elleke Boehmer comments that the 'majority of narratives of Empire involved masculine heroes and assumed a predominantly male audience'.⁶⁵ In the work of Lady Barker, the opposite is true. Her colonial stories present a predominantly female readership with a feminine heroine whose adventures centre on domestic concerns: out in the colonies household chores and everyday outings take on the characteristics of the quest romance. She wrote: 'one's nerves and courage are in very different order out in New Zealand to the low standard which rules for ladies in England, who "live at home in ease!"'⁶⁶ Thus, afternoon tea becomes an adventure when imported into the New Zealand bush; collecting the post is a perilous

quest involving a ride across flooded rivers; and Zulu Witchfinders appear at a Garden Party.⁶⁷

Writing for the Virago Press, perhaps unsurprisingly, Fiona Kidman describes Lady Barker as having 'many attributes of an early feminist [...] a courageous person ready to try any adventure', and one who was not 'prepared to be excluded from any activities because she was a woman'.⁶⁸ Similarly, Gillian Whitlock describes Lady Barker as an 'intrepid colonial matriarch'.⁶⁹ However, Sara Mills warns against an interpretation that depicts female travel writers like Lady Barker as proto-feminists who live up to the titles 'indomitable' and 'eccentric'.⁷⁰ Indeed, as Mills points out:

Much of the analysis done by women critics so far falls into this category of proto-feminist reading, yet it is possible to 'prove' by selective reading, that these writers were proto-feminist, anti-feminist, colonial and anti-colonial.⁷¹

These dual readings of Lady Barker's work are certainly possible. She did not represent herself as either indomitable or eccentric: her readers – and certainly her reviewers – saw her as 'thoroughly domesticated'.⁷² Moreover, her public position as Lady Superintendent of the National School of Cookery and her magazine articles and advice manuals confirmed her feminine position as an expert on the domestic. Instead, Lady Barker exemplifies the imperial role of Englishwomen, whose 'civilising mission' was to carry English ideals abroad. As Mackay and Thane comment:

The ideal was the healthy, practical, but cultured, woman with domestic training, 'who will keep up the tone of the men with whom they mix by music and booklore when the day is over'.⁷³

Following her success in the genre of household management with the publication of *The First Principles of Cooking*, Lady Barker wrote a series of articles on 'Houses and Housekeeping' for *Evening Hours* during 1875.⁷⁴ Her reading public was already familiar with her domestic concerns and the decoration of her houses, for example, in *Station Life in New Zealand* (1869) she describes 'Our Station Home':

My greatest interest and occupation consist in going to look at my house, which is being *cut out* in Christchurch, and will be drayed to our station, a journey of fifty miles. It is, of course, only of wood, and seems about as solid as a band-box, but I am assured by the builder that it will be a 'most superior article' when it is all put together. F- and I made the little plan of it ourselves, regulating the size of the drawing-room by the dimensions of the carpet we brought out.⁷⁵

Later collected and published as *Houses and Housekeeping: A Fireside Gossip upon Home and its Contents* (1876), each of the seven articles deals with a different



'Witchfinder Detecting a Thief'. This image taken from *A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa*, (Macmillan and Co., 1883 edition), illustrates the chapter 'Zulu Witches and Witchfinders'.

room in an imaginary London house. However, Lady Barker's writing inevitably draws on her colonial experiences, exporting the 'English home' to the colonies and importing the 'Empire' into the domestic spaces of England. Thus, when advising on suitable decoration for a London drawing room, Lady Barker recalls her Indian 'tent drawing-room, which moved twenty-five miles ahead every day.'⁷⁶ She also describes 'a little wooden house, up a quiet valley on a New Zealand station' where 'every article of furniture had been slowly and expensively conveyed over roads which would give an English upholsterer a fit to look at.'⁷⁷

This co-existence of the domestic and the colonial is best demonstrated in Lady Barker's contribution to Macmillan's 'Art at Home Series', *The Bedroom and Boudoir* (1878). Here she gives advice on the most private space in the domestic sphere, writing remembrances of colonial bedrooms⁷⁸ around illustrations of imported and exotic furniture.⁷⁹ She told her readers:

I don't suppose any human being except a gipsy has ever dwelt in so many widely-apart lands as I have. [...] Especially pretty has my sleeping-room always been, though it has sometimes looked out over the snowy peaks of the Himalayas, at others, up a lovely New Zealand valley, or, in still earlier days, over a waving West Indian 'grass piece'. But I may as well get out the map of the world at once, and try to remember the various places to which my wandering destiny has led me.⁸⁰

In all her advice literature Lady Barker ostensibly advocates domesticity, yet her constant references to travel and her own colonial experiences imply that the home could be anywhere within the British Empire. Thus, exploiting domestic ideology and embracing the 'civilising mission' designated to 'the Englishwoman' abroad, she managed

to wander 'up and down the face of the globe' and to write professionally on matters concerning the home.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following for their help with the research undertaken for this article: Robert Machesney, Alysoun Saunders and Ruth Tellis at the Macmillan Archive; Verity Andrews at Reading University Library; Tom Reynolds at the State Records Office of Western Australia; and Maryon Craig at the Battye Library in Perth, Western Australia.

Notes

1. Lady Barker had three sons by each of her two husbands: John Stewart Scott Barker b. 1853; a stillborn son (unnamed) b.1856; Walter George Barker b. 1857; Frederick Hopton Napier Broome (died in infancy) b. 1866; Guy Saville Frederick Broome b.1870; and Louis Egerton Broome b. 1875.
2. See A. Hasluck, 'Lady Broome', *Western Australian Historical Society Journal*, 5 (3) (1957), 1-16; A. Hasluck, *Remembered with Affection* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1963); F. Kidman, 'Introduction to Lady Barker', *Station Life in New Zealand* (London: Macmillan, 1870); reprint with notes by Fiona Kidman (London: Virago Press, 1984); B. Gilderdale, *The Seven Lives of Lady Barker* (Auckland NZ: David Bateman, 1996); G. Whitlock, 'A "white-souled state" Across the "South" with Lady Barker' in K. Darian-Smith, G. Gunner & S. Nuttall, eds., *Text, Theory, Space: Land, literature and history in South Africa and Australia* (London: Routledge, 1996); C. Hankin, 'Barker, Mary Anne 1830 – 32? – 1911', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 11 December 2002, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>; and A. Selzer, *Governors' Wives in Colonial Australia* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2002).
3. S. Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*, (London: Routledge, 1991), 20.
4. *Ibid.*, 4.
5. *Ibid.*, 20.
6. J. Haggis, 'White women and colonialism: towards a non-recuperative history', *Gender and Imperialism*, C. Midgley, ed., (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 47.
7. Midgley, *Gender and Imperialism*, 7, offers a definition of the 'recovery' mode as work 'much of it aimed at a popular audience, [that] seeks to restore women to Imperial History and demonstrate the scope of women's involvement in the Empire: as the wives of colonial administrators, settlers, explorers, missionaries and nurses'. She defines the closely related 'recuperative' works as those 'which aim to debunk myths of the "destructive" female whose racial prejudice led to the disruption of "good" relations between male colonial officials and indigenous peoples, and to reassess women's imperial roles in a more positive light'.
8. *Ibid.*, quoting from J. Haggis, 'Gendering colonialism or

colonising gender? Recent women's studies approaches to white women and the history of British colonialism', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 13 (1990), 105-115.

9. Hasluck, *Remembered with Affection*, 1.

10. Rather disappointingly, the titles of Gilderdale's chapters: 'The Soldier's Wife'; 'The Farmer's Wife'; 'The Governor's Wife' and 'The Colonial Widow', place Lady Barker in a subordinate position. This is ironic given her complaint that 'Lady Barker's obituary in the *Times* of London said more about her husband's achievements than her own' (Gilderdale, *Seven Lives*, xiv). Only the chapter entitled 'The Author' suggests an independent role, but given that Gilderdale discusses Napier Broome's poetry and journalism throughout, perhaps this chapter should have been called 'The Author's Wife'?

11. *Ibid.*, xv.

12. Especially those texts that use the device of the letter 'home' such as *Station Life in New Zealand* (1870); *A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa* (1877); and *Letters to Guy* (1885).

13. Although Lady Barker was known as 'Mrs Broome' in New Zealand, she retained the title 'Lady Barker' until Frederick Napier Broome was knighted in 1884. The retention of her first married name and title after her marriage to Broome troubles many scholars from the Southern Hemisphere. Kidman uses the notion that Lady Barker had already 'established some writing credentials' to explain this potentially 'snobbish' act. Gilderdale suggests that it is likely that Macmillan encouraged her to write as 'Lady Barker' to differentiate her from her husband, 'and also because the 'cachet' of a title automatically lifted the book in the eyes of the Victorian public' (Gilderdale, *Seven Lives*, 140). More amusingly, Nelson Wattie comments on Lady Barker's aristocratic pretensions in retaining her title and remarks that 'Her readers might be excused for thinking that 'Lady' was her Christian name'. N. Wattie, 'An English Lady in the Untamed Mountains: Lady Barker in New Zealand' in K. Gross and W. Klooss, eds, *English Literature of the Dominions: Writings on Australia, Canada and New Zealand* (Königshausen & Neumann, 1981), 98.

14. Hankin, 'Barker'.

15. *Colonial Memories* begins with the following 'Note' dated October 1904: 'My cordial thanks are due – and given – to the Editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, within whose pages some of these 'Memories' have from time to time appeared, for permission to republish them in this form. Also to the Editor of the *Boudoir*, where my 'Girls – Old and New' made their *début* last season. M. A. B'.

16. Lady M. A. Broome (1904), xxi.

17. *Ibid.*, xxii.

18. FamilySearch™ International Genealogical Index for the Caribbean at <http://www.familysearch.org> gives her date of birth as 1830 (film number 1903747). Gilderdale gives it as 1831.

19. Lady M. A. Broome (1904), xxi.

20. 'Woodville', Lucan near Dublin was the home of her paternal great-grandfather, an Indian Army General, Sir Hopton Stafford Scott. Her mother's cousins, the Maynes, provided a home at Tixhall Lodge, Cannock

Chase, Staffordshire.

21. Lady M. A. Broome (1904), x.

22. Gilderdale, *Seven Lives*, 40-8, writes that on their return to England from Jamaica, the Barkers were initially based at the Woolwich Barracks (headquarters of the Royal Artillery), later renting a small house in Woolwich. In 1857 Mary Anne Barker stayed with her sister-in-law at Chiddingstone Rectory in Kent, but later took a house in Kensington where she lived until she left for India.

23. *Ibid.*, 41-2, drawing on Col. Julian R. J. Jocelyn's *The History of the Royal Artillery (Crimean Period)* (Murray, 1911), 43-6; 203-4 details the rapid promotion of George Barker.

24. F. Hays, *Women of the Day – A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Contemporaries*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1885), 11.

25. Gilderdale uses Lady Barker's 'Indian Diary', an unpublished private source now the property of her descendants, to construct a narrative of her journey to India and her travels across the sub-continent. This primary document also records the death of her husband and her journey home.

26. Barker died of hepatitis and dysentery.

27. Lady M. A. Broome (1904), xii. Gilderdale, *Seven Lives*, 86, suggests that Lady Barker and her two boys lived with her sister-in-law at Chiddingstone Rectory.

28. Lady M. A. Broome (1904), xii.

29. At the age of 15, Broome went to New Zealand to work for Richard Knight at 'Steventon', a run of 9,700 acres (3,925 hectares), which was situated on the south bank of the Selwyn River (the Wai-kiri-kiri). Knight was a nephew of Jane Austen – 'Steventon' was named after the rectory in Hampshire where Austen was born. Broome and a partner, H. P. Hill, bought the property in April 1864 from Richard and his brother Arthur Charles Knight. Hill and his farm manager lived on at Steventon while the Broomes moved into and extended a small cob cottage two miles away which they named 'Broomielaw'.

30. Lady M. A. Broome (1904), xii.

31. FamilySearch™ International Genealogical Index for the British Isles at <http://www.familysearch.org> gives the date of their marriage as 21 June 1864. Lady Barker and Gilderdale both give it as the summer of 1865.

32. Lady M. A. Broome (1904), xiii.

33. Lady M. A. Barker, *Station Life in New Zealand* (London: Macmillan, 1870); Virago reprint, 1984, Preface. Macmillan & Co. first published *Station Life in New Zealand*, in December 1869 but it was dated 1870. The first print-run was 1500 copies and the book retailed at 7/6d. A second edition was printed in November 1871, this time 3000 copies retailing at 3/6d. A third edition of 3000 copies appeared in December 1873 again selling at 3/6d, and a fourth of 1500 copies was printed in June 1883, once more costing 3/6d. There were two further reprints, a Colonial Library edition in 1886 and another in 1887. *Station Amusements in New Zealand* was serialised in *Evening Hours* during 1873 and published by this journal's owner, William Hunt & Co.

34. Kidman, 'Introduction', v.

35. Wattie, 'An English Lady ...', 97, quoting from A. H.

McLintock (ed.), *An Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, Vol. 1 (Wellington, 1966), 158.

36. Broome published two volumes of poetry: *Poems from New Zealand* (1868) and *The Stranger of Seriphos* (1869).

37. Lady M. A. Broome (1904), xiv.

38. The stories of life in the colonies or on travel include: *Station Life in New Zealand*, (Macmillan, 1870); *A Christmas Cake in Four Quarters* (Frederick Warne, 1871); *Travelling About over Old and New Ground* (Routledge, 1872); *Station Amusements in New Zealand* (William Hunt, 1873); *A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa* (Macmillan, 1877); *Letters to Guy* (Macmillan, 1885); and (writing as Lady Broome) *Colonial Memories* (Smith, Elder & Co., 1904). The juvenile fiction comprises *Stories About* (Frederick Warne, 1871); *Ribbon Stories* (Macmillan, 1872); *Holiday Stories for Boys and Girls* (Routledge, 1873); *Sybil's Book* (Macmillan, 1874); *Boys* (Routledge, 1874); *This Troublesome World, or Bet of Stowe* (Hatchards, 1875); and, *The White Rat* (Macmillan, 1880). Unsurprisingly, Lady Barker's juvenile fiction is also full of colonial references. *Stories About*, for example, includes chapters on her Jamaican childhood, army camp-life in India and riding in New Zealand. One of the heroines in *Sybil's Book* marries and goes out to live in Australia, and another travels to the West Indies. Similarly, *Boys* contains stories titled 'My Emigrant Boy' and 'My Missionary Boy'. The domestic advice books are *First Lessons in the Principles of Cooking* (Macmillan, 1874); *Houses and Housekeeping* (William Hunt, 1876); and *The Bedroom and Boudoir* (Macmillan, 1878). Lady Barker's only attempt at fiction *Spring Comedies* (Macmillan, 1871) was poorly received.

39. See *Evening Hours*, Vol 1, 'Our Recreations in New Zealand'; Vol 2, 'New Zealand Amusements'; Vol 3, 'Bet of Stow: A True Story'; Vol 4, 'Notes on Cooking'; Vol 5, 'Houses and Housekeeping'; and Vol 6, 'Life in South Africa'.

40. See reviews in the *Times* for *Stories About*, 23rd December 1870; *A Christmas Cake in Four Quarters*, 25th December 1871; *Station Amusements in New Zealand*, 10th October 1873; *Sybil's Book*, 23rd December 1873; *A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa*, 20th August 1877.

41. Her fourth son, born soon after the Broomes arrival in New Zealand, had died of diarrhoea aged 2 months. The infant's death is recounted in *Station Life*.

42. Lady M. A. Broome (1904), 241.

43. Sir Henry Cole and a committee, which included the late Duke of Westminster, the late Lord Granville, Mr Hans Busk, Sir Daniel Cooper, Mr (Rob Roy) McGregor and 'many other experts' founded the National School of Cookery at South Kensington in 1874. With its low fees, the School aimed to attract and train working class women and servants. However, Lady Barker notes that when the school opened Henry Cole was unhappy because the 'pupils were by no means the class he wanted to get at. Fine Ladies of every rank, rich women, gay Americans in beautiful clothes, all thronged our kitchen, and the waiting carriages looked as if a smart party were going on within our dingy sheds'. See Lady M. A. Broome (1904), chapter

XVI, 'A Cooking Memory', 240 – 254.

44. Hays, *Women of the Day*, 11. The Macmillan Archive records that *First Lessons in the Principles of Cooking*, was her most successful book. Selling at 1/-, there were three editions with print runs of 10,000 (February 1874), 5,000 (October 1875) and 3,000 (January 1886).

45. The chapter describes the ignorance of young ladies regarding the cooking of eggs; a gas explosion in the kitchens, which resulted in a 'rain of potatoes'; and, the story of a young curate, whose landlady was such a poor cook, that he took the desperate step of dressing as a woman, in order to learn how to cook a mutton chop!

46. In 1874 there had been an uprising in the Province of Natal led by Chief Langalibalele. Sir Garnet Wolseley replaced Natal's Colonial Governor and Broome was appointed his secretary.

47. Lady M. A. Barker (1877), 59.

48. *A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa* has prompted further critical consideration of Lady Barker's writing. Whitlock, 'White-souled state...', for example, uses post-colonial theories to discuss *A Year's Housekeeping* alongside Lady Barker's later Australian book, *Letters from Guy*. Here she identified the colonial ideology produced by Lady Barker's responses to Natal and Western Australia 'from her privileged position as a senior colonial official's wife', 17. Whitlock's essay raises several interesting points that relate to the *domestic* in Lady Barker's writing. In her discussion of Lady Barker's domestication of the 'South', Whitlock describes Lady Barker as 'an expert on domestic management, as the first Lady Superintendent of the National School of Cookery', but does not consider any of Lady Barker's writings on the domestic. This omission was unfortunate given that she states that post-colonial analysis 'must examine the discursive production, reproduction and power of colonial ideology in various texts, both literary and non-fiction, including conduct manuals and cookery books', 71.

49. Broome was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Mauritius in 1880.

50. *Western Australian*, 8 December 1882.

51. Several writers discuss Lady Barker's use of this literary form. The New Zealand novelist, Fiona Kidman (vii) believes 'they were real letters'. However, suggesting an alternative to the simplistic autobiographical interpretation of Lady Barker's writings, Peter Gibbons remarks: 'Even if the letters of *Station Life* rest upon original correspondence they have been worked over later, and the epistolary form is largely, perhaps entirely, a device. [...] Lady Barker's artful prose is most fully demonstrated when her books are read as comedies of manners rather than as transparent documentary episodes'. See P. Gibbons, 'Non-Fiction', in T. Sturm, ed., *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991), 47.

52. Broome was 54 years old when he died; his widow was 65 years old.

53. Western Australian Archives, CSR 3371/97.

54. Lady M. A. Broome (1904), xxi – xxii.

55. The *Times* Obituary: Lady Broome, Tuesday, March 7 (1911), 11.

Making Social Justice Feminism a National Movement: Molly Dewson and Democratic Party Politics in the United States, 1933 - 1940

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On November 10, 1940 Mary Williams (Molly) Dewson sat in her home in Castine, Maine, and wrote a letter to her close friend Eleanor Roosevelt. Franklin D. Roosevelt had just won his third term as President of the United States. Although the recent national elections had focused on the United States's response to the European conflict, Dewson's mind still dwelt on the New Deal and her former organization, the Women's Division of the Democratic National Committee (DNC).² In her letter Dewson lamented that she and Roosevelt did not have enough time to discuss the future of the Women's Division.

In the 1930s, she continued, reform efforts had attracted competent women to the Democratic Party and united the party in a crusade. The 'extraordinary opportunity' of the New Deal, she concluded, should continue in the third Roosevelt Administration.³

In her reply to Dewson's letter Eleanor Roosevelt agreed that both domestic reform and women's participation in American politics should continue their previous advances. In a series written earlier that year to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment's ratification, the First Lady had reviewed the recent accomplishments of women in party politics and concluded that the major achievement of women since 1920 was the increase of national interest in 'social questions.' For the first time the United States government had participated in reform issues ranging from housing to care for the handicapped. But Eleanor Roosevelt wanted to accomplish more. While women in the United States remained divided on certain issues, she continued, if they could unite on occasion 'I think it is safe to say that something historically important will happen.'⁴ Eleanor Roosevelt therefore emphasized that reform efforts merited attention, even in the midst of international crisis.

