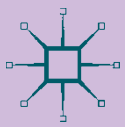
A HISTORY OF THE GIRL

Formation, Education and Identity

Edited by Mary O'Dowd and June Purvis



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palgrave
macmillan

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ISBN 978-3-319-69277-7 ISBN 978-3-319-69278-4 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017960187

Cover designed by Jenny Vong

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

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Isobelle Barrett Meyering is a historian of Australian feminism, childhood, and the family. She completed her PhD on children and the Australian women's liberation movement (1969–1979) at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, in 2017. Dr Barrett Meyering has taught a wide range of history and gender studies subjects at UNSW, and her work has featured in a number of journals including *Australian Feminist Studies*, *Outskirts: Feminisms Along the Edge* and *History Australia*. Dr Barrett Meyering previously worked as a research assistant at the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse from 2009 to 2013.

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Asha Islam Nayeem is a Professor of History at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. She is editor of two journals, the *Bangladesh Journal of American Studies* and *Bangladesh Historical Studies*, the journal of the Bangladesh Historical Association, of which she is the general secretary. She is a board member of the International Federation for Research in Women's History, 2015–2020. Her research is in the area of gender history and education. She has contributed extensively on women and education to various journals. Currently she is working on the manuscript of a book on female education in eastern Bengal in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Alison Mackinnon was the Foundation Director of the Hawke Research Institute from 1997 to 2006. She is a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. In 2009 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia. Professor Mackinnon's major research focus is women's history, particularly the education of women and girls in both historical and contemporary contexts. Her recent books include *Women, Love and Learning: The Double Bind* (2010) and *A New Kid on the Block: The University of South Australia in the Unified National System* (2016).

Mary Jo Maynes is Professor of History at the University of Minnesota. Her books include *Taking the Hard Road: Life Course and Class Identity in French and German Workers' Autobiographies of the Industrial Era* (1995) and, with Jennifer Pierce and Barbara Laslett, *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History* (2008). She has also coedited many collections, including *Secret Gardens, Satanic Mills: Placing Girls in European History* (2005). She has recently published *Family: A World History* (2012) coauthored with Ann Waltner.

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Mary O'Dowd is Professor of Gender History at Queen's University Belfast. Her current research interests focus on women and gender in Irish history. She was a founding member of the Women's History Association of Ireland and served as president of the International Federation for Research in Women's History (2000–2005). Professor O'Dowd was elected a Member of the Royal Irish Academy in 2010. Her publications include *A History of Women in Ireland, 1500–1800* (2005); *Reading the Irish Woman* (coauthored with Gerardine Meaney and Bernadette Whelan, 2014). She has recently completed a coauthored study of the history of marriage in Ireland from 1660 to 1925.

June Purvis is Emeritus Professor of Women's and Gender History at the University of Portsmouth, UK. She is founding and managing editor of the journal *Women's History Review*; editor of a Women's and Gender History Book Series with Routledge; author of four single-authored books, including *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography* (2002) and *Christabel Pankhurst: A Biography* (2018); and coeditor of 13 edited book collections, including *Women's Activism: Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present* (2013). She is Chair of the Women's History Network and

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Marja van Tilburg is Senior Lecturer in Early Modern History (1500–1789) at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. She specialises in European cultural history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Dr. van Tilburg's doctoral thesis (1998) was a study of gender and sexuality in Dutch conduct books and is discussed in Peter N. Stearns's *Encyclopedia of European Social History from 1350 to 2000*. Since then, she has published articles on changing perceptions of the life cycle in European culture, including in *the Journal of Family History*.

Ann Waltner is Professor of History at the University of Minnesota. From 2005 to 2014 she directed the Institute for Advanced Study at the University of Minnesota. From 2000 to 2005 she was editor of the *Journal of Asian Studies*. Her books include *Adoption and Kinship in Late Imperial China* (1991), and she has written numerous articles on childhood, family, and gender in China. Professor Waltner has most recently published *Family: A World History* (2012), coauthored with Mary Jo Maynes.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Mary O'Dowd and June Purvis

Girls' Studies emerged as a distinct field of scholarly research in the 1990s. Its development was a reflection of the growing concern with the status of girls in contemporary society. The girl has been at the centre of global discourse in the twenty-first century. The education of girls, sex trafficking and grooming of female children, and the portrayal of teenage girls in popular culture have generated considerable public debate in many countries. Given the urgency of these issues, it is not surprising that most scholars in Girls' Studies have concentrated on the girl in contemporary society.

The history of the girl has been slower to develop.[1] Several excellent collections of essays were published in the early years of the twenty-first century, but the wider research area has not generated the same intellectual excitement as, for example, Women's History did in the 1970s and 1980s.[2] Historians of women are only slowly beginning to use age as well as gender as a criteria for historical analysis.[3]

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M. O'Dowd, J. Purvis (eds.), *A History of the Girl*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4_1

One reason that might be offered for the tardy development of research on the history of the girl is the difficulty of accessing the voices of girls prior to the twentieth century. This was also, of course, a familiar defense in the 1960s and early 1970s concerning the limited amount of research on the history of women. Yet, when historians explored the archives from a gender perspective, they realised that there was a wealth of relevant material. A focus on women and gender also provided new ways of looking at well-researched texts and documents. Similarly, the contributions in this volume reveal the wide range of sources that are available for the history of the girl. They include private letters and diaries, official government and school records, contemporary magazines and newspapers, and published and unpublished memoirs. Scholars have used some of these sources in the past but, like the use of gender as a category for historical analysis, an age-based analysis can provide new insights and perspectives. June Purvis (Chapter 7) notes, for example, that the autobiography of Sylvia Pankhurst has informed the standard narrative of the public and private lives of the Pankhurst family since it was first published in 1931. Yet Purvis's careful deconstruction of the text indicates that it reveals more about the author's constructed memory of her girlhood than may have been the case in reality.

This volume had its origins in a special theme panel on the history of the girl at the Congress of the International Committee of Historians held in Jinan, China, in 2015. The purpose of the session (which was sponsored by the International Federation for Research in Women's History) was to ask an international group of historical researchers to identify key research questions and common themes in the global history of the girl.[4] Chronologically, we also wanted the panel to cover a long span of time beginning in the medieval period. Despite the wide chronological and geographical spread, the panel discussion and the contributions to this volume converge on three main themes: the transition from girlhood to womanhood, the formation and education of girls, and the paid employment and work of girls.

A central question in the history of the girl is when does girlhood end and womanhood begin. The contributors to this volume suggest that there is no simple answer to this question. Historians of childhood have long pointed out that the distinction between childhood and adulthood is often blurred. While chronological age provides some guidance, it is not usually the determining factor. In medieval and early modern European society, the terms 'boy' and 'girl' could be used for young people from infancy

through to their mid- or late twenties.[5] Marriage has traditionally been considered the rite of passage marking the journey from youth to adulthood, but child marriages and legal definitions of minors compound that assumption. In colonial Bengal, as Asha Islam Nayeem (Chapter 9) notes, girls could be married and widowed by the age of nine. In Nigeria, a girl might be compelled by her family to marry before she becomes a teenager, but she remains legally a child until she is 18 years of age.[6]

Leaving home for work or education could also loosen parental control and propel the girl into adulthood. Despite the association of girls with the home and the domestic space, there is a long tradition of girls from poor families moving from their parental house to secure employment elsewhere. Sophie Brouquet (Chapter 2) points to the apprenticeship of girls in medieval craft workshops in European towns from the age of 10 or 11. In colonial Lagos, as Oluwakemi Adesina (Chapter 12) notes, girls from rural areas were sent to the city by their parents to seek employment, often in the form of hawking goods in the street. Mary Jo Maynes and Ann Waltner (Chapter 5) suggest that paid work in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century textile industry was the means through which girls could achieve independence from their families. Similarly, Yan Hu's analysis of oral interviews with girls in southwest China revealed their determination to create a new life for themselves far away from their place of birth. Adesina, however, documents the darker side of girls living away from home, as many Yoruba girls in Lagos earned their living not by hawking but as prostitutes.

Maynes and Waltner also query the level of economic independence acquired by girl workers in the textile industry in Europe and China. Like medieval apprenticeship agreements, the contracts for the employment of girls in China were often made between a girl's father and the textile manufacturer. In parts of Europe—such as Ireland—the wages of domestic spinners were usually paid directly to a girl's family. And when girls began to work in mills and factories, their wages were handed over to their parents, although they were given a small cash sum to spend on themselves. Girls employed in factory work in early twentieth-century China were frequently housed in dormitories and supervised by female employees. The world of work continued, therefore, to treat working girls as children who required adult control.

Education could create a physical as well as a cultural divide between parents and their daughters. Asha Islam Nayeem (Chapter 9) breathes new life into the conceptual framework of Philippe Ariès on the history of childhood by locating it in a colonial context. The replacement of the

indigenous form of education in colonial Bengal with a stratified system that was age based introduced new ways of identifying the different stages of a child's life. As the concept of formal schooling spread and was extended across gender and class lines, childhood itself lasted longer. At the other end of the educational process, Alison Mackinnon (Chapter 11) argues that enrolling in university programmes delayed the marital age of female students and, she suggests, their girlhood. Her chapter explores the question: Were female students perceived as girls or women? Mackinnon documents the close supervision of women students across the western world until quite late in the twentieth century. As Carol Dyhouse has pointed out, universities considered themselves *in loco parentis* or substitute parents for the students in their care.[7] Although the female students had left home, their lives, like those of the Chinese textile workers, were carefully monitored by house wardens and academic supervisors.

Another way to explore the distinction between girlhood and young womanhood is to consider both concepts as cultural constructions. As Isobelle Barrett Meyering (Chapter 10) notes, this was a core belief of the second wave feminist movement in western societies in the 1970s. Girls, it was argued, were conditioned from birth to have a subordinate role in society. Twentieth-century feminists critiqued what they perceived as the rearing of girls to behave in a constrained and passive manner. The content of the advice books explored by Marja van Tilburg (Chapter 3) and Emily Bruce and Fang Qin (Chapter 6) document what this entailed. Both chapters, however, suggest that perceptions of the ideal girl and young woman were often more nuanced than the feminists of the 1970s assumed. The perceptions also differed over time and in different social or national contexts. Van Tilburg, for example, traces the impact of the new focus of psychologists on adolescence on the changing construction of girlhood in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The new modern adolescent girl of the *fin de siècle* might have had more freedom to socialise outside the home than girls in earlier times, but she was also identified as going through a 'difficult' time in her life as she matured sexually and, thus, was perceived to represent a potential a danger to herself as well as to young men.

Although there was an international market in advice books with the works of English, French, and German authors translated and circulated in different countries, the advice was not always delivered in a uniform fashion. Eighteenth-century Dutch and German authors appear to have been more open about acknowledging and discussing sexual desire in young women than their English counterparts. Similarly, Bruce and Qin detected

differences in the characteristics of the ideal girl in nineteenth-century Germany and China. They suggest that in Germany, the virtue of 'diligence' was emphasised while in China there was a stronger focus on developing domesticity in preparation for marriage.

Eighteenth-century female authors of didactic tracts incorporated a proto-feminism in their advice to young women as they encouraged them to read and develop their own intellectual curiosity. In eighteenth-century Britain and Ireland, the 'literary lady' was, nonetheless, an ambiguous figure, mocked but also admired. Girls were instructed to acquire an education that would make them agreeable and informed companions for their husbands, but they were also warned against flaunting their knowledge in social settings.[8] As Mary O'Dowd (Chapter 4) observes, the Irish bishop Edward Synge advised his daughter, Alicia, not to boast about her learning although, at the same time, he encouraged her to read as much as possible and regularly recommended books to her. Emily Bruce and Fang Qin note a similar mixed message on girls' education among nineteenth-century German writers who warned of the 'dangers of feminine curiosity'.

Anxiety around the educated girl is a persistent theme in the history of the girl from the medieval period through to the twenty-first century. Girls' apprenticeships in medieval Europe were normally shorter than those for boys as families were reluctant to invest in the training of their daughters. Indentures for female apprenticeships often included a cancellation clause if the girl married before her training was complete. Formal schooling for girls always lagged behind that for boys. And it was usually with much wringing of hands that girls were admitted to schools which taught them more than basic literacy. Schools for girls initially were often directed at poor girls with wealthier parents reluctant to send their daughters to such institutions. As June Purvis (Chapter 7) notes, Emmeline Pankhurst shared the misgivings of many nineteenth-century parents concerning the appropriateness of a public school education for her daughters. She preferred to rely on private tutors and governesses for the girls when they were young. Later, when the Pankhurst sisters attended a secondary school, both mother and daughters spoke of the teachers with contempt.

The debate around girls' access to formal education outside the home can also overlook the importance of the more informal education that many girls received in homes in different parts of the world. Girls learned domestic skills in the home but, in middle- and upper-class families, a variety of tutors and governesses also taught more academic subjects. In

eighteenth-century Ireland, as Mary O'Dowd reveals, Alicia Synge was taught by a French governess and also received lessons from a fellow at Trinity College, Dublin. In late nineteenth-century China, as Emily Bruce and Fang Qin describe, the daughters in the Lü family had an impressive literary education that began at a private school attended by the children in the extended family of their mother.

The importance of parents as the principal educators of their children is also emphasised by a number of contributors. Purvis documents the involvement of the Pankhurst children in the political activities of their parents. The girls preferred to play election games rather than spend time with their dolls. Despite subsequent divisions in the family, all of the Pankhursts adhered in adult life to the radical politics that they imbibed in their childhood. Similarly, as O'Dowd shows, the journal by Irish Quaker Mary Leadbeater makes clear the way in which her parents' active involvement in the Society of Friends infiltrated her childhood, not always with her adolescent approval.

When school education became the norm for girls in the twentieth century, public debate moved to a discussion of the appropriate curriculum. There were common themes in this debate across the globe from newly independent Bulgaria in the late nineteenth century to colonial Bengal in the middle decades of the twentieth century. In many different countries, government officials, teachers, and school mangers fretted over the most appropriate school curriculum for girls. What was the purpose of girls' education and should they be educated for the home or the workplace? As Georgeta Nazarska (Chapter 8) comments, there was often a class dimension to this debate as poorer girls were given a vocational education to enable them to find employment while girls from wealthier families were provided with a more academic training. Yan Hu (Chapter 13) also points to the class complications of girls' education in rural parts of south west China as parents could not afford to educate their daughters and the state did not provide support for girls to attend schools in the local town or city. In early twentieth-century Bengal, as Asha Islam Nayeem documents, diverse religious groups opted for differing curricula for girls, and the colonial government had to modify the standardisation of the curriculum in girls' schools accordingly.

Emily Bruce and Fang Qin refer to the education of girls as a 'means of promoting middle-class power'. From a different perspective, Georgeta Nazarka's analysis of secondary schools for girls in early twentieth-century Bulgaria concurs with this conclusion. In her prosopographical study of selected girls' schools in Sofia, she notes the family networks of pupils who

attended the institutions over several generations. Almost all the girls were from middle-class families in which the fathers and, in some cases, the mothers had attended university. The past pupils from the prestigious schools formed organisations that were influential in philanthropic and cultural activities in Sofia. Entry into the social elite of the new state represented a form of empowerment for educated women.

Alison Mackinnon, however, cautions against exaggerating the extent to which women benefit from education, particularly at the tertiary level. She documents the uneven history of the admission of women to universities in Islamic countries. In Iran and Saudi Arabia, women students form a considerable proportion of the student population. In Iran, however, there have been attempts to impose restrictions on the subjects that women are permitted to study. While there has been a remarkable increase in the number of women attending university in Saudi Arabia, their advancement in the world of work is less impressive. Many women have difficulties securing employment, and, if they do find paid work, most expect to resign on marriage.

In other parts of the world, work for girls and young women has for a long period of time formed part of the history of the global economy. As Sophia Brouquet notes, the fine embroidery work of women in late medieval London known as *opus anglicanum* formed an important part of the English export market as it was sold throughout Western Europe. Maynes and Waltner document the central importance of the work of girls to the global textile industry from the eighteenth through to the twentieth century. They also note, however, that the labour of girls in the global textile industry was so taken for granted that it generated relatively little comment in the long period covered by their study. Historians of women have long recognised that the majority of the labour force in the textile industry was female, but few historians have given sufficient recognition to the fact that the workers were not only female but were also mainly teenage girls. Working in textile factories and mixing with other teenage girls was an important part of the formation of hundreds of thousands of girls in many parts of Europe and China throughout the period studied by Maynes and Waltner.

Yan Hu looks at the global economy from a different perspective: its impact on the lives of girls living in rural southwest China in the late twentieth century. Lured by the attractions of China's rapidly growing consumer society, the young girls chose to migrate to the city in the expectation of having a more financially secure life than their farming parents.

They also opted for arranged marriages with the same aim in mind and agreed to live far away from their family and childhood friends. Using the methodology of a social anthropologist, Hu argues that the girls were taking advantage of the new economy to take control of their lives and indirectly demand social equality for themselves. They were unconsciously responding to the inequalities embedded in economic globalisation. In colonial Lagos, as Oluwakemi Adesina explains, young girls were also the victims of global trends in capitalism. Urban expansion and the detrimental impact of the 1929 economic crash on the rural hinterland promoted a flourishing business in prostitution. The girls were from the local Yoruba community while most of their customers were European men serving in the colonial army and administration or working as seamen temporarily resident in the busy port of Lagos. In Yoruba society, girls worked as street hawkers in order to contribute to the family economy, but in the colonial setting of the 1940s, this traditional custom was transformed into a barely hidden guise for prostitution.

There is a strong comparative dimension to this volume. Two of the studies (Chaps. 4 and 5) compare the experiences of girls in Chinese and Western European history. The authors conclude that there are more similarities than differences. Other chapters confirm that the history of the girls in different parts of the world incorporates common themes and attitudes. This is partly a consequence of economic and political colonialism and the sharing of public and private policies and attitudes. It also indicates that the issues discussed in the volume (the transition from girlhood to womanhood; the formation and education of the girl and her identity as a woman) are universal themes that are still relevant for contemporary debates about girlhood today. A historical perspective underlines the remarkable continuity in the history of the girl.

Notes

1. An early twentieth-century book published in Britain—Dorothy Margaret Stuart, *The Girl Through the Ages* (London: Harrap & Co., 1933)—has been largely ignored by subsequent scholars. A copy that June Purvis owns was given as the Third Form Prize to Sonia Kemp at the Nottingham High School for Girls in July 1935.
2. See, for example, Mary Jo Maynes, Birgitte Søland, and Christina Benninghaus (eds), *Secret Gardens, Satanic Mills: Placing Girls in European History, 1750–1960* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); Alys Eve Weinbaum et al. (eds), *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption,*

Modernity, and Globalization (Duke University Press, 2008); Jennifer Helgren and Colleen A. Vasconcellos (eds), *Girlhood: A Global History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010). Miriam Forman-Brunell and Leslie Paris have edited two collections of essays on the girl in modern American history: *The Girls' History and Culture Reader: The Nineteenth Century* and *The Girls' History and Culture Reader: The Twentieth Century* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2011). See also Valerie Sanders (ed.), *Records of Girlhood: An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Women's Childhoods* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Valerie Sanders (ed.), *Records of Girlhood Volume Two: An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Women's Childhood* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012). Most of the focus for the history of the girl has been on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with a strong focus on education and contemporary literature. See, for example, Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981); Judith Rowbotham, *Good Girls Make Good Lives: Guidance for Girls in Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989); June Purvis, *A History of Women's Education in England* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1991); Rosemary Auchmuty, *A World of Girls* (London: The Women's Press, 1992); Claudia Nelson and Lynne Vallone (eds.), *The Girl's Own: Cultural Histories of the Anglo-American Girl, 1830–1915* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1994); Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girls' Culture in England 1880–1915* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Penny Tinkler, *Constructing Girlhood: Popular Magazines for Girls Growing Up in England, 1920–1950* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1995); and Carol Dyhouse, *Girl Trouble* (London: Zed Books, 2013). See also the special issue of *Clio*, *femmes et sociétés,* 4 (1996) which focussed on the adolescent girl. Available online at http://journals.openedition.org/clio/428; DOI: 10.4000/clio.428.

3. There were, for example, only a small number of panels focused on the history of the girl at the Berkshire Women's History Conference held at Hofstra University in New York in June 2017 (https://2017berkshireconference.hofstra.edu/program/). Accessed 20 July 2017.
4. Eight papers presented at the congress explored themes relating to the history of the girl in seven countries. In order to widen the international focus, we added five studies that explore aspects of the main theme in four additional countries. These were selected from the proposals submitted in response to the call for papers for the panel.
5. Barbara Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London. The Experience of Childhood in History* (Oxford University Press, 1993), 5–13.
6. Christopher Nwonu and Ifidon Oyakhiromen, 'Nigeria and Child Marriage: Legal Issues, Complications, Implications, Prospects and Solutions', *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization*, 29 (2014), Consulted online at http://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JLPG/article/view/15930/16398.

7. Carol Dyhouse, *No Distinction of Sex? Women in British Universities 1870–1939* (London: UCL Press, 1995).
8. See essays in Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Mary O'Dowd, *A History of Women in Ireland, 1500–1800* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005), 214.

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CHAPTER 2

Girls at Work in the Middle Ages

Sophie Brouquet

> The spirit of monopoly, which presided over the reduction of these [guild] statutes, has gone so far as to exclude women from the employments most suited to their sex, such as embroidery, which they cannot excuse on their own account.…
>
> —Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot (1776)[1]

At the end of the eighteenth century, the reforming French minister Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot was indignant that needlework remained under the control of male guilds as he believed that this work should have been organised by women. The exclusion of women from craftsmanship such as embroidery seemed to Turgot to be an outdated legacy from medieval times. Instead, he proposed a gendered division of labour based on the 'laws of nature'. Turgot like many commentators after him was not aware that the medieval labour market was not as closed to women as, at first sight, it might appear.

The history of work in rural and urban medieval society has long been associated with men and masculinity. Basing their analysis on the formal statutes of urban craft guilds, historians in the past too quickly assumed that women and girls were excluded from the world of work. Yet, as recent

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M. O'Dowd, J. Purvis (eds.), *A History of the Girl*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4_2

research, relying on a wider range of sources, reveals, young unmarried girls worked both in rural areas as well as in craft workshops.[2]

The young unmarried girl is usually defined by historians in terms of her legal status, her role within the family, or her relationship with her parents. Earlier histories of medieval women, however, had a wider perspective. One of the first papers devoted to women in the Middle Ages was by English historian Elizabeth Dixon. Published in 1895 and dedicated to the women craftsmen of Paris, it focused on women's work.[3] As Dixon implicitly acknowledged, all urban economies create a division of labour, between young and old men, qualified craftsmen and unskilled workers, men and women, and, of course, boys and girls. In the twentieth century, however, historians were slow to develop Dixon's initial study. References to women's work in medieval society tended to rely on a familiar litany of the physical harshness of women's labour and their low wages in comparison with those of men.[4.] The new interest in the history of the adolescent girl, however, has led historians to focus more specifically on the different types of work undertaken by girls in towns as well as in the countryside.

Medievalists and gender historians have begun to document girls working independently or on behalf of their familiar household, particularly in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in northern France and England. Girls' access to independent employment seems to have been more difficult in southern Europe (with the notable exception of slaves or servants), where the application of Roman law tended to exclude them. Yet, as both textual and visual sources reveal, girls in most parts of medieval Europe worked with their fathers or brothers within the family workshop. Through an analysis of different types of sources, this chapter explores the role of girls and young women in urban workshops. There is a particular focus on girls engaged in paid artistic crafts, such as painting, embroidery, and work with gold or silver.

Apprenticeship

Female apprentices appear in medieval London archives from the late thirteenth century. According to the laws of the City of London, a girl could be apprenticed to a woman or a man. For the female teenager, the period before marriage was one of freedom, and girls were aware of this independence and form of autonomy. Villagers came from the countryside to work in towns as servants or apprentices. Most young girls worked in small shops or as servants, seamstresses, laundresses, brewers, tapsters, or hostelers.[5]

Few secured skilled work, and most worked for short periods of time before they married. Domestic service allowed girls to leave the family home, save a little money for their marriage, and choose their husbands more freely. Some benevolent employers bequeathed small sums of money to their female servants, but wages were low for live-in servants, who were provided with lodging, clothing, and food.[6]

The girls' parents signed an apprenticeship contract with the master or the mistress. Some contracts were probably concluded by a simple oral agreement and might only be identified through court disputes. In 1417, for example, Katherine Lightfoot presented a case in the court of the mayor of London accusing Thomas Blunvyle and his wife of holding her as an apprentice against her will. The mayor determined that Lightfoot should be released from her contract because she was under 14 years of age and too young to be an apprentice.[7] This was one of 19 cases of ill treatment of girl apprentices recorded in the *Plea and Memoranda Rolls of London* for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In 15 of the cases, there is no reference to the girls' parents, which suggests that most of the girls were orphans and there may not, therefore, have been a formal agreement made on their behalf.[8]

The contract was usually in the name of both husband and wife, but girls normally served their apprenticeships under the supervision of the mistress of the household. The age of entry into apprenticeship was traditionally younger for girls than it was for boys. The entrance fee was also lower, as families were not prepared to spend as much on training a girl as on a boy. The contract determined the time and the conditions of the girl's presence in the workshop. Some female apprenticeships were very short. In York and in Exeter, for example, contracts were fixed for only one year. Elsewhere, however, they could be longer, ranging from 3 or 4 to 10 years. In reality, girls often served for a shorter period of time. A clause in the apprentice contract for girls allowed for an agreement to be dissolved if the girl married. In such cases, the girls' parents were obliged to pay an additional sum of money to the mistress or master to compensate for their loss of an apprentice.[9]

Girls were attracted to the clothing industry and trained to be silkworkers or embroiderers. When they married, women could continue to work in the trade that they had learned as an apprentice. In some English cities, from the beginning of the thirteenth century, married women could also work as *femes soles*, independently of their husbands, and take apprentices while their husbands worked in a different trade. Women were also

free to make their own wills. As widows, women who had served as apprentices had also an advantage over women who had not, as they were in a position to earn an independent income. In London, the statutes of the city treated the apprentice training of girls and boys equally, but women continued to have no public role in the guilds.[10]

In late thirteenth-century Paris, women were present in many artistic professions. There were, for example, 6 female goldsmiths recorded in 1292 in the register of the Taille.[11] They appear to have been mainly independent craftswomen working in workshops outside of their homes. Their income from their work was, however, low. On average, the women earned a third less than the male goldsmiths recorded in the register. In Cologne, at the same time, women played a leading role in some sectors of the economy and enjoyed a real autonomy and financial success. In Frankfurt, they took part in at least 65 professions, some of which were in public sectors, such as the position of guardians of turns, attached to the customs; but, as in Paris, their wages were lower than those of men employed in similar posts.[12]

Caroline Barron has written about a 'golden age' for women between 1350 and 1500 thanks to the opportunities offered by the demographic decline after the Black Death.[13] This view is not shared by all historians of women in medieval England. For example, Judith Bennett has emphasised the continuity of a strong patriarchal society. For her, gender remained throughout the medieval period a criterion of social dissociation: women were less well paid, and the patriarchal structures were maintained.[14] In her study of women's earnings from agricultural work in England in the century after the Black Death, Sandy Bardsey argued that women's wages remained consistently low. Women were paid at the 'same rate as that of other members of the "second-rate" work-force—boys, old men and disabled men'.[15] Unlike men, women were not identified by their trade but by their marital status: single, married, or widowed.

Girls in Artistic Workshops

In the medieval period, work in the fine arts was dominated by men. Painting, sculpture, and architecture were perceived as male activities. Recent research has, however, uncovered a female presence in some artistic workshops. In 1991, in their *History of Women*, Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot pointed to the role of girls in artistic creations, especially

their participation in luxury crafts.[16] In Flanders and the Low Countries, the apprenticeship of girls in painting was mentioned in four statutes. There were female painters in Brussels in the fourteenth century, although, in 1387, the town statutes officially prohibited women from working as painters.[17] In Tournai, girls and boys learned the craft of painting and, one woman, Marthe de Hulst from Antwerp, was recorded as an illuminator in the city in 1479.[18] In Douai in 1558, a city ordinance renewed the late fifteenth-century statute that permitted the apprenticeship of girls and specified that embroidery work for financial gain was reserved for women.[19] In Bruges, the Fraternity of Saint John Evangelist welcomed the members of the guild of Saint Luke who included artists, book binders, and booksellers. One of the articles of the foundation charter of the fraternity identified boy and girl apprentices as members.[20] The well-known painter Philippe de Mazerolles (d. 1479) was a master in this guild, and he took at least four young girls in apprenticeship. In Languedoc, the municipal archives of Montpellier preserves two fourteenth-century apprenticeship contracts for girls in the craft of painting which were written by independent women painters.[21] There are also occasional references to other individual women artists, such as Agnes van den Bossche, who was a member of the guild of painters in Bruges and was responsible for painting the silk banner for the town of Ghent known as *The Maid of Ghent with a Lion*.[22]

The training of girls and their participation in artistic crafts are well attested in medieval London. On 8 February 1369, John Catour from Reading sued Elias Mympe, an embroiderer, in the London municipal court. Catour claimed that Mympe had mistreated his daughter, Alice, who was contracted to him as an apprentice for five years.[23] Catour accused the master of hitting his daughter and of depriving her of food. Two other girls, Alice and Agnes Saumple, from Northampton and Newcastle-on-Tyne respectively, were apprentices for a seven-year term when their parents presented a case on 4 August 1422 against their mistress, Alice Glanton. The girls were being trained in embroidery, although it emerged in court that Glanton was not a citizen of London or a member of the trade of the embroiderers.[24]

The participation of girls in the trade of the embroidery was, therefore, permitted in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century London. Needlework, known as *opus anglicanum*, was regarded as one of the most esteemed artistic endeavours in medieval England. It was considered to be the equivalent of painting with a needle. It was highly valued and exported throughout Western Europe.[25] In 1455, the petition of the London silkwomen to

the crown complained against the competition of foreign men. The silkwomen presented themselves as 'ladies and dams and virtuous damsels' and explained the necessity of protecting virtuous Englishwomen from ill-famed Lombards and the dangers of 'the great idleness amongst young gentlewomen and other apprentices of the same crafts within the said city'. The trade involving *opus anglicanum* was considered one of the most profitable of the City of London.[26]

In the Middle Ages, the artist was only exceptionally an isolated creator; more often the artist was a member of a family workshop in which the different sexes and generations participated together in production. Participation of female apprentices in artisan workshops was, therefore, not unusual, but what do we know of the division of labour between husband and wife, father and daughters, brothers and sisters within the workshop? Widows, wives, and girls were regarded as full members of the workshop. Women, girls, sisters, and widows collaborated with men in the creative process. In mixed-sex workshops, gender difference was largely offset by family membership and solidarity between father and daughter, brother and sister. At the same, time, however, there was a clear awareness of the inferiority of women, who were often confined to auxiliary tasks. There was also more informal training of girls in the craft workshops. It is, for example, unlikely that the girls who worked as maidservants for families of artists had only one domestic function. They must have served where they were most useful and took part in the labour of the workshop. The interest that the guilds took in the domestic servants in the households of craftsmen suggests that this was the case. In 1450 the guards of the Company of the Goldsmiths condemned William Rotheley who, 'counter to any humanity, threw out of ... his place his maidservant and tolerated that she slept outside during two nights'. She was obliged to borrow money to remain in the inn of the Pewter Pot to the great dishonor of the company.[27]

Literary Evidence

It was the text of a chivalry romance, *Yvain, le chevalier au lion*, written by Chrétien de Troyes between 1176 and 1181, that provided one of the first descriptions of salaried women workers in the Middle Ages. The encounter between the valiant knight and a group of silkworkers testified to a new reality, that of work, money, and working-class conditions at the heart of the Arthurian fairy tale. Married to Laudine, the worthy Yvain languishes

and wishes to leave her in search of adventure; his wife agrees on condition that he return within a year. But Yvain forgets his promise, so Laudine lets him know through a messenger that she no longer wants to see him again. Crazed with pain, Yvain enters the forest and adopts a wild form of life. A damsel heals him. His spirits revived, he sets out again. On his way, he observes a battle between a lion and a dragon. Yvain takes the side of the lion, and together they overwhelm the diabolical animal. Subsequently, the lion follows Yvain everywhere. A young lady comes to ask him to help her to recover her inheritance. They arrive in front of the castle de la Pesme Aventure, the 'Worst Adventure', so called because all the knights who have sought to fight the two demons that lived there died. When Yvain arrives at the castle, the inhabitants, disregarding all duties of hospitality, tell him that he is not welcome and warn him against the shame and humiliation that await him there. But as Yvain insists, the porter opens the door:

> The porter encouraged him to go up, but the invitation was very unpleasant. My Lord Yvain remained silent. He passed before him, and reached a vast room, very high and brand new. He found himself before a courtyard enclosed by large stakes, round and pointed. Between the stakes, he saw up to three hundred young girls harnessed to various works. They wove gold and silk threads, each as best as possible, but an absolute destitution prevented most from wearing a headdress or a belt. At the chest and elbows their coats were torn; their shirts were soiled in the back. Hunger and distress had thinned their necks and made their faces livid. He saw them as they saw him. They bowed their heads and wept; they remained thus a long time because they no longer had the taste for anything. Their big eyes remained as fixed on the ground as their affliction was great.[28]

Yvain wants to turn around, but the porter dismisses him. The knight asks him who these poor girls are. As the porter refuses to answer him, Yvain returns to talk with them. They tell him that they come from the kingdom of the Maids. Their prince, wishing to travel the world in search of adventure, arrived at the castle where the two demons lived, and they forced him to pay them a tribute of 30 maidens each year until their deaths. This terrible fate has lasted for 10 years, and there were now 300 maidens in the castle, all condemned to work night and day.

> We will always weave silk cloths and we are no better dressed. Always we shall be poor and naked, always we shall be hungry and thirsty. We will never be able to procure more food. We have very little bread to eat, very little in the

> morning and in the evening even less. From the labour of her hands, each will obtain, in all and for all, only four pennies for the pound. With that, it is impossible to buy food and clothes, because the one who earns twenty shillings a week is far from being out of business. And rest assured that none of us brings in twenty shillings or more. That would be enough to enrich a duke! We are in poverty and the one for whom we struggle is enriched by our work. We stay awake for most of our nights and all day to bring in even more money because he [i.e. one of the two demons] threatens to mutilate us if we rest. That is why we dare not take rest. What else can we say? We are subjected to so many humiliations and evils that I could not tell you the fifth of it.[29]

The episode of the Three Hundred Maidens is one of the best-known and controversial texts of the chivalric literature of twelfth-century France.[30] Scholars have commented a great deal on this interjection of 'social realism' into the world of the Arthurian fairy tale. Many commentators view it as a reflection of historical reality, while others criticise the historical improbabilities of this workshop, made up of 300 girls weaving silk. The very precise description that Chrétien de Troyes provided of the women's condition, miserable and overwhelmed with work, is scarcely different from those recorded in more official documents in the thirteenth century. However, it is not difficult to identify inconsistencies. First, there is the size of the workshop. Three hundred girls is not a credible number for what was a nascent textile industry. Twelfth-century France was not known for its silk weaving work, which at the time was virtually monopolised by the Italian city of Lucca. The presence of a workshop in a castle rather than in a town also seems unrealistic. It is unlikely, however, that Chrétien de Troyes invented details such as the precise earnings of the women workers. He was, therefore, inspired by reality but used poetic license to exaggerate the number of workers. He embellished his story with silk and gold rather than the more mundane, albeit more realistic, wool or linen cloth and replaced an urban workshop with an enchanted castle. These reservations made, it is not impossible to perceive in the harsh treatment imposed on the 300 hundred girls weavers, humiliated and exploited, the echo of economic growth and the development of the textile trade.

More important, perhaps, is the contrast in Chrétien de Troyes' text between the low income of the workers and the idleness and aimless wandering of the knight. The girls' spokesperson complains that they earn only four pennies a week, just enough to survive, while their work earns their captors at least 20 shillings (or 240 pennies), sixty times more than the girls receive. The author may again have drawn on contemporary data

for these figures. Very few accounting records have survived for the late twelfth century, but in 1314 in Artois, a female mattress maker earned six pence a day.[31] One could reasonably estimate, therefore, that the daily wages of women and girls in the textile crafts of the north of France in the twelfth century could vary between two and four pennies. This low wage amounted to half that earned by men.[32]

Christine de Pizan completed her *Livre de la Cité des Dames* in 1405. The text opens with the author in her study surrounded by books. She is lamenting her female condition, when she receives the visit of three noble ladies who came to console her. Reason, Righteousness, and Justice come to ask her to defend the women unjustly calumniated and despised by men. Dame Reason reminds Christine de Pizan of the many talented women who had lived in the past. She notes the learned women and inventors and then evokes the memory of women artists such as the Greek Timarété and Irene:

> Timarété … [was] said to have been so talented in the art and science of painting that she was the undisputed sovereign of her time.…Her fame was so great that at the time when Archelaus reigned over the Macedonians, the Ephesians, worshippers of Diana, begged her to paint a magnificent picture bearing the effigy of the goddess. They preserved this picture with the veneration due to the most perfect masterpiece, and exposed it to the eye only during the solemn feast of the goddess.…
>
> Another Greek, by the name of Irene, had such a mastery of the art of painting that she too had to surpass all the painters of her time.…The people of the time held her for such a prodigy that they made a statue to her glory, representing a young woman in the process of painting.[33]

Christine de Pizan was inspired to write of Timarété and Irene by Boccaccio, who included an account of women artists in ancient Greece in his *De Mulieribus Claris* (Of Famous Women) (1361–1362). Bocaccio described the women as young and single, free from male authority. Timarété was also described as the daughter of the painter, a family relationship that was not uncommon in medieval artistic workshops. A key question is, of course, to what extent did these mythical artists represent the medieval reality of women's participation in artists' workshops? Are they simply the product of literary fiction, or do they reflect a reality? Although Christine de Pizan drew on Boccaccio's account for her reflections on artistic women, she also referred to her own knowledge of women painters. She related what she said to Dame Reason:

> My Lady, these examples show us that the ancients honored the wise men better than us, and held the sciences in highest esteem. However, about women who are gifted for painting, I myself know a certain Anastasia whose talent for framing and borders of illuminations and landscapes of miniatures is so great that one can cite in the city of Paris, where live the best artists of the world, only one that surpasses her. Nobody can do better than her the floral and decorative motifs of books, and her work is so much appreciated, that she is entrusted with the finishing of the richest and most sumptuous works. I know it from experience, for she has painted for me certain borders which are, in the unanimous opinion, of a beauty commensurate with those executed by the Great Masters.[34]

It is unlikely that Christine de Pizan invented this painter named Anastasia. She was well informed about the art of illumination in Paris, as she regularly commissioned paintings from artists for the manuscripts that she dedicated to wealthy patrons.[35] There are no references to Anastasia in other medieval records, but the name may be a pseudonym for the almost contemporary figure of Bourgot, the daughter of the painter Jean Le Noir who was well known in Paris as an accomplished artist and assistant of her father.[36] Bourgot worked with her father on, for example, the painting of *The Book of Hours of Yolande of Flanders*.[37]

Visual Sources

There are not many surviving contemporary illustrations of medieval craft workshops and trades. Images of women craft workers are even rarer. The overwhelming majority of the illustrations that do include women depict them engaged in textile handicrafts. This is not surprising as the great majority of women, and especially girls, were engaged in these activities. The images usually show them alone, spinning wool, weaving, or embroidering. A small number of illustrations depict groups of women working in entirely female workshops. One such female workshop is represented by a color drawing in *Ovide Moralisé* preserved in the Lyon Municipal Library (Illustration 2.1).[38] Within the framework of an urban house, three women are active in three separate tasks: spinning wool at the distaff, working at the spinning wheel, and wrapping threads on a reel. These three activities were generally reserved for women while weaving, considered more noble and more difficult, was generally done by men. The two spinners, bareheaded, with a youthful appearance, were obviously young girls who were

Illustration 2.1 Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon, ms. 742, fol. 54. *Ovide Moralisé*

learning from or working for a female employer who, as her headdress indicates, was married and supervising her apprentices as she worked.

This almost familial image corresponded well to the reality of the workshops described in the notarial or urban registers. It involved family workshops where girls were employed in a protected environment. In contrast, the miserable conditions of the workers described by Chrétien de Troyes revealed a different social reality for many women workers. The illustrators of medieval manuscripts did not, however, depict the harsh conditions in the textile industry, which employed dozens of girls for very low wages.

In the illustrations included in Boccaccio's *De Mulieribus Claris* (1361–1362), women artists are depicted alone at their work. Timarété was engaged in painting a Madonna and Child (Illustration 2.2), the Roman artist Marcia painted her self-portrait, and Irene was working on the polychromy of a statue of the Madonna with the Child (Illustration 2.3). Some of the women artists included in Boccaccio's manuscript are single, such as Bourgot (or Anastasia praised by Christine de Pizan) while

Illustration 2.2 Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS 12420, fol. 101 v. Marcia

Illustration 2.3 Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS 12420, fol. 92 v. Irene

others are married. All, however, are represented alone, dressed like women of the aristocracy or the rich bourgeoisie. These images are, therefore, far removed from the reality of the work of the young women of the medieval cities.[39]

Conclusion

Scattered through a range of different types of sources is considerable evidence of the apprenticeship of girls in craft and artistic guilds in medieval Europe. Young women were trained in skilled artistic work. Most of the evidence of women artists relates to single or widowed women. In the family workshop, the identity of the married woman was usually subsumed into that of her husband and, hence, she disappeared from the historical record.

Notes

1. Cited by David Herlihy, *Opera muliebra, women and work in medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 185.
2. See, for example, Barbara Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London: The Experience of Childhood in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); P. J. Goldbert, *Women in England c. 1275–1525* (Manchester University Press, 1995).
3. Elizabeth Dixon, 'Craftswomen in the Livre des Métiers', *Economic Journal*, 5 (1895), 209–28.
4. See, for example, Michela Pereira, *Idee sulla donna nel Medievo* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1981); Maria Consiglia De Metteis, *Idee sulla donna nel Medioevo: fonti e aspetti giuridici, antropologici, religiosi, sociali e letterari della condizione femminile* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1981); Michela Pereira, *Ne Eva ne Maria* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1981).
5. Barbara Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London. The Experience of Childhood in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 122–130.
6. Goldberg, *Women in England, c.1275–1525*, 173–176.
7. Arthur H. Thomas (ed.), *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls Preserved Among the Archives dof the City of London at the Guildhall A. D. 1413–1437* (Cambridge University Press, 1943), 229.
8. Kim M. Phillips, *Medieval Maidens. Young Women and Gender in England, 1270–1540* (Manchester University Press, 2003), 134.
9. Hanawalt, *Growing Up*, 142.
10. Henrietta Leyser, *Medieval Women; a Social History of Women in England, 1450–1500* (London: Phoenix Giant, 1995), 163; Caroline Barron, 'The

Golden Age of Women in Medieval London', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 15 (1989), 39–40.

11. Herlihy, *Opera muliebra*, 148.
12. Ibid.
13. Barron, 'The Golden Age', 39–40.
14. Judith M. Bennett and Amy M. Froide, 'A Singular Past' in Judith Bennett and Amy M. Froide (eds), *Singlewomen in the European Past, 1250–1800* (Philadephia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 8.
15. Sandy Bardsley, 'Women's Work Reconsidered: Gender and Wage Differentiation in Late Medieval England', *Past and Present*, 165 (1999), 23.
16. Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot, *Histoire des femmes en Occident* (Paris: Plon, 1991), 2, 393.
17. The 1387 statutes of the Guild of Painters and Glassmakers in Félicien Favresse, 'Les premiers statuts connus des métiers bruxellois du duc et de sa ville et note sur ces métiers', *Bulletin de la commission royale d'Histoire,* 111 (1946), 41, 76–79. The statutes of 1453, however, permitted women to be mistresses, which implied that they had had an apprenticeship.
18. Dominique Vanwijnsberghe, "*De fin or et d'azur," Les commanditaires de livres et le métier de l'enluminure à Tournai à la fin du Moyen Âge (XIVe-XVe siècles)* (Louvain: Peteers, 2001), 291.
19. Marc Gil, 'Les femmes dans les métiers d'art des Pays-Bas bourguignons au XVe siècle', *Clio, Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, 34 (2011), 231–254.
20. William H.J. Weale, 'Documents inédits sur les enlumineurs de Bruges', *Le Beffroi* 4 (1872–1873), 252; Louis Gilliodts-Van Severen, 'L'œuvre de Jean Brito, prototypographe brugeois', *Annales de la Société d'émulation pour l'étude de l'histoire et des Antiquités de la Flandre*, 10 (1897), 303.
21. Cécile Beghin, 'Donneuses d'ouvrages, apprenties et salariées aux XIVe et XVe siècles dans les sociétés urbaines languedociennes', *Clio, Histoire, Femmes et Sociétés*, 3 (1996), 31–54.
22. This banner is preserved in the Museum of the Byloke of Ghent. See Maximilian P. J. Martens, 'La clientèle du peintre' in Roger van Schoute and Béatrice de Patoul (eds), *Les Primitifs flamands et leur temps* (Tournai, La Renaissance du Livre, 1998), 153–154. See also Alfons van Werveke, 'Een werk van de Gentsche schilderes Agnes van den Bossche in het Museum van Oudheden der Stad Ghent', *Bulletin der Maatschappij van Geschied-en Oudheidkunde te Gent*, 16 (1908), 219–221; Diane Wolfthal, 'Agnes van den Bossche, Early Netherlandish Painter', *Woman's Art Journal*, 5 (1985), 8–11.
23. The length of an apprenticeship for a painter was on average 4 to 5 years, which indicates that *opus anglicanum* was considered a particularly intricate artistic exercise. Only the apprenticeship for goldsmiths was longer (7 to 10 years).