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56. E. Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 2-3.
57. Gilderdale, *Seven Lives*, dust-jacket description.
58. Kidman, 'Introduction', ix – x.
59. Lady M. A. Broome (1904), 38.
60. Ibid., 2.
61. Lady M. A. Barker (1877), 118.
62. The working title for this book was *Sketches in Black and White*. Reading University, Ref. MS 1089: Lady Barker to Alexander Macmillan, 25th November 1876 (written from Maritzburg, Natal).
63. Lady M. A. Barker (1877), 247.
64. Lady M. A. Barker (1873), 47.
65. Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 9.
66. Lady M. A. Barker (1873), 74.
67. Lady Barker's description of the Zulu witch-finders (Letter IX, 4 April 1876) should be compared with the more masculine and blood-thirsty version described by H. Rider Haggard in *King Solomon's Mines*, 1885, Chapter X: 'The Witch Hunt'. Dennis Butts' explanatory notes to the Oxford World Classics edition of *King Solomon's Mines* state that 'in March 1876 Rider Haggard himself witnessed a Zulu witch-dance.' It is tempting to think that this may have been at Lady Barker's Garden Party, given that Haggard was on Broome's staff in Natal and is mentioned in two of Lady Barker's letters to Macmillan, in which she recommends articles he had written on the Transvaal. Reading University, Ref. MS 1089: Lady Barker to Mr Grove, 11th August, 1879.
68. Kidman, 'Introduction', vii-viii.
69. Whitlock, 'White-souled state...', 72.
70. Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 20.

71. Ibid.

72. Lady M. A. Barker (1873), 47.

73. J. Mackay and P. Thane, 'The Englishwoman', in R. Colls and P. Dodd, eds, *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 203.

74. 'Houses and Housekeeping' in *Evening Hours* (1875), is a series of seven articles that deals with a variety of subjects. The first article deals with the attic rooms allotted to servants; the second and third consider 'The Nursery'; the fourth deals with 'Bedrooms'; the fifth is titled 'The Dining-Room'; the sixth is 'The Drawing-Room'; and the final article looks at 'Kitchens'.

75. Lady M. A. Barker (1870), 39.

76. Lady M. A. Barker, 'Houses and Housekeeping: The Drawing-Room', *Evening Hours* (1875), 315.

77. Ibid.

78. Lady M. A. Barker (1878), 33-4: 'I have slumbered "aright" in extraordinary beds, in extraordinary places, on tables, and under them (that was to be out of the way of being walked upon), on mats, on trunks, on all sorts of wonderful contrivances. I slept once very soundly on a piece of sacking stretched between two bullock trunks ... I know the uneasiness of mattresses stuffed with chopped grass, and the lumpiness of those filled by amateur hands with wool – *au naturel*.'

79. For a discussion of the problems associated with using the illustrations as historical evidence, see E. Ferry, '... information for the ignorant and aid for the advancing ...' Macmillan's 'Art at Home Series', 1876 – 1883' in J. Aynsley and K. Forde, eds, *Design Values and the Modern Magazine* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

80. Lady M. A. Barker (1878), 20.

Dewson's and Roosevelt's hopes, however, soon collapsed as foreign events swept discussions of social justice from political discourse. With the United States's entry into World War II in December 1941, military needs assumed top priority. The President designated himself 'Dr. Win-the-War' rather than 'Dr. New Deal' at a 1943 press conference.⁵ Social legislation never entirely disappeared from the national political agenda; the President's call for an 'economic Bill of Rights' in January 1944, for example, led to the adoption of the G.I. Bill by Congress. In addition, Eleanor Roosevelt continued lobbying for reform issues, especially equal rights for African Americans.⁶ But even with victory against the Axis in 1945, postwar discussions of social and economic equity remained subordinate to fears of domestic Communism, Soviet domination and atomic annihilation. It would take the grassroots civil rights movement's efforts in the 1950s to rouse a complacent nation from its acceptance of the domestic status quo.⁷

Even with these disappointing developments Dewson and Roosevelt remained proud of their New Deal efforts. From 1933 through 1940 the Women's Division of the DNC had become a dynamic part of the United States's Democratic Party. In addition, the Division also acted as the main catalyst for the final stage of a movement called social justice feminism. Social justice feminists in the United States saw their first goal as the passage of women's labor legislation, which would become an entering wedge for the eventual inclusion of all workers under state protection. Although these women did not call themselves social justice feminists, the goals of social and economic equity were the main objectives of their efforts. Rose Schneiderman, a New York City garment worker who became president of the national Women's Trade Union League (WTUL), an organization dedicated to organizing women into trade unions, declared in a 1926 address that one of her primary goals was 'industrial justice.' Frances Perkins, a middle-class reformer who became the first female United States Secretary of Labor, also saw social justice as an important goal. In 1929 she declared, 'Social justice is possible in a great industrial society,' noting how the efforts of previous women reformers had changed social and economic institutions so as to 'create real happiness and welfare for people who cannot govern and control their own conditions of life.' The women who became social justice feminists, moreover, did not emphasize their awareness of gender inequity in the United States, but they definitely wanted to change the social conditions of women.⁸

Historian Paula Baker's 1984 essay, 'The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political History, 1780-1920,' sets the terms for any discussion of women's involvement in U.S. political affairs. Throughout the late 1700s through the early 1900s, Baker argues, women in the United States centered their political activities on petitions and legislative lobbying. By 1920 suffragists such as Carrie Chapman Catt believed that the vote would increase women's political influence. Baker concludes, however, that 'suffrage . . . failed to help women achieve equality.'⁹ While not totally disagreeing with Baker's



Portrait of Mary (Molly) Dewson

analysis, other historians such as Jo Freeman have demonstrated that women in party politics did make significant contributions from the 1920s to the late 1960s.¹⁰ But the contributions of the Women's Division of the DNC have not been closely examined by scholars. This article describes how the Division's efforts from 1933 through 1940 not only made social justice feminism a national movement, but also increased women's participation in the United States's party system.

The Initial Stages of Social Justice Feminism

Definitions of feminism in the United States, as elsewhere, never maintain a smooth course. The seemingly monolithic feminist movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, for example, now stands as a fragmented mosaic, with 'third wave' feminists criticizing the seemingly conformist goals of their predecessors. Feminism therefore undergoes a constantly evolving definition, both historically and socially. The same holds true for the development of social justice feminism in the United States from 1899 through 1940.

Social justice feminism began in the late nineteenth century as the idea of Florence Kelley, the general secretary of the National Consumers' League (NCL). Felix Frankfurter, the noted Supreme Court Justice who worked as NCL counsel from 1916 through 1923, stated that Kelley 'had probably the largest single share in shaping the social history of the United States during the first thirty years of [the twentieth] century.'¹¹ Born in 1859, the daughter of a prominent Congressman from the state of Pennsylvania, Kelley attended Cornell College, graduating in 1882. After her

marriage failed in 1891, Kelley moved into Hull House, the settlement house experiment established by Jane Addams in Chicago. The new resident soon turned her attention to promoting labor reform. Appointed Illinois's factory inspector by progressive Governor James Altgeld in 1893, Kelley soon spearheaded the passage of an eight-hour law for female manufacturing employees, only to see the statute declared unconstitutional by the Illinois Supreme Court. She left her position after Governor Altgeld lost his re-election campaign in 1896. Three years later Kelley moved to New York City to head the NCL, a newly formed national coalition of women's consumer leagues.¹²

Kelley initiated social justice feminism when she became head of the NCL. She and her allies believed that the promotion and passage of women's labor legislation could constitute a preliminary step towards the eventual legislative protection of all workers in the United States, regardless of gender. As Frankfurter stated in a 1916 *Harvard Law Review* article, 'Once we cease to look upon the regulation of women as exceptional . . . and shift the emphasis from the fact that they are *women* to the fact that it is *industry* . . . which is regulated, the whole problem is seen from a totally different aspect.' The first and second stages of social justice feminism, which occurred from 1899 through 1918, encountered great success. In cases such as *Muller v. Oregon* (1908) and *People v. Charles Schweinler Press* (1915), the NCL legal network successfully defended a women's hours law and night work legislation in the United States's court system. In addition Mary Dreier and Schneiderman created alliances with prominent New York State politicians such as Alfred E. Smith and Robert F. Wagner, Sr. to promote and pass nearly sixty labor laws from 1911 through 1915, the most significant labor legislative agenda in the United States before the New Deal.¹³

The third stage of social justice feminism constituted a more problematic yet important stage in the movement. The Women's Joint Legislative Conference (WJLC), a coalition of twenty women's reform organizations in New York State, came into existence in September 1918, two months before the end of World War I. WJLC leaders such as Kelley and Dreier hoped to continue the movement's previous successes. But a resurgent postwar conservatism impeded the passage of the WJLC's ambitious six-point agenda in New York State, including the sponsorship of a health insurance bill for all private employees. In 1923, moreover, the NCL legal network suffered a significant defeat when the Supreme Court declared minimum wage legislation for working women unconstitutional in *Adkins v. Children's Hospital*. By the late 1920s, however, the WJLC regained the initiative, successfully promoting and passing a 48-hour bill for working women in New York State in 1927 and a wage law for female employees in New York in early 1933.¹⁴

Molly Dewson's leadership of the Women's Division in the 1930s spearheaded social justice feminism's final and most important stage. As historian Estelle Freedman

notes, reform activities in the United States remained sharply gendered in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus women reformers such as Kelley did not directly participate in the political process, although Jane Addams campaigned for Theodore Roosevelt's 1912 presidential campaign. In the 1920s social justice feminists continued their non-partisanship. Except for Dewson and Eleanor Roosevelt, most WJLC leaders relied upon alliances created with male politicians such as Smith, Wagner, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Smith served as Governor of New York State throughout the 1920s, while Roosevelt in turn acted as New York's chief executive from 1929 until his presidential election in November 1932. But in the late 1920s Dewson and Roosevelt started the involvement of social justice feminism in national Democratic politics.¹⁵

Franklin D. Roosevelt's Presidential Election and A New Opportunity

The rise of the Democratic Party in American politics after 1932 changed the traditional gender separation of reform activities for two reasons. First, although social justice feminists in New York did achieve some legislative successes in the 1920s, other, major goals in their agenda remained unfulfilled. Not only did the Supreme Court declare minimum wage legislation for women unconstitutional, it also nullified federal child labor laws. A child labor amendment never passed Congress. Kelley expressed the prevailing frustration in a letter to Frankfurter: 'As for my impatience with further tinkering with legislation,' she commented, 'what have I done but tinker for forty-one years?' Social reformers could only hope for incremental changes in the conservative climate of the 1920s.¹⁶ Second, and most important, Franklin D. Roosevelt's first presidential election offered the first national opportunity to make substantial reform advances in nearly a generation. The excitement of social justice feminists can be found in a letter written by Dewson to fellow New Dealer Arthur Altmeyer: 'I cannot believe I have lived to see this day,' Dewson enthused to Altmeyer when the Social Security Act passed Congress in 1935. 'It's the culmination of what us girls and some of you boys have been working on for so long it's just dazzling.' The advent of the New Deal therefore revived dormant energies and sparked new hopes for social justice feminists.¹⁷

Dewson, Eleanor Roosevelt, and the Women's Division

For an organization that became the vanguard of social justice feminism, the first ten years of the Women's Division's existence hardly heralded its later prominence. Created in 1922 in response to the Republican Party's creation of a division for its party women, the Division nonetheless remained a weak force within the Democratic Party. The Division's weakness did not result from lack of leadership; Nellie T. Ross, director from 1930 through 1933, served as governor of Wyoming in the 1920s. But the position offered only part-time work, and a patriarchal

party leadership also provided little funding.¹⁸

The rise of Eleanor Roosevelt and Dewson in national politics after 1928 marked a significant turning point for women's party activism in the United States. By 1933 Roosevelt exercised considerable power within the national Democratic party, either as an initiator of platform deliberations or as head of the Democratic National Campaign Committee's (DNCC) Women's Division. Dewson did not become a political activist until the 1928 presidential campaign, when she served as vice-chairperson of the Democratic Party's Midwestern division. But the Massachusetts native swiftly advanced, replacing her mentor as head of the DNCC's women's division during the 1932 campaign.¹⁹

Several months after the inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, party patronage occupied the efforts of Dewson and Eleanor Roosevelt.²⁰ But the Women's Division of the DNC eventually became their central concern for three reasons. First, Democratic women across the country warned them of the perils facing party women in state organizations. In a February 1933 letter to Dewson, Dessamond Nelson, a party worker from Iowa, warned that newly elected Democrats had not appointed deserving females, while Lillyan G. Robinson, the wife of New Mexico's Democratic chairman, argued that women's organizations should be kept 'alive' between campaigns. Second, Dewson discovered through a tour of the western United States that women's organizations had proved central to the Democratic Party's success in that area the year before.²¹ Finally, Sue Shelton White, executive secretary of the Women's Division, privately confessed her frustrations to Dewson.²²

Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt both proved ready converts to the idea of strengthening the Women's Division. Male political leaders, the First Lady had stated in 1927, proved unable to 'comprehend the value of sustained organization,' while women party workers 'generally believe in all-year-round active political work.' Now, six years later, she decided to put her viewpoints into tangible form. As the title of her 1933 book proclaimed, 'it's up to the women.'²³ Her husband also felt that Democratic women needed encouragement. In a 1930 letter to Nancy Cook of the New York Democratic Women's Division, the then-Governor of New York had insisted that a 'definite plan' for women speakers be created for his upcoming re-election campaign.²⁴ In addition, the President-elect dispatched a note of appreciation to Dewson after reading his wife's report on her activities during the 1932 campaign. 'Let's hope we can build up,' Roosevelt stated to Dewson, 'a women's organization which will be lasting and highly effective.' The Roosevelts therefore proved natural advocates of an increase in women's political activism within the Democratic party.²⁵

When her patronage activities ended in the summer of 1933, Eleanor Roosevelt turned her attention to the Women's Division. She successfully lobbied both her

husband and James A. Farley, the new DNC chairman, to make the Division directorship a full-time position. Then Roosevelt convinced Dewson to assume the new position when Ross became director of the United States Mint in October 1933. With her political savvy, personal knowledge, and strong loyalty, Dewson possessed the necessary qualities for the job. But her close friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt, of course, also provided a key factor. Dewson often forwarded letters to the First Lady, scribbling comments in the margins. Roosevelt biographer James Kearney's description of the Roosevelt-Dewson correspondence as 'voluminous...[but] of purely antiquarian value' thus does not accurately describe the importance of the letters. When she could not provide responses, Eleanor Roosevelt would invite Dewson to dinner at the White House with the President, 'where the matter was settled before we finished our soup,' as Dewson later remembered.²⁶

Perhaps the best indication of Eleanor Roosevelt's commitment to the Women's Division occurred when Dewson developed the 'Reporter Plan' in January 1934. Through this proposed plan thousands of party women would receive special training about the Roosevelt Administration's social programs, thus becoming 'reporters' or local experts on the New Deal. Eager to publicize the idea, Dewson asked to make an announcement at Eleanor Roosevelt's weekly press conference. Roosevelt agreed, allowing Dewson to answer subsequent questions. The Reporter Plan thus received immediate national publicity, and Dewson also received further political cachet from announcing the program during a prominent press conference.²⁷

Dewson and a New Women's Division

Dewson only served as director of the Women's Division until June 1934, when she became chair of the organization's advisory committee.²⁸ But her eight months as director established the Women's Division as a strong force in the DNC for three reasons. First, Dewson expanded the Women's Division, creating speakers and publicity bureaux. The Democratic Party now sent qualified women speakers to inspire local leaders; a steady stream of publications, including a monthly journal, also informed state and local women leaders of party developments.²⁹ Second, the Reporter Plan established a strong connection between the Roosevelt Administration's social justice activities and party women throughout the United States. Finally, Dewson created a permanent budget for the Women's Division. The Division therefore became a strong, active presence within the national Democratic Party for the first time.³⁰

The first test for the Women's Division came in the 1934 congressional elections. While Franklin D. Roosevelt remained highly popular throughout the United States, a question still remained about whether he could parlay his extraordinary popularity into legislative advances in the upcoming elections. The history of such elections demonstrated little hope for an affirmative answer,

for traditionally the party in power lost a few seats in the congressional races. Even Woodrow Wilson lost both houses of Congress on the eve of victory in World War I.³¹

Dewson swiftly organized the Women's Division for the upcoming elections. While her relationship with Farley remained cool because of his initial opposition to a permanent budget for the Division, the DNC chairman did not allow personal feelings to affect his political judgment. As the former Democratic chairperson in New York, Farley knew that about a ten to twenty percent increase in party votes occurred from the efforts of a strong women's organization. 'We felt,' he later remembered, 'that this same kind of job could be done on a national scene.' He therefore encouraged Dewson's activities and even later credited the Women's Division with playing a 'large factor' in the party's electoral successes during the 1930s.³²

The fall 1934 elections ended in a decisive victory for Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Democratic Party. Party control of the U.S. Senate increased from 59 to an incredible 69 (out of 96) seats, while a similar increase of nine seats occurred in the House of Representatives. Democrats also swept the gubernatorial elections, leaving their Republican opponents with only seven out of forty-eight governorships. The New Deal thus seemed destined for decisive victory in 1936.³³

Making Social Justice Feminism A National Movement

While Dewson made the Women's Division a vital part of the DNC, she also wanted to establish the organization as a catalyst for social justice. This goal came naturally to the Division director. In 1911 she had served as the first secretary of Massachusetts's minimum wage commission. From 1919 through 1924 Dewson worked with Kelley at the NCL, even drafting the organization's brief in *Adkins v. Children's Hospital*. She also headed the WJLC's drive for minimum wage legislation in the early 1930s. Thus social justice remained a primary goal in her political efforts. The Great Depression, Dewson declared in early 1936, demonstrated that 'rugged individualism' could no longer survive as a political principle in the United States. 'Cooperation,' she added, 'is based on the principle that there is more for all of us by getting together than by fighting each other.' Thus Dewson emphasized that economic recovery could not come from competition, but cooperation, between capital and labor.³⁴

Dewson later remembered her early efforts at the Women's Division as a whirlwind of activity. 'I utilized practically every waking hour,' she recalled, 'for government positions for competent women, fifty-fifty organization of the Democratic Party, and the Reporter Plan.... But,' she added, 'I did steal a little time during the fall and winter of 1933-34 to help the New Deal measures, my private concern.' Actually Dewson did more than just 'steal a little time.' In fact, she found herself heavily involved in promoting reform on a

national basis.³⁵ Her first opportunity came with the White House Conference on the Emergency Needs of Women, held in November 1933. The conference gathered women from all branches of the federal government, including Ross, Perkins, and Mary T. Norton, an important Congresswoman. Sponsored by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the New Deal agency which coordinated unemployment assistance to the states, the conference discussed options for meeting the needs of depression-stricken women. Dewson did not speak at the conference, but her presence demonstrated her close relationship with Eleanor Roosevelt, the Women's Division's importance to reform activities, and the director's concern for social justice.³⁶

Historian Linda Gordon argues that white women's organizations during the 1930s not only failed to mobilize a mass movement, but also ignored the problems of poor women. Such women, Gordon states, did not seem 'central in their constituency.' But the aim of social justice feminism in the New Deal concentrated on the inclusion of all women in the United States's social and political systems, regardless of class. In addition, political realities always assumed primary importance in Molly Dewson's mind, especially the challenges of overtly challenging patriarchy. As she later remembered, Dewson '[made] the men find working with women easy, pleasant, and profitable' during the 1932 presidential campaign. A program centered on 'just' poor women may have elicited little, if any, support, from the solons of Capitol Hill or even the White House.³⁷

Social justice during the New Deal defined itself in two senses. The first definition came in the area of recovery, as agencies such as the Civilian Conservation Corps attempted to remedy the country's appalling unemployment conditions. The second and perhaps most lasting definition came in the area of reform. Instead of providing expedient solutions to the pressing problems of the Great Depression, the Roosevelt Administration made the state a permanent force in American society. The Securities and Exchange Commission, for example, regulated the once-untamed New York Stock Exchange. Dewson's efforts for social justice received further bolstering in January 1935. Buoyed by the dramatic advances by the Democratic Party in the 1934 congressional elections, President Roosevelt decided to announce a new direction in his Administration's policy in his annual message to Congress. The President now clearly defined the New Deal as a quest for social justice. 'In most nations social justice,' Roosevelt declared to Congress and a national radio audience, 'no longer a distant ideal, has become a definite goal, and ancient Governments are beginning to heed the call.' He added that this quest entailed the accomplishment of three definite goals: the security of workers' livelihoods through an improved use of national resources, the security of all Americans against the 'major hazards and vicissitudes of life,' and the security of 'decent homes.' 'I am now ready to submit to the Congress,' the President asserted, 'a broad program designed ultimately

to establish all three of these factors...' Thus the New Deal now clearly included the permanent establishment of social justice, not just the temporary management of the depressed economy. Dewson and the Women's Division provided some of the support necessary to establish that agenda.³⁸