24. *Calendar of Plea and Memorandum Rolls*, 146–147.
25. M. K. Dale, 'The London Silkwomen in the Fifteenth Century', *Economic History Review*, 4 (1933), 324–335.
26. *Rotuli parliamentorum; ut et petitiones, et placita in parliamento*. Collected and arranged by R. Blyke, P. Morant, T. Astle, and J. Topham. Edited by J. Strachey (6 vols. London: 1767–1777; published 1832), vol. 6, 222–223.
27. Barbara Hanawalt, 'Violence in the Domestic Milieu of Late Medieval England' in Richard W. Kauper (ed.), *Violence in Medieval Society* (Boydell: Woodbridge, 2000), 213.
28. Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain ou le Chevalier au lion*, in *Œuvres completes*. Edited by Daniel Poirion (Paris: Gallimard, La Pléiade, 1994), 337–503.

    Verses 5187 to 5213: 'Le portier l'incitait ainsi à monter mais l'invitation était fort déplaisante. Monseigneur Yvain restait silencieux ; il passa devant lui et arriva dans une vaste salle, très haute et toute neuve. Il se trouvait devant un préau enclos de gros pieux, ronds et pointus. Entre les pieux, il vit jusqu'à trois cents jeunes filles attelées à divers ouvrages. Elles tissaient des fils d'or et de soie, chacune de son mieux, mais un absolu dénuement empêchait la plupart de porter une coiffe ou une ceinture. À la poitrine et aux coudes, leurs cottes étaient déchirées ; leurs chemises étaient souillées dans le dos. La faim et la détresse avaient amaigri leur cou et rendu leur visage livide. Il les vit comme elles le virent; elles baissèrent la tête et pleurèrent ; elles demeurèrent ainsi un long moment car elles n'avaient plus le goût de rien. Leurs grands yeux restaient comme fixés au sol tant leur affliction était grande.' Translation by author.
29. Ibid., verses 5300–5326. 'Toujours nous tisserons des étoffes de soie et nous n'en sommes pas mieux vêtues pour autant. Toujours nous serons pauvres et nues, toujours nous aurons faim et soif ; jamais nous ne parviendrons à nous procurer plus de nourriture. Nous avons fort peu de pain à manger, très peu le matin et le soir encore moins. Du travail de ses mains, chacune n'obtiendra, en tout et pour tout, que quatre deniers de la livre. Avec cela, impossible d'acheter beaucoup de nourriture et de vêtements, car celle qui gagne vingt sous par semaine est loin d'être tirée d'affaire. Et soyez assuré qu'aucune de nous ne rapporte vingt sous ou plus. Il y aurait de quoi enrichir un duc! Nous, nous sommes dans la pauvreté et celui pour qui nous peinons s'enrichit de notre travail. Nous restons éveillées pendant la plus grande partie de nos nuits et toute la journée pour rapporter encore plus d'argent, car il menace de nous mutiler si nous nous reposons. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous n'osons prendre de repos. Que vous-dire d'autre ? Nous subissons tant d'humiliations et de maux que je ne saurais vous en raconter le cinquième!' Translation by author.
30. Jean Frappier, *Étude sur Yvain ou le chevalier au lion de Chrétien de Troyes* (Paris: SEDES, 1969). Pierre Jonin, 'Aspects de la vie sociale au XII^{e} siècle

dans Yvain', *L'information littéraire*, 2 (1964), 47–54; Yvan G. Lepage, 'Encore les trois cents pucelles (Chrétien de Troyes, Yvain, v. 5298–5324)', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 134 (1991), 159–166.

31. Jonin, 'Aspects de la vie sociale au XII^{e} siècle dans Yvain', 52.
32. In the medieval monetary system, 1 shilling = 12 pence, 1 pound = 20 shillings, 1 pound = 240 pennies.
33. Christine de Pizan, *La cité des Dames.* Edited by Éric Hicks and Thérèse Moreau (Paris: Stock, 1986), 111–113.
34. Ibid.,113.
35. Patrick de Winter, 'Christine de Pizan, ses enlumineurs et ses rapports avec le milieu bourguignon' in *Actes du 104° Congrès national des Sociétés savantes*, *Bordeaux, Archéologie et histoire de l'art*' (Paris: Éditions du CTHS, 1982), 335–376.
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37. Ibid.
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CHAPTER 3

From 'Young Women' to 'Female Adolescents': Dutch Advice Literature during the Long Nineteenth Century

Marja van Tilburg

Introduction

Establishing the format for conduct books specifically directed at young adult women proved to be a long, circuitous process. The first examples of this type of advice literature were published in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Given that the genre of the conduct book is as old as the printing press, this was rather late. Authors also held varying views concerning the content of such books. Some addressed girls just old enough to go out and meet with young people outside the familial circle. Not surprisingly, these writers prioritised the young woman's behaviour toward young men. Others wrote for more mature readers. They offered guidelines for selecting a partner for life and establishing a close relationship with him. The authors of such texts also presented their advice in different ways. Most opted for moralistic stories, following the long-standing tradition of edifying literature for women. Others offered fictitious biographies, presenting the female protagonist as an example to emulate. A small group of writers discussed actual situations and offered practical guidance,

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4_3

following the structure of contemporary conduct books for young adult males. The varying content and the different styles of presentation suggest that the authors had difficulty developing guides for young adult women.[1]

This is surprising as modern sexual identities were well established by 1800. These ascribed different but complementary natures to men and women—offering a new rationale for the traditional division of tasks and responsibilities. The middle class turned theory into practice by distinguishing between the public and the private spheres. Women were expected to apply their specific talents to the private sphere of the family. They were not merely to nurture their husband and children, but they were to transform the house into a new cultural space, the home.[2] The evidence suggests that women seized this opportunity. From the early nineteenth century, women tried to create havens in a heartless world.[3] With women's gender role clearly defined, the question is why authors of advice literature had such difficulty guiding young women to adulthood.

To answer this question, we have to take a closer look at the variety within the genre. The differences in content and presentation are intertwined with various notions about what is considered an appropriate education. Some publications prescribed simple guidelines—similar to rules of etiquette. Clearly, these publications expected the young woman to follow the rules. Other texts presented the advice with elaborate explanations—making an effort to convince readers of its rationale. These volumes addressed the young woman as having a mind of her own. These various ways of approaching the readership suggest that the authors had differing views concerning the young woman's personal space. These views, in turn, implied questions about the young woman's individual preference and the extent to which she was allowed autonomy.

These were precisely the questions that dominated the advice literature for young adult men of the period. Every conduct book directed at young adult males explained how to balance personal preferences and societal requirements. The advice focused in particular on choosing a career and a partner. If the young man chose well, he would have no difficulty working hard and providing for his family. Conduct books offered precise guidance to help a young man help himself. In this context, the reader was confronted with the specific problems of being young and was offered rules of conduct to cope with youthful impulses. The reader was thus taught to take responsibility for his life. This approach, developed by Enlightenment pedagogues, remained in place throughout the long nineteenth century.[4]

Viewed from this comparative perspective, the development of the advice literature for young adult women appeared to touch upon the question of adolescence. Initially, the concept of 'adolescence' was gender specific. The term was introduced by Rousseau in his pedagogical novel *Émile, ou l' education* (1762), to describe the coming of age of the protagonist.[5] Whereas Émile matured in harmony with nature, contemporary young men, according to Rousseau, were driven by competition and sexual desire. Modern scholars disagree on whether or not the term 'adolescence' was used only in relation to the male sex throughout the nineteenth century. Some argue that western women were never treated as adolescents: because of their subjugated position, they were denied space for experimentation.[6] Others disagree and discern aspects of Rousseau's concept in literature on female youth.[7] Or, alternatively, they notice distinct varieties of adolescence in the female sex. Historian Sheila Rowbotham, for example, has documented the different ways in which female adolescents were represented in Victorian fiction[8] while literary critic John Neubauer has pointed to specific representations of young women in literary and scientific accounts at the end of the nineteenth century.[9] More recently, Sarah Bilston has argued for the increased awareness of the 'awkward age' in women's popular fiction after 1850.[10] Such differences in scholarly opinion focus mainly on the nineteenth century. Representations of young women tend to converge from the *fin de siècle* onward. Generally speaking, by that time, educationalists and pedagogues agreed on a new concept of adolescence. This view was best expressed by the American psychologist G. Stanley Hall.[11] He argued that young adults go through a phase of great change which allows them to develop their personality. Their creative potential is at its highest which enables them to influence society. Hall's extensive treatise *Adolescence* (1904) framed the discussion on young adults for much of the twentieth century.[12]

This chapter analyses the advice literature for young women from the perspective of adolescence with a particular focus on personal space and individual autonomy, which are implied in the concept of adolescence. Prioritising these two characteristics has the advantage of allowing for comparisons over longer periods of time.[13] First, the chapter explores the content of selected conduct books for young women: which themes are discussed and in what depth. Second, the chapter examines the manner in which the advice was presented: were the readers provided with straightforward rules of conduct, or were they given options or problems to discuss and resolve? Finally, the chapter pays some attention to the youthful

age of the intended readership: were young women approached as young women or as adolescents?

The advice literature for young adults discussed in this chapter was published in the Netherlands from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century? About two-thirds of the 151 titles examined were destined for young men; only 46 were specifically directed at young women.[14] Almost 72 publications could be traced in public libraries, but copies of many conduct books seem not to have survived. Many books were translated from French, English, and German; this is especially true of the guides for young women. A systematic comparison between the translations and the original texts indicates that most translations were accurate and closely followed the original version. The existence of Dutch translations of books first published elsewhere also emphasises the popularity and transnational dimension of advice literature.

The conduct books have been analysed in two distinct ways. First, the *content* of the advice is discussed, following the approach of Norbert Elias's *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* [On the Process of Civilization] (1969) with its focus on the range of topics and the level of detail of the rules of conduct.[15] Second, poststructuralist textual analysis is applied to the *phrasing* of the advice.[16] How is the guidance worded? Does the phrasing indicate a specific method of addressing the reader? Is this, in turn, indicative of a specific perception of young women? This twofold analysis allows for a distinction to be made between rules of conduct, on the one hand, and styles of persuasion, on the other. It also reveals nineteenth-century pedagogical strategies, which incorporate more intricate patterns of gender and adolescence than research has demonstrated so far.

Enlightenment Stirrings

Advice literature proliferated in Enlightenment Europe, and more conduct books were published than ever before. The philosophers modernised this long-standing genre by adapting the guidance offered and by experimenting with writing styles. Their efforts testified to the core Enlightenment belief in the perfectibility of man.[17] Nevertheless, developing a format specifically for young adult women proved challenging. As already indicated, the early publications appeared in a great variety of formats—from presenting rules of etiquette to telling stories of exemplary women. A comparable lack of direction can also be found in the ordering

of the advice. Most conduct books did not present their guidance systematically. For instance, the English guide *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (1774) did not distinguish between work and leisure. It discussed all sorts of activities in the same chapter.[18] Only a small number of conduct books for young women drew on the new Enlightenment approach to advice literature. This format presented the reader with a range of options. Although the text indicated the best and worst choices, the reader was, nonetheless, free to choose. The German philosopher J. H. Campe applied this approach in his *Väterlicher Rat für meine Tochter* [Fatherly Advice for My daughter] published in 1789.[19] The variety of formats utilised for advice books for young women indicates not only a lack of consensus among the authors but also a lack of vision about what the education of young women should involve.

Much of the advice literature was dominated by one topic: a young adult woman's relationships with young men. Most publications prioritised the young woman's participation in public gatherings. However, the authors did not tell the reader how to behave. They expected her to be familiar with social etiquette and act accordingly. Instead, the publications focused on the young woman's attitude. Their advice can be summarised as: join the general merriment but be on your guard for attention-seeking young men. Young women should not mistake a young man's gallant behaviour as an indication of a genuine interest in her. They should be aware that this type of behaviour was required by the rules of sociability in the public sphere. Some authors conveyed this message by contrasting public sociability and family life. They placed the public sphere on a par with the theatre. In public venues, men and women played various roles, but marriage and family provided the setting for real life. Even the most gallant male behaved differently at home. Such guidance was aimed at instilling a specific *habitus*: the young woman should be aware of her surroundings and act accordingly.[20]

Many authors addressed premarital sexual activity in this context. They communicated concern for their readers' responsiveness towards smooth-talking young men and sought to make them aware that the men had usually no intention of marrying them. Every young girl should be prepared for this type of obtrusive and seductive behaviour. To bring the message home, the authors accompanied this rule of conduct with rhetorical fireworks. Mostly, they chose references to the Christian concept of sin. For instance, they described premarital intercourse as the 'fall'—a reference

to the biblical story of the Garden of Eden. Or they presented analogies to the snake that talked Eve into defying God's will. Authors used these references to persuade their readers to adhere to their advice.[21] Again, the advice was aimed at instilling a specific attitude. Young women should be aware and be prepared to cope with these social situations.

A minority of mainly Dutch conduct books extended the advice on readers' attitudes toward young men to include their choice of partner. Usually the authors began with an account of the obligations of the married couple, in line with the average marriage manual. The emphasis was on shared responsibility for the household. The couple should work together as partners, and, therefore, they should also aim to get on well together. Having sketched the ideal marital relationship, the guidebooks elaborated on the qualities required in a husband. The most important were a strong sense of duty, a friendly demeanour, and a willingness to treat a wife with respect. Instead of merely listing these qualities, the Dutch minister Greuve offered a sketch of the ideal husband in his conduct book *Wilhemina* (1808). The volume took the form of a fictitious biography of a young woman from the lower middle class. The protagonist meets several different suitors, and the plot verges on the rather plain but dutiful Goedhart [Goodheart]. The story presented many contrasts between the latter and less well-suited young men. Through this analysis the reader could identify the characteristics to look for in a husband.[22]

This group of authors also tended to address sexual attraction. Greuve, for instance, acknowledged Wilhelmina's desire for a husband: 'which young girl … should not desire a husband? Otherwise it would be shameful to desire something, which is ordained by God and nature?'[23] This paragraph finished with Wilhelmina consenting to Goedhart's proposal. Not only did the couple share similar aspirations in life, but they also had a strong mutual affection for one another. Describing Wilhelmina's thoughts on the proposal, the minister created a contrast between 'pure love' and 'blind love'.[24] A close reading of the text reveals sexual attraction to be part of true love, as long as the choice of partner was made responsibly.

Only one author addressed the topic of sexual desire directly. The German philosopher Campe described how the 'Great Lawmaker' installed mutual sexual attraction in the first couple. The aim was to entice them to procreate, and people the earth:

> [The Creator] accompanied intimate marital activity…with attractive sensual pleasure, both for the male as the female, and created a natural drive towards this, strong enough to overcome aversion to the consequences of this activity.[25]

A few sentences later sexual desire is defined as the urge to love and be united by the bonds of marriage. This conduct book thus presented mutual sexual attraction as a function of marriage. Campe agreed with Greuve and other authors that sexual desire should be sublimated to marital love.

As already noted, about half of the conduct books examined presented stories of young women as examples to emulate. These protagonists can be read as representations of the young woman, and from this perspective, we should note that many early conduct books depicted the young woman as a rather flat character. Only a few portrayed young women in a lifelike manner as enthusiastic and curious people who looked forward to going out and making friends and who radiated self-confidence.

The question is, of course, whether authors really perceived female youth as unproblematic or whether they were representing the young woman in this way for specific purposes. The latter may very well be the case. This representation fits two narrative strategies. The first is to discuss sexual desire metonymically—as the longing for a husband. As already indicated, authors addressing this topic linked it to the young woman's desire to marry. The second strategy is to present marriage as a woman's destiny. All the authors presented marriage as a woman's only option in life. Together these strategies suggested to the young woman reader that she had to accept society's gender regime. Clearly, this lesson was prioritised over teaching her to manage her desire responsibly.

All in all, the first conduct books for young adult women taught their readers how to navigate the public sphere. Women needed to be able to take care of themselves at public gatherings in order to remedy a possible lack of parental control. Authors prioritised the reader's *habitus* toward young men. While enjoying the pleasures of life, she should focus on marriage. If she took the authors' advice to heart, she would draw the attention of a suitable man. At first glance, this message seemed reassuring. Closer inspection reveals that the advice only scratched the surface. Sexual maturation is discussed only with reference to marriage. Personal preference and individual space were hardly given any attention.

Nineteenth-Century Developments

During the nineteenth century, the publication of conduct books for young adult women declined. Authors preferred to write advice literature for the female sex as a whole. However, the small number of conduct books that were published for young women reveal important changes in terms of both the content and the style in which they were formulated. Most authors opted to present rules of conduct with explanatory accounts written in a more pedagogical manner than their eighteenth-century predecessors. The later volumes also distinguished more clearly between schoolgirls and older girls. They also specifically addressed young women concerning their marital responsibilities, a topic traditionally reserved for the marriage manual.[26] Taken together, these authors conveyed a more complex understanding of young women's lives.[27]

The new approach to female youth can be traced in two mid-nineteenth-century guides, written by an English and a Dutch author: Sarah Stickney Ellis and Barbara van Meerten-Schilperoort respectively. Both women published books while they were married and managing a household. Both also had established schools for middle-class girls, and it is likely that the pedagogical approach of their books was inspired by their teaching. Despite these similarities, the two authors wrote very different conduct books. Ellis followed the long-standing tradition of edifying literature that sought to admonish its readership to live virtuously. Ellis did not explicitly offer actual rules of conduct but left it to her readers to absorb them through her account of the virtues of the ideal English woman. Van Meerten-Schilperoort specialised in didactic and educational writing. She wrote her conduct book in the form of a long, explanatory letter from a mother to her daughter. The motherly approach was intended to veil the book's disciplinary message.

Both women authors prioritised personal growth. In *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* Ellis wrote that the young woman should develop her talent, perfect her *habitus*, and refine her character to become the best version of herself. Moreover, she should consider herself a human being first and foremost. As an individual, she has no limitations. Only the assigned location of her activity—the home—is limited. In *Woorden van moederlijke liefde aan mijne dochter Mathilda* [Words of Motherly Love to My Daughter Mathilda], Van Meerten-Schilperoort argued in favour of personal growth in a more conventional sense. She admonished her reader to develop a real interest in the world, reading books on nature and history rather than romantic novels. She should develop her intellectual capacity, exchanging views with people at

social gatherings. Finally, she should apply herself to developing whatever artistic talent she might have. Thus each author encouraged her readers to improve themselves in a specific manner.

Not surprisingly, both authors addressed young women's relationships with young men, acknowledging in different ways their readers' longing for love. This approach was indicative of their shared aim to make their readers consider their emotions critically. Ellis presented an *exposé* on love in which she drew a contrast between the fashionable perception of love and the traditional one. The first centered on the notion of 'falling in love'. Ellis described this with reference to passion and surrender. At first reading, she seems to admonish the reader to control what she perceived as wrongful desire. However, a closer reading of the text suggests that the reader was provided with different perceptions on love and life. Basically, Ellis presented her female readers with the choices that they had in life. In doing so, she tried to assist young women with managing their emotions and taking control of their lives.

Van Meerten-Schilperoort, following the Dutch Enlightenment tradition, addressed the topic more directly. She warned readers against being led by emotions because in doing so they risked making a poor choice of partner and ending up in unhappy marriages. The best way to prevent this from happening was to exercise control. Should a man arouse special feelings, a young woman should ask herself: 'Am I drawn to this man because of his heart and mind? Do his religious inclinations and his virtue make him worthy of my interest?'[28] If a reader could give a positive answer to these questions, she might consider the man a suitable partner for life. If, however, she was drawn to the man for other reasons, such as his wit and charm, Van Meerten-Schilperoort's advice was clear: 'O my child! tear, tear out the still fragile seed from your heart. This may hurt, but not as much as the bleeding wound which would follow if you let the seed take root'.[29] In other words, the author was advising young women to control desire by acknowledging it. Thus Van Meerten-Schilperoort was aiming to help young women to help themselves.

The two authors also addressed the future responsibilities of their readers as wives and mothers. Most important, both created connections to a woman's sexual identity. Ellis drew on her literary skill to create an analogy between domestic duties and feminine nature. In *The Women of England*, she presents a contrast between 'flowers, which already catch the eye and amaze us by the splendour of their beauty' and the inconspicuous little ones, 'which energise the walker by the sweet scent they diffuse'. The accidental passerby wants to know which flower smells so deliciously:

> He finds it embedded amongst green leaves; it may be less lovely than he had anticipated, in its form and colour, but, oh! how welcome is the memory of that flower, when the evening breeze is again made fragrant with its perfume.
>
> It is thus that the unpretending virtues of the female character force themselves upon our regard, so that the woman *herself* is nothing in comparison with her attributes; and we remember less the celebrated belle, than her who made us happy.[30]

In this passage, housekeeping is likened to flowers. The attraction of the flower lies in its sweet scent. Its appeal is recognised only in hindsight. The analogy suggests that even though domestic work goes unnoticed, it is beneficial all the same. In the same way a person who takes care of a family may be overlooked, but the good she has done will be remembered. So far, Ellis presented a narrative strategy that was often used in advice literature for women. Ellis's innovation of this topos came to the fore in the very last sentence. Here she contrasted 'the female character' with the 'woman herself'. The contrast here is between the ideal and reality. The 'female character' is something a woman has to aspire to; it was not something she already posseses.

In her book, Van Meerten-Schilperoort also connected women's responsibilities to feminine nature. She did this in a seemingly realistic account of the household. The woman paid attention to every person in the house. She established harmonious relationships with all the inhabitants. In other words, housekeeping was simply another way of looking after the family. Van Meerten-Schilperoort assured her readers that their male relatives would be grateful for her attentiveness 'because their shirts are more shiny white and neater than those of other men', and she herself would be rewarded by 'a loving look'.[31] As already indicated, Van Meerten-Schilperoort's book is in the form of a long letter from a fictitious mother to her daughter. The advice incorporated in the volume is presented as the mother passing on to her daughter her own personal experience. This narrative strategy presents mother and daughter as living in a separated gendered world. The mother wants to raise her daughter according to the regulations of the female sphere. In this indirect way, Van Meerten-Schilperoort established a connection with women's sexual identity. Taken together, the advice and the presentation foreshadow Virginia Woolf's iconic 'angel in the house'.[32]

In general, the mid-nineteenth-century advice literature presented young women as more rounded personalities than earlier conduct books. The writers acknowledged that there was more to a woman's life than simply finding a husband. Sarah Stickney Ellis and Barbara van Meerten-Schilperoort went further: they identified with their readers as women. For example, they both addressed the extent to which women's work was taken for granted. They also alluded to the way in which a woman's happiness depended on her husband. Moreover, they situated women in society at large and admonished their readers to take an interest in the world and to seek to improve themselves. Their ideal young woman was appreciative of the fact that true friendship is rare, but she tried to get along with everybody in her life. She hoped to find a husband, but in the meantime she would treat the other members of her family well. Her greatest aspiration in life was to spread happiness. These two authors elaborated on this advice in some detail so that the reader might solve her own problems. For instance, Ellis offered a strategy for coping with the general lack of regard for housekeeping. Van Meerten-Schilperoort discussed the choice of partner, advising her readers to take personal responsibility in making their selection. In different ways, Ellis and Van Meerten-Schilperoort prepared young women for their future lives while respecting the limitations imposed on them by the social order. The advice literature of the nineteenth century thus tried to guide young women to adulthood.

In summary, the conduct books of the mid-nineteenth century extended the range of topics to be considered. The authors offered advice that enabled the reader to influence her situation. The new advice pertained particularly to issues of love and desire. These topics were presented indirectly, namely as the young woman's longing for love. Thus, the nineteenth-century advice literature allowed for more personal preference and individual agency than its predecessors.

Fin-de-Siècle Approaches

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, advice literature for young adult women once again became a popular genre as social commentators, psychologists, and pedagogues developed a new interest in adolescence. Writers and artists represented youth as the most creative phase of life. Among these were women who developed their own youthful experiences into a specific feminine variety of adolescence.[33] Scientists followed suit, with the burgeoning social sciences identifying youth as an important

topic of research. In this context, the American psychologist G. Stanley Hall argued for a new approach to male and female adolescents in which they should be free to develop their personalities. If their creative powers were given free rein, society would flourish. This view had striking similarities with the account of youth that Rousseau had incorporated into his writings. In his early career, Hall had visited Germany and had clearly learned a respect for Rousseau's views on youth from German pedagogues.[34] Hall's account of adolescence published in two volumes in 1904 was hugely influential. These new ways of thinking about adolescence encouraged authors of advice literature for young adult women to experiment with new pedagogical strategies.

The general interest in the education of young adult women should also be viewed in the context of women's greater visibility in the public world in the early twentieth century. Young women no longer spent most of the day at home. Teenage girls remained at school longer with female attendance at secondary schools growing rapidly. For young people in their early twenties, urban expansion opened up new types of public venues, such as shopping arcades and tearooms. Following the model of associations founded for male youth, new clubs and societies were established for girls and young women. Scholars have interpreted the proliferation of youth organisations in the early twentieth century as indicative of the emergence of a separate sphere for youth.[35] It is important to note, however, that these societies followed the rules and conventions of adult sociability. Young women also looked for guidance and inspiration to the campaigns for women's rights that gathered pace in the first decades of the twentieth century. The demands for better education for women and for better job opportunities also helped to open up a wider world for middle-class girls and young women.

The innovations in conduct books for young women are most evident in the authors' attention to the process of sexual maturation. Many writers began to connect every part of a young woman's life to the progression of sexual development and awareness. The advice extended to all aspects of life, including questions of health and hygiene that had not been discussed in earlier forms of the genre. Furthermore, the conduct books offered rules for behaviour that were no longer hidden discretely in fiction. Finally, and most significantly, the guidance for young women focused on the individual. The social environment—the public sphere as well as the home—was marginalised. This trend is consistent with the tendency in European culture to discipline the person in ever greater detail.[36] At last,

the format of the conduct book for the young adult woman began to resemble the advice literature for adolescent males.

This new approach to the young woman is evident in every *fin-de-siècle* conduct book directed at young women examined for this study. An example can be found in an anonymous German conduct book that presented rules of etiquette for specific social settings, starting with public functions and continuing into family life. The introductory chapter opened with an account of the process of maturation:

> A mysterious premonition of the woman's real destiny titillates the youthful breast, an inexplicable something dominates feeling […]. The different emotions are not without danger for the young girl. […] She does not yet know how to manage this abundance of feeling.[37]

Thus, this presumably woman author began her text with an explanation of pubescence. Later in the same section, she sketched out the main physical and emotional changes that the adolescent would experience. To explain these changes, she drew a comparison to a rose. The girl did not reach adulthood in a short period, just as a rosebud did not come to full bloom at once. The repeated references to nature suggested that these developments was unavoidable. The tenor of the advice was the necessity to monitor carefully the maturation process.

Comparison with earlier advice literature for young adult women can offer further insight into this new approach. Like authors of earlier conduct books for young women, the anonymous late nineteenth-century author expected her reader to meet her future husband at a public venue. She did not, however, offer guidance on how to select the right kind of man—the actual choice of partner. Instead, she elaborated on the image that the young woman might have of her future husband. She should not look for someone who matched her ideal because her imagination would present the young man as more talented and more attractive than he actually was. Moreover, a man who treated her gallantly in public might behave differently after marriage and even prove to be a wolf in sheep's clothing. Clearly, this conduct book stated that the young woman could not see the world as it is. To solve this problem, she should seek advice from her parents. At best, this advice would make the reader insecure in her choice of partner and unable to trust her own inclinations.

This new approach dominated the two guides prepared by the American physician Lyman B. Sperry, one for young adult men and one for young

adult women. These guides discussed in detail the physiological and psychological aspects of sexual maturation. The author organised his rules of conduct on the former in a chapter called 'procreation' and on the latter in one called 'subjective symptoms of adolescence'. The advice is arranged in this way because:

> This is the most important and also the most dangerous phase in the life of the girl, because in these years the all-important question will be answered if she will become a beautiful, alluring, useful and happy woman or not. One year can determine whether her life will be a success or a failure.[38]

The influence of the new approach is clear in Sperry's discussion of the young woman's sexual desire. Sperry stressed that nature should be allowed to lead the way. However, the young woman's interest in the other sex should not be stimulated. Sperry translates this advice into practical rules of conduct. While a woman is still in her teens, she should not venture into the public world. The excitement of meeting men could hamper the maturation process. She should avoid reading romantic novels at every age, as her imagination should not be allowed to get the better of her. In this context, the author also warned strongly against masturbation. Sperry was one of the very few authors who addressed this topic.[39] On the whole, he admonished the reader to restrain herself both in her curiosity to meet new people and in her desire to experience new emotions.

The *fin-de-siècle* advice literature represented the young adult woman as going through a complex and dangerous process that engendered many different and at times conflicting emotions. She might be overwhelmed by the changes she experiences. The only way to cope was to be aware of her feelings and to be truthful about them. She should correct herself immediately should she stray from the straight and narrow path leading to marriage. The tone of the advice literature did not convey confidence in the young woman. In emphasising the urgency of the advice, the authors may have heightened their readers' feelings of insecurity.

In sum, the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century advice literature for young women suggested that sexual maturation was difficult and dangerous for the individual. To live happily, this process should be monitored carefully. Sexual maturation affected every aspect of a woman's life, and, consequently, she should select with care those whom she could trust. More than ever, the authors conveyed the idea that the young woman would be going through a difficult phase in her life.

Conclusion

The social and cultural settings in which young adults lived their lives began to change dramatically in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The predominantly familial circle gave way to new venues that offered opportunities for enjoying the pleasures of consumer society. Pedagogues and parents acknowledged the need to prepare youth for the allure of the expanding public sphere and developed different strategies for each sex. Young adult males were taught to balance personal preference and social responsibility. They practised the art of managing themselves in the various kinds of clubs established for male youths. However, the advice literature for young adults suggests that authors had difficulty establishing a pedagogical strategy for young women. Whereas the advice for young men was clearly formulated, the guidance for young women was varied and vaguely phrased.

The late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century conduct books for young adult women had only a few things in common. Most focused on the reader's behaviour at public gatherings in order to compensate for the lack of parental oversight. About half acknowledged that the public sphere functioned as a marriage market. These publications addressed the choice of partner and stressed the need for dedication and decency in a husband. Later in the nineteenth century, the advice literature for young women conveyed a more uniform message. Authors elaborated on the meaning of women's contributions to society and motivated their readers to identify with the role of wife and mother. Women authors stressed that the reader's future happiness depended to a large extent on her husband. They advised her to choose her partner carefully, bearing society's gendered requirements in mind. A woman in her early twenties should acknowledge her desire and act responsibly, conducting herself with style and grace. Above all, they urged the reader to acquire self-knowledge and develop character. The themes of individual preference and personal autonomy were thus addressed. However, when authors began to adopt the concept of adolescence at the turn of the 1900s, they started to focus almost exclusively on sexual maturation. From their perspective, this process implied approval of the socially accepted concept of woman.

A key question that arises from this discussion is how the changing format of the conduct books for young adult women reflected on the individuality and autonomy of young women. The analysis undertaken here of 72 conduct books indicates that the situation changed from an emphasis on a relatively small number of rules in a clearly structured, patriarchal society to a large number of rules in more diffuse and complex social settings. Throughout the nineteenth century, the advice prioritised

the young woman's *habitus* in life. Over time, it also began to address her future happiness as a wife and mother. Authors advised young adult women to accept the contemporary concept of womanhood. With the introduction of the concept of adolescence, the framework of the advice narrowed. Authors emphasised that the *fin-de-siècle* young woman should concentrate on sexual maturation and consequently on social adjustment. Thus a girl's sexual identity was prioritised. At the same time, her personal preference and individual space were ignored. In short, the introduction of the concept of 'adolescence' into the advice literature at the turn of the twentieth century did not bring young adult women the freedom and autonomy that it had brought young men a century earlier.

Notes

1. Marja van Tilburg, *Hoe hoorde het? Seksualiteit en partnerkeuze in de Nederlandse adviesliteratuur, 1780–1890* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1998), 44–46, 83–95.
2. Karen O'Brien, 'Sexual distinctions and prescriptions' in Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 3–7; Mary Catherine Moran, 'Between the Savage and the Civil: Dr. John Gregory's Natural History of Femininity,' in ibid., 9–10.
3. See for example Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009); the phrase is borrowed from Christopher Lasch's *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).
4. Van Tilburg, *Hoe hoorde het?*, 40–44, 46–52, 80–81.
5. J. J. Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes*. Edited by Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), iv, 502.
6. Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge, 1981).
7. Katherine Dalsimer, *Female Adolescence: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Works of Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).
8. Sheila Rowbotham, *Good Girls Make Good Wives: Guidance for Girls in Victorian Fiction* (Oxford University Press, 1989).
9. John Neubauer, *The Fin-de-Siècle Culture of Adolescence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
10. Sarah Bilston, *The Awkward Age in Women's Popular Fiction, 1850–1900: Girls and the Transition to Womanhood* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).
11. G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and its relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education* (2 vols., London and New York: Appleton and Co., 1904).

12. Nancy Lesko, *Act Your Age!: A Cultural Construction of Adolescence* (New York and London: Routledge Falmer, 2001).
13. Compare Dena Goodman, *Becoming a Woman in the Age of Letters* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 63–67, 251–273.
14. Young women could choose between conduct books for women, young adults, and young adult women. This variety is evidence of the flourishing of the genre of advice literature from the Enlightenment onwards. See Tilburg, *Hoe hoorde het?* for a full list of the publications analysed for this chapter.
15. Nortbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation: sociogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen* 2nd ed. (2 vols, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980).
16. Mieke Bal and Christine van Boheemen, *Narrotology: Introduction to the Theory of the Narrative*, 3rd ed. (Toronto University Press, 2009).
17. Anthony Pagden, *The Enlightenment and Why It Still Matters* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 5–7, 16–18.
18. John Gregory, *Het vaderlijk legaat zijn zijne dochters.* Transl. from: *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (Dordrecht: van Houtrijve en Bredius, 1841). A revised edition was published in Schoonhoven by S. E. van Nooten in 1848.
19. J. H. Campe, *Vaderlijke raad aan mijne dochter, in den smaak van Theohron. Aan de huuwbaare jufferschap gewijd.* Transl. from: *Väterlicher Rat für meine Tochter. Ein Gegenstück zum Theophron. Der erwachsenern weibliche Jugend gewidmet* (Amsterdam: Wed. J. Doll, 1790).
20. The notion *habitus* pertains to the combination of mentality and behavior. See Elias, *Über den Prozess,* I, vii–x, lxxi–lxxxii.
21. This type of analogy reinforces the message embedded in the text. In many analyses of conduct books, the distinction between actual content and stylistic devices is not made. See Marja van Tilburg, 'Pedagogy as the Third Partner in Marriage: Educating Young Adults Towards Partnership in the Netherlands, 1780–1890' in Bruno W. F. Wanrooij (ed.), *La Mediazione Matriomoniale: Il terzo (in)comodo in Europa fra Otto e Novecento.* Biblioteca di Storia Sociale 32 (Fiesole and Rome: Georgetown University and Edizione di Storia e Letteratura, 2004), 175–182.
22. G. C. de Greuve, *Wilhelmina, of handboek voor het vrouwelijk geslacht.* Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen-Series XIII (Amsterdam: C. de Vries, H. van Munster en J. van der Hey, 1808), 109–124.
23. Ibid., 114–115.
24. Ibid., 114–116.
25. Campe, *Vaderlijke raad*, 200.
26. The genre of the marriage manual proliferated in the long nineteenth century: 67 different titles were published in the Netherlands. All discuss the choice of partner. See Tilburg, *Hoe hoorde het?*, 19–37.

27. A. B. van Meerten-Schilperoort, *Woorden van moederlijke liefde aan mijne dochter Mathilda*. Adapted from: *Worte mütterlicher Liebe an meine Tochter. Eine Gabe für Christliche Jungfrauen. Aus den Nachlasse der seelicher Freifrau Wilhelmina von Dehnhausen zu Grevenburg. geb. von Mengersen* (Amsterdam: P.N. van Kampen, 1844); Mrs Ellis [S. Ellis-Stickney], *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Fisher, 1839).
28. Ibid., 203.
29. Ibid.
30. Ellis, *The Women of England*, 29–30. Italics by Ellis.
31. Meerten-Schilperoort, *Woorden*, 130.
32. Phyllis Rose, *A Woman of Letters: A Life of Virginia Woolf* (London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 156–158.
33. Neubauer, *Fin-de-Siècle Culture*, 82–86, 133–140, 157–159.
34. Lesko, *Act Your Age!*, 51–54.
35. See, for instance, Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); John Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860–1960* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986).
36. Michel Foucault has demonstrated this trend in his various analyses of modern western culture. See, for example, his *Histoire de la Sexualité* (3 vols, Paris: Gallimard, 1976–1984).
37. Mevrouw [Mrs.] J, *De verloofde*. Transl. from the German (Haarlem: Coebergh, 1896), 2–3.
38. Lyman Beecher Sperry, *Een boek voor jonge vrouwen*. Transl. from: Confidential Talks with Young Women (Groningen: A.J. Vredevoogd, 1900), 15–16.
39. See also Campe, *Vaderlijk raad*, 210 for an earlier discussion of masturbation.

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CHAPTER 4

Adolescent Girlhood in Eighteenth-Century Ireland

Mary O'Dowd

In Chap. 3, Marja van Tilburg documented the proliferation in the late eighteenth century of advice literature directed at girls and young women. She also emphasised the transnational dimension of this literature as English, French, and German texts were translated for Dutch readers. Similarly, in eighteenth-century Ireland, printers identified the commercial potential of the advice literature market and freely reprinted London editions of English-authored books as well as translated texts, particularly those by French authors.[1] Despite the ubiquity of such publications, it is rare to find evidence of young girls reading or, more important, explicitly following the advice proffered in them. Advice books were probably more often used by adults. As Norma Clarke commented, Hester Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* (1773) was found in 'almost every girl's schoolroom' in late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England and 'came to symbolise restraint … used by older women … as aids to external control of the young'.[2]

In Chap. 1, van Tilburg also noted that the expansion in the print market of advice books for young women coincided with the development of the concept of adolescence. The new awareness of this life stage between

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4_4

childhood and adulthood does not, of course, mean that behaviour later defined as adolescent did not exist at an earlier time. Girls living in eighteenth-century Ireland manifested many of the characteristics associated by twenty first-century society with adolescent behaviour including a developing sense of self-identity, increased sexual awareness, and resentment at parental authority.[3] The aim of this chapter is, therefore, twofold: first, to trace the transition from adolescent girlhood to womanhood in eighteenth-century Ireland and, second, to assess the extent to which girls and young women were influenced by the advice so meticulously detailed in the published literature.

The central source used for this analysis is the journal of Irish woman, Mary Shackleton who was born into a Quaker family in 1758. Shackleton began her journal-keeping in 1769 at the age of 11 and maintained the habit throughout her life with the final entries dating to days before her death in 1826.[4] Shackleton wrote regularly in her journal throughout her teenage years. It is, therefore, an invaluable source for documenting the transition of a young girl from adolescence into early womanhood. The content of the Shackleton journal will be augmented with references to other sources, notably the biographical writings of three women: Dorothea Herbert, Laetitia Pilkington, and Margaret Leeson as well as the letters of a father, Edward Synge, to his teenage daughter, Alicia.[5]

Since the recognition in the late nineteenth century of adolescence as a key life stage, psychologists, medical doctors, and anthropologists have debated the meaning of the concept and the age group to which it applies. In particular, there is no agreement as to when adolescence starts and finishes. Scholars working in the field of adolescent studies have, however, identified a three-stage process in the transition from childhood to adulthood: the preteen years (ages 9 or 10 to 13), sometimes referred to as preadolescence; the middle teenage period (from 14 to 17 or 18); and the late teens through to the early 20s, often now described as young adulthood.[6] This chapter makes use of this threefold division of adolescence to explore the transition from girlhood to young womanhood in eighteenth-century Ireland.

Preadolescent Girlhood

In 1769, shortly after her eleventh birthday, Mary Shackleton began her journal, an act that reflected her growing self-awareness and sense of independence from parental authority, two of the key criteria included in the definition of adolescence. Although keeping a journal was part of the

Quaker tradition, Shackleton's journal as a young girl did not conform to the customary style of a religious diary, written to record the author's daily spiritual exercises and thoughts. Shackleton's father and mother took a leading role in the small Irish Quaker community, but apart from noting her attendance at Quaker meetings, the young Mary Shackleton rarely referred to religion in her early journals. Instead, in her first journal entries, she focused on her daily routine: rising in the morning; accompanying her aunt, Deborah Carleton and grandfather with whom she lived, to her parents' house located nearby in Ballitore village, County Kildare; and attending the meetings of the local Quaker community.[7] Neither her aunt nor her parents appear to have been aware of the journal, and Shackleton kept it hidden from them for much of her youth. Keeping a secular journal of this kind was, therefore, for the young Mary Shackleton, an act of defiance against the confining limitations of a strict adherence to the regulations of the Society of Friends to which her parents were so strongly committed.

In her first journal in 1769, Shackleton also noted her attendance at school: 'I went to school for the first time, this new year'. Although she had learned to read and write at age four, Shackleton's formal schooling appears to have begun in her eleventh year.[8] Her father, Richard Shackleton, ran a well-known boarding school for boys in Ballitore which his daughters as well as his sons attended. The Shackleton girls sat alongside the boys in class and followed a shared curriculum, a mixture of classical learning, geography, arithmetic, history, and religious literature.[9]

Another Irish girl, Dorothea Herbert, also learned to read at a young age but subsequently she was taught by a variety of private tutors, including a French governess, an itinerant dancing master, and a 'blind drunken french Music Master'.[10] By the 1770s, however, attending school was becoming an increasingly common experience for middle-class Irish girls. Herbert's younger sisters, for example, attended a small local school.[11] By that time too, boarding schools for older girls were becoming fashionable. The writer Sydney Owenson attended a day school in the mid-1780s when she was about 5 but later went to a French boarding school on the sea coast near Dublin. Owenson recalled in her memoir that her father had to plead with the headmistress to enroll her in the school when she was nine because she was below the average age of pupils for the school. Among her fellow pupils in her class were the daughters of a prominent Irish politician and a clergyman who subsequently became a bishop, another indication that formal schooling was by then an acceptable part of a middle-class girl's educa-

tion.[12] Owenson and her sister spent three years in the school and then attended a 'finishing' school nearer to their family home in Dublin city centre.[13] The latter, like many of the schools for 'young ladies', emphasised a curriculum that improved the 'morals and manners' of the pupils.[14]

Although Dorothea Herbert did not attend school, she did undergo a similar 'finishing' or preparatory experience. Herbert lived in rural Ireland, close to the small provincial town of Carrick-on-Suir, County Tipperary. When she was about 11 or 12 years old, Herbert was sent by her parents to stay for a year with her aunt in Dublin, where she was to have the benefit of 'Masters in the Metropolis'. Here, her clothing was scrutinised by her aunt and cousin:

> My Mother's fine home Linen was deem'd too coarse, my Rich flower'd Cottons chosen by the Crony Amateurs of Carrick were deemed vulgar and unwearable. My new St John Stays a horrible bore, and my Philippian Pumps Abominable. In short I experienced the greatest Mortification whilst they dissected my Carrick finery of which I was not a little proud.[15]

Her rural clothing discarded, Herbert was dressed by her aunt in a new morning gown. She was then brought to dancing, drawing, and music masters who aimed at 'as they term'd it, "The Making of Me"', which involved, above all, undoing what were deemed to be the inappropriate social habits that Herbert had learned from her rural teachers.[16] Although Herbert was too young to attend many adult social events, her music master organised a series of children's balls, breakfasts, and suppers to teach his pupils how they were expected to behave on such occasions. Sydney Owenson also remembered the balls that were organised in her boarding school with a similar purpose in mind.[17] Herbert's aunt reinforced the instructions of the music master, taking her niece and her own daughter to selected adult social events and closely observing their social skills.[18] Herbert was reprimanded for laughing and crying during a performance of the *Beggar's Opera*. Her aunt told her niece that 'it was quite against the Rules of Polite Decorum and betrayed a Vulgar Rusticity to laugh or Cry at a Play House'.[19] Herbert's aunt also rebuked her own daughter for 'talking too loud in the Green Room [in the theatre] to a Pretty Gentleman who paid her some Compliments'. Possibly making use of an advice book as a guide, Herbert's aunt, like the teachers in Owenson's school, was preparing her young charges for their transition into acceptable womanhood.