Dewson and Her Networking In the New Deal

Dewson's proclivity for social justice found a ready base of support in the new federal women's network. She noted this factor in a letter written shortly after the White House Conference. 'I am proud that we have Frances Perkins in a most prominent place in the policy making group . . . and Rose Schneiderman on the [NRA's] Labor Committee,' Dewson told her friend Lavinia Engle.³⁹ Perkins, now U.S. Secretary of Labor, continued her long-term friendship with Dewson. The two women first met when Dewson became civic secretary of the Women's City Club of New York in the mid-1920s. The friendship deepened when Perkins, as New York Industrial Commissioner, provided invaluable support for Dewson's minimum wage bill for working women from 1930 through 1933.⁴⁰ Dewson and Perkins quickly brought minimum wage legislation to the attention of President Roosevelt. While the Supreme Court's *Adkins* decision seemingly nullified federal minimum wage legislation, the two women believed that floor wage legislation could succeed on the state level. In February 1933 they sent a proposal to the President-elect suggesting the convening of a national conference of governors so as to pressure the state executives to support pending wage laws. Roosevelt did follow the suggestions after his inauguration, indicating how highly he regarded the two women's initiative.⁴¹

Dewson's efforts for social justice soon embraced the National Recovery Administration (NRA), one of the New Deal's most significant agencies. Created in 1933 by Congress, the NRA's myriad activities ranged from promoting business recovery to instituting national, if voluntary, hours and wage agreements. Dewson became a member of the NRA's Consumer Advisory Board. She also aggressively promoted the institution of wage and hours codes in the cannery and candy industries. But the agency's rather limited regulations frustrated Dewson. 'The NRA is a great pipe dream,' she remarked at the time, 'but pipe dreams are rather nebulous.' She became further disgruntled when the NRA wage codes set differing floor salaries for men and women. Dewson, with the assistance of Mary Anderson of the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau, convinced both Perkins and NRA director General Hugh Johnson to equalize the pay scales. But Dewson could not have been too displeased when the Supreme Court declared the NRA unconstitutional in May 1935.⁴²

In addition to working with women leaders in the New Deal, Dewson also extended her networking across gender lines. Perhaps the most important contact became Harry Hopkins, head of FERA. Hopkins possessed long-standing

relationships with social justice feminists. As a young social worker in New York, then as the state's emergency relief and public jobs program administrator, he formed alliances with Dreier, Mary van Kleeck, and Perkins. One also senses that with their equally straightforward, even blunt, personalities, Dewson and Hopkins enjoyed working together.⁴³ The two reformers realized that the area of federal relief provided enticing opportunities for scandal and publicity. Thus they immediately resolved any problems. As Dewson later remembered one situation, a female FERA administrator in Michigan had used government funds to purchase some hostile newspapers. Evidently the woman did not realize that she had misused relief allocations. Alerted by Hopkins, Dewson convinced the woman to quietly resign, and the misuse of funds never reached the media.⁴⁴ Dewson did not confine her cross-gender efforts to just the executive branch. When the Social Security bill came before a U.S. House of Representatives committee in March 1935, Dewson personally attended every session. When Congress finally enacted Social Security, Dewson promoted the new legislation in Division literature.⁴⁵

Besides Dewson's personal efforts, the Women's Division promoted the goal of social justice in four ways. First, Division publications asserted the connection between women's inclinations and the goals of social justice. 'The present program of the Democratic Party for economic and social justice,' one pamphlet asserted, 'appeals deeply to women.' Second, the Division continuously promoted the Democratic Party's achievements in the area of social legislation. Dewson later remembered that her 'obsession' in January 1934 revolved around the development of 'a clear and more widespread understanding of [Franklin] Roosevelt's program.' The Women's Division fulfilled that obsession through the Reporter Plan. 'My basic conviction,' Dewson added, 'was that everyday women could be deeply interested in specific plans to care for the human misery created by the general collapse, to get the wheels started, to remove existing evils, and to work out a better-ordered society.'⁴⁶ Third, the Women's Division sponsored regional conferences, through which federal officials explained the intricacies of the New Deal to Democratic party women. Finally, the Division promoted gender equality in the party structure through the '50-50 plan.' 'Every [state] political unit,' Dewson explained in 1936, 'shall have a chairman and vice-chairman of different sexes, both preferably elected and not appointed.' Every Democratic state party organization eventually incorporated the Division's demands; Illinois, California, and New York, for example, adopted the plan in 1935, 1937, and 1939, respectively.⁴⁷

Conclusion

By 1940 the social justice feminist movement reached its end in the midst of overseas developments and political realities. 'Remember back when we had only the depression on our minds, and thought we were in trouble?' the *New Republic* noted in August of that year. 'Nobody can plan his life a year or six months ahead.' The United States's involvement in World War II, and then Republican

political gains in the 1946 congressional elections, soon swept discussions of social justice from political discourse. Even so, social justice feminism accomplished two important goals as a national movement from 1933 through 1940. Not only did it accomplish the movement's original goal of including all workers under state protection through federal statutes as the Social Security Act of 1935 and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, the first federal maximum hours and minimum wages statute, but it also deepened women's involvement in the Democratic Party. The movement begun in the mind of Florence Kelley at the advent of the twentieth century became a significant factor in the United States's domestic reform activities during the 1930s through the efforts of Eleanor Roosevelt, Molly Dewson and the Women's Division of the DNC.

Notes

1. This article resulted from a presentation during the 2003 Women's History Network conference in Aberdeen, Scotland. I want to thank conference participants, as well as the editors and reviewers of this magazine, for their intelligent, perceptive comments. I want to also thank the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute in Hyde Park, New York for giving me the Albert M. Greenfield Research Fellowship in February 2003 so that I could undertake research in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library. I can be contacted at johnmcguireus@yahoo.com.
2. For the issues surrounding the 1940 presidential election, see David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 454-464; Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994; reprint, New York: Touchstone Books, 1995), 188-189; and James McGregor Burns, *Roosevelt, 1882-1940: The Lion and the Fox* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1956; reprint, Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace, 1984), 454-455. The Democratic National Committee came into existence in 1848. Originally consisting of one committeeman from each state and territory, the DNC doubled its size after 1920 to admit committeewomen on an equal basis. Douglas B. Craig, *After Wilson: The Struggle for the Democratic Party, 1920-1934* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 76.
3. See letter from Molly Dewson to Eleanor Roosevelt, November 10, 1940, in 'The Papers of Eleanor Roosevelt, 1933-1945', *Research Collections in Women's Studies*, Microfilm Edition (hereinafter 'Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm Edition'), Reel 7.
4. For Roosevelt's thoughts before the 1940 election, see Eleanor Roosevelt, 'Women in Politics,' originally published as a series of articles in *Good Housekeeping* in January, March, and April 1940, reprinted in *Courage in a Dangerous World: The Political Writings of Eleanor Roosevelt*, ed. by Allida M. Black (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 61, 65, 70 (quotation.)

5. See Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 783-784.
6. *Ibid.*, 784. For Eleanor Roosevelt's continuing social justice efforts during World War II, see Allida M. Black, *Casting Her Own Shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Shaping of Postwar Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 46-47, 58, as well as Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 60.
7. For an overview of the postwar era in the United States, see James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996; reprint, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
8. 'Extracts From Address by Miss Rose Schneiderman Before the Women's Industrial Conference... Jan. 20, 1926: The Right to Citizenship,' Mary van Kleeck Papers, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, Box 71, Folder 1171. 'Address at Testimonial Luncheon in [Francis Perkins'] Honor...', typed copy in Frances Perkins Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Collection, Butler Library, Columbia University, Box 44, 'speeches, 1929-1930.' The definition of feminism comes from that used by Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 4 and Elisabeth Lonna, 'Waves in the History of Feminism,' in Hilda Romer Christensen, Beatrice Halsaa and Aino Saarinen, eds, *Crossing Borders: Re-mapping Women's Movements at the Turn of the 21st Century* (Copenhagen: University of South Denmark Press, 2004), 45-46. For discussions of social justice feminism, see John Thomas McGuire, 'Caught in the Middle: Sue Shelton White and the Conflict Between Social Justice Feminism and Equal Rights in New Deal Politics,' *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 64:1 (Spring 2005): 63-75, 'Two Feminist Visions: Social Justice Feminism and Equal Rights, 1899-1940' *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 71:4 (Autumn 2004): 445-478, and 'From the Courts to the State Legislatures: Social Justice Feminism, Labor Legislation and the 1920s' *Labor History* 45:2 (May 2004): 225-246.
9. Paula Baker, 'The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political History, 1780-1920,' *American Historical Review* 89:3 (June 1984): 638, 640, 643.
10. See, for example, Jo Freeman, *A Room At A Time: How Women Entered Party Politics* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), who discuss briefly the Women's Division of the DNC, Melanie Gustafson, Kristie Miller, and Elisabeth Israels Perry, eds, *We Have Come to Stay: American Women and Political Parties, 1880-1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), Kristi Andersen, *After Suffrage: Women in Electoral and Partisan Politics Before the New Deal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), and Karen Malinda Mason, 'Testing the Boundaries: Women, Politics, and Gender Roles in Chicago, 1890-1930' (Ph.D. diss., The University of Michigan, 1991). An interesting account of U.S. women in right-wing politics during the New Deal era can be found in June Melby Benowitz, *Days of Discontent: American Women and Right-Wing Politics, 1933-1945* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002).
11. For Frankfurter's evaluation of Kelley, see his

introduction to Josephine Goldmark, *Impatient Crusader: Florence Kelley's Life Story* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1953), v.

12. The literature on Florence Kelley and her work in both Illinois and New York is voluminous. The best place to start is Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work: The Rise of Women's Political Culture, 1830-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), esp. 101-105 and 168-172. Other sources include Louise W. Knight, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), Kathryn Kish Sklar, 'Hull House: A Community of Women Reformers,' *Signs* 10 (1985): 665-666, and Jane Addams, *Twenty Years of Hull House, With Autobiographical Notes* (New York: Macmillan, 1910; reprint, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 77. For the early history of the National Consumers' League, see Maud Nathan, *The Story of an Epoch-Making Movement* (New York: Knopf, 1926; reprint, London: Garland Publishing, 1985) and Landon R. Y. Storrs, *Civilizing Capitalism: The National Consumers' League, Women's Activism, and Labor Standards in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 13-40.

13. For discussion of the first and second stages of social justice feminism, please see John Thomas McGuire, 'A Catalyst for Reform: The Women's Joint Legislative Conference And Its Fight For Labor Legislation in New York State, 1918-1933' (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York, 2001), as well as the articles cited in footnote 8. Felix Frankfurter, 'Hours of Labor and Realism in Constitutional Law,' *Harvard Law Review* 29, 367. The work of Smith and Wagner, which also encompassed the Factory Investigating Commission, is covered extensively. The two most recent sources are Richard A. Greenwald, *The Triangle Fire, The Protocols of Peace, and Industrial Democracy in Progressive Era New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006) and David von Drehle, *Triangle: The Fire that Changed America* (New York: Grove Press, 2003).

14. McGuire, 'A Catalyst for Reform,' 276-313.

15. For the 'separate spheres' of women's and men's activities, see Estelle Freedman, 'Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930,' *Feminist Studies* 5 (Fall 1979): 512-529. For Addams's involvement in the Progressive Party, see Melanie Gustafson, *Women and the Republican Party, 1854-1924* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001) and for a discussion of the non-partisanship of the WJLC leaders, see McGuire, 'A Catalyst for Reform.'

16. For a further discussion of the difficulties facing women reformers in the 1920s, see McGuire, 'From the Courts to the Legislatures' and Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*. Kelley's quotation is from a letter written to Felix Frankfurter, May 26, 1923, in Felix Frankfurter Papers, Library of Congress, Microfilm Edition, Reel 100.

17. Letter from Molly Dewson to Arthur Altmeyer, August 25, 1935, quoted in Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 42.

18. See Sean J. Savage, *Roosevelt: The Party Leader,*

1932-1945 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1991), 90, for the Women's Division's origins. Ross's political career is described in Ware, *Beyond Suffrage*, 41.

19. For Eleanor Roosevelt's political activities in the 1920s, see Joseph Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin* (New York: Norton, 1971; reprint, New York: Smithmark, 1995), 220-246, 265-286, and Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt, Volume I, 1884-1933* (New York: Viking, 1932; reprint, New York: Penguin 1993), 227-236, 302-337. The best discussion of Dewson's political beginnings and her career up to 1932 can be found in her memoir, 'An Aid to the End,' 1-63, copy in Mary Williams (Molly) Dewson Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

20. For the extensive correspondence between Eleanor Roosevelt and Dewson about women's appointments in the new Roosevelt Administration, see Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm Edition, Reel 6.

21. See letters from Dessamond Nelson to Molly Dewson, February 23, 1933, Lillyan G. Robinson to Molly Dewson, February 27, 1933, and letter from Molly Dewson to Eleanor Roosevelt, April 29, 1933, all in Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm Edition, Reel 6. The Nelson and Robinson letters, as with so many other letters throughout the 1930s, were forwarded by Dewson to Roosevelt.

22. Letter from Sue Shelton White to Molly Dewson, March 21, 1933, in Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm Edition, Reel 6.

23. Eleanor Roosevelt's 1927 speech can be found in 'Favor Young Folk in Politics,' *New York Times*, 5 January 1927, 13. Her 1928 proposal is described in James R. Kearney, *Anna Eleanor Roosevelt: The Evolution of a Reformer* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1968), 106. See also Eleanor Roosevelt, *It's Up to the Women* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1933), 205-219.

24. See letter from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Nancy Cook, March 22, 1930 in *FDR: His Personal Letters, 1928-1945*, Vol. 3, ed. by Elliot Roosevelt (New York: Buell, Sloan, and Pierce, 1950), 7 and 121-122.

25. See letter from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Molly Dewson, December 12, 1932, in *FDR: His Personal Letters*, Vol. 3, 308.

26. This description is based on my examination of the collected correspondence in the Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm Edition. Kearney, *Anna Eleanor Roosevelt*, 108. Dewson, 'An Aid to the End,' Vol. I, 2.

27. Dewson's description of her conversation with Eleanor Roosevelt and the subsequent press conference can be found in 'An Aid to the End,' Vol. II, 8-10.

28. For Dewson's specific term as Director of the Women's Division, see Dewson, 'An Aid to the End,' Vol. I, 123, and Vol. II, 39. Dewson never lost control over the Women's Division even after her retirement from national politics in 1937, for her successors Carolyn Wolfe and Dorothy McAllister were her protégées.

29. Dewson, 'An Aid to the End,' Vol. I, 69.

30. Letter from Molly Dewson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 18, 1934, in Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm Edition, Reel 6.

31. Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*, 198-202.

32. James A. Farley, *Behind the Ballots: The Personal History of a Politician* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1938), 160. For Dewson's later, bitter recollection about Farley's initial opposition to her request for a permanent budget, see Dewson, 'An Aid to the End,' Vol. I, 48.
33. For the 1934 election results, see Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*, 202, and Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Coming of the New Deal* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958; reprint, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1988), 506-507.
34. For Dewson's activities before becoming a political activist, Ware, *Partner and I*, 1-47, remains the best source for Dewson's early life. The quotation is from 'Basis of Talk Given by Mary W. Dewson. ...during Jan.-March 1936 [throughout the Far West],' copy in Mary Williams (Molly) Dewson Papers, 1893-1962, Women's Studies Manuscript Collections, Schlesinger Library, Microfilm Edition, Series L: Women in National Parties, Part A: Democrats (hereinafter 'Dewson Papers, Microfilm Edition'), Reel 3, 1.
35. See 'An Aid to the End,' Vol. I, 25.
36. For a description of the conference, see Ware, *Beyond Suffrage*, 106-107.
37. Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare, 1890-1935* (New York: The Free Press, 1994; reprint, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 212. Dewson quotation comes from 'An Aid to the End,' Vol. I, 44.
38. The concept of the New Deal being first a period centered on recovery, then reform, first came from Basil Rauch, *The History of the New Deal, 1933-1938* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944; reprint, New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), but Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. popularized the concept in his three-volume history of the 'Age of Roosevelt.' He argued that the 'First New Deal,' exemplified by the reform program passed in 1933, 'told business what it must do,' while the 'Second New Deal' of 1935 told 'business what it must *not* do.' Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Politics of Upheaval* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1960), 392. But some historians dispute Schlesinger's neat demarcation, noting that Franklin D. Roosevelt never systematized his reform programs, and that some supposed 'Second New Deal programs' actually started before 1935. See William E. Leuchtenberg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 163. I instead concentrate on what became the *goals* of the New Deal, thus avoiding the need to construct a perhaps artificial division of the New Deal.
- 'Annual Message to the Congress, January 4, 1935,' in *The Public Papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt, With A Special Introduction and Explanatory Notes by President Roosevelt, Volume IV: The Court Disapproves, 1935* (New York: Random House, 1935), 15-17.
39. See letter from Molly Dewson to Lavinia Engle, November 20, 1933, located in the Women's Division, Democratic National Committee Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.
40. See McGuire, 'A Catalyst for Reform,' 265-315.
41. See letter from Molly Dewson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 1933, Folder 32, 'Correspondence with Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1928-1945,' in Dewson Papers, Microfilm Edition, Reel 3, and letter from Frances Perkins to Raymond Moley, February 16, 1933, in Felix Frankfurter Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Subject File, 'Labor Dept.' The President's call for minimum wage legislation can be found in 'Roosevelt Asks Governors of 13 States to Enact Measures Similar to New York's,' *New York Times*, 13 April 1933, 1. For Dewson's claim concerning the NRA, see her handwritten comment on the February 1933 letter.
42. For Dewson's participation in the NRA, see 'An Aid to the End,' Vol. I, 25-26. See Landon R.Y. Storrs, 'Civilizing Capitalism: The National Consumers' League and the Fight for 'Fair' Labor Standards in the New Deal Era' (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1994), 210-211, 234 (work with Anderson), and 235. Dewson's continuing involvement in minimum wage policies can be found in 'An Aid to the End,' Vol. II, 27.
43. For details on Harry Hopkins, see George McJimsey, *Harry Hopkins, Ally of the Poor and Defender of Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987). Linda Gordon provides a good summary of Hopkins' pre-New Deal efforts in 'May 22, 1933: Harry Hopkins Brings Relief' in *Days of Destiny: Crossroads in American History* (New York: Agincourt Press, 2001), 280.
44. See Dewson, 'An Aid to the End,' Vol. II, 29-30.
45. See Dewson, 'An Aid to the End,' Vol. II, 28.
46. Quotations from 'What the Women Could and Should Do for the Democratic Party,' DNC pamphlet, January 1935, and 'Basis of Talk Given By Mary W. Dewson,' 4, both in Dewson Papers, Microfilm Edition, Reel 3. Dewson's recollection of both her obsession and her plans for the Reporter Plan can be found in 'An Aid to the End,' Vol. II, 7.
47. Quotation from 'Women's Interest in the Nation's Interest in Politics,' copy of article published in the 1936 Democratic Campaign yearbook, in Dewson Papers, Microfilm Edition, Reel 3. The approval of equal gender representation on the Democrats' platform committee can be found in Dewson, 'An Aid to the End,' Vol. II, 127. For more information on the adoption of the '50-50 plan,' particularly in California, see Jacqueline R. Braitman, 'Legislated Parity: Mandating Integration of Women into California Political Parties, 1930s-1950s,' in *We Have Come To Stay*, 175-186.