Herbert's extended visit to Dublin, Mary Shackleton's attendance at her father's school, and Sydney Owenson's enrollment in a boarding school represented, therefore, an important transition stage in their lives. It was the eighteenth-century equivalent of secondary school education, which psychologists have identified as a key factor in the adolescent development of young people in contemporary western society.[20]

Between the ages of 12 and 13, Shackleton was only beginning to be aware of boys. In 1771, she exchanged letters with her younger sister, Sally, in which they discuss their 'love' for boys in their school.[21] In her accounts of the attraction of young men, Dorothea Herbert drew on the language of romantic novels, which authors of advice books unanimously denounced and urged young women not to read. She recalled that in Dublin, when her aunts were out, she and her cousins read novels, endeavoured to write their own, and, generally, 'romantickized'.[22] As Quakers, the Shackleton sisters had limited access to secular reading, but this did not hinder their romantic dreams. Instead of the heroes and heroines of contemporary novels, they drew on the characters portrayed in the classical literature that they were taught by their father. Mary Shackleton invented classical pseudonyms for the schoolboys as well as for herself and her sister. Her love was directed toward 'Hector', named after one of the heroes of Homer's *Iliad* while Sally acknowledged her love for 'Damon', renowned in classical literature for his loyalty and friendship. Shackleton adopted the pseudonym of the queen of Carthage, 'Dido', for herself while Sally was Dido's sister 'Anna'.[23] The sisters admitted that their love was unrequited with Shackleton romantically noting the 'pain' that her heart suffered for the 'lovely creature', Hector. As she wrote resignedly to Sally: 'I never (I think) loved any boy yet, that return'd my love'.[24]

The Shackleton sisters' attitude to boys was, therefore, typical of pre-adolescent girls with an awakening awareness of the other sex but, as yet, no physical intimacy. They were at an interim stage between girlhood and adolescence. Despite their new interest in the opposite sex, they still had not abandoned many of their childhood preoccupations. Mary and Sally Shackleton, for example, also corresponded about their dolls, albeit making up courting stories about them.[25]

The sisters were also keenly aware that their parents, and particularly their father, would not have approved of their correspondence on the schoolboys. Richard Shackleton regularly requested to read his children's letters, much to the increasing resentment of his daughter Mary. On several

occasions, Mary Shackleton directed Sally to burn her letters to her, noting that she wrote one letter 'in the parlour, where there is no fire, but I would be afraid to write it above, lest I should be ask'd to shew it; which would be very disagreeable to us both, I believe'.[26]

The Teenage Years

There is a notable difference between Shackleton's first journal written when she was 11 and those penned throughout her teenage years. Through the later journal pages, it is possible to detect her increased awareness of boys, her defiance of her parents, and her developing sense of self-identity, all characteristics linked with modern definitions of adolescence.[27] In her first journal, Shackleton wrote mainly about members of her immediate family and the daily activities that revolved around them; in her subsequent volumes, until she was in her nineteenth year, she focused more on her interactions with people outside her immediate family circle. In particular, she wrote a great deal about the boys in her father's school. Shackleton was also far more explicit in naming the boys and did not rely on pseudonyms as she had done in her earlier correspondence with her sister. Following her grandfather's death in 1771, some of the school boarders stayed at her aunt's house. As a teenager, Shackleton had, therefore, daily contact with boys of her own age who were not members of her family.[28] Kevin O'Neill has documented the surprisingly physical closeness of Shackleton's encounters with the schoolboys.[29] Shackleton, her sisters, and female cousins flirted with them and played games that involved asking intimate questions with kissing as a reward for the answers. At age 12 and 13, the favorite game of the girls with the schoolboys was 'master and scholars' in which the participants role-played, and each took on a different persona of either one of the boys or the master. By the time Shackleton was 16, however, the group's preferred game was 'questions and commands', better known in contemporary society as 'truth or dare'.[30] The questions that Shackleton recorded in her journal also have a modern air to them:

> I had asked Elsey … if he was a rose who would he have to pluck him. He said Sally. She commanded him to kiss her the next time…
>
> … Playing questions and commands with Jack and Sally. Jack commanded me to kiss Rayner which I was obliged to do.[31]

Other commands requested the truth about the girls' and boys' feelings for one another: 'I made Sally tell that she had rather see Elsey return than any other of the boys who left [i.e., the school]'.[32] When the boys and girls were on their own without adult company, kissing and sitting on each other's laps seem to have been a normal part of the horseplay between the two sexes: 'Sally and I left in the parlour. Bob pulled Sally on his lap and kissed her. Sally got up and ran out. Bob pulled her back'.[33] The teenage Mary Shackleton also looked on with fascination as her older sister, Peggy, was courted by Samuel Grubb, the man whom she later married. The young couple availed themselves of the two parlours in her aunt's house, spending a great deal of time unchaperoned in one of them, usually after the adults had gone to bed.[34]

In her memoir of her teenage years, Dorothy Herbert also described the freedom that she and her brothers and sisters had. She recalled social gatherings late at night with the teenage children of their neighbours, the Jephsons, which often involved alcohol:

> One Night after the Seniors went to Bed we sat up till two Oclock at a Supper of Cold Meat, salad, Gooseberry Fool, and Crabs of our Own Dressing – Not forgetting our Old Jug of Punch after it – when Otway and Fanny Jephson became so riotous, and roared so in laughing that they brought down the whole party above, some in their Shifts, some more in their Shirts … When Fanny Jephson and Otway saw their plight, Nothing on earth could equal their merriment, and Not till Mrs Jephson had given her three or four Shakes could we get our Volatile Companion into any decent Composure.

The evening did not end with the adult reprimand. The party moved out-of-doors and ended with a drunken visit to a neighbour's house.[35]

In her mid-teens, Shackleton had at least two relationships with boys that seem to have gone beyond the unrequited passion of her preadolescent years. Kevin O'Neill has described Shackleton's affection for the schoolboy William Hall. Their friendship included a great deal of physical contact, which included squeezing of each others' hands and slapping. In December 1774, she recorded 'Billy Hall did not slap as much but squelched my hand—he did not hurt me though—no indeed'; a few days later: 'Billy Hall punched me. I punched him, am I sorry I hurted him? Why? ask my heart'.[36] Apart from physical horseplay, Shackleton also endeavoured to get a lock of Hall's hair and make a paper silhouette of his profile, and she

marked his height on a school wall.[37] In the constraining world of the advice books, such gestures might have been considered the first steps in a formal courtship. Among the young people in Ballitore, however, they were not taken so seriously and appear to have been viewed as a normal part of youth culture. Although Shackleton confided to her journal how upset she was at Hall's departure from Ballitore to join the army, she quickly transferred her affection to another young man called Tom Pimm. In typical teenage fashion, Shackleton was embarrassed at any public acknowledgment by others of her feelings for the two boys. When Pimm also left Ballitore, Shackleton wrote in her journal that she had resolved not 'to let my affections be entangled again. I hope I will not blush now when he is mentioned or sitting by, or speaking to him, and not know how to look lest I should be suspected, which was the way to make me so'.[38]

Although Mary Shackleton described her close physical contact with Hall and Pimm, there is no hint in her diary that she had sexual intercourse with either of them. Teenage sex and marriage were not unusual, however, in eighteenth-century Ireland, even within the middle-class networks of the Shackletons and the Herberts. Two of Herbert's teenage friends were married before they were 16.[39] Both Herbert and Shackleton were also familiar with single mothers and young runaway brides. Under Irish marriage law, a couple could marry relatively easily with little advance notice and few or no witnesses. Herbert, for example, wrote of a young couple who eloped and married on their way to Dublin. The service was probably conducted by a couple-beggar, an itinerant Church of Ireland or Catholic clergyman who married couples for a small fee.[40]

Other women memorialists boasted of their sexual conquests in their teenage years. Laetitia Pilkington recalled in her memoir that 'as I approached womanhood, there was a new scene opened to me' and alleged that by the time she was 13, she had 'many lovers'.[41] In her autobiography, Margaret Plunkett described her liaisons in her mid-teens with older men and her frustration with her brother when she was 15 because he would not consent to a marriage proposal that she had received.[42] Similarly, Pilkington claimed that her mother refused her permission to marry on a number of occasions, and her memoir suggests that she may not have had her parents' consent when she did marry at 16.[43]

The teenage disagreements of Mary Shackleton with her parents and aunt were less dramatic than those of Pilkington, but she too recorded her resentment at their restrictions, often over issues that will be familiar to

modern parents. She threw a tantrum when her aunt would not permit her to go to a social event which some of her friends were allowed to attend: 'I fell a crying … I walked about in great grief … I went into the parlour walked about and cried'. She pleaded again with her aunt, arguing that she rarely asked permission to go to such events. Eventually, her aunt yielded and consented to her going, provided she came home with a group of companions.[44]

Like other adolescent girls, Shackleton had a sullen response to some of her parents' commands and guidance. When her mother advised her daughters not to walk on the wall of a bridge, as it was unsafe, Mary wrote sarcastically in her journal: 'memo to obey hir orders'.[45] On another occasion when her mother indicated her intention to dine with Mary, her sister, and her aunt, Mary noted sharply in her journal: 'what an honour'.[46] Shackleton often tried to avoid going to her parents' house for meals, preferring to stay in the home of her aunt who was less strict in her disciplining of her nieces and nephews than her sister and her husband.[47] On Shackleton's seventeenth birthday, she recorded in her journal that the local large estate owner had hosted a ball for his son whose birthday was on the same day. Shackleton was clearly disappointed that the Quaker tradition did not permit a similar celebration for her: 'pray am not I [of] as much consequence … to some, to myself….'[48] When her father rebuked her for expressing pride at reaching the age of 17, she responded defiantly, albeit secretly, in her journal that she was 'a very fine child of my age in my humble opinion … I am more than all the Maurice Keatings [the landlord's son] in the world'.[49] As Katherine Dalsimer has commented, adolescents have a tendency to self-aggrandisement or, as an eighteenth-century commentator observed, to 'magnify themselves'.[50] Shackleton herself admitted that she was 'arm'd so strong in impudence' that she was indifferent to the sneers of others.[51]

Shackleton's greatest act of teenage defiance was, however, the keeping of her journal. As noted already, the journal was not in the format of the typical Quaker journal, and the young author was well aware that she was doing something of which her aunt and her parents, particularly her father, would not approve. She wrote in secret with only her sister, Sally, initially knowing that she was keeping a journal. Like her earlier letter writing, Shackleton was careful where she wrote, often in the dark or a hidden corner of the house and slipping downstairs when no one was looking to steal ink with which to write:

> I steal the ink up to bed at night and down in the morning but always forget to leave it in a convenient place to steal so I run the risque of being seen carrying it away. I steal Betty's ink into the boys' room where I have a pen but as I could not do either now (my aunt being in the Parlour and Sister Peggy in the Kitchen), I went into the closet, put a pen in my bosom and the ink bottle in my pocket.[52]

Shackleton also recorded in her journal her fear that her parents or her aunt would discover her writing habit. As she wrote shortly after her seventeenth birthday: 'I dread my father catching me writing'. She also noted on a number of occasions that she had dreams of her journal being discovered: 'I dreamt last night that St Clair [a schoolboy] found this journal and carried it to my father and mother which vex'd me exceedingly'.[53]

Through her regular entries in her journal, Shackleton was also experimenting with different forms of self-expression. In her first journal, she despaired that she would have enough material about which to write as she passed many days 'as usual', but she was very soon referring frustratingly to running out of paper and space to include all that she wished to relate. When Shackleton was 16, she wrote that she told 'every thought in my journal' and made use of it to write confidentially about boys and her feelings for them.[54] Katherine Dalsimer has suggested that the keeping of a journal was 'ideally suited' to the needs of an adolescent as it provided a means to 'express hidden thoughts and feelings'. [55] The teenage Shackleton also wrote poetry, another medium frequently used by youth to communicate their emotions.[56] By the time she was 18, Shackleton was trying out different ways of presenting her journal and was clearly thinking in terms of writing stories based on the events of her daily life. She was in the process of developing her identity as a writer, a role that later also brought her into conflict with her parents and the wider Quaker community.[57]

Psychologists have noted that modern teenagers use clothes and fashion to experiment with their identity and self-awareness.[58] Following her year in Dublin, Dorothea Herbert was self-consciously aware that her clothes identified her as 'rustic'. In later years, she recalled with some amusement the herbs and ointments which she and her sisters used to improve their appearance when they were teenagers:

> Every night we were wrapd up like Pomantum Sticks in greasy brown Paper … Our Hands, Faces, and Chests were completely cover'd with Tallow and

> Brown Paper, made into various sorts of Ointments – Our Arms were Suspended in the Air by strong Ropes fastend to the Tester of the Bed – Our feet tied to the Valance to stretch our Legs and Make us grow tall …[59]

Herbert also ruefully noted that all of these efforts were in vain, and she recorded in her memoir a number of social occasions on which she felt embarrassed by her appearance. She remembered, for example, that when she was about 13, she and a friend spent a week preparing for a visit to Herbert's wealthier cousins. Before they left home, 'we thought ourselves amazing fine having Notably Transmogrified every Wearable we could beg buy or Borrow'. Compared to her cousin's fashionable clothing, Herbert and her companion felt self-consciously dowdy: 'Indeed, with all our Oeconomical Arts our Wardrobes were so defective that we wished ourselves back a thousand times, and were continually weeping at one mortifaction or another'.[60]

The Society of Friends had strict guidelines for the dress of its members, which, to her daughters' despair, Shackleton's mother followed rigidly. There were, however, no explicit regulations about hairstyles, and the Shackleton sisters experimented with cutting their hair in different ways with Mary boasting that she and Sally had been the first to introduce a new style to Ballitore.[61] The dark, plain clothes that their mother insisted that they wear made the Shackleton girls stand out, even within the Quaker community. Shackleton recorded in her diary her acute embarrassment and self-consciousness about her dress. When she was 18, she described attending a Quaker wedding where the bride and her attendants wore light-colored clothes. Shackleton was dressed in a long black cloak and hood and felt decidedly out of place. She thought that she 'was not a fit person to be in the train of girls' that followed the bride from the meeting house to her home but was mortified at the thought of having to join the men instead. Like Dorothea Herbert, Shackleton was ashamed of her clothes and wished she could go home.[62]

The teenage Shackleton and Herbert were both conscious of their new physical attraction to men, but no young Irish woman recorded her response to the most important physical change of adolescent girls, the onset of menstruation. Paradoxically, it was a male correspondent, the bishop of Elphin, Edward Synge, who penned a rare discussion of menstruation in correspondence with his teenage daughter, Alicia. Synge understandably fussed over Alicia's health. She was the only surviving child of a family of seven. Synge's wife had also died young.[63] Synge attributed

his wife's death to complications during menstruation and her embarrassment at discussing her condition with her doctor. Consequently, Synge emphasised to his 18-year-old daughter that she should not be ashamed to discuss her monthly cycle:

> My Dear, Dear Girl. Consider, You are a Female, I won't say Woman. Everything therefore that belongs to Females belongs to you. Your Frame and Nature is what the great God of Nature has given you. Can any thing then that is natural, be matter of reproach, or be conceal'd as a shamefull imperfection?[64]

In a very sensible tone, Synge urged Alicia to speak to her doctor about any menstruation-related problems: 'If it costs you a few blushes at first, What signifys it? They'll soon be over, and you and I both easy'.[65]

Eighteenth-century Irish middle-class girls in their early to mid-teens shared, therefore, many of the experiences and the characteristics of modern teenagers. There is no evidence that any of the girls studied for this chapter read printed advice books, although their guardians and parents may have done. The teenage girls seemed to have had more freedom to socialise with boys and young men without adult supervision than the authors of advice books recommended. Close friendships between girls are another characteristic that modern commentators associate with female adolescence. Of equal importance, however, for Dorothea Herbert and Mary Shackleton was their membership of a community of young people of both sexes. They both record their friendships with boys as well as girls. Leadbeater spent most of her teenage years in the company of not only the boys in her father's school but also youth of both sexes from Quaker families in the vicinity of Ballitore. They socialised together on the school grounds and at Shackleton's home and also ventured out at night without adult supervision. Similarly, in her *memoir*, Dorothea Herbert emphasised the community of young people that she and her siblings formed with their neighbours and friends.

Young Adulthood

In 1777, as Shackleton entered her nineteenth year, the format and tone of her journal changed dramatically and began to conform more to what her parents might have expected of their Quaker daughter.[66] Shackleton described the different Quaker meetings which she attended not just in

her local village of Ballitore but also farther afield. By her late teens, Shackleton travelled regularly with members of her family to provincial meetings of the Society of Friends as well as to national meetings in Dublin. These meetings provided young people with opportunities to socialise. Shackleton also made use of the trips to Dublin to meet up with former pupils of her father's school, some of whom were studying at Trinity College.[67] Shackleton was, however, notably more reserved about her contacts with the young men whom she encountered at Quaker meetings than she had been as a younger teenager. In her account of the wedding she attended in 1777, she described how the young people gathered together and the men were encouraged to kiss the women who sat beside them. Shackleton noted with some relief that she had 'escaped the general kissing for not being used to such behaviour, I would not know how to behave'. This seems in strong contrast to the journal entries of her early teenage years when she wrote freely about kissing the boys in her father's school, declaring on one occasion: 'I am an advocate of kissing a friend. It is an affectionate manner of solicitation'.[68]

If Shackleton as a young woman was reticent about her friendships with young men, her journal documents her close friendships with a community of Quaker girls. She met them at Quaker meetings and regularly recorded the time they spent 'chatting'. When Shackleton attended meetings away from home, she frequently shared lodgings and beds with other girls. Kevin O'Neill has documented the emotional language in which Shackleton wrote about her close female friendships.[69]

The changing format of her journal reflected Shackleton's transition from adolescent girl to young woman. By the time she was 20, she was no longer hiding her journal from her father, who in 1778 presented her with a copy of *The Ladies Complete Pocket-Book*, which was a printed diary for the following year. It was designed for brief daily entries and regular account keeping; the gift may also have marked Richard Shackleton's recognition of his daughter as a young woman. Mary's mother, Rachel Shackleton, made use of a similar pocketbook.[70] For the first time Mary Shackleton also began to enter in her journal the allowance that she received from her father along with a list of her annual purchases. Greater financial independence was, therefore, an important indication of Shackleton's transition to adulthood. Characteristically, Shackleton ignored the daily divisions of the 'pocket-book' and often wrote far longer entries for particular days.[71]

Shackleton's initiation into the wider Irish Quaker community was an important marker in her journey into adulthood. She became an active member of the women's meeting provincial group, serving as clerk and as a representative to the national meetings. Shackleton's closer engagement with the public sphere through engagement with the Quaker organisation may also have encouraged her to observe the Society's rules more strictly.[72]

Through the surviving correspondence of Edward Synge with his daughter, Alicia, it is also possible to document his changing advice to her as she moved into her late teens. As a widower, Synge clearly struggled with how to advise his only surviving child. When she was in her early teens, Synge recommended to his daughter that she observe and imitate the behaviour of older women whose social skills he admired: 'I don't know whether you've observ'd Mrs Nicholson's manner of speaking. 'Tis the most distinct without formality, or slowness, that ever I heard. In this, as in every thing else, she is worthy your imitation'.[73] During Alicia's later teenage years, Synge may have begun to draw on printed literature for guidance on how to chaperone his daughter into young womanhood. When Alicia was 18 (the last year for which Synge's letters to her survive), her father's instructions to her often mirrored very closely the standard tenets of conduct books for young women and how they should behave in public.[74] Like many of the most popular advice books, Synge was above all concerned that Alicia maintain a 'proper reserve' in her social contacts with both sexes: 'A decent reserve without prudery is the top behaviour for a young lady'. At the same time, she was to avoid being too backward. As Marja van Tilburg notes in Chap. 3, good social behaviour was a careful balancing act.[75] Synge agreed that his daughter should be well educated ('the more girls know the better') but warned Alicia against being ostentatious in showing her knowledge, citing her knowledgeable mother who did not flaunt her education.[76] The 'literary lady' who boasted of her learning in society was denounced by many authors of advice books.[77] To his daughter, Synge also emphasised the importance of letter writing as an acquired skill and as a formal means of communication. Again, like many authors of advice books, he recommended the letters of Madame de Sévigné as a model for Alicia to follow.[78] Giving his daughter greater control of financial matters also formed part of Synge's recognition that Alicia was 'almost' a woman.[79]

Edward Synge, therefore, acknowledged that the late teens were an important time for his daughter as she made the transition from adolescent girl to young woman. Both Shackleton and Synge married relatively late; Alicia Synge was 25 and Mary Shackleton was 32. Marriage repre-

sented an important rite of passage for both women, but it was not a significant stage in their transition into young adult womanhood. Of more significance was their increasing engagement with the public world and learning the correct forms of behaviour. As they began to emerge from their adolescent years, both were also entrusted by their fathers with greater control over financial matters.

When Dorothea Herbert was about 18 years of age, she fell in love with a young man called John Roe from a neighbouring family. In her memoir, Herbert described Roe's visits to the Herbert family home. She interpreted his visits and behaviour toward her as part of the formal process of courting. When Roe, however, ceased to visit and subsequently married another woman, Herbert appears to have had a mental breakdown. Her memoir was written when she claimed that her family had locked her in her room and refused to allow her leave the house. She penned her memoir as the *Retrospections of an Outcast Or Life of Dorothea Ro*e, indicating that she believed Roe's behaviour toward her amounted to a courtship and a promise of marriage.[80] Confined to the home with no engagement with the outside world, Herbert appears frozen in late girlhood romanticising her relationship with Roe. She seems to have not made the transition into womanhood. Instead, her memoir looks backward with a sense of nostalgia at the idyllic happiness of her childhood and youth.

Herbert's perception of John Roe's behaviour as constituting a courtship may have been wishful thinking, but her narrative painfully documents the passive behaviour expected of young women in the formal world of courtship. Unlike in their early teenage years, Herbert and Shackleton were aware of the rules of 'public decorum', or what Edward Synge referred to as 'forms'.[81] The actions of a man visiting a house or sitting beside a woman could be implicitly assumed to be the initiation of a formal courting ritual without either party explicitly acknowledging that this was the case. Kevin O'Neill has documented the protracted courtship of Mary Shackleton as she waited for her future husband, William Leadbeater, to propose. In the courtship process, the initiative was with the man. And young women like Dorothea Herbert were left to guess or fantasise at the meaning of the man's actions.[82] She described with despair one evening spent in John Roe's company:

> John Roe … returned home not having once quitted me the whole Evening, from the time we left the dining Room … But Alas! all this time the Words, I love! never passed his Lips though we often touch'd on the sweet passion in general conversation, but ever in a laughing rallying Manner.[83]

Conclusion

In exploring the lives of girls in the past, it is important to use age as a criterion for analysis and distinguish between preteen girls, adolescent girls, and young women. Among the girls who are the focus of this study, the early teenage years were less restrictive than the later ones. It was only when they reached the ages of 18 or older that they began to adhere to some of the tenets of behaviour laid out in the printed advice books. None of the girls recorded that they had read or were familiar with such texts, although parents and guardians may have used them as guides on how to train and advise their wards. By their late teens, both Dorothea Herbert and Alicia Synge had in different ways imbibed and understood the social behaviour expected of them—behaviour that was laid out in the advice books that were available to readers like Edward Synge, who regularly gave his daughter lists of books to be ordered from both the English and the Irish print market.

A focus on restraint, however, can lead us to overlook other physical and emotional developments in teenage girls in the past. Modern ideas about adolescence can be a useful guide for examining and understanding the writings of eighteenth-century girls and can alert the historian to comments that might otherwise be ignored or dismissed as unimportant.

Notes

1. Gerardine Meaney, Mary O'Dowd, and Bernadette Whelan, *Reading the Irishwoman. Case Studies in Cultural Encounters and Exchange* (Liverpool University Press, 2014), 13–53.
2. Norma Clarke, 'Bluestocking Fictions: Devotional Writings, Didactic Literature and the Imperative of Female Improvement' in Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2005), 470–1; Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind Addressed to a Young Lady* (2 vols, London: H Hughs for J. Walter, 1773). The first Dublin edition was also printed in 1773.
3. Leo B. Hendry and Marion Kloep, *Adolescence and Adulthood* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Alexa C. Curtis, 'Defining Adolescence', *Journal of Adolescent and Family Health*, 7, no. 2 (2015). Consulted at http://scholar.utc.edu/jafh/vol7/iss2/2/, 8 June 2017; Judith G. Smetana, 'Adolescents and Parents. Conceptions of Parental Authority', *Child Development,* 59 (April 1988), 331–335.

4. National Library of Ireland (hereafter NLI), MSS 9292-9346. See also Barbara Hughes, *Between Literature and History: the Diaries and Memoirs of Mary Leadbeater and Dorothea Herbert* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010).
5. Dorothea Herbert, *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert, 1770–1806* (Dublin: Town House, 1988; 1st published 1928–29); Mary Lyons (ed.), *The Memoirs of Mrs. Leeson, Madam, 1727–1797* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1995); A. C. Elias Jr., *Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington* (2 vols., Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1997); Marie-Louise Legg (ed.), *The Synge Letters: Bishop Edward Synge to his Daughter Alicia, Roscommon to Dublin, 1746–1752* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1996).
6. Curtis, 'Defining Adolescence'.
7. NLI MS 9292.
8. Ibid., 24; Mary Shackleton Leadbeater, *The Leadbeater Papers: a Selection from the MSS and Correspondence of Mary Leadbeater* (2 vols, London: Bell and Daldy, 1862), i, 83. There is some ambiguity around when Shackleton first attended school as the entry in her journal could also be interpreted as meaning that she went to school for the first time in 1769 having been there in previous years.
9. Barbara Hughes, *Between Literature and History,* 128–9; Michael Quane, 'Ballitore School', *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society and Surrounding Districts*, 14, 2 (1966–7), 174–209.
10. Herbert, *Retrospections,* 18, 41.
11. Ibid., 82.
12. Sydney Owenson, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs: Autobiography, Diaries and Correspondence* (London: W H Allen, 1862), 98–109.
13. Ibid., 110.
14. See, for example, *Dublin Evening Post,* 13 September 1785, 18 June 1808; *Saunders's Newsletter,* 22 April 1802, 11 October 1805, 21 June 1817, 10 October 1821, 29 July 1820. See also Mary O'Dowd, *A History of Women in Ireland, 1500–1800* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2005), 210–212.
15. Herbert, *Retrospections*, 43–44.
16. Ibid., 44–5.
17. Owenson, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs,* 90.
18. Herbert, *Retrospections,* 50.
19. Ibid., 48.
20. Curtis, 'Defining Adolescence'.
21. Olive C. Goodbody, 'Letters of Mary and Sarah Shackleton 1767–1775', *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society and Surrounding Districts,* 14, 4 (1969), 415–30.
22. Herbert, *Retrospections,* 50.
23. Goodbody, 'Letters of Mary and Sarah Shackleton 1767–1775', 419–20.

24. Ibid., 419.
25. Ibid., 426, 427.
26. Ibid., 419.
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CHAPTER 5

Young Women, Textile Labour, and Marriage in Europe and China around 1800

Ann Waltner and Mary Jo Maynes

Introduction

Comparing girls' transitions to adulthood in regions of China and Europe during the era of the so-called Great Divergence around 1800 brings new insights into 'the global history of the girl'. At the same time, focusing on girlhood also opens up new possibilities for bringing gender and generational relations into global historical analyses more broadly. Our comparative approach stems from a long-standing interest in European and Chinese family, household, and gender systems. We see certain aspects of these systems—especially the ideologies and practices around generational relations, the household organisation of labour in protoindustrial production, the gendered life-cyclical transition between childhood and adulthood, and the arrangement of marriages or other forms of sexual union for daughters—as having had wide social, economic, and cultural ramifications, including ramifications for labour systems and their response to changing historical conditions.

The focus here is on the household and non-household textile work of young women as they moved (or, in some cases, did not move) through the life-cycle transition from daughter to wife and from a natal to a marital household. We are also interested in women's relationship to markets as

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M. O'Dowd, J. Purvis (eds.), *A History of the Girl*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4_5

both producers and consumers of textile goods that circulated through market and non-market mechanisms locally, regionally, and globally. We begin our comparison with household-based textile production systems in both regions, exploring production for both subsistence and market. We also note variations in household labour systems that involved both family and non-family (e.g. wage/servant) labour.

In order to construct an analysis of important global economic-historical processes, as well as to argue comparatively, the temporal scope of our project extends from roughly the mid-seventeenth through to the mid-nineteenth century. The time frame thus encompasses periods of important commercial and technological developments in textile production and marketing in both Europe and China. We draw our evidence very broadly, but we concentrate on several regions of protoindustrial textile production: the Jiangnan region in east-central China, which around 1800 was heavily involved in market-oriented production of both silk and cotton; southern Germany, especially Württemberg, where primarily linen and woollen goods were produced; southeastern France, a centre of silk production; and Ireland, where linen and later cotton were produced. By way of conceptual framing, we begin with a brief introduction of the main elements of our comparison: arguments about economic development and textile production systems and their relationship to households and marriage systems.

Family, Household, and Textile Production and 'the Great Divergence'

When, why, and how the economies of China and Europe diverged have been topics of much debate since the phrase 'Great Divergence' was first coined by Samuel Huntington; the most recent discussions centre on arguments made by, among others, Kenneth Pomeranz in *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*.[1] Many of the original arguments revolved around the construction of wage and price series that made it possible to discuss comparative trends in standards of living and labour productivity in Europe and China around 1800. Our interest in comparative global history centres on household-level analysis and on similarities and differences stemming from the nature of family and household organisation in Europe and China. Since, as feminist historical analysis has made clear, family, household, and economy have long been intricately interlinked, we want to focus our attention on some aspects of

European and Chinese family economies, as they figure into long-term economic development patterns.[2]

One of the striking historical peculiarities of many regions of Europe that had emerged by the seventeenth century was a pattern of relatively late marriage—that is, relative to other regions of the world, where some form of marriage, at least for women, usually occurred shortly after puberty. In addition, a substantial minority of early modern European men and women never married, in contrast with nearly universal marriage elsewhere. These European marriage practices have been closely connected with particular family-economic links long established in the historiography. In brief, customs of betrothal and property transfer discouraged marriage before the couple commanded the resources required for at least limited economic independence, meaning a shop and tools in the case of the artisan or, for peasants, a house and land and the basic equipment required to farm it. Late marriage was also rooted in the widespread practice of *neolocality*—that is, the expectation that a bride and groom would set up their own household at or soon after marriage—common in much of northern, Central, and Western Europe, though by no means universal.[3] The contrast between early modern Europe, generally speaking, and other world regions meant that a labour pool of unmarried girls was available to a degree uncommon elsewhere. Unmarried girls had the potential to engage full time in tasks like spinning, uninterrupted by the increased domestic responsibilities brought on by marriage and childbearing. In addition, while many unmarried girls worked at home, a period of service away from home in a farm household, as an apprentice, or as a domestic servant in an urban household was characteristic of both male and female youth in many regions of Europe as a life-cycle phase preceding marriage.

The traditional Chinese family system was characterised by early age at marriage, nearly universal marriage for women, and *virilocal* residence (i.e., a newly married couple normally resided with the groom's parents). From the sixteenth through to the twentieth century, Chinese couples married much younger on average than did their European counterparts. According to Chinese demographic historians, 'in China, females have always married universally and early … in contrast to female marriage in Western Europe, which occurred late or not at all'.[4] Roughly speaking, whereas around 1800 all but 20 percent of Chinese women were married by age 20, among European populations, between 60 and 80 percent of women were still unmarried at this age. In traditional China, only 1 or 2 percent of women remained unmarried at age 30, whereas between

15 and 25 percent of 30-year-old Western European women were still single. (For men, the differences, though in the same direction, are far less stark.)[5] Because the new couple in China would ordinarily reside in the household of the groom's family, it was not necessary for an artisan to become established or a peasant to own a farm before marrying. The newly married couple participated in an ongoing domestic and economic enterprise. Early marriage in China meant that the category of female 'youth', which was so significant for European social and economic history, has no precise counterpart in Chinese history. A young Chinese woman laboured, to be sure, but the location of her work was most commonly either in the household of her father or her husband. There were female domestic servants in China, but knowledge about the nature of their servitude is fragmentary; domestic service was less common and may have been of longer duration than the life-cyclic servitude so common in Europe.[6] The nature of young women's marriage and labour patterns in the Chinese and European contexts held implications for the particular ways in which early modern economic development occurred in the two regions. In a comparative history of domestic production, the fact that the young female labour force in China was, to an extent far greater than that of Europe, both married and 'domesticated' within a male-kin-headed household needs to be part of the story.

A growing number of regional studies of textile history offer a rich terrain for comparison.[7] For our purposes, accumulating evidence about the gender and generational divisions of labour in household production of textiles and about relationships between household production and changing markets is most relevant. Household labour organisation in textile production in China and Europe varied depending on the fabric produced; we are most interested in silk, cotton, and linen. Moreover, specific attention to different phases of the textile production process—especially spinning and weaving—highlights comparative similarities and differences.

Girls' Work in Household Production Systems

Europe's 'Protoindustrial' Textile Industries in Regional and Global Markets

Europe's textile industries underwent dramatic growth and change long before the earliest textile factories arose in the second half of the eighteenth century. Beginning in the fifteenth century, 'protoindustrial'

production and marketing methods were reorienting textile production towards large and distant markets; by the seventeenth century, many regions of Western and Central Europe were producing wool, linen, or silk cloth for transnational and even transcontinental markets. Merchant entrepreneurs involved in organising protoindustrial production typically bought up large quantities of cloth produced in both urban handicraft shops and rural peasant homes to resell across and beyond Europe. Some markets were regional or continental. But products of European protoindustry increasingly found their way into global markets, such as the New World settler colonies and slave plantations that specialised in the production of agricultural commodities and raw materials and needed to buy cloth.[8]

In this situation, European merchant entrepreneurs had an incentive to move from merely buying and selling fabric to reorganising production; as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in some regions, they began to concern themselves with the labour and technology necessary for the successful competition of their textile products on international markets. In many regions, merchant entrepreneurs introduced a 'putting-out' system to organise labour, whereby these merchants advanced raw materials to spinners or weavers, who then were required to sell back their finished products to these merchants to pay for the advances. Even before the factory, then, protoindustry brought increasing numbers of rural and urban household members—of varying ages and genders—into mass market production.[9]

Economic and political frameworks varied by fabric and by region. Southern German weavers produced linen, as well as wool, in a protoindustrial system that was flourishing by the late eighteenth century. A range of entrepreneurial and state strategies for increasing profit or economic development was pursued. The rulers of Württemberg chose to encourage the local textile industries by setting up state-licensed monopolies; in the case of linen, concession rights were sold to merchants or weaver-merchants who in turn organised linen production in peasant villages. Despite the domination of weaving by men, women were active in the industry, especially as spinners. It appears, however, that the domination over the industry by these state-authorised concessionary groups limited the autonomy and independent wage-earning capacity of female spinners here as compared, for example, to Ireland, where households that specialised in spinning flax sold their yarn independently of weavers.[10]

In southern France, the eighteenth-century textile growth sector was silk. State encouragement intensified at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Initial state intervention focused on mulberry tree plantations since mulberry leaves were the basis of the silkworms' diet. Silk thread production involved feeding silkworms, unwinding the silk strands from their cocoons, and spinning those strands into thread, all of which was done largely by women working in sheds in rural areas. By the end of the eighteenth century, silk production had grown into an industry worth 130 million livres a year, or roughly 15 percent of the kingdom's total industrial production.[11]

Despite their impressive growth, by the mid-eighteenth century, all of these flourishing protoindustrial textile industries were feeling the impact of the 'cotton craze'. Cotton textiles, which had been produced in India, China, Africa, and the New World for centuries, entered European markets in appreciable amounts only in the late 1600s, mainly through British ports. Initially the British crown supported the importation of Indian cottons by the East India Company (which operated under a royal charter) for reasons of international political rivalry. Cotton fabrics promised to undercut the importation of silks from France, Britain's main European and global rival. But cotton, far from remaining a fabric of the upper classes, soon attracted a more popular market. Indian cottons soon threatened Britain's own woolen industry, so cottons were banned by Parliament in a series of acts passed between 1701 and 1721 under pressure from wool producers. Despite the bans, continued growth in the demand for cotton focused attention on establishing domestic cotton production in England, thus contributing to the mechanisation of production in cotton that launched the Industrial Revolution proper. At the same time, the search for raw cotton—which, unlike wool, flax, or silk, could not be produced in Europe—fuelled the colonial plantation economy in the Americas and elsewhere. Europe's textile industries were quite volatile in the eighteenth century, and spinners—among them huge numbers of girls—took on a major significance in calculations of profitability and power.[12]

Gender and Generational Division of Labour in Household Textile Production in Europe

In Europe, the gendering of labour processes in artisanal and protoindustrial textile production varied by sector. Weaving was rarely done by women. In

some protoindustrial linen-producing regions, such as the Oberlausitz region of Saxony, where linen weaving was not considered an 'honourable' trade, women wove alongside men.[13] However, the weaving of wool and silk, which was more likely to be organised by guilds of male artisans who excluded women from guild membership, was rarely done by women. Moreover, in regions such as southern Württemberg, where state concessionary corporations of merchants or merchant-weavers regulated the linen trade, women were excluded even from linen weaving, although some women apparently assisted at home looms formally operated by their husbands.[14]

Spinning was gendered very differently from weaving in Europe. In southern French silk-producing areas, most contemporary descriptions presumed that reeling and spinning silk were female occupations. The French word employed for the occupation of spinning almost always took the feminine form—*fileuse*. Descriptions of textile labour processes use feminine pronouns and endings that reveal that the occupations associated with silk thread production were typed as feminine. For example, François-Félix de la Farelle, in his history of protoindustrial raw silk production in southern France focusing on the 1820s, explicitly identified the critical workers as female: 'The first female worker (*ouvrière*), called a *fileuse*, would detach this [silk] strand [from the worm] with a marvellous dexterity, and still does so today. A second female worker turned the wheel, and bore the title of *tourneuse*'.[15]

Early censuses for southern France are uneven in their recording of occupations beyond that of the household head. Very few enumerators in silk-producing regions listed occupations for women or children. However, trends in the occupations reported by women themselves at the time of their marriage help to correct the silences of the census. For example, in the city of Avignon, one of the older silk centres of southern France, during the 1820s, over 40 percent of brides reported themselves to be (female) silkworkers (*ouvrières en soie* or *devideuses*), a proportion that would rise in the following decades.[16]

Spinning other types of thread for protoindustrial production was also generally women's work. In southern Germany, where the most commonly produced textiles were linens, wools, and blends, spinning was almost exclusively women's work, although it is rarely named formally as an occupation in most historical records. Reliable quantitative information about the female workforce is scarce before the second half of the nineteenth century. However, Sheilagh Ogilvie has tracked gendered and life-cyclic patterns of work as depicted in court records from the wool-producing

town of Wildberg in Württemberg between 1674 and 1800. Witnesses to crimes frequently mentioned the activities in which they were engaged at the time they observed the crime. The two most commonly mentioned work activities of women witnesses were agricultural labour and spinning. Spinning was specifically mentioned as the activity in which they were engaged when witnessing a crime by 12 percent of the unmarried daughters, 5 percent of the married women, 4 percent of the widows, and 13 percent of the unmarried women living on their own who appear in these records.[17]

Ulrich Pfister analysed occupations in a 1762 household register for a protoindustrial district of northern Switzerland whose households produced for some of the same regional markets as those of neighbouring Württemberg. In the village of Oetwil, 78 percent of all married women were listed as having industrial occupations. Some wealthier farmers' wives and daughters wove cotton; other women and girls spun cotton yarn. Overall, the protoindustrial labour force of this village was 74 percent female; 32 percent of village's textile workers were unmarried women and girls. Moreover, 56 percent of women in Oetwil in their twenties remained unmarried.[18]

In all of these cases the protoindustrial textile labour force, based mainly in households, relied heavily on female workers. Young women were most crucial to the spinning of the silk, flax, wool, or cotton yarn that eventually made its way onto the weavers' looms. Young female labour was highly significant in the household production of textiles in the regions of Europe we are examining here, a pattern that is clear despite the unevenness, even erasures, characteristic of the historical record.

Gender and Generational Division of Labour in Household Textile Production in China

The Chinese historical record as it pertains to women and work, though rich, is also riddled with erasures, especially as regards young women and girls. The imperially commissioned eighteenth-century encyclopedia *Gujin tushu jicheng* [Complete Collection of Illustrations and Writings from the Earliest to Current Times] is one example of a valuable yet problematic source. It contains biographies of 27,141 exemplary women culled from local histories. Occupations are given for about a tenth of the women: for 2,286 of them, the occupation is given as 'spinning and weaving' (*fangzhi*) and for 399, the occupation is 'women's work' (*nuhong*), which always refers to textile work.

There are virtually no other occupations given for women. (Housework and child rearing are not marked as occupations.)[19] These biographies make clear the importance of textile work in the lives of Chinese women, and their inclusion in the encyclopedia also demonstrates that the importance of their labour was recognised. But the biographies (which are in general only three or four lines long) do not distinguish between spinning and weaving, and they generally do not tell us whether the woman is working in cotton, silk, or some other fabric. They do tell us that women in dire straits were often able to use their skill in working in textiles to support themselves and their families.

During the Qing dynasty, Chinese textile production flourished. Beginning in the sixteenth century, Chinese silks were exported to Europe, Mexico, and Japan. Sayings like 'Cottons from Songjiang clothe the empire' and 'Silks from Suzhou clothe the world' can be found in numerous sources.[20] During the eighteenth century, production of both cotton and silk increased rapidly. Although it is difficult to arrive at reliable figures, Bozhong Li estimates that cotton production in Jiangnan doubled between 1700 and the mid-nineteenth century.[21] Chinese cotton began to replace Indian cotton in Southeast Asia, and silk exports to Europe and the Americas were also on the rise in the eighteenth century.[22] Bozhong Li estimates that silk production for Chinese domestic markets tripled from the early seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century (from 21,000 piculs to 61,00 piculs). Overseas exports also increased during the same period, though more modestly, from 11,000 piculs to 16,000 piculs.[23] Both finished silk cloth and raw silk were exported; the raw silk (or silk thread) was an especially important export to Europe as Europeans began to develop their own silk-weaving capacities. Female labour was important in both cotton and silk, though, as we shall see, in different ways.

Both cotton thread and cotton cloth were generally produced in rural households. Households that did spinning did not necessarily grow the cotton they spun; indeed, as the Songjiang cotton industry grew, large amounts of raw cotton were imported from outside the area.[24] Local histories show that spinners might obtain raw cotton from the market. For example, a local history from Songjiang in the sixteenth century tells us that 'village women go in the morning to the market with cotton yarn, which they exchange for raw cotton and then they go home'.[25] Sources on cotton production suggest the omnipresence of brokers—middlemen who were key to organising links between various decentralised production processes, such as growing, ginning, spinning, and weaving. Peasant households could increasingly rely on supplemental earnings from textile

production as the market expanded, but reliance on this market also brought vulnerabilities. Qin Shao reports in the early nineteenth century that because the prices paid were so low, the shops that bought cloth were colloquially called 'death shops'.[26]

Weaving cotton cloth for local use was nearly always seen as women's work. To maximise the efficiency of cotton weavers (who in home production were often adult married women), other members of the household (often younger girls or older women) would spin the needed yarn, especially in areas where yarn was not available on the market.[27] Kenneth Pomeranz has estimated that in Jiangnan, it would take four hours of spinning cotton to produce enough yarn to occupy a weaver for an hour. Even very young girls in China seem to have worked at spinning along with older girls and women to produce the needed thread. A number of authors who prescribed the proper course of education for children suggested that a girl should begin working with textiles at about the same time as a boy would begin to learn to read.[28] For example, Lan Dingyuan (1680–1733) wrote that a girl should begin learning textile work before she turned 10.[29] Bozhong Li cites two Qing dynasty (1644–1911) texts that talk about the process of teaching young girls to become expert textile workers. The first claimed that a girl 'who is five or six *sui* can be taught to spin cotton; at 10 *sui* she can weave cloth'. Another is slightly less ambitious in its expectations regarding girl workers: 'A girl at seven or eight *sui* can spin; at twelve or thirteen she can weave'.[30] Girls were thus presumed by the authors of these prescriptive texts to be integrated into the Chinese household-based textile labour system from a fairly young age. Bozhong Li further argues that in textile-producing regions, women left agricultural work completely by the late eighteenth century and that 'only the better skilled and stronger women were occupied in weaving. Younger, older, and less dexterous females were employed instead in spinning, using single-spindle wheels or, more rarely, three-spindle machines'.[31]

Nearly all simple cottons were woven by women and girls in rural households; this was mainly for local consumption, although there were certainly women 'cottage' weavers who wove cotton goods for more distant markets, including 'kerchiefs' and socks, which were specialties of Songjiang in Jiangnan. Fancier cottons were produced in urban workshops; in these urban workshops, looms were operated by men.[32] The final finishing processes of fancy cotton fabric (dyeing and calendering) were done in workshops, which were often urban, and the workers were also generally male.[33]

The processes of silk production were quite different from cotton. The care of the silkworm eggs and the worms themselves was done mainly by peasant women, assisted by children, both boys and girls. During the period when the silkworm eggs were incubating (roughly two weeks), they were temperature sensitive. In winter months, women sometimes protected the eggs by placing them in special pockets inside their clothing. Silkworms, once hatched, had voracious appetites and were picky eaters: they required mulberry leaves. Households that raised silkworms might have their own mulberry trees, or they might purchase mulberry leaves in the market. Both men and women harvested mulberry leaves and women and children fed the worms.[34] A nineteenth-century local history from the Suzhou area reports that during the most intense work periods of caring for the worms, schools would be let out so children could help.[35] Once the worm had spun its cocoon, it was plunged into hot water, which killed the worm and prevented it from breaking free of the cocoon, which would have spoiled the silk. Women and girls worked over the vats of hot water, unreeling the strands and twisting strands from several cocoons into thread.[36] Some silk cloth was woven in the household, although this was increasingly rare by the eighteenth century. When silk cloth was produced in the household, girls were important in its production. A local gazetteer from the Suzhou area talks about how children would assist in operating small drawlooms that would produce patterned silk.[37] But by the eighteenth century, domestic weaving of silk cloth was the exception rather than the rule. Silk cloth was woven in urban workshops or on rural estates, and the weavers were men. Bozhong Li concludes that 'unlike today when cocoons are the last items produced by sericultural households, in Ming-Qing Jiangnan the last good [from the rural household] was reeled silk and twisted or untwisted floss'.[38]

One big comparative observation is that although spinning was 'women's work'—and disproportionately young women's work—in both regions, women also commonly wove in China (in the case of cotton, at least, if not silk) whereas, as we have seen, most weaving in Europe was done by men. Women were weaving in China, and around 1800 an increasing proportion of the cloth they wove was destined for markets—regional, national, and international—as opposed to household use. With rising production for markets during the eighteenth century, and especially export markets, women in rural households in some cotton-producing regions began to focus their work efforts more and more on the production of cotton cloth while their husbands specialised increasingly in farming. Age- and gender- divisions of labour were implicated in

regionally specific ways into regional economies and changed as those economies became embedded into local and distant markets.

Girls' Work in Non-domestic Production Settings

Girls' Textile Work in Non-domestic Production in Europe

As textile production moved gradually from sheds and cottages to factories, young unmarried women played the key role in the transition. They arguably comprised the majority of Europe's earliest modern factory labour force. Their significance to the process of industrialisation grew out of their importance in protoindustrial divisions of labour and the fact that they were simply taken for granted as a workforce. That significance rested as well on the competitive advantages their labour brought in the global struggle for domination of various textile markets. Some specific new technologies that revolutionised textile production beginning in the eighteenth century were developed with an eye towards a workforce that was imagined as young and female. According to Maxine Berg, writing about textile technologies in Britain:

> New techniques in calico printing and spinning provide classic examples of experimentation on a child and female workforce. In calico printing, processes were broken down into a series of operations performed particularly well by teenage girls who contributed manual dexterity (learned at home) with high labour intensity. The spinning jenny was first invented for use by a young girl, its horizontal wheel making it uncomfortable for an adult worker to use for any length of time.[39]

Similar thinking influenced the economic development strategies in German states. For example, Württemberg's Ministry of the Interior became interested in encouraging the state's linen industry in the face of the threatened flood of British machine-produced goods after Napoleon's protective tariff system ended in 1814. The ministry was considering both establishing state-run spinneries and subsidising private ventures; various proposals for state subsidy were submitted between 1817 and 1829. One proposal from a mechanic interested in new technologies makes explicit his imagined labour pool; he sought a subsidy to build and disseminate a type of spinning machine 'recently invented' in Munich: 'This machine is operated by one person who requires the assistance of 8 twelve-year-old

girls; they then do the work of 72 people. In that 72 threads flow out of the machine from the prepared flax'. The report's author added, 'if the flax is long and fine, four of the above 8 girls can be spared'.[40]

The age and gender division of labour of protoindustrial textile production was, however, not what distinguished Europe's economy from that of the rest of the world. What was more distinctive was the presumed mobility of a pool of young, unmarried female textile workers. Until the eighteenth century, women workers had mostly worked in households and small shops. But women who were not yet married, following a pattern resembling the routine of engaging in domestic service on farms or in cities, could leave home for larger or more distance workplaces. Some young women entered domestic service as spinners in household-based operations. Some moved into nearby towns to work in handicraft manufactories or silk reeling sheds for a few months of the year or longer. Eventually, they moved into factories whose spinning and weaving machines were powered by water or steam. And this pattern of labour force participation by young, unmarried women remained a key distinction between Central and Western Europe and much of the rest of the world until around 1900.

As Deborah Simonton has documented, early textile industrial centres were filled with young women:

> The image of factory and workshop labour is the 'mill girl' … Of the 260 employees at Heilman Freres at Ribeauvillé, 39.2 per cent were females between sixteen and twenty-five years of age. In Manchester and Salford in 1852, 76 percent [*sic*] of fourteen-year-old girls were in the mills, and 82 per cent of the female textile workers of Roubaix were under thirty.[41]

In the Irish linen industry, protoindustrial production was not immediately displaced by factory production but rather persisted alongside of it. The household system of linen production continued in some regions of Northern Ireland even into the twentieth century.[42] Research by Jane Gray and Betty Messenger demonstrates the interplay of skill, gender-specific wages, and geopolitics in the process of mechanisation of Irish linen production.[43] The owner of one of the earliest flax spinneries of County Armagh made his entrepreneurial calculations with revealing precision. Writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, he saw the main drawback to the general substitution of machinery for hand labour was the 'low price of labour; yarn spun by women is sold here much

cheaper than the same article manufactured by machinery in England'.[44] Mechanical spinneries did come to dominate the trade overall, however, causing economic contraction in protoindustrial yarn regions and a concentration of growth in those regions that mechanised spinning. The factory system introduced a new gender division of labour; weaving as well as spinning was feminised, thereby creating an even stronger demand for mobile female labour. By the late nineteenth century, in jobs in the spinning mills, 'females outnumbered males approximately three to one at the general operative level, holding most of the jobs in the preparing, spinning and reeling rooms'. Women by then also did most of the factory weaving.[45]

In the Irish cotton industry, the major mechanised mill for spinning (also later weaving)—the Portlaw mill near Waterford on the south coast—also filled its demand for labour by hiring a large number of young women. According to Tom Hunt, in 1835, 64 percent of the mill's workers were female; fully 42 percent were females under the age of 21. As the plant grew and added machine divisions, the number of adult males employed there rose; but among the textile operatives, young women remained dominant through the 1870s. Female operatives, mostly between the ages of 13 and 21, comprised between 48 percent and 60 percent of the labour force in cotton spinning and weaving between 1835 and 1874.[46] The cotton cloth they produced, in the words of a visitor to the mill in 1852, was 'forwarded weekly to all parts of the civilised and uncivilised world … [the] eastern archipelago, in Hindostan and China, in Mexico, the West Indies, Brazil … [and] the west coast from Cape Horn to Oregon'. More than 42,000 pounds of cotton were manufactured into calicoes (once available only from India), and, as Hunt points out, the investment in the Portlaw mill which was said to be £100,000 in 1847, equalled fully a third of what the investment in the entire industry had been in 1800.[47]

Mechanisation affected silk spinning processes later and less dramatically than in cotton, flax, or wool. In mid-nineteenth-century France, the delicate task of unwinding silk cocoons was still done by hand. But the invention of steam taps to help *fileuses* adjust the water temperature encouraged the concentration of spinning into larger workplaces known as filatures. The *tourneuse* was displaced by a machine. But according to LaFarelle, instead of being thrown out of work, the *tourneuse* could retrain herself in three or four years of apprenticeship to take on the better-paid job of *fileuse*, for which there was now more demand than ever. In fact,

because mill owners were always looking for skilled *fileuses*, 'a large number of families, whether from the countryside, the bourgs or the small cities, who up until then had never been involved with silk filature were lured by the possibility of considerable earnings to have their women and daughters take part in it'.[48] The labour force in some 400 silk reeling filatures and spinning mills of the Midi totalled more than 20,000 workers in 1840, of whom over 90 percent were women or children.[49]

The long-term consequences of these new labour patterns for young women are far from clear. Certainly the relatively low wages the women commanded precluded economic independence, an especially challenging situation for young women away from home. Moreover, in each of the regions discussed here, the late eighteenth-century promise of prosperity was darkened or interrupted by industrial crises. A protracted depression in Württemberg's linen industry in the early nineteenth century revealed the vulnerabilities that involvement with the international market could bring.[50] In Ireland, the catastrophe that followed the protoindustrial linen boom was immense. After the Great Famine of the 1840s, resulting partly from policies and practices that encouraged the growth of a dense population of farmer-textile households, thousands of Ireland's unmarried young women undertook an even more dramatic form of mobility, crossing the ocean in search of employment in the United States. The crisis in southern France was as particular as its reliance on silk. Silkworm disease devastated cocoon production beginning in 1853. By the time the region recovered, world trade in silk cocoons was dominated by Japan. Even though Lyon continued to hold on to its position as a major centre of silk production, its looms and filatures were increasingly fed by imported raw silk or imported cocoons. In all three regions, then, the young woman spinner as described here was a crucial and a vulnerable historical figure.[51]

Girls' Textile Work in Nondomestic Production in China

Household-based textile production for market distribution as well as for domestic use persisted longer in China than it did in Europe. Even though the move to factories of textile production in China, and thus of textile workers, postdates the era around 1800 that is of most concern to us here, it is worth discussing some of the evidence about age and gender characteristics of the earliest textile factory workforce in China for the light it sheds on our larger comparison. As we have seen, the household had never been the only site of textile production in early modern China. Silk and

fancy cottons were often woven in urban workshops, although the bulk of the floss or yarn worked in them would have come from women and girls spinning in rural households. However, most ordinary cotton cloth and some silks were produced in rural households throughout the early modern era. And even as household production processes differed significantly between cotton and silk, so too did the move, toward the end of the nineteenth century, of some of these processes into nondomestic sites.

In the late nineteenth century, most of the cotton cloth used for ordinary consumption was still produced in rural households. Xu Xinwu has estimated that, in 1860, 99.5 percent of the cotton worn in China was still produced in rural households. In the following decades, the amount of imported and machine made cloth increased, but Xu estimates that as late as 1920, 65 percent of the cotton consumed in China was what he calls 'rural native cotton'.[52] Moreover, well into the twentieth century, peasant households were still producing textiles for their own use, which Xu labels 'a distinctive phenomenon in world history'.[53] Xu, in agreement with other scholars of household-based production in China, argues that the most important reason for this persistence is that rural textile production was well integrated into the agricultural cycle and that family farms remained viable through the combination of agricultural and textile production.

Still, despite this notable persistence, the markets—domestic and foreign—for factory-produced cotton yarn and cloth were expanding dramatically in the late nineteenth century. The first cotton factory in China opened in Shanghai in 1889; by the end of World War I, China had moved from being a net importer to a net exporter of factory-produced cotton yarn. And, in fact, home weavers also began to switch to weaving factory-produced yarns. By 1920, there were over 30,000 cotton workers in mills in Shanghai, about half of whom were women. During the 1920s, the numbers of factory workers skyrocketed, as did the proportion of them who were women and girls.[54] In the expansion era of the 1920s, women were seen as more desirable workers in Shanghai (and the northern cotton centre Tianjin) because they were imagined to be more docile than men and because they could be paid a lower wage. The workers, often girls recruited as contract labour from the countryside while still in their early teens (or even as young as eight years old or so), were often housed in dormitories supervised by female company employees or recruiters. The contracts for these girl workers would often have been made with their fathers; some of the contemporary documents even refer to the girls as 'bought' and 'sold'.[55]

Silk industrialisation presents a somewhat different story. Even in its household forms, although it relied mainly on family labour, the production of silk thread did sometimes rely on girls who were either servants or wage labourers or who worked in a putting-out capacity in silk production. One of the earliest mechanised silk filatures was established in Nanhai County in Guangdong province by the entrepreneur Chen Qiyuan in 1874. His silk filature turned a profit almost from the start. According to Ma Debin, Chen established a system of female labour recruitment: 'Mobilizing the lineage and village organization, he successfully recruited female workers in neighbouring areas … female workers of a particular factory were usually recruited from the same lineage-based village community sharing a common family name, whereas hiring from outside the lineage was discouraged'. Chen's recruitment system may help to explain his ability to attract young female labour. But it collapsed when the expansion of the factories provoked an uprising by household weavers and the provincial government's subsequent shutdown of the mills, although they too were successfully reopened later.[56]

Lillian Li documents some of the rural household labour implications of the move of silk production from household to factory in the region around Shanghai. First, with the introduction of large-scale filatures in the late-nineteenth century, the household system was altered in that peasants increasingly sold cocoons to filatures rather than selling reeled silk, and so reeling was no longer a largely domestic enterprise.[57] The household reelers were thus displaced and either had to change the work they did or move to the filatures. According to Li, in Shanghai reeling mills, 'girls from eight to twelve years old' were assigned the most 'unpleasant' tasks—tending the basins and finding the cocoons' threads—while older women did the actual reeling.[58] This cumulative evidence suggests that it was possible to recruit young women workers into concentrated industrial settings in China by the late nineteenth century, even though the terms of their mobility and the nature of their contracts may well have reflected the persistence in China of a household organisation of some processes of textile production and also stronger household control over labour.

Conclusion and Questions

Some comparative questions about girls' textile labour hinge on gendered and status-specific perceptions of relationships to the market. Normative sources from both regions indicate suspicions of the market even as they observe its expansion. For example, Pang Shangpeng's claim that only

servants' clothing should be purchased and that family garments should be made at home, thus distancing family consumption from the market, is not dissimilar from English- and German-language advice manuals for girls, dating from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in which girls are warned against the tyranny of fashion and obsession with acquiring new clothing at the risk of their virtue.[59] On these questions, we expect to find our planned future comparisons of fiction and prescriptive literature that was circulating around 1800 in Chinese and European languages to be fruitful.

Age and gender divisions of household labour in agriculture and textile work, and their relationships to space and to the market, are at the core of the comparative argument presented here. Gender and life-cyclic divisions of labour mattered in both regions but not in the same ways. Moreover, the often-made general claim that women in China only worked indoors is not borne out. Although the earlier availability of a much larger pool of unmarried and mobile female labour in Europe remains a significant difference, women, including young women, occupied out-of-doors work spaces in agriculture and protoindustry in both China and Europe. In both areas, earlier divisions of labour changed in response to growing markets for land, agricultural products, and textiles. Women of all ages were becoming more enmeshed in protoindustrial labour and market relations in textile-producing regions in Europe and China around 1800. But, it is important to note, the domestic spaces of textile production remained viable far longer into the modern era in China than they did in Europe, a difference that did relate to the relative strength of the control of household heads over young female labour.

Our reading of the sources leaves us with many remaining questions about age and gender divisions of labour in textile regions of China and Europe and their role in the Great Divergence. Some observed differences might turn out to have ironic consequences, in that certain practices that appear as gender oppressive in the European context—for example, the general tendency for weaving to be defined as 'men's work' and to be valued above spinning—holds a very different valence in China, where much weaving was done by women and also was often characterised in prescriptive sources as work that was particularly suitable for women. In turn, the gendering of weaving and spinning in at least some sectors in China, combined with the retention of young women in paternal and marital households, may well have contributed to the longer-term viability of household textile production in China.

Without rehearsing here the many debates in European, Chinese, and comparative historiographies about changing standards of living between the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, we note that many historians have seen evidence of lower living standards in regions of Europe where protoindustrial labour was done by more fully proletarianised workforces, as opposed to regions where households eked out a living through a combination of agricultural and industrial activities. And whether or not women in general, and young women in particular, experienced gender-specific advantages or disadvantages as a result of their involvement with market production remains an interesting, but open, question.

Notes

1. Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton University Press, 2000).
2. See, for example, Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe 1500–1800* (New York: Vintage, 1998); Jack Goldstone, 'Gender, Work, and Culture: Why the Industrial Revolution Came Early to England but Late to China', *Sociological Perspectives*, 39, no. 1 (1996), 1–21; Marion W. Gray, *Productive Men, Reproductive Women: The Agrarian Household and the Emergence of Separate Spheres During the German Enlightenment* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000); Mary Jo Maynes and Ann Waltner, 'Women's Life-Cycle Transitions in World-Historical Perspective: Comparing Marriage in China and Europe', *Journal of Women's History*, 12, no. 4 (2001), 11–21; Mary S. Hartman, *The Household and the Making of History: A Subversive View of the Western Past* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Susan Mann, 'Grooming a Daughter for Marriage' in Patricia Ebrey and Rubie Watson (eds), *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 203–30; Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
3. The classic article pointing out the Western European marriage pattern is John Hajnal, 'European Marriage Patterns in Perspective' in D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversly (eds), *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1965), 101–140. This article generated a debate among Europeanists that is still ongoing. More recently, Kenneth Pomeranz has argued that, despite this difference, in terms of several key demographic variables, the European pattern does not differ

markedly from China, Japan, or Southeast Asia. See Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, 11. See also James Lee and Feng Wang, *One Quarter of Humanity: Malthusian Mythology and Chinese Realities* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999) and Theo Engelen and A. P. Wolf (eds), *Marriage and the Family in Eurasia. Perspectives on the Hajnal Hypothesis* (Amsterdam, Piscataway, New Jersey: Aksant Academic Publishers, 2005).

4. Lee and Wang, *One Quarter of Humanity*, 65.
5. Ibid., 65.
6. For a discussion of servants, see Mann, *Precious Records*, 38–44. For a discussion of women and work, see ibid., 143–77. See also Maria Jaschok, *Women and Chinese Patriarchy: Submission, Servitude and Escape* (Hong Kong University Press, 1994) for more recent times.
7. See, for example, Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (eds), *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200–1850* (Oxford University Press, 2009); Bozhong Li, *Agricultural Development in Jiangnan, 1620–1850* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Kenneth Pomeranz, 'Women's Work and the Politics of Respectability' in Bryna Goodman and Wendy Larson (eds), *Gender in Motion: Divisions of Labor and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).
8. For recent work making these connections, see Jonathan Eacott, *Selling Empire: India in the Making of Britain and America, 1600–1830* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Anka Steffen, 'Silesians and Slaves: How Linen Textiles Connected East-Central Europe, Africa and the Americas', presented at the conference 'Dressing Global Bodies,' Alberta, Canada, 7 July 2016; Xiaolin Duan, 'Fashion, State, and Social Change: Chinese and Mexican Silk in Early Modern Manila Trade', paper presented at the meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Minneapolis, 30 March 2017.
9. Key works on European protoindustrialization include Karl Ditt and Sidney Pollard (eds), *Von der Heimarbeit in die Fabrik. Industrialisierung Und Arbeiterschaft in Leinen- Und Baumwollregionen Westeuropas Während des 18. Und 19. Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1992); Sheilagh C. Ogilvie, *State Corporatism and Proto-Industry: the Württemberg Black Forest, 1580–1797* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Hans Medick, *Weben Und Überleben in Laichingen. Lokalgeschichte Als Allgemeine Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996).
10. Ogilvie, *State Corporatism and Proto-Industry*. For the Irish comparison, see Jane Gray, *Spinning the Threads of Uneven Development. Gender and Industrialization in Ireland during the Long Eighteenth Century* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005).

11. François-Félix de La Farelle, *Études Économiques Sur L'industrie de La Soie Dans Le Midi de La France* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1852), première étude, 4–5.
12. For an important analysis of these arguments, see Beverly Lemire, *Fashion's Favorites: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660–1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (eds), *The Spinning World*; and Maxine Berg, 'In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century', *Past & Present*, 182 (2004), 85–142. See also Eacott, *Selling Empire*, and Robert S. DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic: Clothing, Commerce, and Colonization in the Atlantic World, 1650–1800* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).
13. See Jean H. Quataert, 'The Shaping of Women's Work in Manufacturing: Guilds, Households, and the State in Central Europe, 1648–1870', *American Historical Review*, 90, no. 5 (1985), 1122–48. See also: Steffen, 'Silesians and Slaves'.
14. Sheilagh C. Ogilvie, *A Bitter Living: Women, Markets, and Social Capital in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford University Press, 2003).
15. La Farelle, *Études Économiques,* première etude, 2.
16. Archives Départementales de Vaucluse, Série E, Etat Civil.
17. Ogilvie, *A Bitter Living,* 116ff.
18. Ulrich Pfister, 'Work Roles and Family Structure in Proto-Industrial Zurich', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 20, no. 1 (1989), 83–105.
19. Liang Chu-bin, 'Mingdai nügong yu beifang funü wei zhongxin shi tan tao' (unpublished PhD dissertation, National Central University, Zhongli, Taiwan, 2001), 41. For a discussion of *nügong*, see, among others, Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 237–272. For a description of the *Gujin tushu jicheng*, see Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual, Fourth Edition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015).
20. Cited in Bray, *Technology and Gender*, 223. See also the statement by Zhang Han (late sixteenth century) quoted by Jonathan Hay, *Sensuous Surfaces: The Decorative Object in Early Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 44 and by Tang Zhen (seventeenth century), cited by Mann, *Precious Records*, 153.
21. Bozhong Li, *Agricultural Development*, 109.
22. For a discussion of Chinese silk exports to Mexico, see Duan, 'Fashion, State and Social Change', 18–27.
23. Bozhong Li, *Agricultural Development*, 107. During the Qing dynasty, a picul (*dan*) was about 50 kilograms.

24. Harriet T. Zurndorfer, 'Cotton Textile Manufacture and Marketing in Late Imperial China and the "Great Divergence"', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 54 (2011), 710.
25. Masatoshi Tanaka, 'The Putting-out System of Production in the Ming and Qing Periods: With a Focus on Clothing Production, Part 1', *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, 52 (1994), 27–28.
26. Ibid., 52, 26.
27. Pomeranz, 'Women's Work and the Politics of Respectability', 249; Laurel Bossen and Hill Gates, *Bound Feet, Young Hands: Tracking the Demise of Footbinding in Village China* (Stanford University Press, 2017). Pomeranz claims that there was very little cotton yarn on the market in 'Women's Work', 247.
28. Liang, 'Exploration of Women's Work', 68; Ping-chen Hsiung, *Tender Voyage: Children and Childhood in Late Imperial China* (Stanford University Press, 2005), 201.
29. Lan Dingyan, 'Nûxue', cited and discussed in Liang, 'Exploration of Women's Work', 68.
30. Bozhong Li, '"*Cong fufu* bing zuo" dao "nan geng nu zhi"', *Zhongguo jingjushi yanjiu*, 3 (1996), 105–7.
31. Bozhong Li, 'Involution and Chinese Cotton Textile Production: Songjiang in the Late-Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries' in Riello and Parthasarathi, *The Spinning World,* 390. A child in Qing China was one *sui* at birth; at the next New Year, the child would become two *sui*. Thus a child born right before the New Year would be two *sui* after the New Year but only weeks or months old by western calculations.
32. Zurndorfer, 'The Resistant Fibre: Cotton Textiles in Imperial China'; Tanaka, 'The Putting-out System', 53:42.
33. Paolo Santangelo, 'Urban Society in Late Imperial Suzhou' in Linda Cooke Johnson (ed.), *Cities of Jiangnan in Late Imperial China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 108.
34. See the illustrations in Dieter Kuhn, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 5, pt. 9, *Textile Technology: Spinning and Reeling* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 294–300. Kuhn does not discuss the gender of the harvesters, but it is clear from the illustrations in agricultural handbooks that both men and women were collecting the leaves. See also Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender*, 248.
35. Lillian Li, *China's Silk Trade, Traditional Industry in the Modern World, 1842–1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 19.
36. Kuhn, *Science and Civilization*, 301–307.
37. Bray, *Technology and Gender*, 235.
38. Bozhong Li, *Agricutural Development*, 92. See also the discussion in Lillian Li, *China's Silk Trade*, 33.

39. Maxine Berg, 'What Difference Did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?' in Pamela Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650–1914* (London: Arnold, 1998), 161.
40. Württemberg Staatsarchiv Series E 14/Bü 1170, Report to the King by the Ministerium des Innern und der Finanzen concerning the various offers to produce 'Flachsspinnmaschinen'. Stuttgart 5/19 April 1819, 4.
41. Deborah Simonton, *A History of European Women's Work* (London: Routledge, 1998), 139.
42. Brenda Collins, 'The Loom, the Land, and the Marketplace: Women Weavers and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-century Ireland' in Marilyn Cohen (ed.), *The Warp of Ulster's Past* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 229–52. Whereas prior to 1800, most weavers were male, after the Famine years (1845–1847), more women and girls began weaving at home.
43. Gray, *Spinning the Threads of Uneven Development* and Betty Messenger, *Picking Up the Linen Threads: A Study in Industrial Folklore* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978).
44. Andrew Gray, *A Treatise on Spinning Machinery with Plans of Different Machines Made Use of in That Art from the Spindle and Distaff of the Ancients to the Machines Which Have Been Invented or Improved by the Moderns. With Some Preliminary Observations, Tending to Shew That Arts of Spinning, Weaving and Sewing, Were Invented by the Ingenuity of Females. And a Postscript Including an Interesting Account of the Mode of Spinning Yarn in Ireland*. (Edinburgh: A. Constable & Company, 1819), Postscript, 18–19.
45. Messenger, *Picking Up the Linen Threads*, 20–23.
46. Tom Hunt, *Portrait of an Industrial Village and Its Cotton Industry* (Dublin and Portland: Irish Academic Press, 2000), 59–61.
47. Quoted in ibid., 64.
48. La Farelle, *Études Économiques,* seconde étude, 2–3.
49. Ibid., 15–18.
50. See Medick, *Weben Und Überleben in Laichingen*.
51. See Mary Jo Maynes, 'Arachne's Daughters: European Girls' Labor in the International Textile Industry, 1750–1880' in Mary Jo Maynes, B. Søland, and C. Benninghaus (eds), *Secret Gardens, Satanic Mills: Placing Girls in European History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 38–53.
52. Xinwu Xu and Byung-Kun Min, 'The Struggle of the Handicraft Cotton Industry against Machine Textiles in China', *Modern China* 14:1 (1988), 43.
53. Ibid., 39.
54. Robert Cliver, 'China' in Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk (ed.), *The Ashgate Companion to the History of Textile Workers, 1650–2000* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2014), 120.

55. Emily Honig, 'The Contract Labor System and Women Workers: Pre-Liberation Cotton Mills of Shanghai', *Modern China*, 9, no. 4 (1983), 421–54.
56. Debin Ma, 'Between Cottage and Factory: The Evolution of Chinese and Japanese Silk-Reeling Industries in the Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy*, 10, no. 2 (2005), 204–05.
57. Lillian Li, *China's Silk Trade, Traditional Industry in the Modern World, 1842–1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 29.
58. Ibid.
59. Cited in Zurndorfer, 'The Resistant Fibre', 57.

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CHAPTER 6

The Education of European and Chinese Girls at Home in the Nineteenth Century

Fang Qin and Emily Bruce

Introduction

While the timing of the introduction of formal schooling differed in Central Europe and China,[1] it is the informal context in which most girls were educated that demands our closer attention if we are to better historicise girls' intellectual and personal development. And in home-based, informal education, we see overlapping pedagogical values, beliefs about gender, and even instructional modes or genres between our two geographic contexts. Our examination of these shared values brings together sources from ideological perspectives—pedagogic texts and official histories that reveal prescriptive visions for girls' education—as well as records of experience—personal narratives, letters, journals, and poetry—that present individual girls' and families' educational practices.

This chapter builds on previous published work, including Fang Qin and Emily Bruce, '"Our Girls Have Grown Up in the Family": Educating European and Chinese Girls in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Modern Chinese History*, 10, no. 1 (2016), 1–18. The authors would like to thank the editors of this volume and especially Mary O'Dowd for organising the 2015 CISH session.

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M. O'Dowd, J. Purvis (eds.), *A History of the Girl*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4_6

In both cases, the home was the critical site for reproducing the ideology of domesticity for girls, since home-based education constituted the means by which knowledge, morality, and practical skills were produced and transmitted from generation to generation. In Central Europe, the drive to secure prosperity for an emerging middle class through education produced tensions and contradictions around the value and threat of literacy, the cultivation of natural behaviour, and the gendered boundaries of knowledge and virtue. In China, girls fuelled themselves through home-based education in Confucian womanly virtues, appropriate literary talents, and/or inherited familial tradition to prepare for their future marriage-oriented roles. Pedagogues and parents in both places attempted to cultivate appropriate girlhood by canonising exemplary figures in such genres as official histories, pedagogical texts, and family stories. Meanwhile, home-based education also became a key way in which girls interacted with family members and thus fostered a sense of class-bounded belonging and identification.

Educating German Girls at Home

Feminist campaigns in the 1860s and 1870s called for the expansion of European girls' secondary schools. In the German case, the percentage of girls receiving a formal education was on the rise throughout the nineteenth century. For example, in Prussia, the presence of between 250 and 350 public girls' schools during the period from 1827 to 1864 ensured a secondary school for girls in every large town.[2] However, even in the middle and upper classes, most girls continued to be educated at home. And even for those beginning to attend secondary school institutions, informal instruction at home was always a critical component of German girls' education, as it was in China. This section of the chapter uses four didactic genres to explore the purposes of educating German girls at home and the content of that education: new youth periodicals, schoolbooks, letter writing, and diaries.

Across these genres, three purposes for educating girls in Central Europe are evident. First, the education of girls and women was increasingly understood as essential to securing middle-class power and prosperity. This was not only about training girls as the first educators of the next generation (as in Linda Kerber's notion of 'republican motherhood'). The pedagogue J. G. Reinhardt, for example, presented the catastrophic consequences of being an uneducated woman in his periodical *The Girl's*

Mirror. In 'On the Use of Reading and Writing', a dishonest man discovered that Anastasia, who had inherited some money, could neither read nor write. Drawing up a fraudulent loan agreement, he disappeared with her money. The story ended with Anastasia's sad reaction: '"Oh, if only I had learned to read and write!" And from that time she told all children to go to school diligently, where they could learn to read and write'.[3] Reinhardt's melodrama of Anastasia's financial literacy suggested that young women should have control over their money and the education to manage it.

Second, partly as a means of promoting middle-class power, girls' education in the domestic context sought to cultivate bourgeois sociability. As a teaching form, letters were used by children to practise a number of different skills and demonstrate their knowledge of topics from political geography to religious doctrine. Yet by far the most common pedagogic purpose of letter writing was the development of young people's social literacy, their capacity to 'read' their social world and navigate family and business relationships. For example, 11-year-old Bettina Brentano filled an entire letter to her sister Kunigunde with explanations of why she could not write her a letter:

> You asked me all sorts of [questions] in your letter, but I cannot answer all of them, partly because the post is going out soon, and also because I have lost the letter, and I do not have any more time left to look for it.… Only this news can I tell you, that Marie Sophie [another sister] is angry with you because you have still not written to her.[4]

Letters like this exerted a social as well as a pedagogic purpose, even without reporting much news. Brentano used correspondence to negotiate relationships with these two sisters and others whether she had specific information to communicate or not.

A third purpose of informal education was the more straightforward development of girls' skills and knowledge. Yet German educators, as elsewhere, were ambivalent about how specialised women's knowledge should be. Just as more and more girls were pursuing an education that included situating them in a global market and culture, practical exploration of that world was denied to them and gender-specialised texts for children proliferated. Certain virtues—notably, self-control and obedience—were celebrated in female youth while boys began to read more tales of heroism and cleverness.[5] Textbook author Friedrich Nösselt, however, used the very

gender ideologies emerging from the Enlightenment, which excluded women from active public participation in the world, to argue in the early nineteenth century that the education of girls in geography and world events was important. By teaching girls about the past and the nature of other nations in the world, he hoped to impress upon them the importance of 'an excellent paternal world order'.[6]

Girls' informal education covered a range of skills, including literacy, domestic tasks, and household management. But through and in support of instruction in these concrete skills, girls' education also emphasised the cultivation of a specific set of virtues, especially industry, discipline, sensibility, and literacy. At the same time, pedagogic texts warned against the dangers of feminine curiosity, vanity, or worldliness.

The central virtue promoted in nineteenth-century middle-class German families was industry. In 10-year-old Marie Seybold's short entries of the 1830s, clearly kept with an adult audience in mind, her regular observations on her own industriousness often constituted an entire day's record. Interestingly, these comments were usually positive—'Today I was diligent'—and there were few reports of days when she or someone else found her work lacking. One mysterious variation came on 26 May, when she observed, 'Nothing else happened that deserved to be remarked on, other than that I have been diligent'.[7] In a different hand, the last line, 'that I have been diligent', was later underlined and an exclamation point added at the end. Was the adult reader contradicting Marie's self-assessment? Or confirming and commending her hard work? Either way, industry versus idleness was the key axis of self-improvement evident in this diary.

While diligence was a critical virtue for girls and boys alike, other qualities that informal education sought to cultivate were more explicitly targeted at daughters. Pedagogues and parents promoted a gendered philanthropic selfhood, deeply implicating girls in the making of class cultures. One example can be seen in the report 'The Charity of Some Young Girls', from an 1806 issue of the youth newspaper *Bildungsblätter*. The story told of two girls aged eight and nine who heard about poverty in Saxony and decided to save their pocket money to purchase material for winter clothes, which they sewed themselves for the poor children. Whether the tale is read as an advocacy of compassionate giving or a self-congratulatory middle-class fantasy, what is especially interesting here is the link the author made between literacy and moral development. The piece opened with a question: 'What good child would not gladly hear or

read something about such young people, who are invigorated by this beautiful spirit of good deeds?'[8] It closed by underscoring the same sentiment, suggesting that reading about these girls might encourage other children to make sacrifices for the pleasure of charity. The individual most pedagogues wanted to cultivate in a girl was a compassionate, devoted, selfless person directed toward serving others. Both boys and girls were taught to be sensitive and devoted to their families, but the ideal female vocation required disregarding individual personalities and desires—the selfless self.

Educating Chinese Girls at Home

Compared with Europe, women's schooling came late to China. In 1842, in Ningpo, one of the first five treaty ports open to western imperialists, a female missionary established the first girls' school, mainly enrolling young girls from poor families for the purpose of evangelism.[9] Half a century later in 1898, Chinese elites built the first Chinese-managed girls' school in Shanghai and took girls from genteel families.[10] It is safe to conclude that before the second half of the nineteenth century, almost all girls, especially those from elite families, were educated at home if at all. This section first draws a generalised picture of Chinese girls' home-based education and then elaborates the discussion through a case study of one family's education of four daughters in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The home-based education of Chinese girls usually consisted of three parts: basic reading and writing literacy; practical household management skills like cooking, weaving, and embroidery; and the inculcation of Confucian womanly virtues and sometimes domestic religion.[11] Some genteel families who had sufficient resources and who probably especially cherished their daughters also cultivated advanced literary skills including poetry, painting, or calligraphy in girls' early years. Writing a poem or drawing a painting was identified with a rich tradition of women's culture.[12] Those with outstanding literary achievements were usually crowned with the title of 'talented woman'. This was probably the most valorised metonymical figure of Chinese women's culture before the second half of the nineteenth century.[13] Poetry, as women's most favored literary genre of self-representation for centuries, provides the main source for looking into Chinese girlhood and home-based education. Interestingly, since many women produced poems prolifically after they married or became mothers, the pieces that touched on their girlhood years were composed

in a very nostalgic tone in contrast to 'women's loneliness, isolation, and emotional privation in marriage'.[14] Their portrayal of the years in which they grew up was thus tinged with pleasant memories of family members.

One of the most influential Confucian ideologies regarding Chinese women was gender separation, or the so-called *nei/wai* (inner/outer) boundary. Women, regardless of their social status, were expected to stay within the inner chambers of the household. Men, instead, could leave home to travel, to socialise with friends and relatives, to attend civil service examinations, or to do business. The gender separation was intended to prescribe appropriate roles for both sexes in their lives. However, for girls and boys under a certain age, there was some flexibility in this principle. Until the age of 7 and sometimes 10, in some genteel families, girls and boys were allowed to study together with no specific gender difference.[15] The textbooks included *Sanzi jing* [Three-character Classic] and *Qianzi wen* [One-thousand-character Classic], the most basic primers for the education of children of both sexes in traditional China.[16]

Womanly virtues also became a subject of didactic literature to instruct girls in daily living. This included texts like Chen Hongmou's *Jiaonü yigui* [Bequeathed Instructions for the Education of Girls], which was reprinted at least twice in the second half of the eighteenth century.[17] Pamphlets like Chen's usually listed all the principles and expectations that girls and women should abide by down to the very last detail. In terms of the role of daughters, they outlined the appropriate time, dress, behaviour, and deportment for the interaction of a daughter of a genteel family with her parents.

In most families, parents played a vital role in guiding the formation of girls' knowledge, but sometimes relatives, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and even senior siblings, substituted for absent parents. Some families even retained a governess to stay for years to intensively instruct the daughters at home. In regard to studying, parents tended to be more lenient with daughters than with sons. This was because girls were not obligated to perpetuate the family's reputation by taking the civil service examination and pursuing officialdom and, in fact, would probably marry into a totally strange family when they grew up.[18]

However, after the dividing age (7 to 10), boys and girls were separated for different subjects and purposes. Boys were usually taught to compose patterned essays and poetry to prepare for their adult life, in which they, by cultivating proper civil capacity, either took the civil service examinations or socialised with other elite peers to form their own network.

In contrast, girls usually retreated from the study to the inner spaces of boudoirs or kitchens and prepared for future married life.[19]

The case of the four sisters in the Lü family can provide further detail about girls' home-based education in the second half of the nineteenth century. Huiru (1875–1925), Meisun (1881–1945), Bicheng (1883–1943), and Kunxiu (1888–1914), were the four daughters of Lü Fengqi (1837–1895) and Yan Shiyu of Anhui Province.[20] Like most elite families in late imperial China, the home-based education of the Lü family was greatly shaped by the father's political pursuit of civil service examinations and then officialdom. Lü Fengqi devoted the majority of his time and energy to the civil service and participated very little in the education of his daughters. Most of their early education was thus carried out by their mother and her maternal family. For example, in 1885, when the eldest daughter was 10, the second daughter was 4, and the third daughter was 2, the mother, Yan Shiyu, brought the three daughters to Beijing and lived with her maternal family. This left the girls with lovely memories of living in the compound with three generations of the Yan family. From the poetry and essays of the second daughter, Meisun, we can see that not only did the grandmother kindly provide them with embroidered dresses and delicious snacks,[21] more importantly, the two elder girls were able to join their cousins in receiving elementary education at the Yan family school.[22] Both boys and girls at the Yan family school studied *Sanzi jing* and *Qianzi wen*, as did most children in imperial China. Within two years of their arrival in the Yan compound, Meisun completed the primers with fluency sufficient to outsmart one Yan cousin and to win the favour of the tutor.[23] As for Huiru, the eldest, she had already composed 10 poems at the age of 12.[24] This indicated at least that she was trained in rhythmics and poetry writing.

In 1887, Lü Fengqi resigned from his position and brought his wife, three daughters, and two sons back to Lu'an, where their new compound was located in Anhui Province. The youngest daughter was born soon after, but, unfortunately, the new birth was overshadowed by the death of the two sons. With no surviving male heir, the parents had no outlet for their sorrow except supervising the education of their daughters.[25] The first two daughters were already well educated at the Yan family school. Accordingly, their father hired a Lü clan member to teach the girls at home and then hired another tutor specially to teach the girls painting. In about four or five years, the eldest daughter's painting skills improved to the point that 'the father's sorrow was slightly relieved'.[26] Bicheng, the

third daughter, was also able to rhythmise beautifully with the father. According to one anecdote, one day when she was in the garden with her father, he composed the line 'the spring wind blowing the willow' upon seeing the willow tree in the garden. Immediately Bicheng, who was standing next to her father, responded with the line 'the autumn rain striking the *wutong* tree'.[27] Bicheng's five-character line shows she was already capable of using the verb 'strike' to describe the relationship between two objects in nature, the autumn rain and the *wutong* tree, in response to her father's line.

Meanwhile, when Meisun was 11 or 12 years old, she was taught to write rudimentary essays and poems that were originally designed for the men's civil service examination. She so excelled that 'both father and the tutor appreciated my work'.[28] Allowing a daughter to study the subjects of the civil service examination was probably the result of the father's 'compensation' mentality. At the general level, daughters were not expected to carry on the family reputation by advancing in the civil service, and at a more specific level, in the Lü family, there was no son. But the curriculum indeed went far beyond what a girl of the inner chamber was supposed to study.

In retrospect, it was their home learning that helped these young women survive the family crisis after their father's sudden death in 1895. The death of their father marked the collapse of the family's material shelter and the dramatic end of the daughters' girlhood. In the following years, all four daughters, married or not, engaged with modern women's education in one way or another and became pioneers in this progressive cause. The Lü daughters were able and willing to support the family by trading their home learning for economic security, self-fulfillment, and social recognition.

Shared Aims and Values

Talent Versus Virtue

The tension between talent and virtue was a central concern for educators of girls in both contexts. In the German case, bourgeois accomplishments and even intellectual development were not seen as necessarily incompatible with virtue; indeed, girls could demonstrate their industry and self-discipline through academic performance in home-based education

or at school. But what the comparison with China casts in relief is the limits to that tenuous alliance between talent and virtue. German pedagogues also believed there were dangers to educating girls, especially the threat of unbridled feminine curiosity. Some authors of periodicals justified their publications as a defense against the temptations of novel reading, both popular and pernicious for girls.[29] Seventeen-year-old Anna Hasenfratz recorded in her diary her elation at receiving permission from her older brother to read novels after she solicited his approval: 'He also gave me a brief answer to my question. He wrote: "If only the novels do not turn your head, then it is quite alright!!!" I am entirely beside myself about this message'.[30] Karl Engelhardt used his periodical, *The New Children's Friend*, to warn against the dissipations of too much dancing. He encouraged girls to learn enough for social intercourse (and even included dance patterns and sheet music in his publication) but wrote disapprovingly of how 'many a young girl has trilled dance melodies all day, lived and moved in English dances and waltzes, found pleasure nowhere except at the ball, and become a passionate dancer'.[31] German girls encountered countless contradictory messages like this throughout their education.

In China, 'a woman without talent is virtuous' was probably the most influential ideology shaping attitudes about girls' education.[32] In the long tradition of women's culture, women's virtues were usually placed above women's talents. But since the Song dynasty (960–1279), as the civil service examination became extremely competitive, the need to educate boys became urgent. Accordingly, girls, who were expected to become future mothers, gradually received an advanced education in order to fully prepare for their future mother-tutor roles. The emergence of a large number of talented women in the Jiangnan region in the late seventeenth century could be seen as a consequence of this ideological transition.[33] Genteel families began to take girls' learning seriously, so that in the eighteenth century, literati no longer debated whether girls should be educated but rather what girls should learn and for what purpose.[34] Toward the end of the nineteenth century, with the encroachment of western imperialism and the penetration of the nationalist agenda, the talented woman of China was gradually disparaged in public discourse since she and her literary capacity were considered a metonym for the past and tradition, things that progressive intellectuals were eager to blame in order to justify their modernity project.[35]

Family Relations

In both the German and Chinese contexts, the family setting of girls' education was an essential dimension in that instruction: how it was conducted, for what ends, and by whom. Prescribed gender roles served as a backdrop for the idealised education of girls at home. While common wisdom holds that mothers were primarily responsible for informal education at home, in both our cases, patriarchal authority still held sway in the prescriptive vision of girls' learning through male authors.