The Tyranny of the Maternal Body: Madness and Maternity

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With reference to the works of Charles Darwin, legal commentators and psychiatrists, this article explores the meaning of maternity in the Victorian and Edwardian periods with particular reference to puerperal mania, puerperal melancholia and infanticide ('puerperal' relating to childbirth or the period immediately following)¹. It illustrates how parturition was regarded as the fulcrum of women's instability. 'Puerperal insanity' was a 'catch-all' phrase used to describe a wide variety of reactions to pregnancy and childbirth. These ranged from the understandable despair of a young girl experiencing an illegitimate pregnancy, to the mother of ten infants who hallucinated because she breastfed whilst malnourished. The essay illustrates that some women clearly suffering from postpartum microbial infections were defined as having puerperal mania²; their feverish delirium was mistaken for maniacal insanity. The sanctions for maniacal behaviour, or understandable chagrin if vigorously expressed, were often very harsh and included institutionalisation, the use of restraints (chains or straitjackets) and seclusion. Puerperal melancholia was particularly associated with exhaustion, the mental cruelty of husbands and poverty. As Bucknill and Tuke's remarks will make clear, parturition was a time when women were particularly at risk of being defined as insane.

In my initial reading, I came across an 1895 quote by the prominent psychiatrist, Henry Maudsley, joint editor of the *Journal of Mental Science (JMS)* from 1863 and President, from 1870, of the Medico-Psychological Association (MPA):

...there is nothing nice in the process of parturition nor in the base services which the child exacts.³

I imagine 'base services' included nappy changing as well as feeding. Maudsley regarded baby care in general to be degrading and the 'fuss' surrounding it to be irrational since the baby is merely an 'excretory product': that's right; he uses the word 'product' – the baby is not even regarded as human. By implication, women who indulge in this 'fuss' are irrational since they have these bizarre emotions for the 'excretory product'. Yet women do have a link, a physiological link, that causes the new mother's breasts to swell with milk as the baby calls out, and many delight in the new life they have created which seems more miraculous than anything else... But giving birth and motherhood still seem to be degraded in our culture in the twenty-first century. What has changed since Maudsley's time? It seems necessary, to me, to take a glimpse at the past in the hope that it will illuminate current discourses. Maudsley's revulsion intrigued me as it contrasted so

sharply with the sensual enjoyment of the baby reported by so many mothers.

That the nursing of babies was regarded as a loathsome activity is made quite clear by Maudsley. It is only because of women's particular mentality, he suggests, that we can bear to perform these functions:

It can hardly be doubted that if the nursing of babies were given over to men for a generation or two, they would abandon the task in despair or in disgust, and conclude it to be not worth while that mankind should continue on earth.⁴

It seems clear that Maudsley's rational masculinity evinces emotional distance from babies. Furthermore, his remarks actually suggest (a not entirely rational) revulsion to both parturition and the care of an infant. And the absurd 'fuss' that women make is evidence of women's predilection for 'base' activities, or at best a sign of irrationality.

So my starting point is that a close examination of how maternity has been perceived and how these ideas are linked to notions of femininity will prove illuminating. My hypothesis is that maternity or 'maternal impulses' constructed as the quintessence of femininity, or as illustrative of the very 'nature' of woman, will be seen as particularly primitive or unstable, but an examination of key theorists will make this point clearer. This essay will illustrate that the moment of birth was considered to be the primary or pivotal moment of women's perceived instability.

Heredity

As well as the popular nineteenth century idea that insanity was more easily passed down the female line ('Before the child is born it is certain its after constitution may be seriously affected by its mother's state of mind', asserted Maudsley.⁵) there was also a belief that behaviours developed in adulthood would be more likely to be passed on to the child of the same sex and would manifest themselves in the offspring in adulthood. Therefore, various 'masculine' or 'feminine' behaviours developed after adolescence were seen as hereditary in origin. Furthermore, this, essentially Lamarckian, rule is used as the basis for arguing man's ultimate superiority over woman since much stimulus takes place in adulthood – that of sexual selection (contest between rival males, more stimulating, supposedly, than that between females) and natural selection (success in the general struggle for life, in which men were, purportedly, more engaged). Charles Darwin (1871) postulated that 'the characters gained will have been transmitted more fully to the male than to the female offspring... thus man has ultimately become superior to woman.'⁶ On the other hand, behaviours acquired by children would be transmitted to children of both sexes.⁷ This is certainly just as well: Darwin puts it thus:

It is, indeed, fortunate that the law of the equal transmission of characters to both

sexes prevails with mammals: otherwise it is probable that man would have become as superior in mental endowment to woman, as the Peacock is in ornamental plumage to the peahen.⁸

The implication of this quotation is that women are constitutionally more mentally infantile than men because we get the characteristics acquired by children but not the extra stimulus thought to accompany masculine adult development.

As Charles Darwin admitted, much of his work was 'highly speculative' and many of his ideas 'would no doubt prove erroneous'; certainly, his ideas on the heredity of mental characteristics are such a case in point.⁹ Furthermore, these ideas, latched onto by psychiatrists, were challenged by social reformers of the period, such as John Stuart Mill.

Through natural selection, Darwin explained in *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871), man had become superior to women in courage, energy and 'inventive genius'.¹⁰ It is her maternal impulse, in particular, which is seen as the characteristic preventing her from engaging in those activities thought to stimulate our 'higher mental facilities', such as fighting, fashioning weapons, and hunting.¹¹ (He does not analyse traditional women's activities to make a case for why they might be less mentally stimulating).

Darwin summarises women's characteristics thus:

Woman seems to differ from man in mental disposition, chiefly in her greater tenderness and less selfishness; and this holds good even with savages... Woman, *owing to her maternal instincts*, displays these qualities towards her infants in an eminent degree; therefore it is likely that she would often extend them towards her fellow creatures. Man is the rival of other men; he delights in competition, and this leads to ambition which passes too easily into selfishness.¹²

Darwin seems unable to make the conceptual leap, which would enable him to view the pugnacious selfishness of men as a transient prevailing norm allowing them greater career success (rather than the end point of a long process of evolutionary change), or the social rules regarding female conduct as preventing the more privileged classes of women from engaging in competition. Thus he is able boldly to assert that 'the average mental power in man must be above that of woman' with regards to 'whatever he takes up'.¹³ When women evince qualities that men do not possess this is interpreted negatively:

It is generally admitted that with women the powers of intuition, of rapid perception, and perhaps of imitation, are more strongly marked than in man; but some, at least, of these faculties are *characteristic of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilization*.¹⁴

Clearly, there are double standards at play here in the interpretation of these supposed feminine characteristics. Rapid perception should surely be regarded as a very worthy attribute in evolutionary terms? And is not intuition invaluable? Imitation was particularly associated with apes and infants, so it suggests atavistic traits in women. (My two-year old son is very good at imitating behaviours he does not understand). As more recent theorists have pointed out, whilst feminine attributes are culturally specific and subject to change¹⁵, what is defined as feminine within a given culture is often devalued.¹⁶ Furthermore, as areas of culture become feminised they often also become devalued, less influential, and less highly rewarded.¹⁷ This is not a modern phenomenon.

To summarise, what Darwin perceived to be feminine strengths are interpreted as evidence of primitive mental functioning rather than of higher mental activity. Women's maternal impulses *in particular* were seen as preventing her from acquiring the sort of stimulus which would allow her higher mental development. No wonder nineteenth century psychiatrists, such as Maudsley, had difficulty in perceiving motherhood as anything other than a degrading activity – it was more than degrading: it was leading to hereditary degeneration. Women, in giving way to their base impulses in wanting to care for children, were condemning future generations of females to intellectual inferiority. As Cynthia Eagle Russett (1989) put it, Darwin's work became 'the starting point for a psychology of sex difference' which emphasised 'mental distinctions between the sexes';¹⁸ furthermore, as Showalter (1992) and Oppenheim (1991) emphasise, this 'sexual science'¹⁹ was very much constructed upon the prevailing cultural views of womanhood at the time.²⁰ Erskine (1995) concurs.²¹

Maternity and Instability

What is it in particular about maternity that was considered pathological? This question requires further discussion. Part of the answer lies in an examination of ideas about maternal instinct.

Sir Oliver Lodge asserted in 1911, 'Everyone must realise that women can perform a service to the State more vital, more arduous, and therefore more honourable, than any other; many believe that their instincts would lead the majority of women to fulfil this duty adequately...'²² Although he acknowledges the role to be arduous our 'instincts' have pre-programmed us to fulfil this duty. As Thomas Clouston M.D. put it in 1911:

The inhibitory faculty in a woman is weaker than in a man... Being the highest of the mental powers, and the one on which the moral sense depends in its effects on conduct... *Self-control is the last result of evolution, the last and best result of civilisation*. It is also the first to go in the dissolution of mind in old age and in mental disease and in societies that are on the down

grade. A certain lack of it is, I fear, almost expected in woman, and the highest degrees of it are not commonly expected in her... [it is] few who are not prone to yield in conduct to emotion, instincts and impulse.²³

Women are instinctive creatures, deficient in self-control, and cannot manage steely rationality. It is a weakening, perversion or destruction of moral sense that is associated with mental derangement. Therefore, even before girls reach the (potentially destabilising) strain of puberty or the psychological dangers believed inherent in maternity, they are seen as more prone to mental instability anyway. Motherhood is seen as adding strain to this innate tendency.

Here is W.C. Ellis, medical superintendent of Hanwell (and formally of the West Riding Asylum in Wakefield), writing in 1838. Women are depicted as in a morally weakened condition when pregnant and the emphasis is on the psychological rather than the bodily changes themselves: there is no doubt, but that the various circumstances of hope and fear in which females are necessarily placed at such times, render them more sensitive than usual to the operations of a variety of moral impressions.²⁴

Women's less developed 'inhibitory facility' is thus further weakened and our moral sense comes under threat. Maternity was seen as a particular point of mental and physical stress. The male midwife, Robert Gooch, put it thus with a physiological emphasis. The body is seen as 'sustaining the efforts of labour' or of nursing. The body, under stress, is seen as deranging the mind:

During that long process, or rather succession of processes, in which the sexual organs of the human female are employed in forming; lodging; expelling, and lastly feeding the offspring, there is no time at which the mind may not become disordered; but there are two periods at which this is chiefly liable to occur, the one soon after delivery, when the body is sustaining the efforts of labour, the other several months afterwards, when the body is sustaining the effects of nursing.²⁵

So, to re-cap, it was woman's maternal impulses that were singled out by Darwin as particularly significant in preventing her from engaging in activities that would enable her mental development. These are base impulses owing to our primitive mentality, it was believed. Psychiatrists such as Maudsley argued this mentality fitted women to the disgusting task of nursing babies. Furthermore, the stress of parturition and birth was seen as further weakening our already deficient self-control, making us further prey to emotion, instincts and impulse.

In the period under discussion, it is worth noting that 'instinct' was regarded as the 'apotheosis of Reason', as John Stuart Mill puts it;²⁶ furthermore, 'instinct', maternal or otherwise, was something particularly associated with

women.²⁷ Women are morally weakened at the time of parturition, it is suggested, and then develop a 'savage' maternal instinct.²⁸ The psychiatrist Thomas Clouston's argument, that maternal impulses have such tremendous power that woman will flout that which is considered moral and reasonable, is a key point. Maternal instinct was seen as stronger than prevailing social conventions. Weakening of 'moral fibre' was viewed as the first step towards madness: a "perversion or destruction of the moral sense being often one of the earliest symptoms of mental derangement", and insanity is often inherited'.²⁹

Consequently, maternal instinct, because of its ferocious power, was regarded as a destabilising force. Like animals, women were seen as having an abundance of instinct, which was also viewed as forming the basis of virtues such as self-denial and self-sacrifice. Clouston says of its power:

In its essential essence it belongs only to woman alone... Under its imperative compulsion woman will break all the Commandments in the Decalogue and suffer little remorse for doing so....³⁰

It is important to note the lack of remorse. Maternal impulses, in Clouston's schema, are primitive forces which are potentially impervious to the moral code. So, here is a tension – maternal impulses, according to Clouston, form the basis for altruism and other 'unifying virtues'.³¹ However, their power is also such that they also have the potential to result in lowly expressions of conduct and emotion, which might result ultimately in mental derangement. This idea of loss of moral sense as a precursor to, or symptom of, mental disorder was not an obscure one as Darwin puts it forward in *The Descent of Man*, citing Maudsley in support of his argument. Since insanity was seen as inheritable, the mental derangement could then pass to children, particularly daughters (as the derangement was developed primarily in adulthood). Maternal impulses, as an instinctual behaviour, had potentially disastrous consequences.

To summarise, Maudsley does not regard puberty as simply a physiological development but also a mental one concerned with women developing specific mental capacities, which will equip them for their maternal functions: 'There is sex in mind as distinctly as there is sex in body'.³² The development of women's 'reproductive functions' is seen as potentially deranging and destabilising. Maudsley contradicts Darwin's thesis, arguing that 'the stimulus of competition will work more powerfully on girls than on boys', because we are seen as 'more susceptible' as a result of our reproductive physiology and mentality.³³ Clouston seems to be in broad agreement with Maudsley here, though he is more ambivalent about maternal impulses, which are seen as potentially wonderful and also potentially destructive of women's moral fibre, (destruction of which could lead to mental derangement). A key point here is that both the psychological stress of pregnancy and maternal instinct itself were thought linked

to instability of moral sense; the implications of this are profound, and will be explored. Darwin, in contrast, argued that our 'maternal instincts' worked against our pugnacity, selfishness and competitiveness: all qualities that aid higher mental development. Since maternal instincts developed in adulthood, it was thought that they were a group of behaviour patterns that had no equivalent in men, they were seen as being inheritable only by women.

Insanity in Pregnancy and Puerperal Insanity

It is interesting to note that a large proportion of asylum admissions around the mid-1800s were attributed to insanity 'arising from pregnancy and parturition and lactation.' Bucknill (medical superintendent of the Devon County Lunatic asylum) and Tuke (visiting medical officer to the York Retreat) asserted that in most asylums these admissions accounted for between fourteen and twenty per cent of female cases. Citing a Dr Macdonald, they argue 'that the proportion [of cases of insanity] *increases from day to day, as we approach the day of parturition, and diminishes as we depart from it.*'³⁴ This is the pivotal moment of woman's instability – the fulcrum of our physiologically induced weakness, as perceived in the period. As noted, women were thought particularly susceptible to disorders of the mind because of their overwrought nervous systems. Burns in his 1814 book on midwifery concluded that, 'All women, in the puerperal state are more easily affected, both in body and in mind, than at other times, and some even become delirious.'³⁵ One man midwife, William Tyler Smith, argued that there was a transient insanity at the very moment of birth.³⁶

In his book *Psychology of Mind* (1895), Henry Maudsley identifies two types of insanity which occur during pregnancy. The first he attributes to the effects of 'uterine change in an unstable brain'; the second form is due to changes 'in the quality and circulation of the blood.'³⁷ Women who married later in life are seen as particularly at risk of this as 'their bodily system, having lost much of its elasticity, is less fit to make the new accommodation required to the uterine changes.'³⁸

It is enormously telling to note that melancholia was thought to account for the majority of insanities of pregnancy. Furthermore, and crucially, melancholia was particularly associated with *first pregnancies* and *illegitimate pregnancies*.³⁹ It may be questioned, then, how far this 'insanity' was a reaction to the terrible nausea and discomfort accompanying many pregnancies or the condemnation and censure following an illegitimate pregnancy. In the moral climate of the period, that a woman carrying an illegitimate baby should have felt 'fear' or slumped into 'stupor' is hardly surprising.⁴⁰ (As is well known, there were cases of girls and women hiding the fact of their pregnancies, killing their illegitimate babies then destroying the body, rather than face the consequences of acknowledging the offspring).⁴¹ No doubt a few would have felt suicidal also. Furthermore, the much higher risk of dying in labour, or soon afterwards, from postpartum

infection, must have preyed on the minds of pregnant women and girls.⁴² This is a view supported by Shorter (1982) who asserts: 'If a woman knew ten or fifteen women, she probably knew someone who had died giving birth, or would later die.... There is no doubt that the typical woman in the years before 1900 faced her approaching delivery with foreboding.'⁴³ This point is agreed by Oppenheim (1991) and Marland (2004); indeed, 'dread of approaching confinement' was thought to be one of the causes of insanity.⁴⁴

The youth of women facing their first pregnancies may also have had an influence. The age of consent for females for most of the nineteenth century in England was *only 12 years* and the sexual exploitation of much younger children was highlighted towards the end of the century by the popular press and a particularly sensational court case. As is well documented, to draw attention to the exploitation of children in brothels, W. T. Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, purchased a thirteen-year-old girl, Eliza Armstrong, from her parents for £5. Stead then reported the incident in his paper and was jailed (along with the procuress) for his trouble. However, the case precipitated the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which raised the law of consent from thirteen (as it had been since 1875) to sixteen and outlawed procuring for foreign brothels.

A difficult labour can be deeply traumatizing. The first labour can be particularly painful and frightening. This trauma can result in reactions of shock, anger and disbelief. It is one thing to know intellectually that one's body may rip or rupture, but quite another to *actually experience one's body being torn apart*. Difficult labours were considered to be potentially more dangerous: for example, the alienist Tuke noted 'the tendency of unnatural parturition to produce insanity.' He included as 'unnatural' shock produced by blood loss and the death of the baby.⁴⁵ Many Victorian women would not have known what to expect from a first birth and may not have been able to interpret or comprehend their bodily experiences. It would have been very frightening indeed.

Puerperal Insanity: Manias

Puerperal insanity (which accounted for between 7-10 per cent of asylum admissions for women in the mid-1850s)⁴⁶ follows birth and was seen as taking two main forms: mania and melancholia. A mania was usually evident a few days or a week after the birth. Melancholia developed later, three or four weeks after the event. Poisoning of the blood or adverse effects of 'suppression of the milk', being an effect of a general 'perturbation of the body', were stated by Maudsley as precipitating factors for mania. These were thought to damage the nervous system.⁴⁷

Mania was obviously a catch-all phrase which encompassed everything from chagrin following yet another, possibly unwanted, child, born with little or no pain relief available, to much more serious conditions.

I certainly cannot imagine having ten, fifteen or twenty children and I certainly cannot imagine the psychological effect of watching several of them die.

During the nineteenth century contraceptive sponges became more widely available, but the average English wife still had half-a-dozen children, and almost twenty per cent had ten or more children. (Shorter, 1982, speculates that the decline in the birth rate towards the end of the nineteenth century was due to increased rates of abortion and increasing fertility problems caused by the spread of venereal diseases such as gonorrhoea and syphilis).⁴⁸

Maudsley (1895) wrote that:

Preceding and presaging the mania are such symptoms as irritability, sleeplessness, excited look and talk, restless agitation and suspicion, accompanied or followed by fits of gloom, indifference to the child, perhaps angry aversion to it and to the husband.⁴⁹

Here is a description of patients talking incessantly and wildly:

... and generally on one particular subject, such as imaginary wrongs done to her... a total negligence of, and often very strong aversion to, her child and husband are evinced; explosions of anger occur, with vociferations and violent gesticulations; and, although the patient may have been remarkable previously for her correct, modest, demeanor [sic], and attention to her religious duties, most awful oaths and imprecations are now uttered, and language used which astonishes her friends.⁵⁰

Such behaviour was surely quite shocking to Victorian middle-class sensibilities. Bucknill and Tuke stated:

...that religious and moral principles alone give strength to the female mind; and that, when these are weakened or removed by disease, the subterranean fires become active, and the crater gives forth smoke and flame.⁵¹

Given that puerperal mania was noted to include cases in which there was a complete loss of control coupled with visual hallucinations, it is possible that some women may have been suffering from post-partum infections and fever. In many cases they may have been experiencing the delirium accompanying a fever.