In Central Europe, the valorisation of domesticity was reinforced through depictions of learning and family life not only in amusement-oriented genres like periodicals but also in explicitly instructional genres like geographic schoolbooks. Pedagogues often presented themselves as loving fathers writing for the benefit of their own daughters who were sometimes depicted within the narratives of the periodicals themselves. For example, in the early nineteenth century, Christian Schulz adapted the explorer Mungo Park's travel narrative for young German readers by setting it in a framework narrative of a family learning geography together. Schulz's adaptation begins by describing 'an affectionate father of very respectable character, [with] industrious and well-constituted children. He loved them immensely, and it was his greatest pleasure to see them in their circle [around him]'.[36] These fictional children—Luise, age 10, Friedrich, 9, and Wilhelm, 8—ask questions of their father while he relates the story of the Mungo Park expedition. Schulz offered his young readers an idealistic model of how they should interact with parent educators, in which 'all were allowed to interrupt their father's story with items they did not understand or about which they wanted a more detailed explanation'.[37] Books like this would not only fill young readers' minds with knowledge but also inspire their attention and imagination, directed at father-teachers. Learning, including the study of geography and faraway places, was thus located in a home organised not only around a mother's care of small children but around a patriarch's instruction.

In the Chinese context, if we read carefully from the experiences of the four daughters of the Lü family, it is clear that the father and the mother played different, though not mutually exclusive, roles in shaping the daughters' knowledge structure and identity formation. The extent to which the father was able to invest his energy in the daughters' learning was inversely linked to his political career. The father in general distanced

himself from the family and mainly focused on his career. When he was busy preparing himself for promotion, he even stopped tutoring his own sons.[38] The father's preoccupation with his career led him to place the sons and daughters largely under the care of their mother and her family, as stated earlier. But the whole parent-child picture changed considerably when the father decided to retire. A distant figure who showed occasional tenderness toward his daughters during his rising career trajectory, after his retreat from officialdom, the father became a caring and attentive figure who trained the daughters in the advanced literary skills of poetry and prose writing, along with painting and calligraphy.

In comparison to the influence of the father in structuring the daughters' learning, the mother's role was much more complicated and far-reaching in the Lü family. For example, in addition to telling stories of kinswomen to pass on womanly virtues, the mother also shaped the daughters' attitude toward animal protection and not killing. Emerging around the late sixteenth century, animal liberation and not killing became one of the most widespread practices among the literati. Women of the inner chambers also earnestly engaged in these practices as routinised elements of the domestic religion.[39] According to Meisun, one day when they were young, their mother dreamed she was in a desert of the underworld, being chased by a goat and a pig. She finally escaped by promising the goat and the pig that she would never eat goat or pork. Afterward, their mother always told her daughters, 'Even though pigs and goats were not specifically killed for me, I could not eat their meat. So how could I specifically kill chickens, ducks, fish, and shrimps [to eat]?' Consequently, the idea of not killing any kind of living thing was practised within the sphere of the family. 'Therefore, in my family, we stopped killing [animals] in the kitchen when there were no [special] events. Later on we continued the practice of not killing, even when there were [special] events'.[40] It is no exaggeration to say that the daughters' activism could be traced back to the days when their mother exerted power over the daily life of the family.

Thus, in both the German and Chinese milieus, it is clear that mothers and fathers played important, distinct roles in educating girls. Focusing on the family setting of girls' informal education illuminates the significance of those parental contributions to learning. Delineating exactly how gender shaped parental involvement in girls' home-based education in the two different contexts, however, will require future research.

Exemplary Lives

In both cases, the 'exemplary lives' paradigm was popular for cultivating certain virtues in girls, especially through texts. In German education, the dissemination of exemplary lives was facilitated by a dramatic increase in book production and literacy across the nineteenth century. Reading was understood as a powerful device in the dissemination of evolving gender ideologies. As was also true in China, portraits of exemplary lives constituted one of the most common strategies to promote virtues of industry, selflessness, and naturalness in books written for girls. As Natalie Zemon Davis has written, accounts of 'women worthies' are the oldest form of women's history in the western tradition.[41] 'True histories' of remarkable women from the past, such as political leaders and religious figures, largely appeared in textbooks and biographical galleries. Commonly appearing figures included Helen of Troy, Dido the Queen of Carthage, the Virgin Mary, Joan of Arc, Queen Elizabeth I, Catherine the Great, and Empress Maria Theresa. The textbook author Friedrich Nösselt, for instance, highlighted the importance of St. Hedwig's influence in Germanising Silesia, despite the fact that religious women were are not usually associated with the heroic individual lionised by Enlightenment liberalism.[42]

In German periodicals, the individual women whose biographies were held up as models were usually fictional characters not so distant from the readers whose merits or flaws were presented as ideal or cautionary. The story 'A Little Girl Shows Great Courage' from a 1779 volume of the *New Year's Gift for Children* magazine demonstrates this type, in which 'a little sailor girl' rescues 20 people from a sinking ship.[43] At the same time that her heroic action was signalled as extraordinary, the newspaper-style reporting on this anonymous girl also marked her as an ordinary person with whom the active reader should form a relationship. With amusement-oriented publishing for children steadily on the rise, the model of fictional biographies found in these periodicals came to represent the primary way children read about exemplary women by the middle of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, in textbook publishing over the course of this period, although ancient and medieval heroines such as Dido or Joan of Arc were still included, biographies of contemporary female figures—for example, from the French Revolution—did not appear. Heroic women were gradually relegated to the distant past.

In China, similarly, many recognised exemplary models were recorded in two types of genres, local gazettes and dynastic histories, to demonstrate the integrity of local societies and the legitimacy of political regimes.

In them, women were represented by their virtuous behaviours, ranging from committing suicide after a husband's death, to sacrificing for in-laws, to dying in the course of opposition to robbery or invasion of alien troops. The number of women's suicides or defensive deaths increased especially during a dynastic transition when an old regime was replaced by a new one. In the eyes of the literati who controlled women's access to and constructed their images in official history, these women's deaths mattered not only at a personal or familial level but also at a dynastic level, as they demonstrated uninterrupted loyalty to family and to the overthrown regime.[44] Most Chinese women models were not influential figures, at least not as significant as the queens, religious leaders, or political heroines in the western tradition. They were more typically the daughters of peasant families or the wives of officials who guarded cities, but it is exactly this obscurity that demonstrated both the efficacy and the replicability of women's virtues. They provided a baseline for young girls in imperial China, who were expected in their early years to emulate the actions and choices of these models, and who, by doing so, were offered the possibility of recognition in official history.

In addition to official accounts in China, many stories regarding women models were also recorded in family histories. On one hand, these stories showed the penetration of the exemplary-woman tradition in individual families; on the other hand, they also added elements to the accumulated stock images and thus enriched and consolidated this tradition. In the Lü family, Meisun, the second daughter, recounted many stories about her female relatives' virtues of filial piety, submission, and tenacity. For example, in an account of Lady Yan, Meisun's maternal grandmother, Meisun was convinced that the Yan family survived the Taiping rebellion (1851–1864) due to Lady Yan's filial piety to her mother-in-law. Lady Yan cared so much about her mother-in-law that even after the mother-in-law died, Lady Yan was still worried that her mother-in-law's bones would be frightened by thunder. As a consequence of this filial piety, all her sons were blessed with success in the civil service examination.[45] To Meisun and her sisters, these virtues were not simply a long, abstract list advocated by official histories but rather qualities that could, and indeed did, materialise on a very personal level. Stories like these were passed from mother to daughter, or between female relatives, through daily conversations that took place in boudoirs or in kitchens, or through poetry. They became a significant way of passing on women's tradition and culture and thus constituted a critical part of girls' home-based education.

Conclusion

As we have argued, girls' informal education was a critical site for cultivating appropriate womanhood in both Europe and China in the nineteenth century. Despite the distinct features we touched on at the beginning of the chapter, we have explored characteristics that developed similarly in both the German and the Chinese contexts, including the ideology of domesticity, concerns over the family's role in girls' education, and the cultivation of virtues through exemplary models.

In analysing our cases alongside one another, we have identified several promising directions for future research. In both contexts, marriage usually played a critical role as the ending marker of girlhood, but the experience of that institution in Central Europe and China differed in many ways. How, then, did young women's education prepare them differently in Europe and China for responsibilities and identities in married life?

Another future goal is to locate China and Germany within global history and think about the ways in which some elements in girls' home-based education were produced, reproduced, and transmitted along global networks. For example, some of the exemplary models discussed above, such as Joan of Arc, originated in Europe and traveled worldwide in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. How did the transmission of these images influence girls' home and school education when they became part of imperialist expansion within Europe and between Europe and China? To rephrase this question on a larger scale, as women's education became a global phenomenon in the modern era, how did colonial fantasies and worldviews affect girls' learning? Especially in China, since the emergence of women's schooling was largely a response to imperialism-inflected nationalism, what was the relationship between 'home' and 'school' in the physical as well as the metaphorical sense? While our chapter ends with these questions, our comparative research has not.

Notes

1. Edicts promising state-sponsored primary schools for all girls and boys below age 12 or 14 first appeared in the late eighteenth century (as early as 1763 in the case of Prussia). However, the actual enforcement of these laws was sporadic at best, particularly for girls.
2. Juliane Jacobi, 'Girls' Secondary Education in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Germany, Austria and Switzerland'. Paper presented at the European Educational Research Conference, Goteborg, 10 September

2008. German literacy rates were also quite high compared to the rest of Europe: by 1850, 85 percent of Prussia's population could read and write, compared with 52 percent in England and 61 percent reading literacy in France. See Kenneth Barkin, 'Social Control and the Volksschule in Vormärz Prussia', *Central European History*, 16, no. 1 (1983), 50. Female illiteracy is estimated to have declined to under 10 percent by the mid-nineteenth century, if not earlier. See David Vincent, *The Rise of Mass Literacy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 9.

3. J. G. Reinhardt, *Der Mädchenspiegel* (Halle: Johann Jacob Gebauer, 1794), 74.
4. Bettina Brentano to Kunigunde Brentano, 7 September 1796 in F. Mencken (ed.), *Dein dich zärtlich liebender Sohn* (Memmingen: Heimeran, 1965), 101.
5. Susanne Barth, 'Das Goldtöchterchen: Zur geschlechtsspezifischen Erziehung von Kleinen Mädchen im Kinderbuch um nach 1800', *Der Deutschunterricht: Beiträge zu Seiner Praxis und Wissenschaftlichen Grundlegung*, 42, no. 3 (1990), 61–75.
6. Friedrich Nösselt, *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte für Töchterschulen* (Breslau: March 1827), iv.
7. The Diary of Marie Seybold, Familiennachlass Schmidt, Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, File Q 3/48 Box 3, entry dated 26 May 1830.
8. Johannes Christian Dolz, 'Wohlthätigkeit einiger jungen Mädchen', *Bildungsblätter oder Zeitung für die Jugend* (Leipzig: Georg Voß, 1806–1811), 296.
9. For a brief history of missionary-run girls' schools in China, see Xueyuan Du, *Zhongguo nüzi jiaoyu tongshi* (Guizhou: Guizhou jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995), 250–254.
10. Xiaohong Xia, 'Zhongxi hebi de jiaoyu lixiang: Shanghai 'zhongguo nüxuetang' kaoshu' in *Wanqing nüxing yu jindai Zhongguo* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2004), 3–37; Paul Bailey, *Gender and Education in China: Gender Discourses and Women's Schooling in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 2007), 15–25.
11. Susan Mann, 'The Education of Daughters in the Mid-Ch'ing Period' in Benjamin A. Elman and Alexander Woods (eds), *Education and Society in Late Imperial China, 1600–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 19–47; Clara Wing-Chung Ho, 'The Cultivation of Female Talent: Views on Women's Education in China during the Early and High Qing Periods', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 38, no. 2 (1995), 196–201; Xiaoping Cong, 'Cong muqin dao guomin jiaoshi: Qingmo minzu guojia jianshe yu gongli nüzi shifan jiaoyu', *Qingshi yanjiu*, 1 (2003), 88.

12. For a history of women's culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (Stanford University Press, 1994); Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford University Press, 1997).
13. At the end of the nineteenth century, the image of the talented woman and her poetry writing was criticized for its incompatibility with modern national agendas. See Ying Hu, 'Naming the First New Woman', *Nan Nü: Men, Women, and Gender in China*, 3, no. 2 (2001), 199–205.
14. Mann, *Precious Records*, 13.
15. Generally speaking, it was quite common in the late imperial period for boys and girls under the age of seven or ten to study together. See Pingchen Hsiung, *A Tender Voyage: Children and Childhood in Late Imperial China* (Stanford University Press, 2005), 205–207.
16. For analysis of these two primers, see Wu, 'Education of Children in the Sung', 322–324.
17. Mann, *Precious Records*, 28–29.
18. Hsiung, *Tender Voyage*, 199–202.
19. For a general introduction to the life trajectories of both sexes, see Mann, *Precious Records*, 47–75.
20. For a more detailed analysis of the education of the Lü sisters, see Fang Qin, 'Wanqing cainü de chengzhang licheng: Yi Anhui Jingde Lüshi zimei wei zhongxin', *Jindai zhongguo funü shi yanjiu*, no. 19 (2010), 259–294.
21. Meisun Lü, 'Chong zhi jingshi' in *Mianliyuan shi* (Qingdao, printed by the author, 1931), 5.
22. Meisun Lü, 'Meisun ziji sansheng yinguo' in *Mianliyuan suibi* (Qingdao: printed by author, 1941), 84.
23. Lü, 'Chong zhi Jingshi', 5.
24. Fengqi Lü, *Shizhushannong xingnian lu* (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 1999), 410.
25. Ibid., 410.
26. Ibid., 411.
27. Tiefu Guang, *Mingyuan Shici Zhenglüe* (Originally printed in 1936; Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1986), 208.
28. Lü, 'Meisun ziji sansheng yinguo', 85.
29. J. T. Hermes, *Sophiens Reise von Memel nach Sachsen*, vol. 4 (Leipzig: Junius, 1776), 132.
30. The Diary of Anna Hasenfratz, Deutsches Tagebucharchiv, Emmendingen, File 1491, entry dated 1 January 1841.
31. Karl Engelhardt, *Neuer Kinderfreund*, issue 10 (Leipzig: Barth and Franz Haas, 1797), 240.

32. Kang-I Sun, 'Nüzi wucai bianshi de?' in Kang-I Sun (ed.), *Wenxue jingdian de tiaozhan* (Nanchang: Baihuazhou wenyi chubanshe, 2002), 268–291; Lijuan Liu, 'Nüzi wucai bianshide kaoshu', *Funü yanjiu luncong*, no. 5 (2009), 55–60.
33. Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*.
34. Mann, 'Learned Women in the Eighteenth Century', 27–46.
35. Hu, 'Naming the First New Woman'.
36. Christian M. Schulz, *Mungo Park's Reise in Afrika für die Jugend bearbeitet* (Berlin: Schüppelschen Buchhandlung, 1805), 2.
37. Ibid., 8.
38. Lü, *Shizhushannong xingnian lu*, 398.
39. Joanna F. Handlin Smith, 'Liberating Animals in Ming-Qing China: Buddhist Inspiration and Elite Imagination', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 58, no. 1 (1999), 51–84.
40. Lü, 'Paochu sha jie,' 88.
41. Plutarch is especially relevant here. See Gianna Pomata, 'History, Particular and Universal: On Reading Some Recent Women's History Textbooks', *Feminist Studies*, 19, no. 1 (1993), 12; Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Women's History' in Transition: The European Case', *Feminist Studies*, 3, no. 3/4 (1976), 83–103.
42. Nösselt, *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte,* 165.
43. 'Ein kleines Mädchen zeigt grossen Muth' in *Neujahrsgeschenk für Kinder von einem Kinderfreunde*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt: J. J. Keßler, 1779), 78.
44. Ruolan Yi, *Shixue yu xingbie: Mingshi lienüzhuan yu mingdai nüxingshi zhi jiangou* (Taiyuan: Shanxi jiaoyu chubanshe, 2012).
45. Lü, 'Xian waiwangmu Yan taifuren', 15.

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CHAPTER 7

'[T]he Children Bobbed Like Corks on the Tide of Adult Life': The Political Education of the Pankhurst Girls in Late Victorian England

June Purvis

In 1933, the feminist writer and journalist Rebecca West published an insightful essay about Emmeline Pankhurst, the leader of the suffragette movement in Edwardian Britain. In her essay, West observed that the stream of public life flowed through the Pankhurst household so that the children 'bobbed like corks on the tide of adult life'. In this chapter, I intend to explore this theme as a way of understanding the childhood of the Pankhurst girls, drawing out some implications for their subsequent political lives. The Pankhurst family is frequently referred to as the 'first' family of feminism, and this chapter contributes to the process of trying to understand this claim, in all its complexity.[1]

Emmeline and Richard Marsden Pankhurst were parents who were keenly interested in social reform, even before they were married on 18 December 1879, in a Church of England ceremony at St. Luke's in the parish of Eccles, in the county of Lancaster. Richard Pankhurst, LL.D., a radical

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4_7

barrister, a Republican and anti-imperialist, who had supported the abolitionist North in the American Civil War, was regarded as a political extremist in Manchester, where he practised. With a deep hatred of injustice, he sought to make the world a better place by fighting for unpopular causes such as education for the working classes and women's rights.[2]

Emmeline Goulden, the eldest daughter of radical middle-class parents who had supported the abolition of slavery in the American South, had been taken by her mother at the age of just 14 to a women's suffrage meeting. 'I left the meeting a conscious and confirmed suffragist', Emmeline recollected.[3] Interested in the path of progress, she was flattered that Richard, some 20 years her senior, a learned man with years of public service, should pay her attention. During their short and intense courtship, Richard wrote to Emmeline not only of his love for her but also of their shared interest in social reform:

> In all my happiness with you, I feel most deeply the responsibilities that are gathering around us … Every struggling cause shall be ours … Help me in this in the future, unceasingly. Herein is the strength—with bliss added—of two lives made one by that love which seeks more the other than self.[4]

Passionately in love, the high-spirited Emmeline and Richard settled into their new home in Old Trafford, Manchester. Over the next nine years, five children were to be born, although not all in Manchester—Christabel on 22 September 1880, Estelle Sylvia (to be known by her second name) on 5 May 1882, Henry Francis on 27 February 1884, Adela Constantia Mary on 19 June 1885 and Harry on 7 July 1889. Both of the sons died, Henry Francis, or Frank, as he was called, when he was just four years old. Harry passed away when he was 20.[5]

It was soon clear immediately after her marriage that the energetic Emmeline would not be following the common destination for middle-class married women of her day, namely being a stay-at-home full-time wife and mother, managing a household and bringing up a family. 'I was never so absorbed with home and children … that I lost interest in community affairs', she wrote later in her autobiography. 'Dr. Pankhurst did not desire that I should turn myself into a household machine. It was his firm belief that society as well as the family stands in need of women's services'.[6] By March 1880, when she was three months pregnant with Christabel, Emmeline was a member of the Executive Committee of the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage on which Richard also

sat. When pregnant with Sylvia, Emmeline was a member of the network around the Manchester Married Women's Property Committee that was pressing for women to own property in their own right. When the Married Women's Property Act was passed in 1882, after Sylvia had been born, Emmeline threw herself with 'renewed energy' into suffrage work.[7] But despite Emmeline's involvement in suffrage work, she was more ambitious for her husband than for herself. She wanted her husband to do 'great things for the people, to deliver them from poverty and bad housing and overwork, and … work for the cause of international peace'. In particular, Emmeline believed that Richard would make a noble Member of Parliament since he could do 'great things for the working masses'.[8] The idealistic Richard wanted this too.

The hope that Richard Pankhurst, the main breadwinner in the family, would become an MP brought about a number of house moves, including moving to London in the late 1880s and then back again to the North in 1893. Richard stood three times unsuccessfully for election to Parliament. In 1883, while still living in Manchester, he resigned his membership of the Manchester Liberal Association and stood as an Independent candidate in that city. Believing that his chances of election would be substantially improved if he moved to London, the home of parliamentary democracy, the family moved to the metropolis in 1887. Richard then stood as a candidate for Rotherhithe Liberal and Radical Association (which had no connection to the Liberal Party) but did not win. Further, the cost of the election plus a libel action he brought against his opponent's claim that he was an atheist reduced the family's income. In 1895, after the family had moved back to the North, he stood again unsuccessfully for election to the House of Commons, this time as an Independent Labour Party (ILP) candidate for the district of Gorton, Manchester.[9] Since standing for Parliament was an expensive business, which had to be borne by the candidate, the Pankhurst family were often out of pocket, especially since Richard's radical election addresses—abolition of the House of Lords, disestablishment of the Church of England, nationalisation of the land, adult suffrage for men and women, free compulsory secular education, and Home Rule for Ireland—lost him many clients.

When the Pankhurst family moved to London in 1887, Emmeline had decided that the best way to help their depleted finances was to open a shop, and so they settled on 165 Hampstead, which offered living accommodation above shop premises. However, when four-year-old Frank died the following year, from diphtheria due to faulty drains, a new residence

was hastily sought. A large rented house in a middle-class area was the next home, 8 Russell Square, while premises for another shop selling fancy goods, also called Emerson's, were rented in Berners Street, off fashionable Oxford Street. The Pankhurst girls watched and sometimes helped as their mother, the practical parent, laid carpets, made curtains, upholstered furniture, and hung pictures. Their father, hopeless at any kind of manual task, buried himself in his own work and kept apart from all such domestic chores. 'I am a helpless creature!' he would say, even handing over the carving of the Sunday joint to his wife.[10] However, more importantly, it was at 8 Russell Square that the political socialization of the three daughters, Christabel, Sylvia, and Adela, became particularly pronounced.

The late 1880s were a time of social and industrial unrest as exploited working-class employees demanded higher wages and better working conditions. The home at 8 Russell Square became a centre for political gatherings of radical reformers of many different kinds, including Socialists, Fabians, anarchists, suffragists, free thinkers, and agnostics. 'Discussions whirled about our young ears, mingling with our childish interests', recollected Sylvia, 'the New *versus* the Old Trade Unionism, the Socialism of various schools … the decision of Edith Lancaster to contract a free union, instead of a legal marriage, a position in which the Doctor [Richard] strongly championed her'.[11] The girls would help to arrange the chairs for the meetings, give out leaflets, and take the collection in brocade bags. Sylvia, an artistic child, would print notices saying 'To the Tea Room'. Now and again, remembered Christabel, she and Sylvia, as the two eldest children, were allowed to attend the meetings. 'The big double drawing-room housed a considerable company, and meetings and conferences would be held here on peace and arbitration, industrial and social questions and, of course, on woman suffrage'.[12]

It was while Christabel, Sylvia, and Adela were living at 8 Russell Square that a brother, Harry, was born in July 1889. A strong, sturdy child, his arrival was a moment of great rejoicing since it seemed as if little Frank had come again. The girls wondered at his small toes and fingers and were hastily hurried to the basement, with the servants, when shortly after Harry's birth their mother began to hemorrhage. Fortunately, Emmeline's life was saved by their quick-thinking nurse Susannah, who lived with the family, looking after the children. Susannah ran into the streets, to find a doctor. Two weeks after Harry was born, Emmeline and Richard were closely involved with the formation of the Women's Franchise League, a radical organisation that put forward an advanced programme for all

women—unmarried, married, or widowed—that sought not just the parliamentary vote but also to eliminate all women's civil disabilities. As Alice Scatcherd, its treasurer, said at the league's inaugural meeting, 'We have nailed our flag to the mast … our desire is to obtain full and equal justice for women with men'.[13] The no-compromise attitude of the league in regard to equality for women—including equal divorce and inheritance rights—was undoubtedly part of the discussion that whirled around the ears of the Pankhurst girls.

Yet the girls also learned that their lives and concerns had to be fitted around the busy political schedule of their mother who was considered important enough to be interviewed in 1891 by the *Women's Herald*. When the interviewer asked Emmeline if she found her work for the women's cause and the running of her shop, where she supervised her shop assistants for about eight hours a day, an impediment to her home duties, she replied decisively:

> In no way … I have four little children, who … are quite as happy, quite as well looked after, as any children … I think they appreciate me all the more because they do not see too much of me. I have an excellent nurse and governess to which I can confidently entrust my children … My children look forward to my return as a treat; I have two days a week I can devote entirely to them … I am a Radical, devoted to the politics of the people, and to progress, especially where the education, emancipation, and industrial interests of women are concerned.[14]

Emmeline may have been a 'radical' in regard to the education of the working classes, but she was very conventional in regard to the education of her own daughters.[15] In common with many middle-class families of the day, the girls in Russell Square were taught at home by a governess, Cecil Sowerby, an artist. She appears to have given few academic lessons but read a lot to the girls, also taking them out to places of interest, especially the British Museum. It was here that Sylvia became fascinated by the wonderful colours in the Egyptian section, especially the mummy cases.[16] After Miss Sowerby left, Richard spoke of sending his daughters to a state-supported local Board school that largely drew on a working-class catchment area. Emmeline was horrified. She strongly opposed the idea, arguing that her daughters were 'too highly strung' and would 'lose all originality' if educated in lessons with lots of other children.[17] Christabel suggested instead that she and her sisters should give each other lessons,

which they did for a short while. Thus the unsystematic home education that the girls had experienced with their governess continued.

The girls seldom played games but on rare occasions might join the servants in a wild chase throughout the large Russell Square house with its two staircases leading to the basement, as well as the many large and unused interconnecting cupboards, suitable as hiding places. Nor did they play with the dolls that visitors often gave them as presents. Each summer and winter when Emmeline with the help of Susannah and a seamstress made the children's clothes, the dolls might be brought out and dressed too, in the left-over material. Then they would be put away again since Christabel, Sylvia, and Adela were not interested in playing with them.[18] Rather than encourage such traditionally 'feminine' behaviour, Emmeline and Richard usually gave the children books as presents and encouraged them to expand their minds by reading.

The interest in politics, the central issue around which family life revolved, continued when the family moved back up North. 'Politics interested us', recollected Christabel, 'and we children were playing election games at an early age'.[19] When the family moved initially for a short time to the seaside resort of Southport, the three girls were sent in January 1893 to the Southport High School for Girls, one of the new more academic girls' fee-paying schools that had been established by the Girls' Public Day School Trust. Richard, an agnostic, insisted that his daughters be exempt from religious instruction, a request that made the sisters feel set apart from the more socially conventional pupils who participated in these lessons. But the exclusion from religious instruction did not stop them from listening to stories from the Bible while they were supposed to be reading non-religious books. Nor were the sisters regarded as rebellious but as 'very quiet, well-behaved children' so that 'great astonishment' was expressed by the teachers when they became involved in the militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU).[20] The girls spent just one term at Southport High School before moving back to Manchester, to a spacious house at 4 Buckingham Crescent, Daisy Bank Road, Victoria Park. Soon they attended dancing classes, taught by the Websters, an old dancing family in Manchester. Christabel again outshone her sisters, indeed all the pupils in the class. The proud Emmeline was delighted, taking great care when making her eldest daughter's dancing dresses.[21]

From September 1893, the girls were pupils at Manchester High School for Girls and stayed much longer than in their previous school—Christabel until April 1897, Sylvia until July 1898, and Adela until July 1902.

Manchester High School for Girls, founded in 1874, had become, under its first headmistress, Miss Elizabeth Day, one of the most prestigious of the new high schools for girls, employing women graduates as specialised subject teachers. Sylvia, unlike her sisters, detested the new school, finding the teaching dull and dry, the homework excessive, and the discipline petty.[22] When Miss Day refused to let Christabel play the part of the dancing master in Moliere's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, despite the French mistress's recommendation, Emmeline too came to regard the teaching with the 'utmost contempt'. She would keep her daughters home on 'the slightest pretext', saying a week spent with her helping at a bazaar was of greater educational value than school attendance.[23] '[M]y daughters never went to school until they were about twelve', she told one interviewer in 1896, 'and then I'm not sure it did them much good. Of course they had some elementary teaching, but I want to develop their individuality above all things'.[24] Developing individuality meant, above all else, encouraging her daughters to participate in political life and to read, think, and talk about the important social issues of the day. The children not only read the Socialist literature that came regularly to the house but also accompanied their parents to political meetings, especially in the developing Socialist movement into which Emmeline and Richard were increasingly drawn, both having joined the Fabian Society in September 1890.

Emmeline also now joined the ILP, hoping it would be a vehicle for improving the lot of poor women and for advancing the cause of women's suffrage. Richard initially was hesitant to follow her lead, fearful that such a move would have a detrimental effect on his ability to attract paying clients. After he announced in the press, in September 1894, that he had decided to join the South Manchester branch of the ILP, his fears were confirmed.[25] But despite the financial hardship, Richard would not abandon his radical politics—nor did Emmeline want him to. Richard was still ever ready to work unpaid for trade unions and other left-leaning political organisations. In the conflict between 'purse and politics', politics was always paramount, a lesson that the three Pankhurst girls would later adopt in their own lives.[26]

Finding out about the girlhood experiences of Christabel, Sylvia, and Adela, in their own words, is not easy. The most detailed account of their girlhood is given by Sylvia in her autobiographical book, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals*, first published in 1931 and republished by Virago in 1977 in an affordable paper edition. I been deconstructing this text, long held as the 'truth' about the Pankhurst

family, for a number of years and comparing it with other sources.[27] Sylvia began writing this memoir in 1928, and, not unexpectedly, it reflects her own particular biases, including her claim that Christabel was their mother's favorite child. During the suffragette movement, which organised its militant campaign from the foundation of the women-only WSPU in 1903 until the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, Sylvia had had a number of disagreements with her mother and Christabel, the key leaders of the WSPU. Sylvia, a committed Socialist, wanted to ally the single-sex WSPU to the labour movement and to admit men as members. Emmeline and Christabel insisted that it should be women-only and free from association with all men's political parties. As Christabel, the key strategist and chief organiser of the WSPU explained, the WSPU should 'rally women of all three parties [Labour, Liberal, and Conservative] and women of no party, and unite them as one independent force'. In particular, the WSPU should not become 'a frill on the sleeve' of any of the male-dominated political parties'.[28] This emphasis on the sisterhood of women, irrespective of social class, and on separate women-only organisations as a way to challenge and reform the male-dominated social order would today be called 'radical feminism'.[29]

In 1913, Sylvia had sought to fuse her socialism and feminism by forming a grouping in the East End of London called the East London Federation of the Suffragettes. The federation, although formally linked to the WSPU, followed its own independent line in that it would not criticise the Labour Party or Labour parliamentary candidates unsympathetic to women's suffrage, advocated mass rather than individual protests, and welcomed men as well as women to its membership. The disagreements among Emmeline, Christabel, and Sylvia in regard to WSPU policy and tactics led the elder Pankhursts to expel Sylvia and her federation from the WSPU early in 1914. The tensions among the women intensified during the First World War: Sylvia was a pacifist while her mother and Christabel supported the war, arguing that if women engaged in war work, this would help to bring about their enfranchisement. Further, in December 1927, another incident occurred that would bring further havoc to the already fragile family relationships. The unmarried Sylvia secretly gave birth to a son, making the news public four months later when she told her story to the *News of the World*. The shock of the news, conveyed in what was considered a scandalous way—unmarried mothers then were considered sexually promiscuous—broke her mother's heart. Sylvia was never reconciled with her mother, who died a couple of months later, on 14 June 1928.[30]

All these tensions between the Pankhurst women, not least the sibling rivalry between Sylvia and Christabel, were influential factors shaping the content of *The Suffragette Movement*, particularly Sylvia's recollections of family life. As Hilda Kean tellingly comments in *The Suffragette Movement*, Sylvia writes not just as an 'angry socialist' but also as a 'rejected daughter'.[31] Nonetheless, it is this text has become the dominant narrative about Pankhurst family life, endlessly repeated and the basis for the popular 1974 TV series on the suffragette movement, *Shoulder to Shoulder*.[32] However, in the 1930s, Christabel also penned a memoir, written from a radical feminist perspective, although it was not published until 1959, one year after her death. *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, written in a matter-of-fact style, was no literary match for Sylvia's earlier book. And, in particular, in *Unshackled* we find much less detail about the Pankhurst girls' childhood. Adela, the youngest Pankhurst daughter who, like Sylvia, was an ardent Socialist feminist for most of her life, published no book about the suffragette movement but did write some recollections about her childhood that have not been published and are rarely quoted. It is not surprising to find that all the Pankhurst daughters tell differing—and often contradictory—stories about their girlhood, although all agree that radical politics was the central issue around which family life revolved.

Christabel, the eldest daughter, seemed to thrive.[33] A bright, pretty, articulate child who could read at an early age, she had a confidence and maturity beyond her years, secure in the knowledge that she was the first-born and, according to Sylvia, as noted earlier, their mother's favorite, 'the apple of her eye'.[34] As the eldest daughter, Christabel was expected to look after Sylvia, and did so. They were 'constant companions' who very rarely quarreled. Christabel would read to Sylvia for hours on end because Sylvia's eyesight was poor.[35]

As the eldest and most knowledgeable child, Christabel took the lead, when the family lived in Russell Square, in writing material for the *Home News*, a magazine that the girls produced, initially weekly and then monthly. Her father would give her letters on important social subjects that she would copy into the journal, and Christabel herself would then write up accounts of Women's Franchise meetings that she attended. When just 11 years old, she penned the following account of one such gathering:

> Mrs. Pankhurst held an At Home at her beautiful house on May 28th. There was a great number of people there. Dr. Pankhurst, as Chairman, said in his

> speech that if the suffrage was not given to women, the result would be terrible … He then, with many compliments, called upon Mrs. Fenwick Miller to speak. Mrs. Fenwick Miller spoke of the attitude of the political leaders and the growing power of the Women's Franchise League. Some opponents tried to prove that women were naturally inferior to men, but our girls won degrees and honour at the Universities. Mrs. Pankhurst wore a black sort of grenadine with train from shoulders, and looked very handsome indeed.[36]

The other two sisters also made contributions to *Home News*. Sylvia drew the illustrations and also wrote a series of short essays on the topic of walks in London, which Christabel helped her copy into the journal. The six-year-old Adela did not wish to be excluded from this enterprise and dictated to Christabel a long story about a destitute widow with a large family who was taken out of poverty by the kindness of a rich benefactor.[37]

Of a calmer temperament than Sylvia and Adela, Christabel is the only one of the three Pankhurst girls who mentions the importance of music in the household. 'Life in those days was not all politics', she recollected. 'There were hours given to music-making … Mother had a moving contralto voice. Father hardly knew one tune from the other—but he loved to hear his wife sing. We children would be admitted to the drawing-room for a while, and even after banishment to bed we could still hear the music through open doors and fall asleep listening'.[38] Perhaps Sylvia and Adela forgot about this aspect of their childhood. Perhaps they regarded it as unimportant, not worth recording.

Sylvia's account of her childhood, which, as noted, has become the dominant narrative of life in the early Pankhurst household, is a tale of woe. She praises her idealistic Socialist father and continually criticises her overworked, practical mother. She recollects how her father held strong Socialist ideals and would encourage all the four children to be ambitious and to work hard, not for themselves but for others, for the common good of humankind. Throughout their childhood he would say to them, 'My children are the four pillars of my house!' and ask, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' urging them to 'Get something to earn your living by that you like and can do'. He insisted that '[l]ife is nothing without enthusiasms!' as he encouraged them to work for worthwhile causes. 'If you do not grow up to help other people you will not have been worth the upbringing!' was another one of his frequent sayings. 'Drudge and drill!' and 'To do, to be, and to suffer!' were other common exhortations as the earnest, middle-aged father tried to instill in his

children a sense of duty toward the less fortunate in society and the necessity of hard work.[39]

Yet, despite remembering these enthusiasms, Sylvia also writes of how her young years were torn by the 'anguish of ethical struggle, and depression descending into agony and despair for trivial failings, of longing for affection, and misery at being misunderstood'.[40] She claims that her mother treated her less favorably than Christabel and that she was often disciplined by the servants for dawdling behind when her boots were too tight or for refusing to eat her cold, lumpy porridge or to take her cod liver oil.[41] Her mother is described as a stickler for discipline, tolerating 'no likes and dislikes', while her adored father, who could presumably have changed the discipline regime, escaped all criticism: 'It was Father's rule—O splendid father!—that as soon as one said: "I am sorry", all punishment must end'.[42]

Adela, a child apart, had very different memories of their childhood. As a toddler she had a weakness in her legs and had to wear splints, which overcame the problem although she did not walk until she was three years old. Petted and nursed by the grown-ups until she was four, she then became a solitary figure when baby Harry arrived. Small for her age, she liked to tell stories and play all the parts. But, however successful her storytelling, Adela felt that she could never win the approval of their Aunt Mary, who lived with them, since Aunt Mary always favoured her big sisters.[43] Whereas Sylvia claimed that Christabel was their mother's favorite child, Adela asserts instead that for many years it was Sylvia herself who fulfilled this role, the person who their mother 'loved & trusted most'.[44]

Adela and Harry viewed their mother with a mixture of love and fear. However, their father was a more distant figure of authority. Both were terrified of him, unable to understand his lectures on socialism, capitalism, religion, and suffrage.[45] The unhappy Adela and Harry spent a lot of time with the servants in the kitchen. Whey they moved 'upstairs', as they became older, they brooded over the smallest troubles, wilting under the watchful eye of their elder sisters, who were treated as grown-ups by their father. As Adela recollected, 'When Harry and I were in trouble, they made us feel like criminals. A little harmless fun or mischief was treated as a great crime by Christabel and Sylvia, long after our parents and nurse had forgotten about it. Sylvia … would revive all the humiliation. She was a fearful "telltale"'.[46]

When the family returned to Manchester, Adela became even more unhappy, especially since the wise nurse Susannah had left to be married.

The situation was not helped by the fact that her tall, elder sisters, the best of friends, called her 'Little Skiggs' and teased her mercilessly, especially when she began to put on weight:

> I began to get fat; my hair was thin, 'rats tails' my sisters called it … Christabel and Sylvia sang and shouted after me 'she is a lump—a lump—a lump' until I was almost beside myself … I grew more and more oppressed and listless day by day. Harry, too, was pale and delicate, repressed and miserable. He got his share of teasing but less than mine and with less animosity … Father and Mother must have been worried over Harry, for his development was retarded, but they did not think of the one thing needful; that my mother should give up her public work and devote herself to her only son. It would have been treason to the Cause … Strikes, elections, free speech demonstrations.[47]

Feeling unloved, the 11-year-old Adela ran away from the school where she was a pupil, Manchester High School for Girls. She was found by a gardener in a neighbouring road, changing out of her school uniform but still wearing her school hat and carrying some books. He immediately contacted the headmistress who came to the scene in a cab and took the distressed pupil home. A doctor was called. According to her biographer, the vulnerable Adela was in the throes of a nervous breakdown.[48] Adela refused to speak and was kept away from school for about a year. Initially she stayed at home for a long time, followed by a holiday with Aunt Bess in Aberdeen. Her anxious parents coped as best they could, giving her a lot of attention. Richard read Shelley to his fragile youngest daughter while Emmeline played the piano and sang to her. Richard also took a sterner line with his elder daughters about teasing their younger sister although Adela remembered that Sylvia still regarded her 'with hostility', even though she moderated her tone.[49] Eventually a much happier Adela returned to the high school where, under the guidance of her new teacher, Isobel Rhys, she particularly enjoyed music and nature study.

So when did the girlhood of the Pankhurst daughters end, and young womanhood begin? That is a moot point, not unrelated to the differing ages of the sisters. In the summer of 1898 the 17-year-old Christabel was taken by her mother to Geneva, Switzerland, to stay with Noemie Rochefort, a French friend from Emmeline's school days in Paris. Emmeline and Noemie, now both married, had agreed to exchange daughters for a year so that Christabel could perfect her French and

Noemie's daughter, Lille, could perfect her English. Such exchanges were common experiences for many middle-class Victorian girls of the period, a sign they had matured to young womanhood. Christabel certainly looked at the prospect of her Geneva stay in this way, as a 'final, irrevocable "growing up"'.[50] But for the 16-year-old Sylvia and the 13-year-old Adela that summer of 1898, their girlhood ended abruptly when their father died on 5 July at their Manchester home. Only Sylvia and a servant were present since Emmeline was still in Switzerland while Adela and Harry were at school.

Despite the fact that he was a lawyer, Richard left behind heavy debts, which the broken-hearted Emmeline was determine to settle. Christabel, Sylvia, and Adela all now had differing roles as they helped their mother to cope with their great emotional loss as well as their difficult financial situation. Untrained for any occupation, Emmeline gratefully accepted the offer of the salaried post of Registrar of Births and Deaths with the local Chorlton Board of Guardians.[51] Although this provided a steady income and a pension on retirement, the salary was insufficient to support four dependent children and pay off Richard's debts. The rent on their spacious Buckingham Crescent home was now too costly so the family moved again, to a humbler house at 62 Nelson Street, off Oxford Road. Emmeline also decided to set up a fancy goods shop again, despite the failure of her previous ventures, hoping it would be not only a financial success but also provide employment for Christabel when she returned from Switzerland. The careers of her other two daughters seemed settled without too much cost. Sylvia, a talented artist, was offered a free studentship to the Manchester Municipal School of Art. Adela, who wanted to be a schoolteacher, was still a pupil at the fee-paying Manchester High School for Girls, but 'jumped' at the chance to train free as a pupil teacher at the state-aided Ducie Avenue Higher Grade Board School. However, the move to the new school was not successful; the unhappy Adela felt isolated from her friends and caught head lice. Eventually she went back to the high school, where the new headmistress encouraged her interest in history.[52]

As Emmeline began to pick up the threads of her political life again, the Pankhurst daughters witnessed once more the fiery and passionate determination of their feminist mother to right the wrongs of women. As a Registrar of Births and Deaths in a poor working-class district, Emmeline was repeatedly shocked by the stories she was told by those women who came to see her. 'I have had little girls of thirteen come to my office to

register the births of their babes, illegitimate, of course. In many of these cases I found that the child's own father or some near male relative was responsible for her state'.[53] Then, in 1900, as an ILP representative on the Manchester School Board, the indignant Emmeline found too that female elementary schoolteachers bore the brunt of inequalities in comparison with their male counterparts. It was not only the lower pay that female teachers received but also the fact that, in addition to their regular class work, women had to teach sewing and domestic science without any extra remuneration. And it was only men who were eligible for election to the new local education authorities that had replaced school boards and thus able to represent their profession.[54] Even Manchester Technical College, considered the second best in Europe, spent thousands of pounds annually on technical training for men with practically no training for women. These experiences, which Emmeline undoubtedly discussed with her daughters, strengthened her conviction that women must campaign for social reform, including the parliamentary vote. 'It was rapidly becoming clear to my mind', she wrote, 'that men regarded women as a servant class until they lifted themselves out if it'.[55] The relevance of these words soon came home to her, in a very personal way.

After Richard's death, a fund had been set up by sympathetic supporters for the welfare of the Pankhurst children. However, Emmeline became increasingly indignant at the way the fund was being administered, especially by its treasurer, a Mr. Dixon, and its secretary, a Mr. Graham. Matters came to a head in the autumn of 1902 when the fund committee resolved that from the New Year of 1903, the allowance for the maintenance and education of the children should be reduced to £50 per year. The enraged Emmeline wrote to Mr. Nodal, one of the administrators of the fund who was sympathetic to her views and had found himself in the minority when the resolution has passed. 'I am sending 15/- a week to my daughter [Sylvia] who is studying Art in Venice & who will remain there and afterwards at Florence for some time', she told him in no uncertain terms. 'I insist that I must have at least the regular £8-6-8 per month in order that she may remain there & my third daughter continue at the High School preparatory to going to the College … the money is the children's & surely I & they know best how to deal with it'.[56] Nodal tried to calm the waters by explaining that the decision had been influenced by the consideration that the remaining balance of the sum, some £270, should be kept 'for the boy [Harry], to give him the best possible start in life; that it is more difficult and expensive to do this for a youth than for a girl'.[57]

Emmeline was furious, not only with the way she was being treated but also with the assumption that priority should be given to the education of Harry. She discussed the situation with her children, and they agreed with her. Emmeline wrote again to Mr. Nodal, explaining the achievements of her daughters. Christabel, who had left shop work, was now a student at Owen's College 'but at no cost to me'. Sylvia, studying art in Italy, was considered 'very talented & industrious & no doubt will make a position for herself after next year as a designer & decorative artist', while Adela had a 'distinct literary gift' and would go from the high School to Owens College'. Then Emmeline made a forcible feminist point: 'I believe & my husband thought it too that it is quite as important to give opportunity of education to gifted girls as to boys. I am carrying out his wishes in what I am doing'.[58] Emmeline Pankhurst, acutely aware of the disadvantages that women experienced in male-dominated Edwardian society, was an important role model for her daughters. Christabel, Sylvia, and Adela all became members of the WSPU, which campaigned not only the parliamentary vote for women but also for wider social reforms that would bring equality for women.

And something else is certain: The individuality of the Pankhurst daughters, about which their mother was so anxious, remained with them as they journeyed through their adult lives. After partial enfranchisement for certain categories of women aged 30 and over had been granted in 1918, the Pankhurst sisters followed their differing paths. Christabel converted to Second Adventism and in 1940 moved to the United States of America, where she became a successful preacher and writer about the Second Coming of Christ. Unlike Christabel, Sylvia moved further and further to the left after the First World War, becoming a founding member of the British Communist Party from which she was expelled in 1921 for expressing her own independent views. Adela, as a young woman, had been an ardent Socialist but later rejected trade unionism, socialism, and the Labour Party—and converted to Roman Catholicism five months before she died in 1961. Emmeline Pankhurst, before she died in 1928, was reconciled with Adela but never with Sylvia, whom she regarded as her most 'troublesome' daughter. Yet it is the troublesome daughter's memoir that has become the dominant narrative about Pankhurst family life.

The passion for radical social reform, especially for women's suffrage, was an enthusiasm that Richard and Emmeline Pankhurst imparted to their daughters. Carol Dyhouse has discussed how the ideal of femininity transmitted in Victorian middle-class homes emphasised women's economic and intellectual dependence, the suppression of ambition and any desire for power

or independence as appropriate 'womanly' behaviour.[59] But this message was not emphasised to the Pankhurst girls. Instead they were encouraged to work hard for the good of humankind, irrespective of any personal sacrifice. Commitment to radical causes was the order of the day. Their home was not a private sanctuary from the outside public world of politics but a space where the intimate and the political were seamlessly intermeshed.

Notes

1. For further information about the Pankhurst girls Christabel, Sylvia and Adela, in addition to the accounts they wrote themselves and which are drawn on in this chapter, see, for example, David Mitchell, *The Fighting Pankhursts* (London: Trinity Press, 1967), where he notes the 'sturdy radicalism' of family life (preface); David Mitchell, *Queen Christabel: A Biography of Christabel Pankhurst* (London: MacDonald and Jane's, 1977), which largely relies on Sylvia's version of their childhood; Martin Pugh *The Pankhursts* (London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 2001), 76, speaks of the 'whirlwind of adult activities' that dominated family life; June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography* (London: Routledge, 2002), chaps. 2, 3, and 4 and June Purvis, *Christabel Pankhurst: A Biography* (London: Routledge, 2018), which both question Sylvia's claims. Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst* (London: Routledge, 2002), 31, notes that the Pankhurst children were brought up in a radical political atmosphere, 'their behaviour conditioned by a framework of rights and responsibilities.'
2. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals* (London: Longmans, 1931), 42–45, 49–51; Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: the Story of How We Won the Vote* (London: Hutchinson, 1959), 19–32.
3. Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1914), 9.
4. Quoted in Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 22.
5. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 87–88; Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 27; Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 26–27 and 142–143.
6. Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 13.
7. Ibid., 13.
8. Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 23–24.
9. Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866–1928* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 514–515.
10. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 90.
11. Ibid., 91.

12. Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 28.
13. Quoted in Sandra Stanley Holton, 'Now You See It, Now You Don't: the Women's Franchise League and Its Place in Contending Narratives of the Women's Suffrage Movement' in Maroula Joannou and June Purvis (eds), *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives*, (Manchester University Press, 1998), 24.
14. Interview with Mrs. Pankhurst, *Women's Herald*, 7 February 1891, 241–2.
15. Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 240 concludes that Emmeline was 'unmistakenly a Victorian'. However, it is important to note that Emmeline's advanced ideas about the role of women in society embraced many of the characteristics of the 'new woman' stereotype of the age—see Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 35.
16. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 107.
17. Ibid., 108.
18. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 102–108.
19. Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 28.
20. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 122.
21. Ibid., 124.
22. Ibid., 121–122.
23. Ibid., 123–4.
24. Mrs. Pankhurst, *Labour Leader*, 4 July 1896.
25. *Labour Leader*, 15 September 1894.
26. Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 25.
27. See, for example, Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, especially 1–8, and Purvis, *Christabel Pankhurst*, introduction.
28. Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 69.
29. See June Purvis, 'Christabel Pankhurst—a Conservative Suffragette?' in Clarisse Berthezene and Julie Gottlieb (eds), *Women, Gender and the Conservative Party, 1880s to the Present* (Manchester University Press, 2017).
30. See Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 348–353, for further details.
31. Hilda Kean, 'Searching for the Past in Present Defeat: The Construction of Historical and Political Identity in British Feminism in the 1920s and 1930s', *Women's History Review*, 3 (1994), 73–74.
32. June Purvis, The March of the Women: A BBC Drama From 1974 Highlights The Tensions in Writing Feminist History, *History Today*, November 2014, 5.
33. Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, 77, suggests in contrast that it was Sylvia who 'coped best' during these years.
34. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 267.
35. Ibid., 98–99.
36. Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 29.

37. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 107.
38. Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 30.
39. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, 67.
40. Ibid., 100.
41. Ibid., 101.
42. Ibid., 101–2.
43. Adela Pankhurst Walsh, 'My Mother: An Explanation & Vindication' (Unpublished manuscript, 11, Adela Pankhurst Walsh Papers, National Library of Australia, Canberra).
44. Adela Pankhurst Walsh, 'My Mother', 49.
45. Verna Coleman, *Adela Pankhurst: the Wayward Suffragette 1885–1961* (Melbourne University Press, 1996).
46. Adela Pankhurst Walsh, 'My Mother', 4.
47. Ibid., 17–18.
48. Coleman, *Adela Pankhurst*, 21.
49. Adela Pankhurst Walsh, 'My Mother', 23.
50. Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 35.
51. See June Purvis, 'Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928), Suffragette Leader and Single Parent in Edwardian Britain', *Women's History Review*, 20 (2011), 87–108.
52. Adela Pankhurst Walsh, 'My Mother', 25–27; Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, 55–56.
53. Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, 33.
54. Ibid., 33–35.
55. Ibid., 35.
56. Emmeline Pankhurst to Mr. Nodal, 27 November 1902 (June Purvis Private Collection).
57. Mr. Nodal to Emmeline Pankhurst, 27 November 1902 (June Purvis Private Collection).
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CHAPTER 8

Girls as Members of an Educated Elite: The Bulgarian Case, c. 1850–1950

Georgeta Nazarska

Introduction

Formal education for girls in Bulgaria was a product of the spread of Enlightenment ideas to southeast Europe in the nineteenth century. Schools for girls and boys were established simultaneously in the 1840s. Initially, the education of girls was limited to primary school level with a small number of Bulgarian women graduating from high schools in Russia, Serbia, and Czech lands in Austria-Hungary. They studied in Kiev, Moscow, and Belgrade with scholarships from the Slavic committees or the Russian government or at the expense of their fathers or of the Bulgarian municipalities. After returning, they worked as teachers or became members of women's societies in their hometowns.[1] During the Bulgarian Revival period (1840s–1870s), girls' schools were general educational institutions, and there was only one vocational school, located in Stara Zagora.[2] Following the establishment of the Bulgarian nation-state in 1878, the first publicly funded high schools for girls were opened, and, in the 1890s, private secondary vocational schools were created.

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M. O'Dowd, J. Purvis (eds.), *A History of the Girl*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4_8

A number of factors contributed to the expansion in education for girls in the late nineteenth century. These included the accelerated pace of urbanisation in the new state and the corresponding modernisation of society. The establishment of the state education system led to an increased demand for teachers while at the same time many male teachers opted to exchange teaching positions for administrative occupations. The modernisation of society also helped the development of a more liberal attitude to girls' education as a means of protecting young women from a life of poverty or prostitution.[3]

Legislative developments in the field of education also encouraged the advancement of girls' secondary education. The National Education Act (1891) provided for the compulsory education of boys and girls as well as the regulation of assessment and curricula.[4] The Secondary Female School Education Act (1896) introduced a seven-year school course for girls and thus aligned the status of girls' schools with those of boys.[5] In 1904, the curriculum in male and female high schools was standardised.[6] Through a series of parliamentary acts, the new Bulgarian state also legislated for female vocational education. Girls were educated for employment in industry and commerce as well as being trained in specialised trade skills such as tailoring, hat making, embroidery, and knitting.[7]

By the first decade of the twentieth century, therefore, a solid network of girls' secondary schools had been established in Bulgaria. The education system was also notable for its gender equality. By 1930, the number of pupils enrolled full time in girls' high schools was 15,154, which represented 40 percent of the total number of pupils receiving second-level education.[8]

Despite these impressive numbers, the public debate about the future and the nature of education for girls did not disappear. In periodicals, female high school students were often subject to satire and cartoons that implied that women were intellectually inferior to men.[9] In the late 1920s, the right-wing government suggested a revision of the school legislation to transform girls' secondary schools into lyceums in which the pupils would be taught a curriculum to prepare them for their future roles as housewives and mothers. The proposal, which would have reestablished a nineteenth-century form of girls' education, was partly aimed at reducing competition in a difficult labour market. Not surprisingly, it met with strong resistance from feminist organisations and was not implemented.[10]

The Evolution of an Educated Female Elite: Three Case Studies

Graduates of the Girls' High Schools: The First Girls' Gymnasium of Sofia

The First Girls' Gymnasium of Sofia was established in 1879 to educate female teachers for the new state and municipal schools. The structure of the high school was two-tier. In the first five years, pupils were taught how to be 'educated wives' and mothers; in the final two years, they were trained as teachers or for entry to university.[11]

The First Girls' Gymnasium of Sofia retained its all-female profile until 1954. It was known for its strict discipline, rigorous and scholarly demands on the schoolgirls, and its uniform clothing. The rules applied to all the girls, regardless of their social background. Various extracurricular activities were popular: musical ensembles (a string orchestra and a female vocal choir) as well as a literary society, dramatic troupe, sports competitions, and outings and excursions. The educational ethos of the school was that the pupils were to be taught in an environment of mutual respect, understanding, and tolerance.[12]

A prosopographical database of the graduates of the First Girls' Gymnasium covers a 40-year period from 1879 to 1929 and consists of 4,365 entries. During this time, three generations of pupils studied at the school. Many were the daughters of educated parents. The majority of the girls' fathers had received a university education while 62.5 percent of their mothers were high school or college graduates and 37.5 percent had received tertiary education. The majority of the schoolgirls (87.2 percent) were daughters of men (and some women) with professional occupations, such as teachers, doctors, lawyers, civil servants, journalists, and army officers. A smaller number (8.1 percent) came from a lower-middle-class background and included owners of small businesses and farmers. The mothers of the schoolgirls were mostly housewives, but they also included some doctors and teachers. There were also close family bonds between the pupils over the three generations. There were many instances of mothers and their daughters attending the school as well as of sisters and cousins. Over time, the First Girls' Gymnasium in Sofia became a centre where a new female elite of the capital city of the new state was created.

Most of the pupils at the First Girls' Gymnasium were born in Bulgaria and lived in Sofia, but families from other Bulgarian cities, such as Plovdiv, Kyustendil, and Rousse, also sent their daughters to the school. The reputation of the school also attracted pupils whose parents had migrated to other parts of eastern Europe. The proportion of girls from rural villages at the First Girls' Gymnasium increased after the First World War, but it remained low, mainly due to the reluctance of rural families to invest in the education of their daughters and to the prevalence of early marriages in rural communities.

Ethnic minorities represented a very small proportion (3.9 percent) of the pupils who attended the school in the 40-year period analysed. Of these minorities, the Jewish (77 percent), Czech (8.6 percent) and Russian (6.9 percent) girls had the largest share. The percentage of Armenians was small (1.7 percent), and there were no children of Turkish background. This picture coincides with the trends in literacy and the educational status of minorities in the country with the Jewish community more likely to favour girls' education than other ethnic minorities. It is also important to note, however, that the Jewish community represented only a tiny proportion of the total (3.02 percent); the overwhelming majority (96.4 percent) of the pupils were members of the Orthodox Church.

Just over 10 percent of graduates from the First Girls' Gymnasium continued their education into university. The Sofia State University opened its doors to women in 1901, although some Bulgarian women (28 percent) continued the practice of attending university abroad, mainly in Germany, Austria-Hungary, or Switzerland. Over half graduated in humanities, but a small number studied medicine, law, and agricultural science. Despite their university education, however, the young women's employment opportunities were limited. Women law graduates were, for example, not permitted to pursue careers as barristers, judges, or notaries until 1945. University graduates from the First Girls' Gymnasium who secured employment worked in the poorly paid public sector as teachers, doctors, librarians, architects, and civil servants. None of the alumni of the First Girls' Gymasium secured positions in privately owned businesses.[13] They often had to supplement their income with additional work.

Many of the graduates of the First Girls' Gymnasium did not wish to enter the full-time labour market but opted instead for a domestic role as

'educated housewives'. Some continued at the same time to pursue an active intellectual life as freelance artists, writers, poets, and journalists. Graduates of the First Girls' Gymnasium were, for example, among the pioneers of Bulgarian theatre, music and fine arts.[14]

It was not until the 1930s that there was a change in the graduates' career orientation. A survey undertaken in 1939, revealed that more than 80 percent of the graduates intended to work outside the home with just half (50.3 percent) opting for a professional career as a doctor, lawyer, or architect. A smaller number were attracted by a career in teaching or science. A surprisingly small percentage (12.2 percent) of the pupils intended to stay at home, as housewives and mothers, to rear the 'the citizens of the Fatherland'.[15]

In the aftermath of the Second World War, another significant transformation in attitudes to their future lives can be documented among the pupils at the First Girls' Gymnasium. In a 1948 survey, the majority of the girls indicated that they intended to continue their education upon graduation because a secondary education was 'no longer sufficient for the contemporary cultural citizen' and because a university degree opened up wider opportunities. The preferred professions were in the field of medicine (25.7 percent), chemistry (17.6 percent), arts (14.4 percent), and pedagogy (11.3 percent).[16]

By tracking the subsequent career of the graduates, several distinctive features can be identified. First, the pupils were strongly influenced by their teachers. The school employed women with high public profiles, particularly in the artistic field. They included well-known writers, composers, and artists of national significance. The pupils were clearly inspired by the activities of their teachers in the public sphere, activities that also embodied the feminism that many of the women espoused.

Ekaterina Karavelova (1860–1947) is an example of one such teacher who influenced at least two generations of high school graduates. She taught Bulgarian language and literature and was also a well-known translator of Russian and French literature. Karavelova was involved with the political career of her husband, Petko Karavelov, who served as prime minister of Bulgaria on four occasions. She was a founder and deputy chair (1915–1925) of the Bulgarian Women's Union and chair (1919–1927) of the Bulgarian Section of the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom. She was also active in the Majka [Mother] Women's Charity Society and a founder and president of the Bulgarian Women's Union of

Writers. Karavelova inspired many of her former pupils to join the women's organisations that she led.

Graduates of the First Girls' Gymnasium also established other formal as well as informal networks. One example was the establishment of the Bulgarian Association of University Women in 1924. The organisation was founded by a group of classmates who had graduated from the gymnasium in the years between 1898 and 1903 and later returned to teach in the school.[17] Subsequently, other graduates who had attended the school joined them. The association created a sense of belonging to an elite community, which was strengthened when the graduates studied together in Sofia State University and subsequently taught in their alma mater.[18]

Graduates of Secondary Vocational Schools: The Princess Maria Louise Vocational School in Sofia

The Princess Maria Louise Vocational School was founded in Sofia in 1893. Its establishment marked the launch of vocational education for girls in Bulgaria.[19] Later, similar schools appeared in provincial towns. By the 1920s, there were 100 vocational schools for girls in the country with 5000 graduates. A decade later, the number of such schools had risen to 167.[20]

The Princess Maria Louise Vocational School was established by the Majka Women's Charity Society.[21] Initially, society members were predominantly Bulgarian women who had received their secondary education abroad. As noted, the leaders of the society included well-known public figures, such as Ekaterina Karavelova, whose presence attracted other elite women to serve on the school's management board and to raise funds for it.[22] The members of the Majka Charity viewed the education of girls as a form of moral protection and economic emancipation which would prevent them from falling into poverty and unemployment or working as prostitutes.[23]

The number of girls attending the vocational school (which accommodated borders as well as day pupils) gradually increased. In the academic year 1908–1909, the school merged with the State Headwear and Florists School; its training programme was extended to three years and tailoring workshops were opened.[24] By 1914, 4,741 girls had attended the Princess Maria Louise Vocational School and 1,207 had graduated.[25]

The official reports of the school outline the social background, motivation, and career achievements of graduates. They came from a varied social environment. In general, girls from low social strata were educated in the school. They included the children of soldiers disabled in wars in the Balkans and in World War I and of refugees from Macedonia and eastern Thrace. The board of trustees frequently agreed to reduce (or dispense with) the fees for these pupils. Girls were also supported with free food and sometimes with donations. The majority of schoolgirls chose to train in courses that would enable them to work as tailors or in ladies' fashion.[26] Few of the enrolled girls were interested in enrolling in cookery classes, mainly because of the perceived lack of employment opportunities in the culinary profession. Restaurants in the cities were considered a male space and were uncommon in rural areas where cooking skills were acquired through watching older female relatives and making use of unwritten recipes transmitted orally through the generations.[27]

Girls from a higher social background were, however, attracted to some of the cookery and catering courses in the vocational school. Unlike poorer girls, 'elite ladies of Sofia high society' enrolled in the catering department, but usually only for two to three months, until they acquired some necessary household skills.[28] More significantly, others were attracted by the two-year handicraft teachers' course that was established in 1910. It qualified the students to acquire a degree and to teach handicrafts in secondary schools.

A prosopographical database of 589 female teachers employed in girls' vocational craft schools in Bulgaria revealed that 49 percent had graduated from the Princess Maria Louise Vocational School. The majority of the teachers (76.1 percent) came from larger towns and cities while just under a quarter (23.9 percent) were born in villages in the immediate vicinity of Sofia. Among the female teachers, the unmarried (55 percent) prevailed, followed by the married (42.2 percent) with widows and the divorced making up a tiny proportion of the total. The database also indicated that a majority (72 percent) of graduates of the vocational school were employed in schools funded by women's societies; a smaller number were funded by the state, local municipalities, or the Orthodox Church. Of the teachers included in the database, 29.1 percent were principals and owners of schools.[29]

The Princess Maria Louise Vocational School led to two significant developments in the education of Bulgarian girls. First, it facilitated the social mobility of pupils from poor families; second, it led to the formation of a closely integrated microsocial group—that of women professionally involved in the arts' industries. Members of this group helped in the transformation of traditional crafts into modern manufacturing and sometimes into art forms. As owners of tailoring businesses, milliners' and haberdashery shops, the graduates from the vocational school set the foundations for the Bulgarian fashion industry. They authored textbooks for students, published dress cutting samples in household magazines, and presented their works in exhibitions. As teachers and instructors of arts and crafts, they exercised a considerable influence over the art syllabus taught in primary and secondary schools (even before the State Academy of Arts produced its own specialists). The first lecturers in the vocational school introduced to their pupils the modern artistic styles and methods that they had learned through their international education in Vienna, Brussels, and Geneva. They encouraged their pupils as prospective teachers and as professional artists to search for national embroidery samples and embellish them in clothing and other designs, to translate and write teaching materials, and to organise their own exhibitions.[30] After World War I, the students of the Princess Maria Louise Vocational School were among the creators of the so-called ladies' magazines in the country. Their articles, recipes, and patterns became a vehicle for transferring urban cultural influence to villages, from the social centre to the periphery.[31]

Thus, through their different career paths and activities, the graduates of the vocational school acted as agents of social advance. They established new cultural practices, commercialised the handicraft industry, and introduced unfamiliar products, spices, and dishes into the Bulgarian countryside.[32]

Graduates of Foreign Girls' Colleges: The American Girls' College of Constantinople

The American Girls' College of Constantinople was founded in 1863. It was an American institution under the authority of the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Mary Mills Patrick served as its principal from 1875 to 1924. The American teachers in the school encouraged feminist views among the students and offered them through their own

lives examples of successful professional careers.[33] More than 200 Bulgarian females graduated from the college between 1882 and 1939. The prosopographical database of 206 graduates provides information on their collective profile.[34]

Most of the girls who attended the school were born in cities and towns with a strong tradition in educating girls from the commercial middle classes. Students with Bulgarian citizenship predominated, but the pupil population also included Armenians and Jews. Like the girls in the First Girls' Gymnasium, their fathers were employed in professional positions, such as teachers, engineers, clergyman, lawyers, and medical doctors; consequently, most of their fathers had attended university. A majority (83.3 percent) of the pupils' mothers had attended secondary school while a smaller but not insignificant number (16.6 percent) had a university education.

Upon graduation from the college, most girls married and became housewives and mothers. They married men of a similar social and economic background to themselves. A relatively small number of girls opted to continue their education in Sofia State University or in universities abroad in the United States or elsewhere in Europe. After their studies, most secured employment as teachers and pharmacists or in administrative office work.

Like the graduates in the First Girls' Gymnasium, former pupils from the American Girls' College of Constantinople developed a social network through the College Graduates Association, which brought together 144 women who graduated from the American colleges in Constantinople, Samokov, and Sofia.[35] The members of the association were in regular contact with each other, and especially with the college in Sofia and its principal, Mary Mills Patrick. The association also facilitated the creation of wider family and professional networking. One of its best-known creations was the English Speaking League (1911–1950), which brought together many members of the Bulgarian cultural elite.[36]

Graduates of the American College were also active members of other organisations including the Bulgarian Association of University Women, a number of female and charity unions, and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) (1924–1950). Established in Sofia as a female section of the Youth Christian Society, the association became an affiliate member of the international YWCA in 1925. The stated aims of the organisation was the promotion of Christian values, but it also had an implicit feminist agenda as it encouraged girls to play an active role in public life. The YWCA also placed an emphasis on social work directed at young employed women.[37]

In the 1930s, the YWCA established a Social Centre for Female Workers with a dormitory, a playground, and a library in one of the workers' districts

of Sofia. It also founded a Women's Labour Placement Office, supported the Pension and Summer Colony for Poor Schoolgirls, held foreign-language courses, and organised charity bazaars, lectures, and concerts in aid of poor and needy families. Members of the YWCA in Sofia also worked with schoolgirls, ages 12 to 18, and set up branches in 19 schools in the city as well as encouraging young administrative employees and students to join the organisation.[38]

The core membership of the YWCA, thus, consisted primarily of schoolgirls, students, and young female workers with a smaller number of older women. According to available data, YWCA membership grew fourfold in the 1930s. An essential element in the continuing strength of the organisation was the support from the alumni of the American girls' colleges in Constantinople, Sofia (now merged with the College at Samokov), and Lovech. Although some of these women had a university education, most were employed in low-level clerical jobs (as office secretaries, translators, etc.) or were housewives.

More generally, the 'educated housewife' with a secondary education was central to the growing strength of the YMCA. As spouses of professional men and politicians, these women found in the organisation a space in which to express their humanitarianism and their philanthropic views.[39]

Conclusion

The three prosopographical databases on which this chapter is based present a picture of an emerging Bulgarian female educated elite. The temporal dynamics of this process intensified between the 1910s and the 1940s and coincided with the advancement of social modernisation in Bulgaria. The formation of a female educated elite interconnected and overlapped with that of men. Initially, this was a strongly middle-class, urban phenomenon. Gradually, over time, membership of the elite widened to include girls from ethnic and religious minorities as well as from rural areas.

Female graduates formed the typical *habitus* (Bourdieu) for the Bulgarian female elite.[40] Key to the bonding process was the young women's strong attachment to their secondary schools, their close ties to their teachers, and the close connections that they made with former pupils. On the basis of this *habitus*, a collective consciousness was formed and made manifest in the women's active engagement with social networks in the professional and the public spheres.

The Bulgarian female elites with secondary education encountered problems with their empowerment in the public space: Their secondary educa-

tion and the desire of some of these women for professional careers reinforced the existing negative social stereotypes of the patriarchal-thinking men. Graduates from secondary schools could work only as primary and elementary school teachers but not in girls' high schools for which a university degree was essential. The school alumni were, therefore, deprived of the higher incomes and prestige offered to the mainly male high school teachers. Vocational school graduates were not eligible for high-paid jobs or to apply for admission to universities. Diplomas from foreign secondary schools, which included the American College of Constantinople, provided a pathway mainly to a low-paid clerical post. The main social field of expression for graduates of the three schools remained the private or home space and the teaching profession insofar as they were admitted into it. In this sense, the graduates represented a marginalised group, both in relation to men and to women with higher education qualifications.

The women graduates of the three schools analysed in this chapter, nevertheless, achieved recognition in the public sphere through their educated expertise and specialisation. It could, thus, be concluded that they acquired a role as social and artistic leaders. They made a significant contribution to Bulgarian social modernisation through their active inclusion in the social transfer of knowledge and intellectual capital. Their parents and relatives had achieved a high educational level and strove to convey this intellectual tradition to their descendants, another important step in the formation of a social elite. Through the formation of formal and informal social networks, the alumnae were promoters of this social and intellectual capital among their peers, their pupils, and society as a whole. The pupils of the girls' secondary schools were thus involved in intertwined educational networks, which they reproduced through the creation of participation in a large number of different formal and informal professional, cultural, political, and related social networks.

Notes

1. Virzhinia Paskaleva, *Balgarkata prez Vazrazhdaneto* (Sofia: Otechestven front, 1984), 102, 155.
2. Ibid., 66–162; Nikolay Genchev, *Balgarska vdzrozhdenska intelligentsia* (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo, 1991), 93 ff.; Nikolay Genchev, *Balgaro-ruski kulturni obshtuvaniya prez Vazrazhdaneto* (Sofia: LIK, 2002), 109–205; Barbara Reeves-Ellington, 'Majkata-prosvetitelka: izsledvane na vzaimovrazkata mezhdu zhenata i natsiata prez Balgarskoto vazrazhdane, 1858–1868' in Elena Tacheva and Iliya Nedin (eds.), *Tja na Balkanite* (Blagoevgrad: Neofit Rilski, 2001), 171–181.

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4. *Darzhaven vestnik*, no. 17, 23 Jan. 1892; no. 93, 4 May 1894; Ekaterina Zlatoustova, 'Devicheskoto obrazovanie sled Osvobozhdenieto', *Uchilishten pregled*, 29, no. 10 (1930), 1521–1540; Maria Radeva, *Kulturnata politika na balgarskata burzhoazna darzhava, 1885–1908* (Sofia: Nauka I izkustvo. 1982), 14–32.
5. *Uchilishten pregled*, 2, no. 2 (1896), 292.
6. *Darzhaven vestnik*, no. 38, 20 Feb. 1904; *Uchilishten pregled*, 9, no. 1 (1904), 70.
7. See the State Vocational Schools Act (1884); the Agricultural Education Act (1897); the Vocational Education Act (1906); *Darzhaven vestni*, no. 13, 16 April 1932; no. 1954, 17 July 1941.
8. Georgeta Nazarska, *Universitetskoto obrazovanie i balgarskite zheni, 1879–1944* (Sofia, IMIR, 2003), 41–53, 62–70.
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Elena Anguelova-Ourukin), and artists (Elissaveta Konsuloff-Vazoff, Zoya Paprikova, and Nevena Gantcheva).

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CHAPTER 9

Did the Bengali Woman Have a Girlhood? A Study of Colonialism, Education, and the Evolution of the Girl Child in Nineteenth-Century Bengal

Asha Islam Nayeem

The nineteenth century in Bengal, as in most parts of the world, was marked by social, cultural, and economic changes that initiated the transition from traditionalism to modernity. The Bengali social fabric, steeped in tradition dictated by religious practices and patriarchal domination, felt the forces of shifting ideologies that gradually eroded centuries-old notions of domestic relations. For the colonial subject, the western education system, which was introduced following the Education Despatch of 1854, became the catalyst for significant change. It ushered into the life of a Bengali woman something she had not experienced before—a childhood. The theoretical premises of this assertion lies in Philippe Ariès's seminal work, *Centuries of Childhood*, which postulates that childhood is not a biological given but a socially constructed concept and that the modern system of education and an awareness of its importance has essentially created the experience of childhood. The school system, Ariès argues,

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M. O'Dowd, J. Purvis (eds.), *A History of the Girl*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4_9

introduced a sharp divide between the world of the adult and the child. The development of the school curricula relied on age-based demarcations from the infant level through to the upper levels, thus specifying the stages of a child's life.[1] As the concept of schooling spread and was extended across gender and class lines, childhood itself lasted longer. This chapter studies the impact such developments had on the life of the girl child.

Historians have long debated the merits and demerits of Ariès's theory, and critics have questioned his method of inferential history and use of atypical examples, such as family portraits, as evidence taken out of context. However, there was nothing inferential about the lack of childhood innocence in the girls of Bengal, where, until the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in general, girls were married off between the ages of seven and nine. Thus the instant an infant daughter was weaned from her mother she became a miniature adult, learning domestic skills like cooking, washing, sewing, and cleaning, waiting for her impending departure from the parental home to the marital one. Contemporary folk songs, ballads, and poems give voice to the plight of the child bride. The most prominent female voice in nineteenth-century Bengal is that of Rashshundori Dasi (c. 1810–1900) who was the first Indian woman to publish an autobiography (1896) and whose agonising tale of being torn away from her mother's lap, to land in an unknown place where she had to cook and clean for up to 25 people at the age of 14, is not an isolated tale, to say the very least.[2] A staggering number of these girls also settled into a widow's woeful existence before they reached puberty.[3] Society was merciless to these child widows. A firsthand description of their lives can be obtained from another contemporary source, the memoirs of Haimabati Sen (1866–1933) whose indomitable spirit for survival led her to receive an education and work as a doctor. She had been married to a 45-year-old man at the age of 9 and was widowed at 10.[4] The custom of early marriage denied the girl child a period of childhood innocence and thrust upon her young shoulders the burden of adulthood at a very tender age. It was also the chief deterrent to girls' education as they were removed from school during the primary grades and quarantined at home to wait and prepare for marriage.

From the second half of the nineteenth century onward, the government began to gradually take control of the field of education by formulating policies and regulating and supervising different educational activities. To be more precise, it was in 1854 that the Court of Directors of the East India Company definitively accepted the systematic promotion

of general education as one of the duties of the state.[5] The Department of Education was formed the following year, and, in 1882, the Indian Education Commission was set up to assess the condition of public instruction and present recommendations for what further needed to be done regarding providing education for the masses. This also meant the establishment of government control over what was to be taught to whom. Regarding curricular development for girls' schools, the Indian Education Commission of 1882 had to consider what girls should or should not be taught. Should they be given the same education as the boys? What would they do with the same education as boys? Did their vocation in life call for the same curriculum that boys had? Did a girl's future role as wife, mother, and housekeeper not disqualify her for an education curriculum that was designed to prepare boys for the job market? What good would a general education do, except make her unsuitable as a housekeeper? Were Hindus and Muslims to follow the same curriculum?

The Commission recommended that 'the standards of instruction for primary girls' schools be simpler than those for boys' schools, and be drawn up with special reference to the requirements of home life, and to the occupations of women'.[6] The Education Commission clearly articulated society's primary assumption that female education was intended as what sociologist Robert Merton has described as a latent function rather than the manifest function incorporated into the education of boys. Merton argued that the manifest function of education is to provide people with information, skills, and values, whereas the latent function of education keeps young people out of the job market, provides a 'babysitter', and perpetuates differences between highly qualified and less qualified people. This functionalist perspective has an immediate relevance for the formation of the education system as it determined the type of curriculum to be followed.[7] The reference to the special requirements of home life and selective occupations suitable for women prompted the Education Commission to recommend that 'the greatest care be exercised in the selection of suitable text-books for girls' schools' and that the preparation of such books be encouraged.[8] If the standard of instruction for girls was to be lowered in primary school, then, for all logical and practical purposes, standards had to be lowered in the higher level also. This fact did not evade the Commission. It recommended that 'an alternative subject in examinations suitable for girls be established, corresponding in standard to the matriculation examination, but having no relation to any existing University course'. Thus, as far as governmental guidance was concerned,

the stage was set for attempting to steer the course of curricular development for female education in a different direction from than that for boys. Nevertheless, the newly adopted policies for mass education had the far-reaching impact of prolonging school life for the girl child, which, in turn, delayed the age of marriage.

The introduction of the western mode of education was a major departure from the indigenous mode on three significant counts. First of all, a student stratification system was introduced, which grouped students in specific classes according to their age. Such stratification did not exist in a strict form in the indigenous system. Children of different ages sat together in the same room or open space, with one teacher (who was invariably male), and recited after him whatever lesson he chose to give.[9] Second, a structured curriculum was introduced for each class or age group. In the indigenous system, there was no structured curriculum for separate levels of education. The teacher exercised discretion as to how much to teach an individual child. Third, primers were prepared to meet the specific requirements of the curriculum. In the indigenous system, there was no fixed curriculum and no prescribed textbooks. The Scottish missionary William Adam reported: 'Normally no printed books were used in the *patshalas* and even manuscript text books were unknown to most of these institutes'.[10] Indigenous education followed a more practical line where children were taught subjects that would meet the requirements of everyday life.[11] An early initiation into the world of adult work, generally by the age of seven, was the norm not just for girls but for boys as well. Thus the indigenous method of pedagogy was geared toward the quick imparting of practical skills for joining the workforce. The *patshala* (also spelled *pathsala*) was the indigenous school for elementary education. Such schools were set up through the benevolence of local landlords and were staffed chiefly by Hindu teachers and were attended mostly by Hindu students (male and female), but Muslim girls and boys were not barred from entrance. The *maktabs* (indigenous institutions for secondary education) and *madrassahs* (indigenous institutions for primary education), however, were reserved for Muslim students. Whereas the *maktabs* offered Koranic education through rote learning only, the *madrassah*s were devoted to the study of Arabic, Persian, and the vernacular. Young scholars passing out from these traditional institutions were not awarded any degrees or certificates. Colonial modernity was, therefore, stamped on young minds through the introduction of an organised and structured pedagogical system that was layered with different levels and rewarded with degrees on completion of the designated programme.

Although it was not the norm for girls to attend these schools in large numbers, girls from well-to-do families were permitted to go to *patshalas*, and education reports from 1838 onward indicate that village girls of a very young age attended the *maktabs* and *madrassahs* along with the boys until they got married, starting from the age of 6 or 7. *Tols* were the higher institutions of classical learning and, as such, were out of bounds for girls. There were four distinct stages in the indigenous *patshala*, and girls were forced to leave school usually between the first and second stages. In the first stage, the scholars learned the vowels and the consonants of the Bengali alphabet by tracing them on the ground with a stick.[12] In the second stage, which lasted between two and a half to four years, scholars graduated to writing on palm leaves and learned to join vowels to consonants, form compound letters, learn the tables of numeration, and become acquainted with the units of weight and measures. The third stage comprised of two to three years of study. Girls usually did not reach this stage.[13] The introduction of the western mode of education gradually eroded the *patshala* mode of education as funds became scarce. From 1855 onward, two main streams of education began to gain popularity: education in English and education in the vernacular. There were English high schools and English middle schools and there were vernacular high schools and vernacular middle schools. More often than not, primary sections would be attached to the English high and middle schools. The primary stage was divided into the upper primary section, consisting of classes 3 and 4, and the lower primary section, consisting of classes 1 and 2. This demarcation at the primary level created a designated infanthood and childhood. Girls who were allowed to complete both the lower and upper levels of primary education gained the privilege of having a prolonged childhood. However, Muslims lagged far behind Hindus where education was concerned. According to the first quinquennium report of 1891 to 1896, 6.8 percent of the female population of school-going age was attending primary school.[14] That percentage was 19.9 among the Hindu female population of school-going age.[15] The quinquennium report of 1907 to 1912 showed considerable progress in numbers. There were a total of 51,180 girls studying in 2,781 primary schools in 1906–1907, out of which 22,223 girls were Muslims. The total number rose to 110,817 in 1911–1912, including 56,575 Muslim girls. The number of primary schools also rose to 4,956. By 1912, there were 22 middle schools in the region that is now Bangladesh, where 2,372 Hindu girls and 108 Muslim girls were studying. By the end of the first quarter of the twentieth

century, 51.9 percent of the female population of school-going age were attending primary school.

This development prompted the then director of Public Instruction, Henry Sharp, to comment:

> …The *purdah*, the system of child marriage, and the general indifference of parents to the education of their daughters still act as checks to progress, but that there has of recent years been a marked change in the attitude of both Hindus and Muhammadans to this question there can be no doubt. Parents are gradually awakening to the fact that the education of their daughters is as much a part of their duty as the education of their sons.[16]

While indigenous *maktabs* and *patshalas* were shutting down for lack of patronage, the Education Department gave its nod of approval to girls' *madrassas* and Koran schools where only reciting the Koran was taught. At the end of the year 1907, Miss M. E. A. Garret, the Inspectress of Schools, reported that there were 40 or 50 such Koran schools in Dhaka, the present-day capital of Bangladesh.[17] These diverse streams of education were quite divisive for society in the long run and resulted in furthering class distinctions rather than creating a homogeneous society through a uniform system of education, under the guidance of a secular curriculum. The preparation of a curriculum suitable for girls was a matter of grave concern to the authorities. In the nineteenth century, the prevailing idea regarding the necessity of female education was that the education of a girl was the education of a mother and, through her, all her offspring. That function, it was thought, needed to be reflected in the curriculum.

Debating the Content of Girls' Education

The debate on what girls ought to be taught was continued into the early twentieth century. Sonia Nishat Amin categorises the ideological debate that was fought out in contemporary newspapers, periodicals, and journals as conservative, centrist, and liberal.[18] The monthly periodical *Al-Eslam* [Of Islam], which had begun publication in Calcutta in 1915, was the mouthpiece of the conservative viewpoint of the Muslims, the majority population of Eastern Bengal. In its fifth year of publication, *Al-Eslam* published a small piece entitled 'Shikshar Vitti' [The Basis of Education] by Sheikh Abdur Rahman, who wrote that it would never do for Muslim girls to get an education based on the western model. He also thought that Muslim

girls should not leave the house in a carriage, should not wear chemises, or *kameez* (a long dress), and should not study in schools until 'old' age.[19] Western education, according to the author, resulted only in the reading of cheap novels, writing love letters, and developing an unhealthy obsession with fashion and clothes. The author proposed a primary education curriculum for the Muslim girls of Bengal that focused on reading the Koran but also incorporated basic literacy and numeracy. Hygiene and character formation were also included, as were lessons on selected topics in history and geography. In their final school years, the girls were to focus on art work, needlework, cooking, child care, family care, and home management.[20] The need to maintain a separate identity for Muslims was felt acutely by conservatives who lamented the loss of power to the Christian aliens and resented the advancement of the Hindu population, who had taken advantage of the new education and held, by the early twentieth century, exalted positions in the colonial bureaucracy. Abdur Rahman articulated this generally general conservative view.

There was, as Anin points out, an ambivalence about the centrist view on girls' education. It echoed the equal but different view that was also part of a similar debate in Europe. The centrists argued that nature had made males and females biologically and temperamentally different, with contrasting social roles. The educational content for males and females should be organised around the functions they were supposed to play in life—service outside the home for the male, home-making for the female. One representative summary of this view is Ismail Hossain Shiraji's *Stree Shiksha* [Women's Education], published in 1907 in Calcutta.[21] In his writings, Shiraji advocated the necessity to harmonise religious tradition with secular thought so that a balance could be struck in which women's physical and mental growth could be assured. Although he stressed moral education for the ladies in the *andarmahal* (secluded space in the home for women), he also supported the imparting of scientific knowledge to women and advocated that *purdah* (seclusion) be observed for their participation in public life.[22]

The liberal section of society, almost all of whom were English-educated men, led the Bengali social reform movement in the nineteenth century. They lent full support to the campaign for women's education and for a delay in the age of marriage. But the liberals had to be careful not to hurt the sentiment of the conservative Muslim population of Eastern Bengal. Consequently, they sought sanction from Islamic scriptures for their promotion of equal education for boys and girls.

Settling the Question of Content Through Public Opinion

It was not standard imperial practice to consult the public on matters of policy. In 1907, however, the government took the unprecedented step of attempting to assess public opinion on the question of female education through a questionnaire circulated to 109 public officials, Christian missionaries, social leaders from the Hindu and Muslim communities, and other members of civil society, all of whom were male. Subsequently, a Female Education Committee was set up, which was entrusted with the work of making recommendations to the government on the basis of the survey. The 24 questions in the survey covered every aspect of female education. Questions 8 and 10 were concerned with curriculum content. Question 8 read: 'Will the following subjects of instruction be suitable for schools?—Reading, writing, arithmetic, household accounts, hygiene, and domestic economy, geography, history and needlework?'[23] Question 10 was: 'Whether it is desirable to impart general religious instruction in these schools, and if so, what should be the lines on which it should be given and under what conditions of superintendence and control?'[24]

Question 8 was formulated on the basis of the subjects already being taught in the schools in the curriculum introduced by the Education Department in 1904.[25] Question 10 might appear to take the issue of Hindu–Muslim sensitivities into consideration, but it was probably also aimed at addressing the phenomenal growth of Christian missionary activity in the second half of the nineteenth century. Their method of proselytisation through the establishment schools was a matter of concern.

An analysis of the answers to Question 8 reveals that the majority of the replies agreed that the subjects listed in the question were suitable for girls' schools. The six missionaries who were among the respondents accepted all the subjects as appropriate for girls and did not suggest any changes. They were, however, in a minority because almost all of the other respondents expressed the view that knowledge of history and geography was not really necessary for girls. A sub-deputy collector of taxes in Mainagury (in West Bengal), Babu Balaram Das, commented: 'A good knowledge of History and Geography appears scarcely necessary for girls. Selected portions from the religious and moral texts etc., may be read by Hindu girls and extracts from Koran Shariff by Muslim girls'.[26] Inspectors of schools from the districts of Rajshahi, Chittagong, Brahmanbaria, and Dhaka as well as Hindu and Muslim men echoed these views. Maulvi Nuruddin Ahmed, a member of the management board of a school in Nowgong, a northern district of Bangladesh,

commented: 'I would rather omit Geography and History and in their place recommend such practical and industrial education as spinning, weaving, knitting and even where practicable, cooking'.[27]

Nursing and midwifery were also suggested as subjects that could replace history and geography. The choice of such subjects was justified by F. C. French, Deputy Commissioner of Cachar (presently in India), who argued that the standard of instruction should be drawn up with special reference to the requirements of home life and to the occupations open to women.[28] Another British officer, Major H. M. Halliday, Deputy Commissioner of Darrang (in Assam, India), agreed and suggested that cookery lessons should replace the study of history and geography, although he also thought that the study of biographies of great men and women was of importance in forming the character of young girls.[29] Character formation, or the 'morals and manners', of girls was a central part of the curriculum in nineteenth-century girls' schools in England and Ireland.[30] Halliday and other British officials were clearly drawing on this older view of girls' education in their responses. The magistrate of the northern district of Rangpur, Mr. J. Vas, suggested a more pragmatic approach. He wrote:

> The course of instruction for girls should not be the same as that for boys. They have not many years to devote to study, and it is not necessary in their case to make the instruction imparted in the first few years merely the foundation for higher study. As much knowledge should be imparted in these years as possible and it should be extensive rather than intensive.[31]

Differences in attitudes to girls' education can also be detected in the varying responses from Hindu and Muslim men. Music, drawing, and painting were subjects that most private Hindu gentlemen wanted added to the curriculum, subjects that had an important role in Hinduism and Hindu cultural tradition. Unsurprisingly, therefore, almost all the Hindu respondents suggested that they be included in the curriculum of the girls' schools. It was also not surprising that none of the Muslim respondents advocated for their inclusion.