This hypothesis is born out by Macdonald's description of puerperal insanity. Here we have fever explicitly linked to puerperal insanity:

...in the acute form of the parturition mania which succeeds parturition, we observe an intensity of mental excitement, *an excessive incoherence, a degree of fever*, and, above all, a disposition to mingle obscene words with the broken sentences; things which are rarely noted under other circumstances. It is true that, in mania, modest women use words

which in health are never permitted to issue from their lips; but in puerperal insanity, this is so common an occurrence, and is done in so gross a manner, that it early struck me as being characteristic.⁵²

Both Robert Gooch and William Hunter, a surgeon and man midwife, believed that there were 'two forms of puerperal mania', *one attended by fever and a rapid pulse, which often proved fatal*, and the other accompanied by only a moderate disturbance in circulation, which usually ended in recovery.⁵³ Maudsley (1873) described puerperal mania in his book *Body and Mind*, thus:

It is of an acute and extremely incoherent character, *a delirious rather than a systematized mania*, marked by noisy restlessness, sleeplessness, tearing of clothes, hallucinations, and in some cases by great salacity, which is probably the direct mental effect of the irritation of the generative organs. Suicide may also be attempted in an excited, purposeless way.⁵⁴

Maudsley's description suggests 'a delirious' mania. Recovery from puerperal mania may be as if 'waking from a dream', it was suggested.⁵⁵ Presumably, a large number of these 'manias' were, in fact, the symptoms of post-partum infections which today could be cured with antibiotics. Again this hypothesis is born out by the remarks of Bucknill and Tuke (1858) who note an 'inflammatory condition' (possibly mastitis) which coincides with 'the secretion of milk (on the fourth or fifth day)'. Of cases of puerperal mania they assert: 'Some of these are examples of phrenitis, [brain fever with delirium] and not properly of mania.'⁵⁶

Shorter's (1982) research on post-partum infection suggests that prior to 1900 bacterial infections resulting from childbirth were not often recognised as such; for example, gastric fever, pleuritis and rheumatic fever were caused by childbirth. He suggests:

the historian should assume that virtually all infections occurring within a month after delivery were obstetric in nature. Thus, deaths assigned to pneumonia and such should really have been included in "puerperal infection".⁵⁷

Thus, Shorter assumes the average mother who survived to age forty-five was likely to give birth six times, making her lifetime risk of contracting a grave puerperal infection around 25%. (Permanent disability due to infections was another serious consequence.) Furthermore, hospitals could become septic environments with maternal mortality as high as 10% in some hospitals:

...throughout the 1850s and 1860s, childbed sepsis climbed even higher, as the new hospitals grew larger, crowded with victims of all kinds of bacterial maladies and thus became increasingly sewers of cross-infection.⁵⁸

Lister's paper on the use of carbolic acid to kill germs

published in the *Lancet* in 1867 did not have a huge immediate effect and general practitioners, in particular, and midwives continued to infect patients because of having germs on their hands and instruments.⁵⁹

The reason I dwell briefly on the extremely high rates of post-partum infection is because I believe that many, if not the majority, of cases of puerperal mania were a misdiagnosis of such infections. Here is a 1914 example of someone who might, had she been even unluckier, been diagnosed as a maniac:

I had milk fever first, and then childbed fever. I lost all reason, never knew a soul for three months. Then I had to go under an operation to have the substance got away [abscesses drained], which left me in a very bad way, the child being eight months old when I was able to get up.⁶⁰

Others, who had poor diets, may have been hallucinating as a result of breast-feeding whilst malnourished (and severely anaemic). These women too may have been misdiagnosed. By the 1860s insanity linked to prolonged breastfeeding was an established category of asylum admission.⁶¹ As John Conolly M.D. was to note, in 1856, of his patients at Hanwell Asylum, a number of women had been engaged in 'protracted nursing' and were semi-starved on their admission.⁶² 'Cases of mania from protracted nursing, together with deficient nourishment, are not, it is well known, unfrequent', he asserted.⁶³ Hilary Marland (2004) who has produced the most detailed work on puerperal insanity in the Victorian period to date, touches upon this subject saying, 'confusion was likely given the delirium of puerperal fever, like puerperal mania, struck women shortly after giving birth, usually in the first or second week after delivery, and the high death rate from puerperal fever may have distorted mortality figures for puerperal insanity.'⁶⁴ Irvine Loudon (1992) estimates the death rate from puerperal insanity to have been between 2-3 per cent of maternal mortality in the nineteenth century and that the explanation for this high death rate is that women diagnosed as suffering from puerperal mania could have been suffering from puerperal fever.⁶⁵ Alienists such as Tuke did note that some of his insane patients were suffering from pelvic cellulitis, phthisis and peritonitis. The historian, Janet Oppenheim (1991) supports this idea too, suggesting that puerperal insanity (in its manic or depressive forms) might encompass the effects of uterine tumours, a prolapsed uterus, fibroids, haemorrhoids, glandular disorders and vitamin deficiencies.

However, some women may have been experiencing schizophrenic disorders, which may, or may not, have been linked to their pregnancy and parturition. Disentangling these different groups retrospectively would prove difficult, if not impossible.

Perhaps some women came to resent their repeated pregnancies. Their 'sullen fits of gloom, indifference to the child, perhaps angry aversion to it and to the husband,'

are clearly socially aberrant acts, but may not denote madness. To transgress social norms, in any given age, is to risk being labelled abnormal, deviant or worse - insane. Indeed, Conolly (1856) notes that cases of puerperal insanity 'had become more especially and constantly subjected to severe coercion.'⁶⁶ It may be the case that the shocking and transgressive behaviour of these 'maniacs' provoked particularly punitive responses. Even in his own institution, which was a model of progressive treatment and philosophy, leeches were used and applied 'in female patients, to the pubes or sacrum.'⁶⁷ In its most extreme form puerperal mania was fatal:

...the pulse becomes rapid and feeble, the tongue dry, little or no food is taken, the secretions are scanty, and the patient, falling into a stuporose state, dies in a coma of cerebral collapse.⁶⁸

Puerperal Melancholia

Puerperal Melancholia is a form of insanity which appeared some weeks after childbirth. Maudsley (1895) described it as follows:

Beginning commonly with a dislike or suspicion of husband, nurse, and others around her, it is often accompanied with suicidal impulse and sometimes with the impulse to kill the child.⁶⁹

It is extremely telling to note that melancholia was particularly associated with 'depressing moral influences such as the husband's unkindness.' Also included as the precipitators of this form of 'insanity' are 'worries about servants, or other domestic chagrins and anxieties'. (Presumably, poverty may be regarded as one such anxiety.) Puerperal melancholia was also thought to be 'caused by the debilitating effects of suckling', and was sometimes known as 'insanity of lactation'.⁷⁰ Maudsley (1895) suggests that it is 'essentially an insanity of exhaustion and preceded usually by such neurasthenic symptoms as headache, ringing in the ears, dimness of vision, neuralgias, and a very weary feeling of weakness'.⁷¹ Why symptoms associated with exhaustion (coupled with other factors such as upset, lack of support or cruelty from a husband) should be pathologised and labelled as insanity is not entirely clear from Maudsley's prose. However, the cure was obvious. What these women needed to recover was rest: it 'is best cured, after the child has been weaned, by a system of good nourishment and by rest of the brain...'⁷² Maudsley also advises husbands not to make sexual demands of their wives whilst they are recovering.

The effects of poverty and lack of care in creating cases of puerperal insanity are noted by Bucknill and Tuke (1858). Here they are referring to cases of puerperal insanity in general (melancholia and mania). They note that the diagnosis accounted for around 8% of the admissions at Bethlem and that the figure was higher elsewhere:

It is a remarkable fact ... that in lying-in hospitals, the number of patients who are so

attacked is very small.' [Dr Reid] 'states, that at the General Lying-in Hospital, Westminster, in which they remain for three weeks after labor [sic], out of 3500 who were delivered there, only nine were afflicted with insanity. The experience of several other large institutions was to the same effect. We do not observe that Dr. Reid offers any explanation. It might, perhaps, be most satisfactorily accounted for, in connection with the very favourable circumstances (such as quiet, good nursing, and sufficient nourishment), which surround the hospital patient, as compared with those of a patient of the same destitute class at her own home.'⁷³

Malnourishment, the stress surrounding poverty, the inability to rest because of the care of other infants or to achieve tranquillity were obviously important factors. Exhaustion was evidently a key factor leading to diagnoses of puerperal insanity. As the above quote illustrates, women who were given enough food and opportunity to rest were far less likely to be defined as suffering from puerperal insanity.

So, to summarise briefly, puerperal insanity was clearly a catch-all phrase used to describe a wide range of responses to pregnancy and childbirth. As illustrated, some women clearly suffering from postpartum infections were defined as having puerperal mania; their feverish delirium was tragically and fatally mistaken for maniacal insanity. As noted, the sanctions for maniacal conduct, or understandable chagrin if forcefully expressed, were often very harsh and included being committed to an asylum, the use of restraints and seclusion. Puerperal melancholia seems to have been principally related to exhaustion, the mental cruelty of husbands and poverty. Hillary Marland (2004) goes so far as to assert 'that alienists as well as other medical practitioners saw infanticide as an anticipated accompaniment, almost a symptom, of puerperal insanity.'⁷⁴

It is not within the scope of this essay to discuss infanticide in detail. However, one brief example may prove illuminating. As noted earlier, some women who were defined as suffering from puerperal mania were actually exhibiting feverish delirium. Smith gives an interesting example of such a woman being defined as insane: Mrs Ryder appeared before the Central Criminal Court in 1856 charged with drowning her baby. Tyler described the case thus:

There was an entire absence of motive in this as in most other cases of a similar kind. The mother was much attached to the child, and had been singing and playing with it on the morning of its death. She destroyed the child by placing it in a pan of water in her bedroom. The medical evidence proved that she had been delivered about a fortnight previously – *that she had had an attack of*

fever, and that she had probably committed this act while in a state of delirium. She was acquitted on the ground of insanity... it was evidently a case in which the insanity was only temporary, and the prisoner might be restored to her friends on a representation being made to the proper quarter.'⁷⁵

The above quotation suggests that delirium was a normal and acceptable defence against infanticide. However, delirium is obviously not insanity. Secondly, Mrs Ryder may have been returned to her friends (if she were of the right class to have 'a representation' made 'to the proper quarter' or she may have languished in the criminal ward of an asylum for many years, as many women defined as insane did. Women who committed infanticide even if *clearly suffering* from postpartum fever risked being defined as insane and receiving an indefinite custodial sentence in a potentially brutal and dehumanising asylum ward.

Conclusion

It is the fecund body which is both quintessentially female and destabilising. What does a fecund body look like? Well, it is soft and has wide 'child bearing' hips has it not? What bodies are these being described here many years later, in 1943 to be precise? Can you guess? They are, 'soft bodies, [with] wider hips, and pubic hair that spread laterally'. Are these women's bodies? Are these fertile bodies? Actually, no; this description, by a group of Harvard physicians during the Second World War, is in fact describing the physiological appearance of male cowards: men thought likely to break down in the field of battle. Masculine men had 'flat, angular bodies, narrow hips and pubic hair running towards the navel, whereas 'cowards', they asserted, 'had soft bodies, wider hips and pubic hair that spread laterally.'⁷⁶ Transposing feminine characteristics of fecundity onto a male body renders it culpable, despicable. It is the maternal body, above all, which carries a corrupting negativity in terms of cultural meaning.

Although all aspects of women's reproductive cycle were implicated in women's perceived instability, or 'periodicity' (a destabilising tendency wrought by constant change), it was birth itself that was the fulcrum of this hypothesised weakness. Women who committed infanticide even if *clearly suffering* from postpartum fever risked being defined as insane and receiving an indefinite custodial sentence in an asylum. Less extreme socially aberrant acts might be perceived as pathological, resulting in a diagnosis of puerperal melancholia. Extreme shows of emotion, anger or despair likewise put women at risk of this diagnosis. Women who were not fecund were 'barren' in the full sense of the word – an important raft of concepts could not attach themselves to such women.

It is not merely 'female intellectual inferiority' which 'could be understood as the result of reproductive specialization' as Showalter put it;⁷⁷ women's very downgraded position

as inherently 'unstable' and 'irrational', and subject to degenerative tendencies, was considered due to this specialisation. The implications of this are more profound than a mere intellectual inferiority. Whether writers believed the problem to be either hereditary or moral, or a combination of both, I have illustrated that it is childbirth which was regarded as the pivotal moment of women's instability; whichever theoretical schema was being employed this was the case. Maternity must be regarded as absolutely central to the discussion of the position of women and especially of how women's insanity was understood.

Notes

1. The first treatise on puerperal insanity produced by a British physician was *Observations on Puerperal Insanity* by Robert Gooch in 1820. He is noted as drawing on earlier work by Thomas Denman, William Hunter, and the French alienist Jean-Etienne-Dominique Esquirol, who had published a year earlier on 'mental alienation' and motherhood. By the mid-nineteenth century no textbook on the diseases of women was complete without a section on puerperal insanity. Hilary Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood. Insanity and Childbirth in Victorian Britain* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 29-32.
2. The nuances of how infection was regarded in the period has been explored by Alison Bashford, *Purity and Pollution. Gender, Embodiment and Victorian Medicine* (London: Macmillan, 1998) which is very much a homage to Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger*.
3. Henry Maudsley, *The Pathology of Mind. A Study of its Distempers, Deformities and Disorders* (London and NY: Macmillan, 1895), 389. In 1869 he became Professor of Medical Jurisprudence at University College, London as well as a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians.
4. Henry Maudsley, 'Sex in Mind and in Education', *Fortnightly Review*, 15, (1874) 472.
5. Henry Maudsley, cited in T. Turner, 'Henry Maudsley: Psychiatrist, Philosopher, and Entrepreneur', in *Anatomy of Madness. Vol 3. The Asylum and its Psychiatry*, W. F. Bynum, W. F. and R. Porter, eds, (London: Routledge, 1988), 165.
6. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (Section III Sexual Selection in Relation to Man), (NY: The Modern Library (unabridged), 1871), 874.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 874.
9. Darwin, *Descent of Man*, 909.
10. Ibid., 868.
11. Ibid., 874.
12. Ibid., 873. Italics added for emphasis.
13. Ibid., 873.
14. Ibid., 873. Italics added for emphasis.
15. See the work of Judith Butler, for example, on the enactment of femininity or 'sex' - her preferred term.
16. J. Lipman-Blumen, *Gender Roles and Power* (London: Prentice Hall, 1984).
17. Alice Rossi discusses what she terms 'diminishing flow' within professions. This is that the presence of women within an occupation is directly related inversely to rewards within the occupation, though examples which contradict this tendency can be found. A. S. Rossi, 'Status of Women', *American Sociologist*, 5 (1) (1970), 1-12.
18. Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 40.
19. Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*. (London : Virago, 1992), 8.
20. Janet Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves. Doctors, Patients, and Depression in Victorian England*. (Oxford University Press, 1991), 232.
21. Fiona Erskine also agrees a 'close conformity' between 'prevailing opinion' and Darwin's findings on sex stereotyping as expressed in the *Descent* (p.100). She notes how this evolutionary biology could be used to counter women's ambitions. Fiona Erskine, 'The Origin of the Species and the Science of Female Inferiority' in David Amigoni and Jeff Wallace (eds.) *Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species. New Interdisciplinary Essays*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).
22. Oliver Lodge, *The Position of Women: Actual and Ideal* (London: James Nesbit and Co, 1911), xi.
23. Thomas, S. Clouton, 'The Psychological Dangers to Women in Modern Social Development' in Lodge, *The Position of Women*, 103-117 (114). My italics.
24. W. C. Ellis, *A Treatise on the Nature, Symptoms, Causes, and Treatment of Insanity, with Practical Observations on Lunatic Asylums, and a Description of the Pauper Lunatic Asylum for the County of Middlesex, at Hanwell* (London: Samuel Holdsworth, 1838).
25. R. Gooch, *On Some of the Diseases Peculiar to Women; with Other Papers*. (London: New Sydenham Society, 1831), 54.
26. John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (originally published 1861 and reproduced NY: Prometheus Books, 1986), 4.
27. Clouton, 'The Psychological Dangers to Women', 112.
28. T. Trotter, *A View of the Nervous Temperament; being a Practical Inquiry into the Increasing Prevalence, Prevention, Treatment, of those Diseases commonly called Nervous, Billious, Stomach and Liver Complaints; Indigestion; Low Spirits, Gout, andc.* (Boston: Goodenow and Stockwell, 1808), 47.
29. Henry Maudsley, 1870. *Body and Mind*, 60 cited by Darwin, (1871) in IV Comparison of the Mental Powers of Man and Lower Animals. *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. (NY: The Modern Library, 1871), 493.
30. Clouton, 'The Psychological Dangers to Women', 107.
31. Ibid.
32. Henry Maudsley, 'Sex in Mind and in Education', *Fortnightly Review*. Vol. 15. (1874): 466.
33. Ibid., 473.
34. J. C. Bucknill, and D. H. Tuke, *A Manual of Psychological Medicine. A Facsimile of the 1858 Edition* (London and New York: Hafner, 1968), 237. They cite J.

Macdonald (former physician to the Bloomingdale Asylum) from *Psychological Journal*, 3, 534-5. My italics.

35. Burns, *The Principles of Midwifery*, (London: Longman, 3rd ed., 1914), 434-5.

36. Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood*, 48: 'at the moment when the head passes through the os uteri, or the os externum.' Exacerbating causes for this were thought to be excruciating agony and the disinhibiting effects of anaesthesia.

37. Maudsley, *The Pathology of Mind*, 415.

38. Ibid., 416.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. M. S. Hartman, *Victorian Murderesses: A True History of Thirteen Respectable French and English Women Accused of Unspeakable Crimes* (London: Robson Books 1977), 52. Hartman notes that infanticide of this nature occurred in popular fiction of the period.

42. Girls and women must have been aware that childbirth was dangerous and that death was a real possibility. Influenced by childbirth-related mortality, the average life expectancy for women in 1890 was only forty-four years.

43. Edward Shorter, *A History of Women's Bodies* (London: Allen Lane, 1982), 69. This point is agreed by Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, 227.

44. Bethlem Hospital lists this as one of their 'apparent and assigned causes of disease'. Wellcome Trust Library WLM28, BE5, B84. General Report of the Royal Hospitals of Bridewell and Bethlem and of the House of Occupations, for the year ending 31 Dec. 1845.

45. Babies were referred to as children in this period so Tuke talks of loosing the child. Marland who has produced detailed research on this topic notes that in her analysis of the case notes of the Royal Edinburgh Asylum almost a third of puerperal cases she scrutinised (23 out of 73) had been admitted following complicated labours. Tuke, *On the Statistics*, 1019; Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood*, 114.

46. Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (London: Virago, 1985), 57.

47. Maudsley, *The Pathology of Mind*, 416.

48. Shorter, *A History of Women's Bodies*, 267.

49. Maudsley, *The Pathology of Mind*, 417.

50. Bucknill and Tuke, *Manual of Psychological Medicine*, 238.

51. Bucknill and Tuke, *Manual of Psychological Medicine*, 273.

52. James Macdonald, M.D., formerly physician to the Bloomingdale Asylum, cited Bucknill and Tuke, *Manual of Psychological Medicine*, 237-238 (my italics).

53. R. Gooch, *On Some of the Most Important Diseases Peculiar to Women*, 61, discussed by Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood*, 41. Marland also cites Burns 'All women in the puerperal state, are more irritable, and more easily affected, both in body and mind, than at other times, and some even become delirious' (my italics).

54. Henry Maudsley, *Body and Mind and Psychological Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1873), 92.

55. Ibid.

56. Bucknill and Tuke, *Manual of Psychological Medicine*, 238.

57. Shorter, *History of Women's Bodies*, 106-107.

58. Ibid., 132.

59. Hospital doctors who attended births and also performed dissections were particularly dangerous in this respect because of transmission of deadly bacteria from cadavers into the private parts of birthing women, via the doctor's hands.

60. Ibid., 115 (my italics).

61. Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood*, 104.

62. John Conolly, *Treatment of the Insane Without Mechanical Restraints* (London: Dawsons, 1856 (reprinted 1973)), 119.

63. Ibid., 108.

64. Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood*, 42.

65. I. Loudon, *Death in Childbirth: An International Study of Maternal Care and Maternal Mortality 1800-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 570.

66. Conolly, *Treatment of the Insane*, 108.

67. Ibid., 69.

68. Maudsley, *The Pathology of Mind*, 419.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid., 420.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. Bucknill and Tuke, *Manual of Psychological Medicine*, 236.

74. Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood*, 172.

75. R. Smith, *Trial by Medicine. Insanity and Responsibility in Victorian Trials* (Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 152 (my italics).

76. C. W. Heath, et. al., 'Personnel Selection', *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 19 (1943) cited by B. Shepherd, *A War of Nerves. Soldiers and Psychiatrists 1914-1994* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), 200.

77. Showalter, *The Female Malady*, 121-2.

Book Reviews

Jane Potter, *Boys In Khaki, Girls In Print: Women's Literary Responses to the Great War 1914-1918*

Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2005, (£50), 0-19-927986-1 (hardback), pp. xiii + 257.

Reviewed by Angela K. Smith
University of Plymouth

In her clear and informative introduction to *Boys in Khaki, Girls in Print*, Jane Potter informs us that it is her intention to 'illuminate the writing of now virtually unknown women writers and how they interpreted the Great War as it was happening' (p. 2). Here she encapsulates the thesis of this very important book and summarises the reasons for its importance. There has been an ongoing project amongst feminist critics of the writings of the First World War, to rediscover and reassert the many forgotten women who put pen to paper to record their share of the experience. Potter's work fits comfortably into this tradition and at the same time develops it in a number of significant new ways.

Firstly, in her choice of which women writers to consider, Potter tackles head on the thorny critical issue of women's popular and romantic fiction. Whilst always acknowledging the possible weaknesses of her writers, Potter refuses to contemplate the idea that these books are of a lesser value than more 'literary' texts when it comes to using them as source materials to understand the First World War. Although it may be easy to understand why many of these writers have slipped from public view, their interpretation of the war experience, very often endorsed by extremely impressive sales figures, clearly represents the way in which many women responded to a war that, for the most part, they could only witness. Their support for the war, which as Potter suggests can appear to us to be overly-patriotic or even jingoistic, captures a real national mood of the war years in an authentic way.

Secondly, what makes this argument about authentic representation so convincing is Potter's decision to confine her study to the actual war years, considering a wide and fascinating range of published materials from postcards, to fiction, to memoirs, but all of it produced as the guns still raged. There is no time for reflection, no space for hindsight. As Potter points out, this comes later in the publications of those war stories that have stood the test of time from the late 1920s and early 1930s. The women considered here wrote with immediacy, and were read in the same way. Their contemporary success indicates their importance in our reassessment of the period.

The book is divided into four chapters and the argument stressing the significance of these materials and this reassessment develops through each. The first chapter

sets the social and cultural context for women's popular writing by examining the pre-war decade, beginning with corresponding textual interpretations of the Boer War. Potter draws on an impressive range of examples to illustrate how this genre of 'romantic war fiction' was developed at the turn of the century. The second chapter gives a fascinating insight into the world of wartime publishing, looking at various visual media as well as the written word. But in some ways the book really gets down to business in Chapter Three. Here Potter gives us in depth readings of six novels, contextualising each and exploring them through rich and sophisticated literary analysis. This pleasure continues into the final chapter as Potter turns her attention to the memoirs of women on active service. With the exception of Enid Bagnold's *A Diary Without Dates*, the texts are, again, all but forgotten now. But the critical readings that Potter offers are certainly illuminating and we can trace the development of a thread of doubt through these narratives to Bagnold's more detached and modernist interpretation of hospital life.

Boys in Khaki, Girls in Print contains multiple readings of a wide and diverse range of texts. It asks the reader to confront and to understand the psyche of the consumer of popular stories, as well as the writer, locating these firmly in a war torn society where many women could do no more than lament, 'if only I were a man...' It is tastefully illustrated by samples of the posters and the front pages of the texts discussed and these images, too, are analysed effectively. Coherently structured and convincingly argued throughout, it is a welcome reminder that we will not fully understand the impact of the First World War until we are prepared to move away from the dominant images of trench warfare and consider the testimony of all members of society. This book represents a valuable contribution to debates around gender and warfare with the added bonus of being highly readable and very enjoyable as well.

Mary Lyons, *Governance Structures of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy: Becoming One*

The Edwin Mellen Press: Lewiston, 2005.
\$109.95/£69.95, ISBN 0-7734-6186-8
(hardcover), pp. xiii +264.

Reviewed by Dr. Joos van Vugt
Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands

The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy was founded in Ireland in 1831 to attend to the poor and the uneducated. Its founder Catherine McAuley was one of those wealthy, pious and enterprising Catholic women the nineteenth century abounded in. Her creation was a great success, expanding all over the English-speaking world and beyond. Today, the Sisters of Mercy number over 10,000 and serve in 21 countries all over the world, including, of course, Ireland. Although McAuley's sister community received papal approbation as early as 1841,

its development was not typical of a papal congregation. In the early nineteenth century the model of a congregation with a central council, a motherhouse and filial houses, and autonomy vis-à-vis local church authorities had not yet matured. The distinction between diocesan and papal status was obscure for many, as was the fundamental difference between contemplative and 'active' religious life. Founders were often eclectic in their spiritual and organizational preferences and many of their creations were rather hybrid accordingly. This was also the case with the Sisters of Mercy. Because McAuley was primarily focused on smooth cooperation with local bishops, she felt that her sisters should work under their authority and direction. Although she tried to keep in touch with all convents, she did not insist on any centralized leadership. Therefore, as it expanded, her congregation dissolved into numerous small diocesan congregations.

The drawbacks of this fragmentation very soon became apparent: the lack of central direction, the inability to reassign sisters from one house to another as their work demanded, and the lack of a sound central novitiate. Mary Lyons, a canonist and herself a Sister of Mercy, recounts how this fragmentation was partially rectified in the course of almost a century by means of diocesan and national (con)federations, unions and new amalgamated institutes. In most cases, this process was not initiated by the sisters themselves but thrust upon them by forward-looking bishops or by the Vatican with its increasing insistence on clear-cut juridical structures in religious life. In the 1960s, the sisters felt very much inspired by the summons of the Second Vatican Council to bring religious life up to date and to do away with obsolete structures.

Lyons' book focuses on the rather sluggish development in Ireland where no less than 26 independent congregations, together with a South African offspring, at last congealed into one Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy (1994). However, she also describes developments in Australia and the USA, where partial reunification was achieved a few years earlier. Worldwide, the Sisters of Mercy are nowadays mustered in eleven entities with varying degrees of centralization.

To reunite dozens of small independent sister communities must have been a grinding task, especially since canonical and democratic requirements had to be met throughout, even in the face of irrational objections. Not one sister could be left behind in the process. The author's account of these developments is competent and clear, if at times inevitably a bit boring, especially where the last stretch of unification in Ireland is concerned. She pays attention to the role of the Vatican and sometimes mentions objections by bishops or by sisters (who feared, for instance, that in a united congregation they would be arbitrarily transferred from one place to another). However, because of her focus on governance structures and processes, she merely glances at the conditions which expedited or hampered reunification, and on the pros and cons of unification for the charitable activities and the private lives of the sisters.

It would be interesting to know more about the reasons why the reunification proceeded so excruciatingly slow in Ireland and much faster in the United States. Also, why some bishops advocated unification and others opposed it (which would seem their natural stance). Finally, I wonder if the ageing of American and European sister communities played a part. Within religious communities on the European continent, centralizing tendencies have been stimulated by the awareness that congregations must be ready to care for a growing number of elderly and ailing members. Has this awareness played a part in Ireland too? In the years to come, the lack of vocations in western countries will become a major worry for the Mercy movement. Even in Ireland sister communities do not take a very rosy view of their prospects, considering the sharply declining number of vocations. Mary Lyons appears nevertheless optimistic about the future of the Irish community, provided that it succeeds in further unification with the more vital parts of the Mercy movement abroad. She hopes her book will help to continue the unification process, and perhaps it will.

Margiad Evans, *The Wooden Doctor*

Honno: England, 2005. £8.99, ISBN 1-870206-68-1 (paperback), pp.v +177

Reviewed by Atil Eylem Atakav
Southampton Solent University

Our health is a voyage and every illness is an adventure story

Margiad Evans, a.k.a. Peggy Eileen Arabella Whistler

In her 'voyage', *The Wooden Doctor*, Evans tells the story of Arabella, an adolescent girl, obsessed with her doctor, who develops a strange incurable illness which she likens to a 'fox' inside her, biting and tearing her flesh. *The Wooden Doctor* was first published in March 1933 and is an extraordinary and unusual novel about dysfunctional family life, unrequited love, and physical pain, and is celebrated as one of the classics of Welsh literature. This certainly is a satisfying answer to Evans' wish when she writes 'if my pen has ever done anything for Wales, it is honoured.'

The book is divided into three sections in addition to an extremely thought-provoking introduction by Sue Asbee, in which she informs the reader about Evans's biography and cultural identity as well as her other work in relation to literary context.

The prelude tells of a childhood fever that generates Arabella's passion with Dr Flaherty, a man thirty years her senior. The first section is set in a regimented French school, where Arabella spends time as a pupil-teacher. In the second section she is in a cottage hospital awaiting a diagnosis for her 'mysterious' illness and in the final section the reader finds her on a remote hill in Carmarthenshire where she writes her own book. Here a love affair with a

young man results in marriage plans, which are abandoned the moment she sees her beloved Doctor once again.

Evans' book may be interpreted as a story of the impossible love between Arabella and the Doctor. This becomes apparent in the doctor's words: 'it's impossible; autumn cannot mate with spring... If you were a little older I should perhaps tell you a true story, but if you were a little older you would not want to hear it, although it might explain why I can be no more to you than a Father Confessor' (p.113-118).

It is, in this sense, apposite to link the impossibility of love to Arabella's abdominal pains that dominate the narrative. As Asbee puts it, there is a strong suggestion that the origin of these pains is not physical at all, but nervous or hysterical. This may be referred to the notion of 'hysterical narrative'. As Elaine Showalter highlights, 'hysteria cuts across historical periods and national boundaries, poses fundamental questions about gender and representation, it is a form of expression, a body language for people who might otherwise not be able to speak or even to admit what they feel' (Elaine Showalter, *Hystories* [1997]). In this context, hysteria proves to be an intricate cultural discourse open to interpretations, and it is particularly applicable to Arabella's narrative, which offers few clear explanations, specifically about *the fox*, her illness. At this point, Asbee's question of, 'if the cause is indeed psychological, what exactly is responsible for generating this cripplingly painful hysteria?' happens to have considerable importance (p.vii).

In fact, the book deserves attention for those who would wish to work out the relationship between Arabella's narrative and Evans' discourse, in relation to their both being women writers. As the question of gender is a question of language, it is apposite here to ask the question of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari: 'How many people today live in a language that is not their own?' This question leads to another question: are women *not* living in a language of their own?

Thus, *the fox* can be seen as the signifier of women's exclusion from language, which is evident in the words of Elaine Scarry: 'the pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned' (Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: the Making and Unmaking of the World* [1987]). The pain is also manifested in Evans' technique of repetition to convey claustrophobia. For instance, descriptive words of 'cold', 'cruel', 'bitter' are repeated relentlessly, suggesting a mind constantly circling but never making progress. Use of the first-person narrative generates again a sense of claustrophobia, whilst the reader shares the mind of a young woman in 'the grip of an intense infatuation, circumscribing the world of the novel with no possibility of escape' (p.vi). Indeed, *The Wooden Doctor* proves significant for those who are

interested in writing the history of women writers of the 1930s.

The Wooden Doctor is a fascinating, tempestuous novel, intense and beautifully written with an emotional range that sweeps from passion to tenderness.

Robert Whelan and Anne Hoole Anderson (eds). *Octavia Hill's Letters to Fellow-Workers 1872-1911*

Kyrle Books: London, 2005. £60.50, ISBN 0 9548 9140 6 (hardback), pp. lxiv + 784

Reviewed by Jay Dixon
Independent Scholar

Starting in 1872 Octavia Hill wrote an annual letter to her 'fellow workers', the final one being in December 1911, just months before her death in 1912. They vary in length from just over 2,000 words to 5,256 and cover such topics as housing for the poor, which was of prime importance to her; outings and entertainments for her tenants; and the National Trust, of which she was a founder member. All 39 letters are published here for the first time (she did not write one in 1884 because '[T]here seems such a rush of talk about work for the poor....I felt ... it ... better not to write anything'), along with the accounts they were attached to.

Hill believed in listening to the poor and respecting their point of view; she did not agree with state provision of welfare services, nor with local authority housing, state pensions and free health care. As a result, her reputation declined after her death. But during her life she was regarded as a major leader of the social reform movement, and was a member of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law from 1905-9 (the first which allowed women commissioners). She was a pioneer of the open spaces movement and believed that art and beauty can raise the quality of life, and that they should not just be the preserve of the rich. Along with Florence Nightingale and Josephine Butler, she was one of only three women to be invited in their own right to attend the 1897 service in Westminster Abbey to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. But while they are still remembered today, Hill goes unacknowledged. This book should go some way to restoring her reputation.

The letters make fascinating reading. Written mainly to middle-class, female volunteers, who offered practical help to tenants in budgeting, tackling bad landlords and trying to find work for the unemployed, they show Hill's philosophy in action. Covering descriptions of current campaigns, the letters also include philosophical and spiritual reflections, and anecdotes about the people she has met during the year. As a result they are a very readable insight into her working year, her varied interests, and Octavia Hill herself.

This book, however, does not just print the letters. Each one is prefaced by a short summary and an editor's note, giving some biographical details and analysis of that year's letter. There are also over 400 informative footnotes, explaining references to people, places, organisations and events mentioned in the letters, a chronology of Hill's life and a bibliography of her publications, a list of donors, two accounts of the Walmer Street Industrial Experiment, and two further appendices on Hill's work for the Kyrle Society and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. There are also over 30 illustrations, mainly of the properties Hill was connected with, but also of some of the mosaics of the Red Cross project with which Hill was involved from the early 1880s, and which rekindled her enthusiasm for her work after her breakdown of 1877.

For anyone interested in the Edwardian period, in the history of social reform, in practical instruction in housing management, or in Octavia Hill herself, this is a must-have book. And for anyone who enjoys a 'good read', these Letters to Fellow-Workers should certainly be on their list of books to dip into.

Valerie G. Spear, *Leadership in Medieval English Nunneries*

The Boydell Press: Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2005.
£45.00, ISBN 1 84383 150 3 pp. xix + 244

Reviewed by Caroline Bowden
Royal Holloway, University of London

Convents over many centuries offered women possibilities of leadership that were rarely available elsewhere and as a result have become the focus of research in recent years. Valerie Spear's impressive study ranges widely in her discussion of conventual superiors over more than 200 years in the later Middle Ages. Building on recent scholarship which has challenged views of fundamental weaknesses in conventual leadership, she seeks to provide a more nuanced view of the role of abbess, her responsibilities and relationships with both secular and ecclesiastical authorities.

Spear's chapter headings identify different elements of the leadership role. She first discusses the meaning of leadership, relating it to the requirements of the monastic rule and discusses the problems of women holding offices of power in institutions which demanded submissiveness and obedience. Chapter Two considers the selection of individuals for the office of Abbess and the factors influencing the choice. Among them Spear finds evidence of the link between social class and the value of the convent: the more patrician abbesses concentrated in the better-off convents.

Convents can never be entirely female communities because of the need for a male Chaplain to hear confession and say mass. In addition they come under the authority of the bishops and their officials as visitors

who inspect and regulate the conduct of the community. Chapters Three and Four are devoted to the relationship of the superiors to external male authority figures, secular as well as ecclesiastical and the influence they had on the role of the Abbesses and Prioresses. Spear considers the ways that royal and papal patronage could be problematic as well as bringing benefits to the communities. She found Abbesses who were able to withstand the pressures of patrons attempting to take liberties with the rights of the convents they supported; for instance at Romsey where the abbess restricted the numbers of former royal servants she took into the convent as pensioners or corrodians.

Chapter Five looks at the ways the superiors balanced their financial and spiritual responsibilities finding many examples of effective financial management of complex situations. Spear's suggestions in Chapter Six for ways of interpreting the bishop's reports on convent visitations are innovative and constructive. She argues that they are indicative of a male attitude to ideal qualities of female leadership and they focus on spiritual leadership of the superiors rather than a guide to daily life within the communities. Nevertheless they have value as 'pocket guides' to the rules and they can reveal much of the quality of daily management of religious houses.

Lack of evidence of individual lives remains a key problem when discussing leadership. It is one thing to be able to piece together evidence of economic and legal activity on the basis of accounts, charters and visitation reports, but understanding individual attitudes and practice remains elusive. The obituary of Euphemia of Wherwell who died in 1257 (Appendix D) is a rare example of an account of the leadership of one superior. However the case for the choice of Chaucer's fictional Prioress for comparative purposes is not entirely convincing. The rest of the chapter does contain many fragmentary examples, but it would have been worth developing a discussion of the nature of monastic obituary writing in order to unpick more from the account of Euphemia's leadership. It is clear from Spear's findings that the abbesses and prioresses varied considerably in their abilities to lead and to manage. She suggests that the loss of moral control in a convent was often consistent with financial mismanagement. However it has to be recognised that many abbesses were faced with huge problems including wars, plague and both lack of resources and of recruits. As she points out, most of the convents survived until the Henrician dissolution which is some measure of success. It was good to find the voice of the superiors themselves in the final chapter dealing with the process of dissolution. For instance, the brave response on 9 November 1538 of Joan Temmse abbess of Lacock; 'the king will not take this house by tyranny'.

There is much in this study which will provide resources for others as well as opening out further the discussion of the complex issues surrounding female leadership and authority. One criticism of the work is that while the study covers a long time period, questions of change and continuity over time are not clearly discussed: for example

the Bull *Periculoso* of 1298 placed significant restrictions on the lives of women religious but the issues are never fully analysed. Other economic and social influences such as the impact of plague and the Black Death would have benefited from fuller treatment since they undoubtedly influenced the problems facing monastic superiors. Some of the discussion appeared constrained by lack of space and side-headings broke up chains of thought at times. However these do not detract from the fact that this book makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the governance of medieval convents.

Stephanie Spencer, *Gender, Work and Education in Britain in the 1950s*

Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke and New York, 2005. £50.00, ISBN 1403938164 (hardback), pp. xii + 253

Reviewed by Lindy Moore
Holywell, North Wales

This is an interesting and readable history that combines several levels of analysis. The interlocking themes of gender, work and education are considered throughout from a feminine point of view. More specifically, Stephanie Spencer examines them through an analysis of the education, employment opportunities and careers advice provided for girls leaving school in the 1950s. She illustrates how schools, women teachers, careers' advice manuals, career novels and women's magazines trained young women in an appropriate femininity, centred on the home and children. This training, which enabled them to move by accepted rites of passage through various communities including those of school-girl, temporary employee, the world of the woman's magazine and full-time housewife, emphasized a gendered concept of citizenship, the importance of personal appearance, housework routines and the 'performance' of womanliness. Nevertheless, there were unresolved tensions between the ideal of full-time domesticity and the lives of the professional women, teachers, advisers, writers or editors, who were providing this advice.

Following the 1950's tendency to define the housewife's role as a 'job', Spencer usefully assigns an overarching definition to 'career' to include all paid and unpaid jobs women did. The Beveridge Report and the national insurance scheme which followed, provide examples of the implicit and often explicit views of official policies and welfare legislation which also assumed a gendering of careers, with women working only until they married. Yet despite these economic and ideological constraints, Spencer found a shift during the 1950s in the priority assigned to domesticity. Thus women's career patterns changed from a period of short full-time employment, given up on marriage for full-time domesticity, to one where part-time paid work might continue after marriage, to be given up when there were young children, but sometimes followed by a return to paid employment afterwards.

This book is also, implicitly, about the nature of primary material. Each chapter in the book is insightfully based around a different contemporary source. These include the official reports and legislation of welfare and education, Mass Observation reports, professional women teachers' associations, advice manuals, the career novel (a previously unexplored phenomenon largely restricted to the 1950s and 1960s), women's magazines and personal interviews with women who left school in the 1950s. This framework does, as the author admits, result in some repetition of findings, as the themes of work, career advice, domesticity and career history reoccur in different but overlapping contexts. It is, however, an interesting approach, which foregrounds the documents themselves and encourages a greater awareness of their ideological context, original audience and relative subjectivity. One of the most interesting sources Spencer analyses is the sociological and educational research of the 1950s, which she thus relocates from a secondary to a primary source. At that time there was particular interest in social class differences and outcomes, and she finds that with few exceptions, women and gender were ignored as a category of analysis.

Spencer notes that 1950s discourses frequently treated all women as a homogeneous group, implying similar experiences of domesticity, regardless of class, education or employment. In the final chapter Spencer draws on the ongoing theoretical debate in women's history as to how best to recognise both the common gendered experiences of all women and the extent to which these may be mediated for the individual by other social factors, and throughout the book she uses Morwenna Griffiths's concept of a web of overlapping communities connecting the myriad personal experiences of individuals, including those she interviewed, to those of women generically. This concept might perhaps have been expanded more fully to indicate the linkages for working-class girls, as the sources used give a rather middle-class feel to the book, while the women interviewed were mainly ex-grammar school.