Curriculum for Vernacular Girls' Schools

Regarding the course of study, the Female Education Committee recommended that there should be two departments in girls' vernacular schools: a primary course of four years and a middle vernacular course of three years with a certificate awarded at the end of each course.[32] On completion

of the primary course, a girl was eligible to continue her studies either in a middle vernacular or in an English school. This new division of classes was to be in effect from 1 January 1910.[33] Classes 1 and 2 of the primary course were classified as infant classes. In infant classes, three hours of work were allocated per day. Classes 3 and 4 were classified as primary classes, and four hours of work were allocated for those classes daily. The curriculum in the infant classes included reading, writing, arithmetic, some needlework, drawing and painting, music, and singing. Muslim girls were not required to draw the human figure if there was any objection to this activity. Similarly, singing was optional for Muslim girls. Elementary history, geography, domestic economy, and hygiene and science were introduced in classes 3 and 4. English as a subject was introduced in the middle vernacular course with simple reading, writing, and some conversation. The middle vernacular course consisted of classes 5 and 6 and had an extra working hour added, bringing the working hours to five, slightly more than that for boys in a middle English school. The girls had the additional curricula of natural science, hygiene, and sewing, which the boys' curricula did not have, hence the additional hours. High school consisted of classes 7 to 10. Additional mathematics was introduced in the seventh grade and was optional for the small number of girls who were striving to go up for matriculation. History and geography were included in both vernacular and English schools.

While considering the method of teaching English, the Female Education Committee was generally in favour of the 'direct method', which involved the teaching of English in that language only (i.e., not explaining anything in the vernacular). English, it was agreed, would be taught as a 'foreign language'.

The curriculum was shaped and formed in such a manner so that the prevailing notions of domesticity, femininity, docility, and chastity were not challenged. As desired by the formulators of the curriculum, the socially constructed notion of the 'ideal homemaker' was perpetuated through the curriculum. Careful consideration was given so that women's education would maintain rather than challenge the status quo. As in nineteenth-century England,[34] so in India of the same period, female education was not meant to train the girls for any profession or for government service. As Madhu Kishwar noted:

> Education for girls … was an attempt to transplant into Indian soil the Victorian ideal of the woman as 'housewife' as the presiding deity of home and hearth, whose business in life was to create for her husband a pleasurable haven when he returned home from each day's tiring business in the harsh, competitive outside world.[35]

Nevertheless, as negotiation went on to replace traditional cultural norms with modern ways and beliefs, the experience of receiving an institutional education brought significant changes in women's status not only in the private space but also in the public domain. Literacy created female agency. This in turn gradually eroded what Sir Philip Hartog, chairman of the Auxiliary Committee on Education in 1929, called 'the dualism of an educated manhood and an ignorant womanhood—a dualism that lowers the whole level of home and domestic life and has its reactions on personal and national character'.[36] In the rapidly changing socioeconomic and political environment of the nineteenth century, education provided physical, social, and psychological mobility to the women who had the privilege of getting an education.

Female education was an offshoot of the modernisation process that was begun in the second half of the nineteenth century and gained full momentum by the beginning of the twentieth. As the concept of woman's work had not developed in the nineteenth century (apart from the option of teaching), the function of female education remained latent. Whatever skills that were acquired through education were to be applied in the confines of the home, through domestic labour, which would bring indirect benefits such as better educational achievements of a woman's children, better standards of family health and hygiene, better care for the infant and the old, and, possibly, a lower birth rate.[37] Chances were extremely low that the children of educated mothers would leave school before completing their studies, thus reducing the high number of drop outs prevalent mostly in the female population of school-going age. The personal satisfaction, pride, sense of achievement, and sense of self-worth that such indirect benefits bring a woman are called 'psychic income' by modern-day economists.[38] Education, even a rudimentary one, increased greatly the likelihood of finding a highly placed husband for the girl, thus creating the possibility of upward social mobility.

Conclusion

Coming back to the assertion made at the beginning of this chapter, that the modern school system created a childhood, we can safely say that the introduction of institutional education for girls led to more far-reaching social changes in both attitude and practice than any reform initiative could have hoped to have achieved. The validity of the concept of the social construction of the idea of a childhood for the girl child finds ground

in the rapidly changing socioeconomic and political environment of the nineteenth century as newly forged ideologies came into conflict with tradition on the question of women's emancipation. Sending girls to school and keeping them in school until the end of the primary or secondary stage gained ground among enlightened families. The idea that a 10- or 11-year-old girl was an 'old maid' and an outcast in the marriage market lost its prevalence. A major paradigm shift occurred with the emergence of the new educated woman that created a space of pre-adult innocence for girls as they shared school life with girls of the same age through the introduction of the stratification of age groups at every level. The concept of the construction of a childhood for girls manifested itself through the debates on the demerits of child marriage. Child marriage was finally forbidden by law in the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929, popularly known as the Sarda Act after its sponsor. The act fixed the age of marriage for girls at 14 and for boys at 18 years. The act was subsequently amended to 18 for girls and 21 for boys. The passing of the act was very significant because the women's organisations, which had begun to form in the first half of the twentieth century, played a major role in lobbying for its passage. Education was the catalyst from which all these activities stemmed. Finally, in the eyes of the law and in the eyes of society, a designated girlhood for a woman was created.

Notes

1. Philippe Ariès, *L' Enfant et la vie familial sous l' ancient régime* (Paris: Plon, 1960). Translated into English by Robert Baldick as *Centuries of Childhood: a Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962).
2. See Tanika Sarkar, *Words to Win: The Making of Amar Jiban—A Modern Autobiography* (Delhi: Kali for Women, 1999).
3. Girls from upper-class backgrounds as well as girls from a lower class shared the same fate as child widows. For example, Kamala Debi, daughter of Ashutosh Mukherjee, Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court and Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, was married at the age of eight in 1904 and was widowed the following year. She remarried in 1908 at the age of 16, but the majority of the child widows bore the life of widowhood from their teenage years. Girijasundari Debi, for example, was born in 1894; she was widowed at the age of 15 and never remarried. She was the aunt of Dr. Bharati Ray, historian and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University. See Bharati Ray (ed.), *Shekaler Narishiksha: Bamabodhini Patrika* (Calcutta University: Women's Studies Research Centre, 1994).

4. Geraldine Forbes (ed.), *The Memoirs of Dr. Haimabati Sen: From Child Widow to Lady Doctor*, translated by Tapan Raychaudhuri (New Delhi: Roli Books, 2000).
5. The Indian Education Policy, Bengal Education Proceedings (A) for the month of June 1904, File 10-0/16, Nos. 50–51, National Archives, Bangladesh.
6. *Report of the Indian Education Commission Appointed by the Resolution of the Government of India dated 3rd February 1882* (Calcutta: Printed by the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1883), chap. 10 (hereafter referred to as *Education Commission Report*).
7. See Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: Free Press, 1968), cited in Richard J. Gelles and Ann Levine (eds.), *Sociology: An Introduction*, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 65.
8. Ibid.
9. See Kazi Shahidullah, *Patshalas Into Schools: The Development of Indigenous Elementary Education in Bengal, 1854–1905* (Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Limited, 1987).
10. W. Adam, *Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (1835 and 1838*) Edited by Anathanath Basu (University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1941), cited in Shahidullah, *Patshalas Into Schools*, 14.
11. Shahidullah, *Patshalas Into Schools.*
12. Ibid., 16–17. There was no fixed timetable within which the scholars were requried to acquire that skill.
13. Cited in ibid., 17.
14. *First Quinquennial Report, 1891–1892 to 1896–1897, Review of Education in Bengal* (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1918). West Bengal Secretariat Library (VII 67, West Bengal Secretariat).
15. Ibid.
16. *Report on Progress of Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam,* 1907–08 to 1911–12, vol. 1, 92.
17. Extract from the Proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam in the Education Department, Assam Secretariat (Sylhet Proceedings) Education A Proceedings, File No. E-946 of 1909, Nos. 1–8, National Archives, Bangladesh.
18. Sonia Nishat Amin, *The World of Muslim Women in Colonial Bengal, 1876–1939* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 185–210.
19. Sheikh Abdur Rahma, 'Shikshar Vitti' [The Basis of Education], *Al-Eslam,* 5th year, 8th number, Agrahayon, 1919 cited in Mustafa Nurul Islam, *Samayikpatre Jiban O Janamat, 1901–1930* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1977), 22. The chemise and the *kameez* were garments associated with westernised women, hence shuuned by the conservatives. Prolonged girlhood was also associated with modernity in the western mode and was, thus, also unacceptable to conservatives.

20. Ibid.
21. See the entry on Shiraji by Rana Razzak in *Banglapedia* (Dhaka: 2006).
22. Amin, *The World of Muslim Women,* 196.
23. Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam Education Proceedings (A), File No. E-349 for April 1908, nos. 125–143, National Archives of Bangladesh.
24. Ibid.
25. See *Resolution No. 1028 T.G., dated the 10th June, 1907, by the Government of Bengal, 4th Edition* (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1908), National Archives of India, New Delhi.
26. Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam Education Proceedings (A), File No. E–349 for April 1908, nos. 125–143, 91, National Archives of Bangladesh.
27. Ibid., 98.
28. Ibid., 89.
29. Ibid.
30. Michael Sanderson, *Education, Economic Change and Society in England: 1780–1870*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 56.
31. Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam Education Proceedings (A), File No. E-349 for April 1908, Nos. 125–143, p. 91, National Archives of Bangladesh.
32. Enclosure No. 1, Recommendations of the Female Education Committee, Education Department (A) Proceedings, Assam Secretariat (Sylhet Proceedings), File No. E-946 of 1909, April 1910, nos. 1–8, National Archives of Bangladesh.
33. Ibid., 8.
34. Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge, 1981), chap. 2; June Purvis, *A History of Women's Education in England* (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1991), chap. 4; June Purvis, 'Using Primary Sources When Researching Women's History from a Feminist Perspective', *Women's History Review*, 1, no. 2 (1992), 273–306.
35. Madhu Kishwar, 'The Daughters of Aryavarta' in Sumit Sarkar and Tanika Sarkar (eds.), *Women and Social Reform in Modern India: A Reader*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007), 306.
36. *Government of Bengal, Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education for the years 1932–37*, by A. K. Chanda, I.E.S., Superintendent (Alipore, Bengal: Bengal Government Press, 1939). Copy in West Bengal State Archives.
37. See Maureen Woodhall, 'Investment in Women: A Reappraisal of the Concept of Human Capital', *International Review of Education*, 19, 1

(1973), Special Issue: *The Education of Women*, UNESCO Institute for Education, 9–29.

38. Ibid.

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CHAPTER 10

The 'Social Processing Chamber' of Gender: Australian Second-Wave Feminist Perspectives on Girls' Socialisation

Isobelle Barrett Meyering

'The arrival of a baby boy in our society is celebrated as a great success, and while the baby girl is "nice", the "try again" attitude seems to predominate in the hope that the next will be a boy', lamented Australian women's liberationist Lynn Fleming in January 1971. 'This favouring of the one sex—male, above the other—female, can be observed throughout the childhood', she continued. Once relegated to the 'social processing chamber' of male or female, children's fate was sealed, with their dress, vocabulary, games, hobbies, and, eventually, career aspirations determined accordingly. The girl learned that her role was to attract and please men, while 'the little boy is assured of being at least a great cricketer, if not the Prime Minister', Fleming concluded.[1]

Fleming was writing in the inaugural edition of the Brisbane-based journal, *Shrew*, one of the first periodicals to be produced by the Australian women's liberation movement. However, her description of the 'social processing chamber' of gender could just as easily have featured in the equivalent publications of its Anglo-American or European counterparts in the late 1960s and 1970s. The emergence of women's liberation groups

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M. O'Dowd, J. Purvis (eds.), *A History of the Girl*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4_10

in Australia just a year before Fleming's article was published had been directly inspired by overseas developments, and the discourse of sex-role socialisation or 'conditioning' formed part of the 'analytical language' that they shared.[2] Indeed, the contention that female oppression was forged and 'internalised' through girlhood was axiomatic to the analyses that emerged out of the new women's movement.

Feminists' concerted efforts to interrogate the socialisation process mark this moment as a crucial one in the history of modern girlhood in western society. Indeed, in constructing girlhood as a pivotal stage in the enforcement of female subordination, feminists were able to make a case for wide-ranging interventions into girls' lives. Across this period, significant energy was invested in projects designed to challenge conventional patterns of socialisation, from the development of 'counter-sexist' children's books and toys[3] to the development of new curriculum resources and 'equal opportunity' policies in schools.[4] Such was the popular impact of these initiatives that British historian Carolyn Dyhouse has recently described feminist scrutiny of girls' socialisation as one of the 'strongest achievements' of the second wave of the women's movement.[5]

While the concept of sex-role socialisation was undoubtedly part of the transnational discourse of second-wave feminism, this chapter argues that it gained traction in Australia through activists' efforts to trace its origins and generate evidence of its effects at a local level. Indeed, the feminist project of social change demanded such attention to the specific conditions of the lives of women and girls. Grappling with the impact of women's own conditioning was considered necessary to their personal liberation and formed part of a wider feminist commitment to consciousness-raising.[6] In addition, documenting its effects in a national context was of strategic value, helping to substantiate feminists' political demands, including a landmark inquiry into girls' education (1974–1975).[7]

Accordingly, this chapter revisits the evolution of sex-role socialisation theory from the vantage point of the Australian movement and explores the ways in which activists applied and extended its key principles. The chapter identifies three key themes that emerged as activists sought to establish the way conditioning functioned at both a personal and a societal level. First, I highlight feminists' efforts to link girls' socialisation to a distinctive form of Australian sexism. Second, I retrace feminists' use of personal testimony as a methodology to generate more individualised accounts of socialisation. Finally, I discuss formative research on girls' socialisation undertaken by feminists and the repeated emphasis in early

studies on the gap between sex-role ideology and the realities of Australian society.

In tracing these developments, this chapter also points to some of the tensions in the sex-role socialisation model that were already beginning to emerge in this formative period. By the late 1980s, sex-role socialisation had been criticised on multiple fronts, not least of all due to its tendency to construct children as passive learners[8] and for treating girls as a unitary category.[9] As I show here, attention to the ways in which local activists deployed analyses of girls' socialisation is useful for understanding to what extent these critiques were anticipated and addressed in this formative period.

Second-wave feminism was a broad-based movement, and this chapter necessarily encompasses a range of perspectives. Drawing on texts and periodicals primarily from the first half of the 1970s, it canvasses the views of early women's liberationists, such as Fleming, alongside those of activists who joined the reform-oriented Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL), formed in 1972, or who worked as 'femocracts' in the federal bureaucracy under the socially progressive Labour Government (1972–1975), specifically as part of the girls' education enquiry (1974–1975).[10] In addition, while the majority of the texts drawn on here were generated by women activists, this chapter also documents the appearance of girls' writings in Australian feminist periodicals, contributing to a small but growing body of Anglo-American scholarship on girls' activism within the second wave.[11]

Toward an Australian Theory of Sex-Role Socialisation

The concept of sex-role socialisation was not an invention of second-wave feminism but, as feminist scholar Hester Eisenstein notes, feminists gave the concept a new 'explosive' meaning.[12] Sex-role theory had become firmly established in the 1940s, as sociologists and psychologists became more concerned with how children learned to identify with their 'appropriate' role.[13] By contrast, second-wave feminists drew on models of socialisation specifically in order to challenge the inevitability of prescribed sex roles. Influenced by Simone de Beauvoir's pioneering analysis of the process of 'becoming' a woman and by the cross-cultural research of anthropologists such as Margaret Mead, second-wave feminists argued

that the designation of certain attributes as female or male was culturally rather than biologically determined. What were seemingly 'natural' differences between men and women were, in fact, the product of, or at the very least powerfully reinforced by, social learning. On this basis, biological 'sex' was to be distinguished from socialised 'gender', the foundations of which were laid in childhood.[14]

Feminists also looked to socialisation theory as a means of explaining why girls and women accepted unequal roles. Female inferiority was, they argued, a conditioned response. US feminist Kate Millet provided a classic explanation in her bestseller, *Sexual Politics* (1970). Emphasising the psychological dynamics of women's oppression, Millet argued that socialisation led to the 'interiorization of patriarchal ideology', thereby ensuring that women accepted their subordinate status.[15] Socialisation was, she declared, the process by which '[s]exual politics obtains consent'.[16] According to Millet, the crucible of this process was the family, with parents effecting the socialisation of the young through a combination of 'example' and 'admonition', with peers, schools, the media and others subsequently providing reinforcement.[17]

Girls' conditioning was, then, understood to be a relentless and often unconscious process. Indeed, the process of sex-role socialisation was so ubiquitous that it could be observed from birth. 'Sex-typed comments on the behaviour and appearance of newborns are aired within a few moments of birth', British sociologist Ann Oakley observed in her classic text, *Sex, Gender and Society* (1972). 'The male baby who has an erection while being weighed is referred to jokingly as a "dirty little man": the female baby born with curly hair is told she is pretty'.[18] So begins the process of their respective sex-role conditioning, with boys encouraged to be strong and active and girls taught to be gentle, nurturing, and dependent.

The notion that girls' socialisation begins from birth resonated powerfully with Australian feminist Joyce Nicholson, who published her own primer on sex-role socialisation, aptly entitled *What Society Does to Girls* (1975). The daughter of a prominent Australian publisher and herself an established children's author, Nicholson joined the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) in Melbourne at its first public meeting in April 1972 and quickly 'flung' herself into the organisation's activities, joining the coordinating committee, taking over responsibility for the newsletter, and contributing to numerous policy submissions.[19] Written three years after she joined WEL, *What Society Does to Girls* adeptly laid out the mechanisms behind girls' conditioning. The book opened with a chapter in which

Nicholson recounted her own feminist awakening upon reading Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970). She recalled:

> Here I read for the first time the reasons why women are inferior in many ways. I read about conditioning, about how girls are trained from birth, by their parents, their peers and society, to be passive, to be mothers, to be supportive, actually to look foolish deliberately to be popular with boys, and how, at the age of puberty, when a boy's creativity is encouraged and grows strong, a girl's creativity is taken away from her, and thus withers.[20]

In the following chapters, Nicholson provided her own account of the way girls were 'trained from birth'. She began with a chapter on the 'early conditioning' process, explaining how infants were immediately sex typed, from the selection of baby clothes to the kinds of physical affection offered to them. Subsequent chapters explored topics ranging from education, to marriage, to the sexual double standard, with Nicholson pointing throughout to the insidious ways in which the family, schools, the advertising industry, and corporations capitalised on and reinforced rigid sex differences.[21] Nicholson left her readers with no doubt that she saw this process as one that was forced onto girls. The girl 'is set in her role from babyhood, and it is not one she would necessarily choose', she asserted.[22]

Marketed as a primer for young readers, their parents and teachers, Nicholson's book was one of the early success stories of Australian feminist publishing.[23] Released during International Women's Year in 1975, it proved popular in Australia, with the owners of the Feminist Bookshop in Sydney, the first store of its kind in the country, reporting it to be much in demand.[24] It also gained traction beyond the Australian publishing market. The London-based women's press, Virago, republished the book in 1977 and issued a revised British edition in 1980.[25] In the latter version, British examples or statistics were substituted for Australian examples and new items were added to a suggested reading list. Otherwise, however, the text remained largely unmodified, an indication of the perceived universality of its themes.

By contrast, other feminists were seeking at the time to theorise the process of girls' socialisation as predicated on a distinct Australian form of sexism. Part of a coalescing body of work on Australian women's history spurred by second-wave feminism, two classic texts of the period exemplify this attempt to frame girls' socialisation as the product of culturally specific forces. They were *The Real Matilda: Women and Identity in Australia,*

1788–1975 (1976), by Miriam Dixson, a lecturer at the University of New England in northern New South Wales, where she had run the first course in women's history in 1975; and *Damned Whores and God's Police: The Colonization of Women in Australia* (1975), by Anne Summers, a founding member of the women's liberation movement in Adelaide who had moved to Sydney in 1971 to begin postgraduate study.[26] Both books linked the dynamics of sex-role socialisation to Australia's colonial past.

Dixson's discussion of girls' socialisation was brief but nonetheless significant, forming part of the opening chapter of *The Real Matilda*. The book's central contention was that Australia's frontier culture and the institution of convictism had contributed to a deeply masculinist culture, as a result of which contempt toward women remained a 'dominant cultural characteristic'.[27] Crucially, women's sense of inferiority was inculcated from infancy. Girls acquired a 'gut knowledge' of their 'outsider' status in the 'pre-verbal stages of childhood', through 'the looks, the gestures and family customs that constitute the child's first introduction to the values that matter in the big world beyond'.[28] The foundations were thus laid in girlhood for a profound sense of female inferiority that, according to Dixson, had made Australian women the 'Doormats of the Western World'.[29]

Summers's account of the link between girls' socialisation and Australian conditions was considerably more elaborate. Mixing historical and sociological analysis, Summers argued that, as part of a 'divide and rule' strategy, Australian women had, since colonial times, been separated according to two 'stereotypes'.[30] The ideal was that of the 'God's police', responsible for the 'policing and preservation of existing [class, sex and race] relations' through her position in the family and, in some cases, in educational and social welfare institutions.[31] Her counterpart was the 'damned whore', who failed in this task or actively contravened the role and whose social exclusion in turn served to keep other women 'in line'.[32]

According to Summers, girls' socialisation was, in turn, mediated by these stereotypes. From a young age, girls were 'specially prepared' for their role as 'God's police', learning to 'be submissive and passive, to conform and obey' and, most important, 'to imbibe the morality of their generation and class'.[33] By way of evidence, Summers cited a recent article by sociologist R.W. Connell—later to become one of Australia's leading gender theorists—reporting on a large-scale quantitative study of youth aged 12 to 20 in Sydney in 1969–1970. Participants in the study had completed a 'morality inventory' that gauged their views on issues ranging

from personal honesty to sexual mores. The results of the inventory showed a 'clear, predictable, and almost completely consistent' pattern of girls expressing a stricter view of morality than their male peers.[34] These girls performed the part of 'God's police' adroitly.

Yet the socialisation process, as presented by Summers, was not always successful. Some girls resisted or simply failed in this role of 'God's police', albeit at a potentially significant personal cost. In particular, Summer singled out the figure of the female juvenile 'delinquent', deemed 'uncontrollable' or sexually deviant, as a classic case of the alternative stereotype of the 'damned whore'. Her assessment was informed by feminist activism at the time around the treatment of girls in state homes, a major focus of Sydney women's liberation groups in the preceding years.[35] In *Damned Whores and God's Police*, Summers presented some of the key allegations against the homes, including the lack of education provided to girls, the subjection of girls to compulsory virginity tests, and the girls' vulnerability to sexual abuse by male staff.[36] Summers evoked the possibility of resistance to the socially demanded role of 'God's police' but also highlighted the severe penalties that girls faced for such contraventions.

In describing what they considered to be a distinctively Australian form of sexism, Dixson and Summers both identified girls' socialisation as a product of historically and culturally specific forces. Furthermore, they suggested that girls' conditioning served wider class and race imperatives. At the same time, these texts continued an established common theme, reiterating that the socialisation process was the key mechanism through which female subordination was enforced. The conclusion was one that resonated with many activists on the ground, as they looked to their own lives in order to generate the evidence of its effects.

Self-examination: The Role of Personal Testimony

In the introductory chapter to *What Society Does to Girls*, Nicholson indicated that her book would explain the mechanisms of girls' socialisation 'in personal, and in general, terms'. The book was to be as much about her own life—'what conditioning did to me'—as it was an exercise in social analysis.[37] Accordingly, examples from her own upbringing were threaded throughout the text. For Nicholson, the paradigm of sex-role socialisation proved to be a powerful prompt for other women to examine their own girlhoods and to elicit testimony from girls themselves.

This generated more individualised and sometimes conflicting accounts, further serving to complicate the depiction of socialisation as a uniform process.

For many, the task of self-examination began in consciousness-raising groups. Meeting in each other's homes or, as the movement became more established, at women's centres, small groups of women committed to a process of interrogating how their own lives had been shaped by their conditioning. Premised on members' commitment to confidentiality, discussions within consciousness-raising groups were rarely recorded. However, guides used at the time indicate that girlhood was a staple topic. Activists in Sydney, for example, drew on a guide published in the popular *Ms.* magazine in 1972 that recommended that '[m]ost groups find that starting at the beginning works best' and suggested members discuss their experiences of being 'raised, treated, or educated' differently from boys.[38]

The process of self-examination on which consciousness-raising groups were based was quickly replicated in other feminist forums, as women offered up their stories at conferences and in print. Adelaide activist Eileen Haley gave an especially detailed account of her 'Catholic girlhood' in a paper at the first dedicated conference on women and education, held in Adelaide over the Easter weekend in 1973, prefacing her comments with a disclaimer that the process of recollection had taken 'days, weeks' and had been a 'painful' one.[39] Haley began by relating her early school days at an all-girls school run by nuns. Among her 'first educational experiences … was that boys *mattered more* than girls': the school fees at the neighbouring boys' school were higher and the facilities superior to those at the girls' school.[40] She went on to relay further examples of how she and her peers were conditioned to accept their inferior status, even as they were taught in an all-female environment by nuns who did not have husbands or children and thus served as an alternative model to conventional femininity.

Crucially, as well as serving as a prompt for women to recall their own girlhoods, the emphasis on the value of personal testimony also created an imperative to consider the perspectives of girls themselves. American scholars Lori Rotskoff and Kera Lovell have recently uncovered substantial evidence of girls' writing in feminist anthologies and periodicals.[41] The earliest Australian equivalent can be found in the inaugural edition of the Sydney women's liberation journal *Mejane*, published in March 1971, and was most likely solicited by their editorial collective. Here Jenny Garlick, identified as a Melbourne fifth-form high school student, described how stereotypical male and female roles had been 'pushed' onto her peers:

> The majority of students at my school come from lower to middle income families … In these families, the females are taught to accept duties traditionally done by women—cooking, ironing, washing etc. and looking after men. The father goes out to work and comes home to relax … By the time the children reach high school this male-female relationship has been pushed well into their minds.[42]

Other journals followed suit. The Melbourne women's liberation journal, *Vashti's Voice*, published a number of letters by girls during the mid-1970s, including one in March 1974 from Maria Deleo who reported on the 'blatantly sexist' treatment of girls at a nearby school, where a beauty contest had recently been held as a fundraiser. Her own school was far more liberal, but even so, Deleo warned that 'because education is not confined to school and the school uses things from the outside world, even the most unbiased school cannot help being sexist'.[43] Most contributions to feminist periodicals were by high school girls such as Garlick and Deleo, but not exclusively so.

For example, in 1975, the editors of a new Sydney literary journal, *Cauldron*, included a short story by eight-year-old Anna Craney about a girl's struggle against sexism in her school, complete with spelling errors that marked it as the work of a child.[44]

While it is difficult to determine to what extent these girls' writings were mediated by adults, what is clear is that women activists placed significant store in their value as evidence of girls' capacity to articulate their own experiences of oppression. Writing about the popular *Ms.* magazine, Rotskoff has described young readers as having looked to the editors as 'sympathetic mentors'.[45] In much the same way, women activists also found validation in girls' accounts and accordingly did their best to assure their readers of their 'authenticity', as exemplified in the *Cauldron* example. Rather than simply relying on their own experiences, women activists were conscious that their claims about the socialisation process would have greater weight if buttressed by the testimony of girls themselves.

As well as providing an opening for girls' participation, the emphasis on personal testimony could also lead to greater recognition of the multiplicity of women's and girls' experiences. An early account in *Mejane*, for example, explicitly identified the ideal of femininity into which girls were socialised as one predicated on middle-class norms. Writing in May 1971, the unnamed contributor explained she had limited her account to that of the 'middle-class girl' as 'this is what I know best'.[46] Concomitantly,

some accounts specifically challenged the adequacy of the sex-role socialisation model in accounting for the totality of girls' experiences of oppression. For example, in an article in *Vashti's Voice* published in 1975, Eulalia explained that, as a young child, she had been much more painfully conscious of her outsider status as an Italian Australian than any disadvantages stemming from her gender. According to Eulalia, it was only as an adolescent that she began to feel the pressures of feminine conditioning, as she confronted the 'cultural conflict' between her school and home life:

> The nuns talked about how to be a young lady; how to walk and sit and smile and I was always given a sharp glance when the subject of 'conversation' came up … I knew this was the Australian way but how could I possibly emulate it? My body was Italian: plump, my hair Italian, thick and wild, my speech was loud and aggressive because that's the way Italians talk![47]

Eulalia's account complicated the idea of sex-role socialisation as a uniform process, although it did not seek to jettison the model as a whole.

The process of self-examination was necessarily an iterative one that required the participation of both women and girls in the act of documenting sex-role socialisation. Cumulatively these accounts provided feminists with a body of testimony that substantiated their claims about the harmful effects of their conditioning. At the same time, the focus on personal testimony could also open up a space for women's and girls' different experiences to be recognised, serving as a countervailing force against both the privileging of adult perspectives in socialisation models and their universalising tendencies. The personal accounts produced by activists did not resolve these tensions, but they did provide a platform for further exploration.

Researching Girlhood: Sex Roles and Social Realities

While personal testimony was often privileged in feminist writings on girls' socialisation, it was by no means the only basis for feminist claims about its damaging effects. Activists also looked to document girls' socialisation using the more conventional tools of social science. Writing in the British context, Dyhouse has noted that, starting in the 1970s, feminist researchers began to generate a 'huge and impressive' literature on girlhood.[48] The same can be said for the Australian movement, as activists set out to

challenge the male-dominated academy and establish their credibility with government. These studies introduced another element into feminist analyses of the conditioning process and its local dimensions: They consistently emphasised the gap between sex-role ideology and the realities of modern Australian society, particularly women's increasing participation in the workforce.

An early iteration of this argument appeared in a study of sex-role stereotypes in children's books published in the inaugural edition of *Refractory Girl*, founded in 1972. Inspired in part by a similar American study, *Dick and Jane as Victims* (1972), postgraduate librarian students Denise Bradley and Mary Mortimer undertook a content analysis of primary school readers included on the School Library Services lists in five Australian states.[49] Their investigation not only revealed that male characters significantly outnumbered female characters but that women and girls were portrayed in a less positive light.[50] Of particular concern was the tendency for female characters to be depicted in the domestic realm. Girls typically 'stay at home and do routine tasks', they reported.[51] Meanwhile, working women featured in very few books, with only 19 female occupations mentioned across the sample, compared to 103 male occupations.[52] Furthermore, those working women who did feature were 'treated unsympathetically, without exception'.[53] These books failed abysmally when it came to Bradley and Mortimer's test of a 'good' picture book for girls, namely that it 'at the very least reflect the reality of our society'.[54]

Bradley and Mortimer's study was soon joined by other studies of children's literature that presented similar findings. A particularly influential study, *The Female Image* (1974), was funded by the University of New South Wales student union and later reproduced in multiple forms, including as part of a toolkit on how to 'combat sexism' distributed to teachers by the Australian Union of Students.[55] Echoing the findings of Bradley and Mortimer, coauthors Patricia Healy and Penny Ryan's survey of three sets of reading books used in New South Wales primary schools revealed double the number of male characters as female characters and a marked tendency to depict adult females either as mothers or other members of family.[56] Once again Healy and Ryan emphasised the 'outmoded' expectations that such books fostered in girls and, furthermore, argued that the 'denial' of the 'social reality' of the working woman reinforced social stigma.[57] These books were likely to have had a 'demoralising effect' rather than encouraging girls 'to develop their abilities and skills'.[58]

Concern about the disjuncture between girls' socialisation and social reality similarly permeated studies focused on older girls and their aspirations. As early as 1970, Anne Summers investigated teenage girls' life expectations as part of her honours thesis titled 'Women's Consciousness of Their Role-Structure'. She arranged for 118 fifteen-year-olds from a cross-section of class backgrounds to write essays in which they imagined their future lives.[59] Reporting her findings five years later in *Damned Whores and God's Police*, Summers noted that she was especially struck by girls' uniformly low expectations of working after marriage. Across the group only 12 to 13 percent of girls expressed expectations of working after marriage, with the exception of those in the academic stream at a school in a lower middle-class area, where the rate was considerably higher at 31 percent.[60] The findings were similar to those in Connell's study, discussed earlier, which found that girls had low expectations of working: 9 percent never expected to work and 72 percent expected to work only until having children.[61]

According to Summers, the resulting danger was that this generation of girls would experience an even more extreme version of the identity crisis diagnosed by American feminist Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963).[62] Their lives were 'likely to be even more irreconcilable with their socialized expectations than is the case with their mothers, the women who today are labelled 'suburban neurotics'. she predicted.[63] Seeking to explain this gap between expectations and changing social realities, Summers continued in Friedan fashion by singling out the role of women's magazines in propagating the idea that 'women are happiest as housewives'. Women's magazines, she argued, presented 'a view of adult female life which not only contradicts *their* likely futures but which distorts the lives of their mothers'.[64]

While the argument that women's magazines perpetuated an unrealistic view of the 'happy housewife' was a well-rehearsed one, the link with girls' educational aspirations was prompted by an earlier study by Melbourne sociologist Shirley Sampson, a lecturer at Monash University who was heavily involved in feminist education activism through the 1970s.[65] She completed her PhD on sex-role orientation in adolescent girls in 1973, the same year she made her debut in the feminist press with an article in *Refractory Girl* on the journal *Australian Women's Weekly*. Then the country's leading women's magazine, the *Australian Women's Weekly* was estimated to reach one quarter of Australian households and to be read by the majority of school-age teenage girls.[66] Sampson had

surveyed an entire year's issues of the magazine in 1971 with a view to understanding the 'social world' found in it.[67]

Much like the analyses of sex-role stereotypes in children's books, Sampson reported that the *Australian Women's Weekly* presented a highly stereotyped view of women's roles, defining them as 'sweethearts-housewives-mothers'. In her survey, she had found that 70 percent of female characters in fictional articles had no occupation outside the home,[68] while feature articles focused on appearance—59 percent of articles on women were about 'beautiful women', film or television stars or royalty—and advice on how to 'please men'.[69] The 'present day working women' were consistently ignored and readers were left with an 'unreal image of women's life cycle'. In the absence of alternative 'role models' Sampson predicted that girls' education aspirations would remain low and that they would continue to enter the workforce with less skills and qualifications than their male counterparts.[70]

By 1973, when Sampson's article was published, feminist critiques of the effects of sex-role socialisation had begun to have an obvious effect on political discourse. That year a major government report on the state of Australian schools identified girls as an educationally disadvantaged group, noting, albeit only in passing, their lower retention rates compared to boys, except at the highest socioeconomic level.[71] Under pressure from women's groups, in May 1974, the government established an inquiry to investigate more closely the causes of girls' educational disadvantage. Created under the auspices of the newly created Schools Commission, the committee appointed to oversee the inquiry, and the team of researchers assisting it, was comprised largely of prominent feminists and sympathisers.[72]

The following year, the committee delivered its much-celebrated report, *Girls, School and Society* (1975). Running to almost 200 pages, the report systematically detailed the relationship between girls' socialisation and their educational 'underachievement', drawing on many of the studies already cited in this chapter as well as on an emerging body of sociological research from Australian and overseas, census figures, and other government data. In particular, it described the many layers of sex segregation embodied in the school system itself, from the subject choices available to girls and boys through to organisation practices such as single-sex classes and the gender hierarchy within the teaching profession itself.[73] As has previously been noted, significant attention was paid to examining the interaction between gender and class, although less consistent attention was paid to race and other forms of disadvantage.[74]

While the argument that girls' socialisation conflicted with social realities had already been used in a range of activists' studies, it was deployed with even greater effect in *Girls, School and Society*. In making the case for government intervention to address girls' educational disadvantage, the committee was at pains to emphasise that social roles were already changing in Australia. The authors of the report dedicated an entire chapter to outlining patterns in life expectancy, marriage and childbearing, and workforce participation[75] and concluded the report by noting that 'stereotyped expectations' were now 'outmoded'.[76] Given the pace of social change, schools now had a responsibility to address discriminatory processes within the education system, not only for equity reasons but to enable young people to better 'cope' with the changes taking place.[77]

As feminists worked toward building a stronger empirical basis for theories of sex-role socialisation, they pointed to the disjuncture between sex-role ideology and social realities as a way of bringing into question the utility of existing stereotypes. These various studies identified the socialisation of girls into outdated stereotypes as having serious repercussions for their social adjustment. On this front, educators and policy makers were warned that their failure to attend to the negative effects of socialisation would have repercussions for social cohesion.

Conclusion

Through the early 1970s, the paradigm of sex-role socialisation represented the prevailing lens through which Australian feminists sought to make sense of girls' experiences. In this formative period, significant energy was directed towards exploring and extending the concept of sex-role socialisation. A key step in this process was to document the mechanisms behind and the effects of girls' conditioning. For this task, feminists drew on a range of sources, seeking out historical evidence, drawing on their own recollections, eliciting testimony directly from girls, analysing literature and popular culture, and reviewing official data. This task was a painstaking but necessary one as activists sought both to grapple with the effects of their own socialisation and to substantiate their claims to a wider audience.

This emphasis on girls' socialisation was far from unique to the Australian movement and was, from the beginning, informed by developments overseas. At the same time, the generation of theory and evidence by local activists brought greater specificity to feminist claims about girls' socialisation. Girls' socialisation was theorised as a product of a distinctive Australian form of sexism. Women's and girls' personal testimonies served to highlight a multiplicity of experiences, and research studies contrasted

sex-role ideology and social realities. In this process, activists also began to reveal some of the limitations of this model, producing accounts of girls' resistance, identifying contradictions within the socialisation process, and, above all, uncovering differences across class and race. Together these findings called into question depictions of sex-role socialisation as a uniform process and instead pointed to the need for a more layered approach to understanding the experiences of girls.

Notes

1. Lynn Fleming, 'One View of Women's Liberation', *Shrew*, 1, no. 1 (January 1971), 7.
2. Marilyn Lake, *Getting Equal: The History of Australian Feminism* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1999), 233.
3. A particularly iconic example is that of the American record, book, and television series *Free to Be …You Me*. On its history, see Lori Rotskoff and Laura L. Lovett (eds), *When We Were Free to Be: Looking Back at a Children's Classic and the Difference It Made* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).
4. By way of example, see the section comparing initiatives in Australia and Canada in the 1970s and 1980s in Jane Gaskell and Sandra Taylor, 'The Women's Movement in Canadian and Australian Education: From Liberation and Sexism to Boys and Social Justice', *Gender and Education*, 15, no. 2 (2003), 154–60.
5. Carol Dyhouse, *Girl Trouble: Panic and Progress in the History of Young Women* (London: Zed Books, 2013), 197. The popular impact of feminist critiques of girls' socialization is similarly attested to in Australian sociologist Chilla Bulbeck's study of the generational impacts of feminism, which opens with chapters entitled 'Growing Up as Girls' and 'Training for Life'. See Chilla Bulbeck, *Living Feminism: The Impact of the Women's Movement on Three Generations of Australian Women* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), chap. 1–2.
6. On consciousness raising as part of Australian feminist practice, see Kristin Henry and Marlene Derlet, *Talking Up a Storm: Nine Women and Consciousness-Raising* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1993).
7. The inquiry, undertaken under the auspices of the Schools Commission, is discussed later in this chapter, in the section entitled 'Researching Girlhood'. For general background on the inquiry and its impact, see the detailed discussions in Alison Mackinnon, 'Girls, School and Society', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 21, no. 50 (2006), 276–279; and Lyn Yates, *The Education of Girls: Policy, Research and the Question of Gender (Hawthorn, Vic.: Australian Council for Educational Research, 1993)*, 7–14.

8. An early example of this critique can be found in Barrie Thorne, 'Re-Visioning Women and Social Change: Where Are the Children?', *Gender & Society*, 1, no. 1 (1987), 91–95. See also Raewyn W. Connell and Rebecca Pearse, *Gender: In World Perspective*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 89–90.
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10. For a brief overview of these different strands of Australian feminism, see Bulbeck, *Living Feminism*, 21–24.
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31. Ibid., 152.
32. Ibid., 154.
33. Ibid., 153.
34. R. W. Connell, 'You Can't Tell Them Apart Nowadays, Can You?', *Search*, 5, no. 7 (1973), 282–285, quoted in Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police*, 429. The wider study was published as W. F. Connell, R. E. Stroobant, K. E. Sinclair, R. W. Connell and K. W. Rogers, *12 to 20: Studies of City Youth* (Sydney: Hicks Smith & Sons, 1975).
35. The women's liberation movement in Sydney launched a campaign for the closure of state girls' homes in August 1972, with some success: Two of the most infamous homes, the Parramatta Girls' Training School and Hay Institution for Girls, were shut in 1974. The campaign has been briefly documented in Suzanne Bellamy, 'Guthrie, Bessie Jean Thompson (1905–1977)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1996), http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/guthrie-bessie-jean-thompson-10382/text18393; and in Bonney Djuric, *Abandon All Hope: A History of Parramatta Girls Industrial School* (Perth: Chargan My Book Publisher, 2011), chap. 8.
36. Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police*, 161–162.
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38. 'A Guide to Consciousness-Raising', *Ms.*, July 1972, 22. The guide appears in a collection of materials of the Women's Liberation Centre, Sydney, Box 8, First Ten Years of Sydney Women's Liberation Collection, MLMSS 9782, State Library of New South Wales.
39. Eileen Haley, 'A Catholic Girlhood' in Sue Higgins and Mary Venner (eds), *Women and Sexist Education* (Adelaide: The Education Group, Women's Liberation, 1973), 11.
40. Ibid., 12.

41. Lovell discovered a 'thick file' of letters from children in the *Ms.* archive. See Rotskoff, 'Little Women Libbers', 94. Lovell has surveyed a wide range of women's liberation materials. See Lovell, 'Girls Are Equal Too'. Although her discussion is not as extensive, Dyhouse also mentions schoolgirl contributions to the British women's liberation magazine *Spare Rib* (Dyhouse, *Girl Trouble*, 204–205).
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43. 'Letters', *Vashti's Voice,* no. 6 (March 1974), 2.
44. Anna Craney, 'A Day of Scrapes', *Cauldron*, 1, no. 3 (1975), 6.
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56. Healy and Ryan, *The Female Image*, 14.
57. Ibid., 15–16.
58. Ibid., 16.
59. Anne Summers, 'Women's Consciousness of their Role-Structure' (unpublished honours thesis, University of Adelaide, 1970). The content of the essays is discussed in some detail in Bulbeck, *Living Feminism*, 34, 44.

60. Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police*, 429.
61. Connell, 'You Can't Tell Them Apart Nowadays', quoted in Summers, *Damned Whores and Gold's Police,* 475.
62. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963).
63. Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police*, 430.
64. Ibid., 437–438, emphasis in original.
65. In 1976, she helped found the Australian Women's Education Coalition and, in 1977, she was appointed to chair the Victorian Committee on Equal Opportunity in Schools.
66. A survey of 2,626 school-age girls (aged 12 to 17 years) cited by Sampson had found that 56 percent read the magazine every week or nearly every week. See Shirley Sampson, 'The Australian Women's Weekly today … Education and the Aspiration of Girls', *Refractory Girl*, no. 3 (Winter 1973), 15.
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CHAPTER 11

‘And Sweet Girl-Graduates’? From Girl to Woman Through Higher Education

Alison Mackinnon

With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.
Alfred Lord Tennyson, The Princess[1]

When does a girl become a woman? Throughout history, that transition has been marked by marriage and even more by motherhood. A mother is no longer a girl, even if she is very young; a wife is usually seen as a woman, even if she too is young. Both have gained women’s knowledge, particularly sexual knowledge, which is forbidden to a girl. In these situations, girlhood and innocence ceases and womanhood begins, even if a woman is totally dependent on others. For many centuries, being dependent on males has been the defining feature of girlhood and womanhood. For girls to move successfully to womanhood in such regimes, they had to be carefully shielded from premature sexual activity or knowledge, lest they compromise their value as wives and mothers.

However, in the twenty-first-century world, there are other transition points to womanhood, virtually unknown until the mid- to late nineteenth century. One key transition point was the entry of girls into higher education, a move much resisted by many who saw the possibility of a different

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M. O’Dowd, J. Purvis (eds.), *A History of the Girl*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4_11

sort of womanhood emerging, one based on independence rather than dependence, one offering a new identity, one not necessary defined by a relationship to another or by bodily change. Higher education offered a new stage in the female life span. And in that stage lay the possibility of economic independence, then the further possibility of sexual independence, an outcome feared as challenging male power and the family. As we move closer to achieving access to higher education for girls worldwide, anxieties about girls' independence are never far from the surface.