Finally, a criticism must be that, despite its title, this is a book about England, not Britain. It ignores important Scottish differences in educational legislation, type of schools, official reports and careers service and is based on English Acts of Parliament and official reports, the English bipartite educational system of secondary modern and grammar schools, English (and some Welsh) statistics and English sociological and educational research. It looks as if, at the last moment, someone thought that 'Britain' would have wider appeal than 'England' when the title was chosen. This attitude, all too common where academic publications are concerned, does not serve research well and is confusing for readers, especially those from outside Britain. It exemplifies the same kind of unthinking generalising which Stephanie Spencer so ably criticises in the academic research of the 1950s when conclusions were extended to include both sexes although women had been ignored in the original research.

Women's Library News

Tours

Do you want to introduce your students to a wide range of resources to support gender research? The Women's Library is currently offering introductory sessions to the library's collections for students at both undergraduate and postgraduate level undertaking courses with a gender focus. The sessions usually last about an hour and are available on a first-come first-served basis to groups of between 5 and 20 students. Bookings are currently being taken for the Autumn Semester. If you would like to arrange a tour for a group of students please contact Beverley Kemp beverley.kemp@thewomenslibrary.ac.uk for more information and details of available time slots.

Newly catalogued material

The Women's Library has recently catalogued a number of small archive collections. These include the archive of Eveline Mary Lowe (7EML) teacher and labour activist, the papers of Hilda Seligman (7HSE) relating to her health work in India and Africa, as well as the letters of William Ironside to Frederick Pethwick Lawrence (7WIR). In addition the Douie family papers (7DOU) including the family photograph album of Vera Douie, the first librarian of the Women's Service Library, and the typescript autobiography of Barbara Cartland (7BCA) are also now available for consultation. Further information about the contents of these archives can be found by searching the Library's archive catalogue online at www.thewomenslibrary.ac.uk/archivemuseumcatalogue

Enhanced catalogues

Two of our existing catalogues have recently been enhanced to assist researchers identifying material relevant to their research. Abstracts of 77 letters from Barbara Bodichon to Helen Taylor, James Joseph Sylvester, Marianne North, the Hill Family and various other correspondents (1827-c.1891) are now available for consultation online, by searching 7BMC on the archives online catalogue. We have also attached images to the records of the Artists Suffrage League album containing designs by Mary Lowndes. You can view these images by searching the archive catalogue online using the reference number 2ASL/11.

Vera Douie fellows

Two fellows have recently been appointed at The Women's Library under the Vera Douie fellowship programme. Delia Jarrett-Macauley will be researching sources for women's emigration at the Library whilst Helen Graham will be using the collections for her research into second wave feminism. Both Delia and Helen take up their posts at The Women's Library in October. Further information about

the fellowship programme can be found on The Women's Library website at <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/thewomenslibrary/about/fellowships.cfm>

Forthcoming events

This autumn, The Women's Library launches a challenging and provocative new exhibition and season of events entitled *Prostitution: What's Going On?* Exploring the issues surrounding prostitution and trafficking, in the past and the present, the exhibition runs from 21 September 2006 – 31 March 2007. Marking the centenary of the death of Josephine Butler, the Victorian social reformer and campaigner for the rights of prostituted women, the exhibition examines questions she raised about prostitution, sexual exploitation and trafficking, both in her own time and in a modern context. It brings together for the first time historical material from the collections of The Women's Library and other lenders alongside photographs, magazines, posters, maps and objects that highlight the complexity of concerns around prostitution and trafficking today.

Prostitution: What's Going On? also features multimedia work made in collaboration with partners Barnardo's and The POPPY project, as well as striking new photographic commissions by Veit Mette and Lydia Goldblatt.

The autumn events programme features panel discussions on current legislation and representations of sex work in the media and cinema, a study day on Victorian feminism and sexuality, and Beatrix Campbell will give the Women's Library Annual Lecture on prostitution and neopatriarchy on 23 November. In addition, running alongside *Prostitution: What's Going On?* there will be a series of events celebrating women's lives and the collections at The Women's Library, including talks on Virginia Woolf and Suffrage 'rebel girls', a study day on motherhood, an evening reading course on World War Two and more meetings of The Women's Library Reading Group. For full details of all the events and how to book tickets, visit www.thewomenslibrary.ac.uk.

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Conferences and Calls for Papers

Rethinking the rural: land and the nation in the 1920s and 1930s

An International Conference to be held at Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, UK, 4 – 6 January, 2007

Organised by the Interwar Rural History Research Group

The 1920s and 1930s were a key period in the emergence of new relationships between land and the nation. The agricultural depression – one of the first truly global economic events – provoked different reactions in different countries, but everywhere it influenced shifts in attitudes towards the rural sector, and in the place of the countryside within national economies. Alongside the economic travails of farming in many countries, this was also a period of interesting reconfigurations in the relationship between landscape and national identity, and reformulations of the meanings and significance attached to folk culture and rural society. New demands on land use for resources such as building land, water, wood and minerals, radically altered agricultural landscapes in the interests of urbanisation/suburbanisation, industrialisation, and transport/communications infrastructure, pressures which led to increasing state involvement in rural life and often to a sense of the countryside as something under threat from modernity.

This interdisciplinary conference will explore these themes, bringing together geographers, literary, art, and performance historians as well as political and socio-economic historians. Keynote speakers include Dr Jan Bieleman (University of Wageningen), Professor David Danbom (North Dakota State University), (Professor Kate Darian-Smith (University of Melbourne) and Professor Alun Howkins (University of Sussex).

For further information please visit: www.irhrg.org.uk

History in British Education: Why History Matters

Institute of Historical Research, University of London

13-14 February 2007

This conference will address why history is important to education and national life in the early twenty-first century. It will enable a dialogue between policy makers, educationalists and practitioners at all levels. It is hoped that the discussions will influence and, if possible, suggest answers to current debates on what history should be taught and how. For further information and a registration form please visit:

www.history.ac.uk/conferences/education.html#why

Life Histories, Women's Histories

Southern Women's History Network/Centre for Life History Research, University of Sussex
17 February 2007, University of Sussex

The Southern Women's History Network and the Centre for Life History Research at the University of Sussex invite papers on any aspect of women's history that use life histories. We are interested in papers focusing on using oral histories, diaries, journals, letters, auto/biography or other life history sources for any period and in any country in the construction of women's history.

Papers should last around 20 minutes and be aimed at an undergraduate audience not necessarily familiar with life history methodologies. Abstracts of no more than 200 words should be sent to Gerry Holloway at g.holloway@sussex.ac.uk by **31 November 2006**.

Further details about the conference will be available on the WHN website in due course.

Social History Society Annual Conference 2007

30 March – 1 April 2007 University of Exeter

The Society is delighted to announce that its 2007 conference will again be timed to coincide with the annual conference of the Economic History Society and will be co-located on the campus of the University of Exeter. The Social History Society's sessions will be centred on the Queens Building, while those of the Economic History Society will be centred on the Peter Chalk Centre. A campus map is available for downloading at www.socialhistory.org.uk/annualconference.htm. There will be plenty of opportunity to engage with delegates at both events.

The conference is an opportunity for broad cross-disciplinary exchange. Papers will be presented from scholars in (eg.) cultural studies, history of art, design and visual culture, literary studies, law and criminology, historical geography, anthropology and the social sciences.

This year we are pleased to offer a new thematic strand, as one of the six around which the Conference is organised. It is called 'Theory and Practice of Cultural and Social History'. Descriptions of all of the strands are available on the Society's web-site.

Finally, proposers are reminded that papers given at the Conference can be considered for publication in the Society's journal *Cultural and Social History*.

For further information please email:

I.persson@lancaster.ac.uk

History and the Public
Swansea University, 12-14 April 2007

This conference develops the debates on 'the use of history for public purposes and the involvement of the public in the study and consumption of history' that began with the highly successful Institute of Historical Research Conference in February 2006.

Call for Papers: Deadline: **30th November 2006**.
Further information, Call for Papers and registration form are available at:
<http://www.swan.ac.uk/history/notices/publichistory>

A Woman's Island ?
Women in Shetland - Past, Present & Future
20 - 22 April 2007

Organised by Women's History Scotland and Shetland Museum & Archives at Shetland Museum and Archives, Hays Dock, Lerwick, Shetland.

Shetland's history has a powerful influence on the ways in which the islands' inhabitants perceive themselves and their identity. The combination of a wealth of scholarly studies on Shetland and the local interest in the past, as well as the development of a £10 million centre for Shetland Museum and Archives presents an unrivalled opportunity to consider the dominant representations of Shetland's past. In particular we aim to investigate the connections between the idea of Shetland as a female dominated society in the past and present-day gender relations as they are manifested in a variety of contexts: work, art, literature and poetry, textiles, music and so on.

For booking details please contact:
Lynn Abrams, Department of History, University of Glasgow, 2 University Gardens, Glasgow G12 8QQ
or by email: L.Abrams@history.arts.gla.ac.uk

Harriet Martineau: Subjects and Subjectivities
21 April 2007 - Institute of English Studies,
University of London

This interdisciplinary one-day conference considers the making of political, imperial and individual identities in the work of Harriet Martineau (1802-1876). Organized by Cora Kaplan (Queen Mary) and Ella Dzelzainis (Birkbeck) in association with the University of London's Institute of English Studies, it will be held at the Senate House, Bloomsbury on Saturday 21 April 2007. Confirmed speakers include the leading scholars Catherine Hall (UCL), Deborah Anna Logan (Western Kentucky) and Linda Peterson (Yale).

For booking details contact: e.dzelzainis@bbk.ac.uk

Women, Sport and Leisure
WHN Midlands Region
May 12th 2007: University of Worcester

Abstracts of 200 words on any aspect of the history of women, sport and leisure should be sent to Sue Johnson, s.johnson@worc.ac.uk, by the closing date of **March 1st 2007**.

Women on the move: refugees, migration and exile

West of England and South Wales WHN
13th Annual conference (Call for Papers)
University of the West of England, Bristol, Saturday
June 23rd 2007

The plight of refugees and the impact of migration currently excites much popular and political interest. Yet these movements are not new and there are long, albeit neglected histories of migration, forced migration and exile.

The Women's History Network welcomes individual papers or panels from academics, postgraduate students and independent scholars. We encourage submissions on a wide range of topics related to refugees, migration or exile in any place or period. All papers should have an historical perspective and should relate to women's history and/or make use of gendered analysis.

Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be sent to Fiona Reid, HLaSS, University of Glamorgan, Wales, CF37 1DL.

Email: freid1@glam.ac.uk

Closing date: **Monday 5th March 2007**.

Women Writing and Reading: Past and Present, Local and Global

University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada 4-6
May 2007

This three-day conference, being held at the University of Alberta, offers a forum for academics and the wider community to discuss issues around the theme of women as writers and readers. The aim of the conference is to explore these issues in the past and present, and in a local and global context. We invite contributions from a wide variety of perspectives social, literary, artistic, historical, political, economic, scientific, legal, philosophical, and so on. What, why, and how do women read and write? What conditions shape women's reading and writing? What is the relationship between women's reading and writing?

We are seeking proposals that engage with these questions in innovative ways. The scope of the conference also includes performing and creative arts. Presentations may be in the form of individual papers, entire panels,

workshops, creative pieces, performance, film or video, multimedia projects, and any other alternative formats. Individual presentations should be 20 minutes long, for inclusion in a 90 minute session with plenty of time for discussion and feedback. A selection of papers will be published. Early submission is encouraged. Deadline for proposals is **28th February 2007**.

Please send proposals of 300 words to the conference organizers by email or regular mail to: **wwr2007@ualberta.ca** or Patricia Demers/Gary Kelly, Department of English and Film Studies, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T6G 2E5

Sexual histories: bodies and desires uncovered

23/24/25 July 2007, University of Exeter, Devon

Keynote speakers: Joan Cadden, Lisa Downing, Philippa Levine

Histories of bodies and sexuality remain dominated by categories of analysis drawn from contemporary, Western society despite awareness that to do so is potentially misleading, euro-centric and anachronistic. Narratives of change about sexual histories are dominated by ideas about repression and liberation, and historical investigations continue to be framed by modern concepts such as homosexuality and pornography.

This conference seeks papers on a wide range of topics across all time periods and disciplines, addressing issues to do with both practice and representation. It is hoped that through such interdisciplinary exchange we can discuss and develop strategies for approaching the study of sex, bodies and desires which are both sensitive to the nuances and complexities of past sexual cultures and able to speak to contemporary concerns and non-specialist audiences.

We would especially like to encourage discussion of the following topics:

- sexuality and the life cycle
- body shape, presentation and desire
- transsexuality and intersex
- unusual sexual practices
- rape and sexual violence
- pornography and its politics
- non-European perspectives.

Contact: Dr Sarah Toulalan,
Centre for Medical History, History Department, University of Exeter, Amory Building, 133 Rennes Drive, Exeter EX4 4RJ.
Tel: 01392 264455. Email: **S.D.Toulalan@ex.ac.uk**.

National Women's Studies Association 2007 Conference

June 28-July 1, 2007

Submission deadline: November 1, 2006

The National Women's Studies Association is pleased to announce that the Call for Proposals for its 2007 conference scheduled for June 28-July 1, 2007 in St. Charles, IL, a suburb of Chicago, is available at **www.nwsaconference.org**.

NWSA invites submissions that examine the conference theme, "Past Debates, Present Possibilities, and Future Feminisms: A Women's and Gender Studies Conference Celebrating 30 Years of NWSA" and its related sub-themes- Girls Studies and Activism, Performing Feminisms, and Im/Migration and Mobility-from women's and gender studies practitioners in college and universities, women's center administrators, independent scholars, K-12 educators, artists, and community activists. The Association also welcomes proposals that do not directly address the theme, but are relevant to women's and gender studies today.

The 2007 conference will feature:

- A talk by Sandra Cisneros, celebrated author of *The House on Mango Street* and the novel *Caramelo*; Engaging Scholarship
- Sessions to promote intellectual exchange and networking; Writing workshops for graduate students and junior faculty; Tribute panel to honor past scholarship that has set new directions for the field;.
- Program Administration and Development and Women's Centers Pre-Conferences.

Allison Kimmich, Executive Director,
allison.kimmich@nwsa.org

Women, Gender and the Cultural Production of Knowledge

International Federation for Research in Women's History (IFRWH)

8-12 August 2007, Sofia, Bulgaria

This conference will welcome interdisciplinary contributions (coming from fields as diverse as history and literary studies, cultural studies, art history, media studies, anthropology, history of philosophy and historiography) dealing with the historical aspects of production, signification and reception of culture – all from a gender perspective.

For further information and registration please visit: **www.ifrwh-bulgaria2007.org**

Conference Reports

West of England & South Wales Women's History Network

Single Women in History 1000 – 2000

Supported by the Women's History Network, the British Academy and the Economic History Society

The title of the 'Single Women in History' conference signalled a global interest in the broad experience of singleness, and scholars of single women around the world found that they are not alone in their efforts. Presenting a rich field of intellectual enquiry not yet explored to its fullest extent, the conference interrogated the construction, composition and transitional nature of the social, legal and sociological category of 'single' over a period of 1000 years in diverse geographical and cultural locations. Attention was often focused on the lived experience of women as they move in and out of categories of singleness.

Excellent organisation by the West of England & South Wales Women's History Network and University of West England meant that there was ample space for sessions, plenty of time for discussion in sessions. Fine weather for the two days further encouraged social connections during breaks, and many delighted in exploring central Bristol in occasional spare time.

Attempting to step away from a traditional definition of single as 'not married', the conference was structured in six strands comprising: Work/Migration, Family/Sexuality, Politics/Social Action, Cultural Representations, Conceptualising Marital Status, and Religion/Spirituality. The six threads of discussion often overlapped, especially during breaks, and delegates were quick to draw linkages between theoretical and empirical papers across the two days.

Conference papers explored different meanings and experiences of 'single', scrutinising the very words used to describe a state of being that includes, but is certainly not limited to; spinster, living alone, anchoress, legally emancipated, never married, chaste, sister, employer, aunt, celibate, educated, ever-single, religious, old maid, helpmeet, divorced, property owner, widow, alone, domestic, lesbian, redundant, eccentric, solitary, traveller, mother, unmarriageable, head of household, and lonely. Such labels and stereotypes were also briefly reflected on in relation to men and male singleness, and it was often noted that current discussions about singlehood tend to overlook the complex gender and power relationships at work when singleness is explored only in direct opposition to marriage.

Plenary sessions over the two days were presented by Katherine Holden (University of West England) discussing the ways in which single has been defined in twentieth century Britain, and Amy Froide (University of Maryland-Baltimore County, USA) discussing representations of never-married women in early modern England. Despite the disparity in time period, the two sessions dovetailed in many ways, particularly highlighting the representations of single and never-married women as a cultural history of concepts. Both emphasised that marital status is no longer a variable, but a valid analytical category, which draws our attention back to the lifecycles of women, and the roles they play in their lifetimes. Anne Byrne (National University of Galway, Ireland) led the final plenary session, where delegates discussed the ways in which the field of singleness studies might be encouraged to grow. It was agreed that there is a clear need for more focus on the discourse that constrain and enable singleness, greater scrutiny of the socio-historical contexts in which caricatures and representations of single are created, and the choice and framing of sources and experiences, 'in her own words'.

Stephanie Wyse, Department of Geography, Kings College London, stephanie.wyse@kcl.ac.uk

The Dorich House Conference

May 2006

The eighth Dorich House Conference, organised by the Modern Interiors Research Centre at Kingston University, took place in May. The subject of this year's conference was *The Professionalisation of Decoration, Design and the Modern Interior, 1870 to the Present* and its aim was to reconsider the developing role of the architect, interior designer and interior decorator in relation to professionalised practice and the role of the 'amateur'. The conference attracted an international audience of practitioners, historians and educators with a shared interest in the histories and contemporary practices of the making of the modern interior.

Keynote address

Joel Sanders of Joel Sanders Architects and the Yale School of Architecture gave the keynote address, reflecting on his essay 'Curtain Wars: Architects, Decorators, and the 20th-Century Domestic Interior', which appeared in *Harvard Design Magazine* in 2002.¹ In 'Curtain Wars' Sanders explored the professional and ideological divide between architects and interior designers, considering historical contexts for the emergence of a gendered professional hierarchy in which decoration/(feminine) has conventionally been subordinated to architecture/(masculine). Sanders pointed to significant areas of overlap between areas of professional practice and called

for an acknowledgement of the restrictive notions of gender and of design that the maintenance of disciplinary boundaries had helped to sustain. He returned to the themes of 'Curtain Wars' in his keynote, suggesting that positive cultural conditions for professional convergence have begun to appear, particularly as a result of more relaxed and flexible attitudes towards gender roles. In the merging of pattern and form evident in recent avant-garde architectural practice Sanders also saw hopeful signs that boundaries between form and decoration might be beginning to be eroded, opening up the potential for a more integrated and inclusive design practice. The keynote was particularly fitting, setting up many of the issues that were addressed in papers given over the two days of the conference. These explored a range of historical influences on professionalisation including access to training, the development of interior design education, the emergence of trade and professional bodies, the influence of other areas of design activity on interior design and decoration, and the relationship between design theory and professional practice.

Women interior designers and decorators

A number of papers examined the experiences of women as interior designers and decorators. In the opening session Nina Baker (University of Strathclyde) explored the extent of women's employment as housepainters and decorators in late nineteenth century Scotland, proposing a hidden history of female activity in the building trades. The critical discourse surrounding women's amateur production of needlework in late nineteenth-century Austria-Hungary, and its implications for the development of an interior design profession in Austria, was the subject of a paper by Rebecca Houze (Northern Illinois University). In the final paper of the day Penny Sparke (Kingston University) considered the relationship between fashionable dress and modern interior decoration, discussing the ways in which interior decoration adopted strategies from couture in the period 1890-1915. The opening day concluded with an evening reception at the Dorich House Museum, formerly the studio and home of the sculptor Dora Gordine, and the launch of *The Modern Period Room: The Construction of the Exhibited Interior, 1870-1950*, a collection of essays developed from papers given at the Dorich House Conference in 2003.

Women's professional identities

The second day saw several speakers consider the fashioning of professional identities. Papers explored the strategies employed by female decorators and designers in situating their work within a professional context, as well as the problems that they faced in gaining recognition and status for their activities. In her paper "*I Am Not a Decorator: Florence Knoll, the Knoll Planning Unit, and the Making of the Modern Office*", Bobbye Tigerman (Metropolitan Museum of Art) discussed the ways in which Knoll constructed her professional identity in opposition to established gendered norms, rejecting the

term decorator, with its restrictive domestic associations, and self-representing as an architect or interior designer. John Turpin (Washington State University) examined the career of Dorothy Draper. Through her pursuit of public commissions and her success in enhancing the profitability of the commercial spaces that she designed, Turpin proposed that Draper played an important role in promoting interior design as a viable business activity; in doing so, he suggested that she helped to re-define the boundaries of professional practice, expanding the parameters for interior design services beyond a domestic context. Both papers exposed the complex negotiations made by female practitioners in their professional lives and pointed to the significance that these negotiations have had for the development of interior design as an expanded area of professional activity.

Debate over the two days was lively, the wide-ranging professional interests of delegates giving rise to many fruitful discussions about the trajectories for professionalisation in different geographical and historical contexts, the intersections between different spheres of design activity, and the relationship between design history, design education and professional practice. These debates and questions were most evident in the work of postgraduate research students, whose research on various aspects of the development of the modern interior was displayed on posters during the conference. Judging by this work the themes of the conference look set to run.

Notes

- 1 Joel Sanders, 'Curtain Wars: Architects, Decorators, and the 20th-Century Domestic Interior,' *Harvard Design Magazine*, 16 (2002).

Fiona Fisher, University of Kingston.

Courses

**University of Edinburgh
School of History and Classics**

MSC Gender History

This taught one-year postgraduate programme explores aspects of global gender history across a broad range of continents (Africa, Asia, Australasia and Europe, including Britain) and periods (classical and medieval to the contemporary world). The role of gender in shaping behaviours, practices and interactions between men and women is discussed in relation to wider political, economic, social and cultural transformations. Key modules on research methods and approaches are combined with a series of specialist optional modules which explore themes such as nationalism, empire, war, revolution, material culture, religion, lifecycle, the emotions, sexuality, crime and deviancy.

Continued on page 42.

CLARE EVANS PRIZE

for a new essay in the field of GENDER AND HISTORY

In memory of Dr Clare Evans, a national prize worth **£500** is awarded annually for an original essay in the field of women's history or gender and history. The essays will be considered by a panel of judges set up by the Women's History Network and the Trustees of the Clare Evans Memorial Fund. The closing date is **31st May 2007** and the prize will be presented by Clare's daughter at the Women's History Network Annual Conference at Winchester in September.

Clare Evans was an outstanding woman who tragically died of cervical cancer on 30 November 1997, aged 37. Born in Bath, she read history at the University of Manchester, graduating in 1982. She continued her studies, registering for a PhD at the University whilst preparing and delivering seminars on feminist history, creating the first feminist historiography course in collaboration with Kersten England and Ann Hughes. By examining census material gathered by Quakers, Clare saw how the changing attitudes to women's participation in the workplace were revealed through the responses to major subsistence crises in the early to mid-nineteenth century. As part of this work, Clare showed how men were constructed as sole wage-earners yet women offered sewing schools to create a new Victorian model following mass unemployment in the cotton mills (a result of the American Civil War). Focusing on textile workers in the Nelson and Colne districts of Lancashire, she uncovered the reality of women's lives to free them from contemporary ideas as dependents within family wage ideology. Clare would have approved of an award which helped women to publish for the first time, giving them the confidence to



further develop their ideas.

To be eligible for the award, the candidate must be a) a woman who has not yet had a publication in a major academic journal, b) not in a permanent academic position, c) normally resident in the UK.

The article should be in English, of 6,000 to 8,000 words in length including footnotes. We welcome submissions from any area of women's history or gender and history. It is anticipated that the winning essay will be published in the *Women's History Review* (subject to the normal refereeing criteria). The completed essay should be sent to Ann Hughes by **31st May 2007**. Please also include brief biographical details (education, current job or other circumstances) and include a cover sheet with title only (not name) to facilitate anonymous judging.

Those wishing to apply for the prize should first e-mail, or write for further details to,
Ann Hughes (hia21@keele.ac.uk),
Department of History and Classics, University of Keele,
Keele, Staffs, ST5 5BG.

CLARE EVANS PRIZE

2006 Winner

This year's winner of the Clare Evans Prize is Gemma Betros for her outstanding essay

Liberty, citizenship, and the suppression of female religious communities in France, 1789-1791

Gemma is presently in the final stages of PhD study at Peterhouse College, University of Cambridge, on the topic of 'The female religious communities of Paris during the French Revolution and First Empire, 1789-1815'. Gemma was presented with a special framed plaque and a cheque for £250 by Merlin Evans, Clare's daughter, at the WHN annual conference in Durham. Gemma's article will now be put forward for publication in *Women's History Review*.

The Clare Evans Prize is an ideal way for a talented researcher at the start of an academic career to get published for the first time. Full details of next year's competition above.

Gemma Betros, pictured right, with Merlin Evans.



For further details contact:

Dr Paul Bailey **Paul.Bailey@ed.ac.uk**

or Sarah Williams **Sarah.Williams@ed.ac.uk**

School of History and Classics, William Robertson Building, 50 George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9JY. Tel: 0131 508349.

**Institute of Historical Research
Methods and Sources for Gender and Women's
History**

Date: 26-30 March 2007 Course Fee: £130

We are once again offering this intensive introduction to archives and libraries in London with particular relevance for the history of women. The course is open to postgraduates, academics and all who are interested in researching themes in gender and women's history.

Students will be introduced to the holdings and particular strengths of all the libraries and archives by their staff, and shown how to use their catalogues and finding aids. They will also have the opportunity to talk in more detail to the librarians and archivists about their own research needs, and to find out more about how particular libraries may be useful to them.

Numbers are limited to 20, so early application is advised. Please visit

www.history.ac.uk/training/courses/wom.html

for an application form, or contact Dr Simon Trafford, The Institute of Historical Research, University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU. Tel: +44 (0)20 7862 8763. Email: **Simon.Trafford@sas.ac.uk**

WHN Moves and News

Congratulations to **Krista Cowman** who has just begun her new role as **Professor of History in the Department of Humanities, University of Lincoln**, having been Principal Lecturer in History at Leeds Metropolitan University

Krista was involved in forming the Network in 1991 and served on its interim steering committee, returning to serve another term in 2001. Her main work to date has been on women's political cultures, especially in the British suffrage movement. She is looking forward to working with her new colleagues to develop historical research at the University of Lincoln.

Congratulations too to **Gerry Holloway**, another veteran of the WHN and a member of our editorial team, who has been promoted to **Senior Lecturer at the University of Sussex**.

Rebecca Rogers, who has regularly presented at WHN conferences, has recently been appointed **Professeur en histoire de l'éducation** at the **Université René Descartes, Paris**.

We would like to celebrate the career moves of our members so please email the editors at **magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org** with your news.

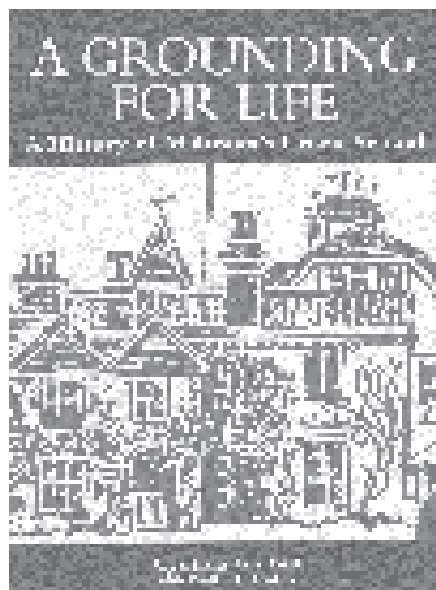
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WHN Book Prize 2006

The Women's History Network (UK) £1,000 Book Prize this year is shared jointly by

Selina Todd for *Young Women, Work and Family in England 1918 – 1950*

and

Jane Potter for *Boys in Khaki, Girls in Print: Women's Literary Responses to the Great War 1914-1918*

Both books are published by Oxford University Press. The former book challenges contemporary accounts that portrayed young women as pleasure-loving leisure consumers, and argues that the world of work was central to their life experiences. Jane Potter's text, on the other hand, explores the novels and memoirs of forgotten women writers during the Great War who appealed to a British reading public hungry for amusement, news and encouragement in the face of uncertainty and grief.

The Panel of judges this year were Barbara Bush, Sheffield Hallam University; Kathryn Gleadle, University College Oxford; Mary Joannou, Anglia Ruskin University; Ann Laurence, the Open University and June Purvis, University of Portsmouth, as Chair. As you can see, we have a wide range of scholarly expertise between us and this year there were nine entries for us all to read. Coming to a final decision was not an easy process but we took our time, deliberated and pondered. On behalf of the Women's History Network (UK), the Panel warmly congratulates Selina Todd and Jane Potter on their splendid win.

We wish to encourage candidates to enter for next year's Book Prize and to remind entrants that the award is for an author's first book which makes a significant contribution to women's history or gender history and is written in an accessible style that is rewarding to the general reader of history. Candidates for the 2007 prize should apply by 15 March 2007, sending a formal letter to me, June Purvis, enclosing a copy of their book. Further details about conditions for entry can be found on the Women's History Network (UK) website: www.womenshistorynetwork.org

Professor June Purvis, School of Social, Historical and Literary Studies, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth PO1 3AS.

Email: bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

Women's History Network (UK)

£1000 BOOK PRIZE

2007 Competition

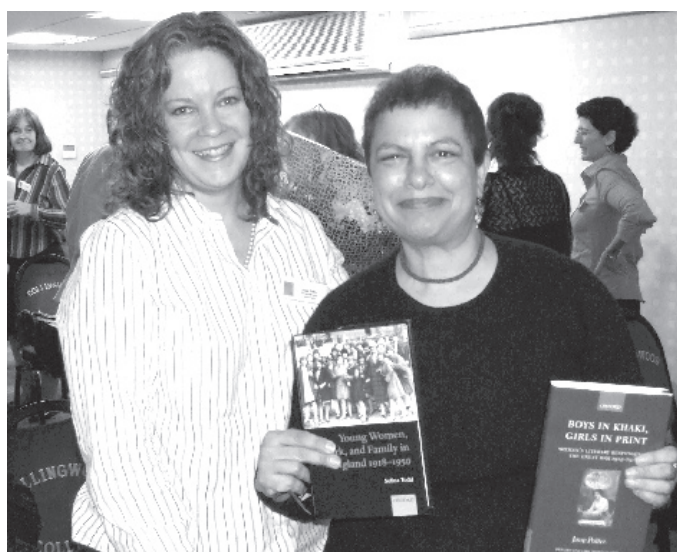
The WHN £1000 Book Prize is awarded for an author's first book which makes a significant contribution to women's history or gender history and is written in an accessible style that is rewarding to the general reader of history. The book must be written in English and be published the year prior to the award being made.

The prize will be presented at the Women's History Network Annual Conference at the University of Winchester in September 2007. Books to be considered for this competition should have been published during the year **1st January 2006 and 31st December 2006**.

To be eligible for the award, the candidate should be a member of the Women's History Network (UK) and be normally resident in the UK. We welcome submissions from any area of women's history or gender and history. The books will be considered by a panel of judges set up by the Women's History Network.

Candidates for the 2007 Prize must apply by **15th March 2007**, sending a formal letter to June Purvis, chair of the panel of judges, enclosing a copy of the book. Professor June Purvis, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth PO1 3AS, UK.

Email: bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org



Jane Potter (left) & Mary Joannou with this year's winning books

Women's History Review

EDITOR:

June Purvis, *University of Portsmouth, UK*

Women's History Review is a major international journal whose aim is to provide a forum for the publication of new scholarly articles in the rapidly expanding field of women's history. The time span covered by the journal includes the 19th and 20th centuries as well as earlier times. The journal seeks to publish contributions from a range of disciplines (for example, women's studies, history, sociology, cultural studies, literature, political science, anthropology and philosophy) that further feminist knowledge and debate about women and/or gender relations in history.



The Editors welcome a variety of approaches from people from different countries and backgrounds. In addition to main articles the journal also publishes shorter Viewpoints that are possibly based on the life experiences, ideas and views of the writer and may be more polemic in tone. A substantial Book Reviews section is normally included in each issue.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

2006 – Volume 15 (5 issues)

Print ISSN 0961-2025; Online ISSN 1747-583X

Institutional rate (print and online): US\$491; £316

Institutional rate (online only): US\$466; £300

Personal rate (print only): US\$76; £45



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Committee News

The WHN AGM held at our September conference in Durham was a lively and well-attended event. Here is a report of the main proceedings:

Treasurer's Report and Charity Status

The Treasurer advised that our finances are healthy and comparable to the same time last year. She reported that the Durham Conference Centre had managed registration for the Conference and that this had been of great help to the conference organisers. However, she advised that the Committee should continue to monitor this practice to ensure value for money.

Six domestic and six international bursaries were awarded to people giving papers at the conference.

The Committee asked members to agree to some amendments to our Constitution that would enable us to gain charity status. These were agreed unanimously. All elected Steering Committee members are trustees, while the ones identified are the convenor, treasurer plus one other member of the Committee.

Membership Secretary's Report

There are around 290 paid-up members; five to six people had joined at this conference; there are nine institutional members and 22 overseas members. So far, 46 members have completed Gift Aid Declaration Forms (if you are not one of them, and you pay tax, please complete the declaration on the back of this magazine and forward it to our membership secretary).

Election of Steering Committee

This year we said good bye to Maureen Meikle, Anne Anderson, Claire Jones and June Purvis, although June remains as ex-officio representative for the International Federation for Research in Women's History. In addition, Siobhan Tolland, Karen Atkinson and Sarah Aiston have stood down for personal reasons. We thank them all for their work for the Network and wish them well for the future.

There were thus seven places to fill on the Steering Committee. However, since only seven people volunteered to serve they were all accepted onto the Committee. However it was proposed that in future we should return to previous practice and have a ballot.

We welcomed onto the Committee the following seven new members: Kath Holden (West of England), Zoë Law (Winchester), Alison McCall (Women's History Scotland), Sue Morgan (Chichester), Jane Potter (Oxford Brookes), Stephanie Spencer (Winchester), Louise Wannell (York). We also welcomed as an ex-officio member Flora Wilson (Schools Liaison), who joins Beverley Kemp from the Women's Library (London Metropolitan University).

Book tokens were presented to Maureen Meikle, our indefatigable Convenor, and to Claire Jones for her work on publicity and the WHN website.

Conference 2007, Winchester

Stephanie Spencer reported that the theme of the next WHN annual conference will be 'Collecting Women's Lives'. It will be held at Winchester University, 7 - 9 September 2007. (Please see the Call for Papers on page 2).

Many thanks to the hard working organisers of our 2006 annual conference at the University of Durham.

Pictured left to right, Sarah Aiston, Jean Spence and Maureen Meikle.



Publicity

Members are urged to take membership forms and copies of the Magazine to any conferences you are attending. Membership forms are available from the Membership Secretary (membership@womenshistorynetwork.org) and copies of Women's History Magazine can be obtained from editors (magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org).

Donations to the Women's Library

The WHN's complementary copy of *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women* has been donated to the Women's Library (London). Further, a conference participant, Folake Onayemi (University of Ibadan, Nigeria) presented a copy of her *Each Shaft Could be the Sun: A collection of poems* (2006) to the Library.

At the close of the meeting a vote of thanks was moved to our conference organisers, Sarah Aiston, Maureen Meikle and Jean Spence, and they were presented with flowers. We would like to extend to them our thanks for providing us with such a well-organised and enjoyable event.

Steering Committee Meeting

All WHN members are very welcome as observers at meetings of the national steering committee. The next meeting will take place on Saturday, November 18 at 12 noon at the Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, University of London, Malet Street, London WC1. If you intend to join us, please e-mail enquiries@womenshistorynetwork.org first - just to ensure that there have been no last minute changes of plan.

Letters Forum

We plan to introduce a letters page in *Women's History Magazine* and would like to encourage members to write to us about any issue relating to women's history. If there is anything you feel strongly about, or think would be of interest to our members, or if you want to comment on the Network or the Magazine, please email your letter to us at magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org

Space may be limited and the editors reserve the right to choose and edit letters.

WHN Member Discount *Women's History Review*

Individual members of the WHN can subscribe to *Women's History Review* at the discounted personal rate of £38 (usual price £45).

Please visit the Taylor and Francis website for further details and application form, www.tandf.co.uk, or visit www.womenshistorynetwork.org and follow the link.

Publishing in *Women's History Magazine*

Women's History Magazine welcomes contributions from experienced scholars and those at an earlier stage in their research careers. We aim to be inclusive and fully recognise that women's history is not only lodged in the academy. All submissions are subject to the usual peer review process.

Articles should be 3000-8000 words in length, style guidelines are available at

www.magazine.womenshistorynetwork.org

Please email your submission, as a word attachment, to the editors at

magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org



What is the Women's History Network?

The WHN was founded in July 1991. It is a national association concerned with promoting women's history and encouraging women interested in history. WHN business is carried out by the National Steering Committee, which is elected by the membership and meets regularly several times each year. It organises the annual conference, manages the finance and membership, and co-ordinates activities in pursuit of the aims of the WHN.

Aims of the WHN

1. To encourage contact between all people interested in women's history — in education, the media or in private research
2. To collect and publish information relating to women's history
3. To identify and comment upon all issues relating to women's history
4. To promote research into all areas of women's history

What does the WHN do?

Annual Conference

Each year the WHN holds a national conference for WHN members and others. The conference provides everyone interested in women's history with a chance to meet and it has become an exciting forum where new research can be aired and recent developments in the field can be shared. The Annual General Meeting of the Network takes place at the conference. The AGM discusses issues of policy and elects the National Steering Committee.

WHN Publications

WHN members receive three copies per year of the Women's History Magazine, which contains: articles discussing research, sources and applications of women's history; reviews of books, conferences, meetings and exhibitions; and information on calls for papers, prizes and competitions, and publication opportunities.

Annual Membership Rates

Student/unwaged
Low income (*under £16,000 pa)
High income

Joining the WHN

£10	Overseas minimum	£30
£15	UK Institutions	£35
£30	Institutions overseas	£40

Membership application/renewal, Gift Aid Declaration and Banker's Order forms are available on the back cover.

Women's History Network Contacts:

Steering Committee officers:

Membership, subscriptions, Dr Moira Martin:
membership@womenshistorynetwork.org
or write to
Membership Secretary, HLSS, University of the West
of England, Bristol BS16 2JP.

Finance, bursaries, Dr Elizabeth Foyster:
treasurer@womenshistorynetwork.org

Web Officer, Ms Zilan Wang:
webadmin@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Book Prize, Chair, Professor June Purvis:
bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

UK Representative for International Federation for
Research into Women's History, Professor June
Purvis:
ifrwh@womenshistorynetwork.org

Magazine Team:

Editors, submissions: Dr Debbi Simonton, Dr Claire
Jones, Dr Jane Potter:
magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org

Book Reviews, Dr Jane Potter:
bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org
or send books to her at
Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies,
The Richard Hamilton Building, Headington Hill
Campus, Oxford OX3 0BP.

Advertising, conference notices, calls for papers, Dr
Gerry Holloway:
advertising@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Administrator

All other queries, purchase of back issues of magazine,
magazines to sell at conferences, please email:
admin@womenshistorynetwork.org
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Dr Claire Jones, WHN Administrator, 7 Penkett Road,
Wallasey, Merseyside, CH45 7QE.

Membership Application

I would like to *join / renew my subscription to the Women's History Network. I */ enclose a cheque payable to Women's History Network / have filled out & returned to my bank the Banker's Order Form / for £ _____. (* delete as applicable)

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Email: _____ Tel (work): _____

Tick this box if you DO NOT want your name made available to publishers/conference organisers for publicity: ☐

Detach and return this form with, if applicable, your cheque to Dr Moira Martin, HLSS, University of the West of England, Bristol, BS16 2JP. Email: membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

----- Gift aid declaration

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 - You can cancel the declaration at any time by notifying the charity – it will then not apply to donations you make on or after the date of cancellation or such later date as you specify.
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3. If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration (see note 1).
4. If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return. If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask the charity. Or you can ask your local tax office for leaflet IR113 Gift Aid.

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To (bank) _____

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Pay to the account of the Women's History Network, Account No. 91325692 at the National Westminster Bank, Stuckeys Branch, Bath (sort code 60-02-05), on _____ 200_, and annually thereafter, on 1 September, the sum of

(in figures) £ _____ (in words) _____.

Signature: _____