In 1978, I witnessed a strange, and to me anachronistic, phenomenon, a clash of these varied views of women, the carefully protected virgins (or wives) becoming 'sweet girl-graduates' as Alfred Lord Tennyson, the British poet, famously called them, yet without the independence that went with that status. In Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, I visited one of the first universities for women in that country. This was the first generation of Saudi women to enjoy higher education in their own country, although some had previously been educated abroad. Men were strictly forbidden to enter the women's spaces, and the students viewed male professors delivering lectures on closed circuit television. Phones by each seat in the lecture theatre enabled them to communicate directly with their lecturers. Within the university, the women wore fashionable clothing and chatted and carried on like students everywhere. As soon as the teaching day ended, they donned their abayas and raced out the doors to the ranks of waiting cars, all driven by men—their fathers, husbands or brothers. For women could not, and still cannot, drive in Saudi Arabia although they will be able to do so from June 2018 according to a recent decree.

Watching them transformed into black-robed dependents in this extremely sex-segregated country, I reflected on the first women graduates of English university colleges, of Girton and Newnham in the 1870s. There too girl students were carefully chaperoned, kept away as much as possible from the contaminating influence of male students. It was much feared that the mere presence of young women would distract, even corrupt, the male students. They may not have had 'prudes for proctors' or 'dowagers for deans', but there were indeed unmarried, widowed, and earnest women keen to keep any sexual distractions at bay for their charges, lest the whole enterprise of higher education for women fail. So potent was the effect of the sexes on each other, it was believed, that their mere presence in the same classroom might cause untold trouble.

The Beginnings of Girls' Higher Education in the West

Tennyson's *The Princess* with its cloying image of 'sweet girl-graduates' was written at a time when the first stirrings of the modern demand for higher education for women were being heard. In the 1840s in England, the plight of governesses attracted a huge debate, one that both presaged the beginnings of extended education for women and highlighted the fears engendered by the prospect of their education.[2] In a period of economic upheaval and social transformation, many young women from middle-class families found themselves without husbands and needing to support themselves. Governessing seemed the ideal occupation for such women. As several historians have pointed out, governesses occupied a precarious and contradictory position in society.[3] In a world where to be a wife and mother was the true destiny of women, they were neither but were expected to embody the virtues of wives and mothers in caring for their charges. It was a position of 'status incongruity', as Jeanne Peterson argued:[4] For while embodying those virtues of the domestic ideal such as patience and self-sacrifice, they were also paid workers, albeit very poorly paid. Their backgrounds might be similar to the families they served, yet they were not part of the family, nor were they servants. In many instances, they came from families that through business failure, death, or misfortune could not support them. Without their meagre incomes, they might well sink into poverty and, worse, vice. Furthermore, in keeping with the mores of mid-Victorian society, they were expected to be morally superior, to stifle any knowledge or thoughts of sexuality.

The attention governesses received in the 1840s was a response to the annual reports of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution, a charity founded in 1841 and reorganised in 1843.[5] The governess was the woman who 'epitomized the domestic ideal and the figure who threatened to destroy it'.[6] It is the latter, the notion of destroying the domestic ideal, that is of particular interest here. In seeking a more serious education and ultimately an economically independent role, governesses were leaders in transforming the role of the girl, as we shall see.

Concern for the plight of governesses and a desire to give them a better education led to the establishment in 1848 of Queen's College, London, with the intention of providing for 'those ladies intending to be governesses'. Originally intended as a home for governesses who were between

jobs, Queen's College was an offshoot of King's College, originally supported by a group of Christian Socialist men—Frederick Denison Maurice, Llewellyn Davies, and David Laing—concerned with wider social and educational reform particularly for working men. The teaching of mathematics provoked contemporary criticism. As the current website of Queen's College, now a selective high school for girls, tells us, Maurice's

> ambition was to provide a means by which girls and young women could gain a serious education, and Queen's was the first institution in Great Britain where they could study for and gain academic qualifications. In 1853 Queen's received a Royal Charter from Queen Victoria which established much of the organisation of the College.[7]

In its early days, lectures were given to all girls aged between 12 and 20, although later the younger ones were educated separately. Queen's was followed a year later by the Ladies' College at Bedford Square, established by a Unitarian, Mrs. Jessie Reid, and assisted by the nonsectarian University College. The young ladies were chaperoned by 'lady visitors', mature women of social standing, as their classes were initially given by men.

In this context modern academic education for women in England began. In the following decades, women were gradually admitted to university classes, at first without taking degrees and ultimately to claim the goal of degrees. The University of London claimed that it was the first to award degrees to women.[8] Oxford and Cambridge lagged well behind.

The English example is not unique. In the United States and in the British Commonwealth, where ancient tradition was not so restrictive, girls were increasingly admitted to higher education and to degrees. In the United States, female academies, teaching much of the curriculum of the male colleges, began the transformation of girls' education in the first half of the nineteenth century. Academies bridged the gap between elementary schools and higher education, some taking in girls as young as 12, others at 14 or 16, in the first decades of the nineteenth century.[9] Oberlin College was the first coeducational college, educating girls from 1833 and granting degrees to two women in 1841. In Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, girls were admitted to university classes and to degrees in the 1870s. In much of Europe, young women first attended universities from the 1870s and 1880s.

While the admission of girls and young women to an educational experience that may have equalled that of their brothers was liberating, the

terms on which that access was gained most often focused on their future domestic role as wives and mothers. Their supposed moral superiority did not exempt them from rigorous supervision or, often, from separate facilities. Girls were frequently segregated in women's colleges or women's dormitories and supervised by deans of women. Placing a girl outside a domestic setting and 'training her to think like a man … violated virtually every late-Victorian norm', as Carroll Smith-Rosenberg argued of the first US women in mixed universities.[10] This dangerous freedom required close attention. Intense surveillance of young women students lasted in many western countries until the 1960s. In the United States, for example, at the University of California (Berkeley), the Women's Dormitory Association formed in 1915 still determined rules of dress and conduct for women students in the 1950s, noting that '[n]o woman should be out alone after dusk'.[11] In Adelaide, South Australia, St. Ann's College's rules included 'no alcohol' and 'no men'.[12]

A New Stage of Life?

In his summary account of gender equality and high levels of education for women, Jerry Jacobs distinguishes three separate aspects to be considered: access, experience, and outcomes. He argues that high levels of access to higher education, for example, do not necessarily lead to equality of experience or of outcomes.[13]

One early unintended outcome of the extension of girls' education in academies and the earliest universities and colleges requires particular attention: the creation of a new stage in the female life span, particularly for girls of the growing middle class in western societies. Girls no longer went straight from their parents' homes to their marital abodes. Some experienced a few years of independence, earning their own living, as schoolteachers perhaps, and enjoying a sense of a new identity, separate from that of daughter or wife. 'Let me follow my own volitions, for at least three or four years to come …' wrote the heroine of a popular American novel of the time. 'Let my mind soar unfettered to the heights where I wish to stand' before being 'tempted to wear those bonds which, though covered with roses and seemingly light as air, must be stronger than steel and heavier than iron',[14] For those who could maintain themselves, albeit modestly, the choice of a husband could be more carefully considered. Another consequence of the increasing years of education for many girls was a later age at marriage. Not only was marriage delayed for

some, but others among the earliest cohorts of women to gain a useful education did not marry at all.[15] The later age at marriage and the fact that some women remained single had an inevitable effect on the birth rate. This demographic consequence, visible from the earliest years of girls' higher education, became increasingly marked as more and more girls entered higher education, as we shall see. This outcome caused considerable consternation to the opponents of girls' education, who saw it as a betrayal of a woman's primary role in life.

Medical Education

Although the founders of colleges and academies usually (and pragmatically) based their arguments for the education of girls on their usefulness to society as wives and mothers, it was inevitable that women's family roles and women's estimation of their own worth would become altered with higher levels of learning. Originally excluded from the professions, other than school teaching, women began to knock on professional doors. Medicine was an early goal, one resisted strongly by the conservative gatekeepers of the profession.[16] The resistance to women in medicine is curious. It centered on the fact that medical students would be expected to undertake dissection, indeed to become familiar with all aspects of male and female anatomy, inevitably to gain sexual knowledge. Until well into the twentieth century, the thought of women and especially girls acquiring 'worldly knowledge' caused considerable consternation. Girls were not expected to have such detailed knowledge of the human body. This was surprising, given the almost universality of midwives, the numbers of children born at home, and the practice of sending older girls to assist in a sister's household during childbirth. The possibility of having women doctors to care for women patients was the most compelling argument for women's eventual admission to the field. Yet of all the battles fought for women's entrance to higher education, the fight to become doctors was one of the fiercest. Whereas a teacher might possibly be seen as a girl, there was no way a female doctor would be so viewed.

A Story of Progress?

The pattern of demand for more education for girls, their eventual gaining of the right to primary and secondary education and, ultimately, university education, has been repeated with similar stages throughout the globe

until the present day. At times, it has taken decades; in other situations, rapid change has occurred. Some countries have made the changes due to external pressures, others to internal demands, particularly the need for a more highly skilled workforce. The history of girls' education and entry into higher education in many countries is not, however, a story of straightforward progress. There is much at stake if women gain an education and glimpse independence. Issues of culture, religion, and ideology constantly threaten to derail educational progress in many parts of the world. The step from girl to woman, independent and free of male surveillance, is a step too far for repressive patriarchal regimes. Gains made in one progressive regime can be overturned in another. In what follows I consider briefly some educational systems in nonwestern societies.

Islam and the Education of Girls

Iran provides a good example of the interplay of religious constraint and the empowerment of women in higher education. The Pahlavi regime (1925–1979) encouraged secularisation, modernisation, and westernisation, and by the end of the regime women constituted 31 percent of university enrollments.[17] In 1979, the Islamic Revolution brought that regime to an end, and in 1980, during the Iranian Cultural Revolution, universities closed for several years while the curriculum was 'purified' from 'the West and the East'—that is, freed of western and Marxist influences.[18] Yet, as Golnar Mehran argues, the imposition of religious rules and regulations, such as compulsory veiling, separate textbooks for men and women, and determining appropriate fields of study for men and women have not deterred Iranian women from accessing higher education. Attempts to significantly restrict girls from entering higher education were strongly resisted by powerful groups of women such as the Women's Social and Cultural Council. During the 2007–2008 university year, women constituted 50 percent of those studying in institutions of higher education.[19] They were well represented in many professions including science and medicine (where they were 66 percent of students), although they were a small minority in engineering. Mehran attributes Iranian women's empowerment during the Islamic revolution and in higher education to both 'government policy to train female "soldiers of Islam" and "advocates of the revolution" and women's own persistence and resistance to exclusion'.[20]

Unrest during the 2009 presidential elections in Iran and a new conservative government brought continuing calls for increasing 'Islamisation'

in universities, and some of the earlier freedoms of mixing in universities were revoked. There were moves to restrict the number of courses women could enter, such as engineering, nuclear physics, and computer sciences as well as English literature, archaeology, and business. Changes such as quotas for females were justified as it was argued women would not be taking up vocational opportunities in these areas or would find the field work too harsh. Some commentators, such as the Nobel Prize winner Shirin Ebadi, viewed the attempted restrictions as part of a deliberate policy by religious authorities to exclude women and to return them to the home.[21] As in so many patriarchal societies, the fear that girls and women would move outside the private sphere of the home and into the public sphere raises anxieties about the destabilisation of the family and hence of society. But the imposition of new restrictions does not always work, the clock cannot be turned back, and women who were used to a degree of freedom will both resist and perhaps turn to other ways to learn. They will study in small groups, subversively, as depicted by Azar Nafisi in her best-selling book *Reading Lolita in Tehran*,[22] or through online courses, if possible, to find the subjects they are now unable openly to pursue.

The fears induced by educating girls in Islamic societies, even at the primary school level, are illuminated in an Iranian sociological study published in 2005.[23] Seeking to understand why girls from some of Iran's poorest provinces did not attend primary school or dropped out of school, Mehran undertook a large qualitative study, drawing on local teachers to interview school-age girls, their parents, and others in the community. Among the cultural reasons given for poor attendance, she found the following responses: 'girls will not pay attention to religious matters if they go to school,' 'it is wrong and shameful for a [physically] big girl to go to school along with boys' (a 'big' girl was one over the age of nine) and 'girls are temporary members of the family whereas boys are permanent' (i.e., the girls will marry and leave). Religion, sexuality, and family are a heady mix, and anxieties about educating girls are never far from the surface. In this impoverished context, where girls were often needed for domestic duties, religious views could justify their withdrawal from school. The need for separate schools for girls and boys also restricts the numbers of schools available overall.

The ultimate restriction is seen in the views of the fundamentalist Taliban, who do not believe in educating girls over the age of 10 at all, leading to the destruction of hundreds of schools and the complete absence of girls' educational opportunities in parts of Afghanistan and

Pakistan, where the Taliban hold sway. This was brought to the world's attention most starkly in October 2012 when Pakistani schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai was brutally attacked on her way home from school in Mingora in the Swat Valley. Malala's crime, in Taliban eyes, was writing a diary in Urdu for the BBC, including such prophetic entries as this:

> Since today was the last day of our school, we decided to play in the playground a bit longer. I am of the view that the school will one day reopen but while leaving I looked at the building as if I would not come here again.[24]

Malala's recovery, and her resilience and bravery in continuing to advocate for the education of girls in Pakistan, has brought global attention to the problem and inspired admiration for those brave enough to challenge extreme patriarchal cultures.[25] She became the world's youngest Nobel Prize winner in 2014.

By complete contrast, the Islamic kingdom of Saudi Arabia, also governed by shari'a law, has recently broadened educational opportunities for girls and women quite dramatically in its US$3 billion overhaul of education, seeking to move beyond oil to a knowledge-based economy.[26] Jacobs suggests that the rapid rise of women's education in oil-producing countries could be taken as evidence that traditional constraints can be overcome by modernisation.[27] Saudi Arabia seems to fit this model. In a brief period from 1983 to 1989, there was a 132 percent increase in numbers of women attending universities, more dramatic than the 95 percent increase for men, bringing the number of women students to 47,000. Education for girls is a recent development in Saudi Arabia: It was only in the 1960s that primary schools were opened to girls, and until 2003, all schools at all levels for girls were managed under a separate ministry from those for boys. King Abdullah, a long-serving monarch who died in January 2015, took large steps to increase the involvement of women, particularly in science and research and in the fields of medicine, computer sciences, business, and agriculture. Several large universities now offer women opportunities to graduate and to undertake postgraduate degrees. King Abdullah University for Science and Technology, a graduate-level university, is the first coeducational university campus in Saudi Arabia. Women are allowed to mix freely with men and to drive on campus, and they are not required to wear veils in the coeducational classes.[28]

Princess Noura bint Abdulrahman University is a women-only educational campus that can educate up to 50,000 students. The campus is

divided into several colleges and specific units, including a separate medical research campus and hospital area. A very rich series of scholarships under the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Scholarship Programme was implemented in late 2004 to increase the number of Saudis, especially women, attending western universities.[29] Samira Ibrahim Islam points out that in 2010 an estimated 15,616 Saudi students (25 percent of whom were women) were studying for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in the United Kingdom, for example.[30] In all, in 2010, 63.42 percent of all Saudi graduates were women and 58 percent of undergraduates were women. The majority were studying science or humanities while a sizable minority studied education, law, business, and social sciences. This is a stunning reversal of a situation in which few Saudi women before the 1960s attended schools. In all, as Islam reports, 'Saudi women are vigorously pursuing higher education'.[31]

But what does this welcome level of women's education mean in a conservative Arab society dominated by clerics? How much independence do young Saudi women gain through their education? Jacobs's assessment that access does not necessarily lead to equal outcomes is highly relevant here. Samira Islam makes some interesting points. 'It is hard to envisage the possibilities that open up when there are almost no budgetary restrictions that will interfere in the development of higher education', she reflects.[32] But where will that expansion lead? How will Saudi Arabia benefit from its well-educated women? Where will the 50,000 graduates from Princess Noura bint Abdulrahman University find work? A major challenge is opening up vocational opportunities for women, and here Islam speculates whether education can be separated from culture. How, for instance, can women find a level of independence and satisfying careers when they cannot leave home without a male escort from their family, when they cannot currently drive or ride a bicycle or take a bus?

Most Saudi institutions are segregated by sex. There is a large mismatch between the numbers of highly educated women, including many who have studied abroad, and the available positions, most of which are in the public sector. Interestingly, about 40 percent of Saudi doctors are women, underlining the view common in the nineteenth-century West that women were best treated by other women and that certain vocations should remain sex segregated, at least to an extent. In 2010, Saudi women's participation in the workforce was 14.4 percent, low even by the standards of other Gulf States, and 78.3 percent of unemployed women held university degrees. For those who do work, resignation at the age of marriage (about

25 years) is typical. The future is difficult to predict here. Perhaps the patterns that prevailed in the West will be repeated, where girls who gained an education then fought for the gradual opening of careers and professional status that went with it. Or, as in the case of Iran, the clock might be turned back and precious gains threatened. It has been said that educating women is indeed subversive, as its opponents feared. Those subversive seeds have been sown in many Saudi women's lives, but their future careers depend on the views of dominant princes and clerics.[33] As Maysa Jalbout argues, 'Higher access to education without equal access to jobs is a lost opportunity for women, their families and their nations'.[34]

Women Holding Up Half the Sky?

A quick overview of women's recent higher education in China reveals a pattern shaped by family background, ideology, and government policy.[35] Revolutionary change in China during the period 1930 to 1980 brought higher education to different groups of girls at different times, in keeping with prevalent ideology.[36] Mission schools had taken the lead in admitting women to higher education in the early twentieth century, particularly on the eastern seaboard and in cities such as Shanghai. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, higher education grew rapidly, meeting a need for national development. Women's participation in higher education grew from 17 percent in 1947 to 20 percent in 1950, with a peak toward 30 percent during the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s. After 1950, free education and grants to children from worker/peasant families assisted young people from less socially advantaged families to enter higher education. However, in 1957 and 1958, children from workers' and peasant families were even more favoured over those from wealthier 'rightist' families (i.e., those with a family background that could be labelled 'intellectual'). The latter were assigned to less highly esteemed institutions, such as teachers' colleges, if they were able to access higher education at all. Whereas in the 1950s students from all backgrounds had to demonstrate a level of ability, during the Cultural Revolution, peasants did not have to excel. After the Cultural Revolution, a broader mix again attended universities, with some children of 'intellectuals' admitted.[37] With a policy of economic modernisation after 1979, women represented about 30 percent of enrollments.

In 1997, China, in common with many other countries, introduced tuition fees, moving away from its policy of free education. As in most

countries of the twenty-first-century world, the numbers of Chinese women enrolling in higher education are growing toward parity. By 2004, women made up 43.8 percent of enrolments, rising to 49.6 percent by 2012. In 2010, women represented 50.3 percent of those undertaking master's degrees and 35.4 percent of those doing PhDs. Yet the fact of parity or near parity is not universally celebrated. News reports describe differential entrance scores for the *gaokao* (admission tests) for men and women, discriminating against women in certain courses.[38] Claiming 'the national interest', officials argue that some adjustment in enrollments is needed to meet personnel training needs. Citing concerns about students' future careers, gender quotas and gender-based admission scores appear to have been implemented in several universities.

A new concern has been raised by the ending of China's infamous one-child policy. Scholar Ye Liu argues that the one-child policy opened up opportunities in education for urban girls. Whereas in larger families, boys' education was prioritised, if the single child was a girl, she was likely to be encouraged to further her education. Liu argues that 'it is clear that the [one-child] policy was accompanied by a steady increase in women's participation in higher education'.[39] Liu fears that in a climate where preference for sons still prevails, if parents have two children, one a favored son, the gender equality that urban families achieved during the one-child generation may cease to exist.

Educating Girls in the Twenty-First Century

> An academic revolution has taken place in higher education in the past half century marked by transformations unprecedented in scope and diversity.[40]

In a remarkably short time, from a historical perspective, a period of only 150 years in the developed world and even less in the developing world, girls have emerged from the home and the domestic workplace to share higher education with their brothers. Women make up the majority of undergraduates in many countries of the developed world and a large part of the developing world. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development predicted in 2008 that 'women will form the majority in student populations in most developed countries and will substantially expand their participation everywhere'.[41] Across the Arab world, women outnumber men in tertiary education with a female-to-male enrolment ratio of 108 percent. In Qatar, the oil-rich peninsula jutting off Saudi

Arabia into the Persian Gulf, nearly seven times as many women as men are enrolled in university.[42] Girls globally appear on mixed campuses studying in most parts of the world next to their male peers. But as Penney et al. conclude, 'numbers are not enough'.[43] And, as Jacobs reminded us, access is one thing, experience and outcomes another.

In many ways, women's experience of higher education differs from men's. They still tend to study different fields, with women constituting worldwide only 23 percent of students in engineering, manufacturing, and construction in 2007, for example, while making up 68 percent of those studying education.[44] Education has long been the women's field *par excellence*, and even in countries with sex-segregated schools, women can pursue meaningful careers in education, following in the footsteps of the governesses who started the educational revolution for girls. Medicine, which fought so hard to exclude young women, has fallen to them with enrollments of over 60 percent women in some countries, particularly in the Islamic world, for example, where sex-segregated careers are typical. Yet so often the fields studied by women, or the specialisations within fields, are those that command lower salaries.

In university governance itself, women are still a minority, although some symbolic (and very tangible) gains have been made with women presidents in the United States at such leading institutions as Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and most recently the appointment of a woman vice chancellor at Oxford. Gender differences remain in numbers of students who obtain higher degrees, in promotions and salary levels, as well as with concerns about sexual harassment and gender-based restrictions. In countries where women's role is severely constrained to the home, it is frequently difficult for women students or faculty to meet fieldwork needs. In countries that value, and reward, study abroad, it can be difficult for women with families to gain the necessary support for travel. While these matters are all significant, what lies behind them is even more crucial: a generalised sense of anxiety about women's advances, a disturbance of the gender regime.

Gender Anxiety

Throughout the history of the education of women, the entrance of girls to educational institutions in significant numbers has caused enormous anxiety, has 'threatened the very principle of gender polarity', in the words of Carroll Smith-Rosenberg.[45] This anxiety was evident as women

began to enter higher education in the latter part of the nineteenth century. As is now well known, male doctors inveighed against the education of women, arguing that the use of their brains would interfere with women's ability to produce children. When that notion was disproved, the argument shifted. Educating women in any but the crafts of the household would *disincline* women from motherhood and devotion to their role as wives. It would threaten the sanctity of the family. This appeared to have more salience, as the first cohorts of university graduates in the United States, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, for example, formed matrimonial bonds less often than their sisters and, when they did marry, frequently did so at a later age.[46] Later marriage, and no marriage at all, led to a lowered birth rate among highly educated women, a further cause for anxiety. Of women who attended the prestigious women's college Bryn Mawr between 1889 and 1908, for example, 55 percent had not married and 62 percent entered graduate school. Of those who married, 54 percent continued in a career, 'remaining economically autonomous'.[47] This was a typical pattern for early women graduates in the West. Yet subsequent generations married in greater numbers and were less likely to pursue higher degrees. In part, this was due to an increasing normalisation of university-level education for women in the West as numbers increased throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. It was also a reaction to the virulent attacks on educated women, particularly those who chose not to marry or to live with other women or in women-centered communities, women who were often characterised as 'mannish' and as deviant or asexual by the new breed of sexologists.[48]

Is it inevitable that the first cohorts of women in any level of higher education attract the opprobrium of their elders and are seen as betraying their gender? A current issue concerning Chinese women PhDs is directly reminiscent of the attitudes to highly educated women in the West at the beginning of the twentieth century. A recent web magazine article reported on gender anxiety about female PhDs. In China, they say that there are three genders: male, female, and female PhD. 'It's a joke that means we're asexual and not feminine enough', says Deng, a 27-year-old sociology PhD candidate from China's southern province of Hunan.[49] Such women are branded as aloof, sexless spinsters, a direct parallel to the attitudes to the first women to gain degrees in the West. Now, with unprecedented numbers of Chinese women undertaking higher degrees, the criticism and ridicule they face is worrying gender experts who see it as a reflection of conservative values. Again we see a case of gender anxiety

as women approach the same numbers as men in higher education and, what is more, appear less interested in marriage and more concerned with independence.

It has become a truism that higher education for women is linked to lower fertility, another reason for alarm for those wishing to maintain the traditional family at all costs. For many years and through many studies, this did indeed seem to be the case.[50] Does higher education disincline women from bearing children, change their attitude toward the division of labour? It is harder to untangle the reasons for this purported lower fertility as more women gain higher education throughout the world. A study of Japanese women unpacks some of the complexities. Shirahase noted the generally accepted understanding that higher education is linked with lower fertility in Japan and set out to determine the factors behind lower fertility.[51] The author found, not surprisingly, that women with higher education postpone marriage until they are older. After assessing a range of other factors, social class background, labour force participation, and attitudes toward the sexual division of labour, Shirahase concludes that age at marriage is the major factor determining declining birth rates. This was also the case in relation to earlier cohorts of women whose lower birth rates attracted attention. Quite frequently when they did marry, the interval between marriage and first birth was quite short, as was the interval between the first and any subsequent births.[52] Studies from Norway and the United States have suggested, however, that the relationship between higher education and lower birth rates has been reversed, and, in fact, it is those with fewer years of education who are curtailing births.[53]

A key question to consider for those of us concerned with the history of the girl is whether higher education offers a girl or young woman the means to gain more control over her life, both economic and reproductive, and more autonomy from the rule of the father or husband. And in gaining that measure of control, does she then provoke gender disquiet in those around her?

As well as issues of marriage, partnering, and reproduction, the issue of labour force participation for highly educated women is illuminating. Women do not always enjoy the same labour market dividend from their years of higher education as do men. In societies that retain a strong patriarchal culture, decisions about women's participation in paid work are often made by male members of the family.[54] Noting the very low participation of Jordanian women in the workplace, Jaber writes of culture and the persistence of barriers to work. Jordanian women are not expected to

work in mixed-sex environments or with foreign females. These issues also prevent well-educated Saudi women from entering all but a few workplaces. In western societies where such restraints do not apply, women have made much stronger inroads into the labour force. They still tend to work in different parts of the labour market from men and to face a persistent gender gap in salaries as well as the life-long deficit for many women caused by career interruptions due to child rearing.

Since the earliest days of women's entrance to higher education, there have been attempts to curb women's enrollments when they appeared to outnumber men's. In the period from 1870 to 1929 in the United States, when numbers of women in coeducational colleges and universities increased significantly, anxiety mounted. In 1900, enrollment at the University of Cincinnati was over 80 percent female and at Boston University, over 70 percent.[55] The fear that women would dominate and thus discourage male enrollments led to attempts to separate the genders for instruction during the first two years at the University of Chicago, female quotas at Stanford University, and Wesleyan University abandoning coeducation in response to concerns from male students and faculty.[56] Institutional responses to increasing numbers of women and anxieties about their place in well-established institutions of higher learning led to the growth of separate colleges for women, especially in the northeastern United States. Those separate colleges would also provide greater opportunities for highly educated women to become faculty members, as they were frequently overlooked or employed at very low levels in coeducational institutions. Yet colleges for women only also raised disquiet as communities of like-minded women, seemingly free of men, appeared to reject the primacy of domesticity and marriage.[57]

The anxieties about Chinese female PhDs, alluded to earlier, echo the concern that too much education will make girls less amenable to male demands, less 'desirable' in male terms. As various institutions sought to restrict female enrollment in certain areas in the early twentieth-century West, now we see threats to women's enrollment in particular fields in Iran and the imposition of higher entrance scores for women in China and no doubt elsewhere. Elite American universities are starting to favour boys in their admission procedures because they think that the mix of students is important for everyone.[58] There is talk of the feminisation of higher education. As historians of women know, with the use of the term 'feminisation' in relation to a particular area comes an implied concern, a cultural anxiety, even a 'moral panic' about a perceived threat to the gender order.

Leathwood and Read argue that this moral panic extends to a concern that with the paucity of male teachers, boys too will become 'feminised', their masculine characteristics suppressed through a more female teaching style.[59]

Leathwood and Read suggest that greater freedoms for women are often accompanied by attempts to reinforce femininity with the assistance of the media. In western societies, both media and consumer society combine to reinforce gender stereotypes, a possible reaction to the increasing equality of women in education and society. Clothing and toys for young girls and boys are more strictly gender segregated than in decades past, with pink and blue sections of toy shops, girls' and boys' sections in bookshops, and clothing outlets gender differentiated from infancy. A feminine beauty ideal is pervasively and persuasively peddled through the media and, increasingly, through the internet.

Can we interpret this extreme presentation of gender differences as an anxiety about the blurring of gender boundaries and the need to strictly police them? A recent analysis of the content of advertisements on websites targeted at adolescents looked specifically at the portrayal of the beauty ideal, an ideal focused on almost impossible thinness.[60] The authors found that much web advertising, unlike magazine and television advertising, could not be easily separated from content and much was age inappropriate for young girls, such as the advertising of weight-loss products. The emphasis in advertising for cosmetics and beauty products, as well as for weight loss, was 'attractiveness and the thin ideal',[61] and the companies often used celebrities in their promotions. This emphasis on ideal feminine appearance, while not new, seems to be intensifying on the internet and constitutes at the very least a distraction from education and sporting activities and a cause for anxiety for teenage girls.

Sweet Girl Graduates?

The popular idea of girlhood, described by Sally Mitchell, 'became enormously popular in the last quarter of the nineteenth century':

> Young lady and young person—like lady and woman—had class references; girl is inclusive. It takes in work girl, servant girl, factory girl, college girl or girl graduate, shop-girl, bachelor girl, girl journalist, and office girl. It includes a schoolgirl as well, but she is not a child.[62]

The college girl and the girl graduate were key to new life options for girls. Not only did college girls or girl graduates enjoy a new stage in the female life course and the possibility of joining male professions, they were part of a new girls' culture. This culture encompassed certain freedoms and the ability to form a new self, at least for a time, free of the restrictions of domesticity. These freedoms have been progressively achieved by ever larger numbers across the globe and have convincingly reshaped girlhood for millions. In claiming higher education girls have also seized a new degree of independence that threatened, and continues to threaten, the ever-fragile boundary between men and women. For the bearers of strict religious ideologies, the innocence of girl graduates has been compromised, and their access to forbidden knowledge is a threat to their value as submissive wives. Yet young women refuse, on the whole, any designation as 'sweet girl graduates', becoming, on the contrary, graduates who wish above all to engage fully in their societies.

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CHAPTER 12

The 'Girl-Hawking War' in Colonial Lagos

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> It was noticed in 1946, that a girl hawker, aged 9, was frequently visiting a man whose wife was away. One night the girl was seen emerging after the man's door had been closed for some time. The girl was questioned and admitted that she had been going regularly for sexual intercourse to the man, and he gave her money. The man was tackled and he admitted this.[1]

In 1939, Nigeria was divided administratively into four divisions: the Colony of Lagos (a small enclave on the island) and the Protectorate, which comprised three provinces: the Northern, Eastern, and Western Provinces.[2] The coastal town of Lagos, which had become a British colony in 1861, was the main urban centre in the country. The majority of the population was Yoruba, but during the 1930s, there was an influx of migrants into the city from all over Nigeria as well as from outside of the country. Emigrants came from Brazil, Cuba, and Sierra Leone and introduced new forms of dress, food, language, religion, and education to the city.[3] In addition, there was also a large temporary population of European soldiers and seamen who also brought new cultural and social habits to Lagos.[4] The introduction of these new lifestyles had a profound

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M. O'Dowd, J. Purvis (eds.), *A History of the Girl*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4_12

influence on society in colonial Lagos. As Monsuru O. Muritala argues, the urbanisation of Lagos from the 1930s redefined social and cultural values in the city.[5]

The economic crash of 1929 along with decreasing profits from agricultural goods drew large numbers of young migrants from rural areas to Lagos. In 1931, it was recorded in the census of Nigeria that over 132,000 people under the age of 15 lived in Lagos. This age category constituted 40 percent of the total population of Lagos.[6] Ayodeji Olukoju has also noted that the 1931 census figures revealed the increasing number of males in the city's population. In 1925, there were an estimated 39,960 adult males compared to 33,000 adult females in Lagos. By 1931, the figure for men had risen to 52,923 (57.5 percent) while that for women was 39,188 (42.5 percent).[7]

Most of the young people included in the 1931 census were those who travelled to the city to find employment or to acquire an education.[8] They usually stayed with relatives already living in the city. The easiest available job for girls under the age of 15 was hawking. It was a traditional and very popular activity around markets in Yorubaland. The indigenous Yoruba people regarded hawking of wares by both boys and girls as a filial duty that enabled children to assist their parents or guardians in the subsistence of the family, payment of school fees, and the buying of clothes.[9] According to Toyin Falola, wares hawked were advertised with the singing of songs that were specific to the product sold. He asserted that goods were sold or hawked by girls to supplement the sales made by their mothers.[10] In 1930s Lagos, however, hawking by girls was increasingly linked to prostitution.

There were two categories of girl hawkers in the city. First, there were girls who hawked wares for their guardians, who usually beat the girls if they failed to sell all their goods. Consequently, these girls preferred not to return home for fear of being beaten. This made them vulnerable to the financial enticements of prostitution. The girls were often lured by European men who did not solicit the girls themselves but sent their stewards to bring the children to their homes, gave them money to cover the cost of their goods, and then had sexual intercourse with them.[11] The second category consisted of girls who were brought from their villages to Lagos to live with female relatives, vaguely referred to as 'aunts', who had promised their parents to educate or employ them. The girls' families were willing to let their children, especially their daughters, move to the city and work as domestic servants or go to school in order to raise the families' standard of living.[12] The girls' aunts, however, did not educate them

but instead engaged them as girl hawkers who attracted men and took them to brothels owned by the aunts. The latter collected and kept the money paid by the men. Other child hawkers were sent out late at night to solicit and lead men to older prostitutes.

This second category usually consisted of girls who were between the ages of 10 and 15. An older woman could have three or more of these children in her charge in her home. The girls were left in a room on their own. When a demand was made for a 'baby', the men entered the room and could choose the girl that they preferred.[13] The men were led to the girls by pimps, called 'boma boys (street boys)'. During the day these girls worked as street hawkers around Portonovo Market Street, Taiwo Street, and Williams Street on Lagos Island.[14]

Young girls also worked in brothels, which were usually managed by older women. The ages of the girls who worked in the brothels ranged from 9 to 24. Lagos drivers acted as touts and pimps who facilitated the patronage of the child prostitutes by European men. It is not surprising that in Yoruba societies, the nickname for taxi drivers is *oko asewo*, which literally means the 'husband of prostitutes'. According to a 1946 report by Alison Izzett, the first female welfare officer in Lagos, most of these men went up-country to

> bring back these girls as wives, ostensibly to train them, actually for prostitution. Few girls have the pluck or chance to get away. Other complaints show that a bona fide husband marries a girl in his country and brings her back to Lagos. A brother or relative of hers then entices her away to become a prostitute. This applies mostly to girls between the ages of 16 and 17 years.[15]

The increasing preponderance of child hawkers below the age of 14 was due to the growing demand for virgins by European seamen. Furthermore, men from the Eastern Provinces were reported to believe that sexual intercourse with virgins cured venereal diseases.[16] The patronage of virgins by European seamen might have been the result of conversations with local men who explained this belief to them. A new perception also became common in the Eastern Provinces that a girl's marriage value was enhanced as a consequence of having had a sexual relationship with a European.[17] This view was clearly a departure from the traditional respect for virginity in almost all Nigerian communities.[18] The report by Alison Izzett observed that one of the impacts of the introduction of European habits to Lagos was the sexual activity of unmarried girls:

> …experience shows that many Yoruba Girls who are employed as maid servants away from home indulge in promiscuous sexual intercourse at a very early age as a means of getting money to buy little extras, clothes and food they desire, as their normal lives are dull and restricted.[19]

From the early 1930s, newspaper editorials began to reflect on what was considered a burgeoning social menace in Lagos: the involvement of hawking girls in prostitution and other crimes. There was also alarm at the rise in incidences of venereal disease within the colonial military personnel. These concerns were expressed in headlines such as 'Girl Hawkers Morals', 'Save the Future Mothers',[20] and 'Street Indecencies'.[21] The authors of these articles alleged that although some of the girls were lured into prostitution, some consciously sold their bodies while pretending to be vendors.[22] Other commentators did not share such sentiments but evoked the native customs, through images of hawking as a preparation of the girl child for marriage and motherhood:

> … we have insisted and are still insisting upon the idea that a sympathetic view should be taken of this matter of hawking… From investigation, one would discover that some parents who are not poor have that idea that they are training their children to a trade which as time goes on they will understand and may have to fall back upon when they become mothers and have to maintain a family … Thus, trade done by hawking is considered part of the training of girls against the responsibilities of motherhood. Where parents are poor, girls are encouraged to trade and hawk wares about so that they may be able to provide themselves with several little things that the parents cannot afford to buy for them. In this way, the girl herself contributes towards her trousseau at marriage. According to native customs, not adulterated native with foreign custom, whatever money the husband gives her is but a minor part of the goods she takes with her to her husband's house. … If hawking by girls is prohibited, apart from the inconvenience it would cause to those who cannot go to the markets to get food and to the parents, and the girls who have to depend upon it for their living, the question arises, what would we suggest to the parents of the girls to set them to do?[23]

While it is correct to assert that hawking was a Yoruba native custom and a livelihood option for the poor and the uneducated, it is also clear that there was an increasingly strong link between girl hawking and prostitution. By the 1940s, there was unanimous agreement by concerned residents of Lagos and the colonial government that hawking by girls between the ages of 9 and 16 years led to their sexual molestation and prostitution.

Before World War II, there was no government social welfare system in Nigeria. Social problems were either not recognised or were ignored by the government. It was largely left to the missions, family, and a small number of voluntary organisations to try to resolve such issues. In 1943, in response to a growing concern about the increase in social problems, including girl hawking, the colonial government established a Social Welfare Service in the Colony and Protectorate.[24] The welfare officers were a combination of Europeans and Africans. To ensure the smooth operation of the welfare office, the colonial government promulgated the Children and Young Persons Ordinance of 1943. Under this ordinance, juvenile courts, remand homes, and girls' hostels were established. Street trading or hawking by children was made a punishable offence for girls under the age of 16 years.[25] The ordinance, however, did not provide for any punishment of parents or guardians who compelled their wards to work as prostitutes.[26] A Venereal Disease Ordinance was also passed in 1943 as the colonial administration aimed to curb the high rates of venereal diseases among serving soldiers.

The phenomenon of girl hawkers working as prostitutes also attracted the attention of women's organisations, such as the Lagos Women's League and the Women's Party.[27] These associations requested that the colonial government prohibit girl hawking by law. In addition, a Women's Welfare Council was formed to act as an advisory body on social problems affecting women and girls. It was composed of British and Nigerian women and was affiliated with the National Council of Girls Club in the United Kingdom, a kindred organisation. This group met with the colonial authority in 1944 and made three suggestions. First, it argued that it was essential to appoint women to the police force. Second, it proposed that the government establish new educational institutions to train girls as domestic servants so that they could find alternative forms of employment. The third request was that ineffective bylaws forbidding girl hawking should be strengthened with more effective legislation.[28]

Consequently, government officials met with the Women's Welfare Council on 15 August 1944 and agreed that:

1. An advisory body be established and a female Welfare Officer be appointed to work hand in hand with the Women's Welfare Council.
2. Child hawking and child prostitution be dealt with under the Children and Young Persons Ordinance.

3. A Boys' Reformatory Home and a Girls' Hostel be established as transit homes for delinquent children.
4. The Women's Welfare Council should recommend educated young women who could be trained as welfare officers on Youth Leadership courses in the United Kingdom.[29]

By 1945, two Nigerian men and women were granted scholarships and trained in the United Kingdom for one year. When they returned, they were appointed to assist the social welfare officers in the new department.[30] Among the latter was Alison Izzett, who as noted above, was appointed the first female welfare officer in Lagos in 1946. The arrival of Izzet signaled a robust commitment to addressing welfare issues concerning girls. She undertook investigations with the inmates of the girls' hostels and patients of venereal diseases in order to understand the girl-hawker phenomenon, juvenile prostitution, and the links between hawking and child prostitution.[31]

Under the terms of the Children and Young Persons Ordinance, the juvenile court system was established in Lagos in 1946. Prior to this date, disorderly youth had been handled through consultations with the child's family or relatives. With the introduction of the juvenile court, social welfare officers determined whether the child should be tried for an offence, repatriated, released to guardians or parents, placed under voluntary supervision, or referred to a Family Welfare Centre.[32]

The records of the Social Welfare Service in the Colony and Protectorate indicate that the new office experienced more social problems with girls than with the boys:

> In Nigeria, out of 923 juveniles convicted in 1946 by the Juvenile Court in Lagos, 668 were found guilty of street-hawking. … the majority of culprits (742) were girls and—as the girls' vagrancy frequently borders on prostitution—the whole problem of juvenile vagrancy was saturated with the problems of child prostitution.[33]

As Table 12.1 reveals, the majority of the cases which officials decided not to refer to a trial also involved girls.

In 1947, the Social Welfare officers dealt with 838 cases concerning girls under the age of 17 (see Table 12.2). Fifty-seven of the children were deemed to be living in 'moral danger', which was a catchall description for sexual abuse of different kinds.[34] In a report on the cases, the social welfare office also noted:

> In nearly all cases of the 369 child hawkers, home inquiries and medical examinations were made and 'an alarmingly high percentage of the juveniles had venereal disease'. As 'the incidence of the disease in boys of under 17 age group is negligible…the adult male population of Lagos has a lot to answer for'.[35]

In addition to the Children and Young Persons Ordinance of 1943, the government also promulgated, in 1946, Regulations to Prevent Children Trading in the Streets.[36] This law was widely circulated in Lagos in both English and Yoruba 'by means of press communiques, wireless broadcast in various parts of the town' as well as statements by the more traditional bellringer.[37] Under the new regulations, it was forbidden for girls under the age of 16 to hawk or sell, unless they were employed by their parents or guardians appointed by a court. Even if employed by their parents, girls under 16 were not allowed to sell before 6 a.m. and after 6 p.m. on certain streets on the Lagos Island.[38]

Other measures included the encouragement of the education of girls 'with special emphasis on Domestic Science',[39] the repatriation of girls

Table 12.1 Cases not referred to a court trial in 1946

Child protection unit decision	*Boys*	*Girls*
Repatriated	0	16
Released to guardian	13	30
Placed under voluntary supervision	5	9
Referred to Family Welfare Centre	0	2
	18	57

Source: NAI/OndoProf 1/3, *Social Welfare in the Colony and Protectorate*, p. 166

Table 12.2 Social Welfare Cases involving Girls under the Age of 17 in 1947

Confirmed prostitutes	38
Suspected of prostitution	25
Living in unsuitable homes (young girls who lived alone with males)	20
Living in moral danger	57
Forced into uncongenial marriage at an early age	9
Child wives (married girls under 14)	18
Sexual exploitation	167
Child hawkers	369

who had not been referred to the juvenile court but who were considered to be in 'moral danger', and the establishment of Girls' Clubs. As the proviso in the Children and Young Persons Ordinance of 1943 stipulated:

> The Governor in Council notwithstanding any native law or custom to the contrary may by order declare that in any area in Nigeria described in such order no person shall give or acquire the custody, possession, control or guardianship of any child or of any young person or of any female of any specified age below the age of 17 years or shall remove any such female from such area save in accordance with rules made by the Governor in Council and such rules may be either general or made in respect of any particular area in Nigeria.[40]

In addition, the ordinance also required that girls who came to Lagos from a rural area must be registered by their guardians within 48 hours of their arrival. Girl hawkers who were suspected of prostitution were detained in girls' hostels, which served as remand homes, for examination and investigation.[41] These arrangements were not foolproof. A major problem was that all the girls were kept together in the same hostels, regardless of their age or level of involvement in child prostitution. The Social Welfare Office also realised that the problem could not be solved by direct government action only; public support was necessary to undertake both preventive and remedial work. Thus, the office retained the help of women's organisations as advisory bodies; and tribal unions (organisations formed to promote the cultural interests of different tribes) for assistance in the repatriation of the girls to their hometowns.[42] In addition, the Women's Welfare Council established a creative recreation club for girls, particularly for victims of girl hawking who were too old to be admitted into secondary schools or were due to leave school. The programme included drawing, music, dancing, educational games, and drama. The findings of the government and its agencies about the experiences of these girl children informed the measures adopted for solving these social menaces.

Conclusion

The girl hawking war in colonial Lagos in the 1940s was aimed at curbing the rising trend in child prostitution and other juvenile crime involving girls in the colony of Lagos. The fight against girl hawking revealed that

Nigerian girls were vulnerable to the problems that arose as a result of the combination of urbanisation and colonisation. Ethnic groups in the region redefined their cultural values in response to increased poverty and the need for young people to migrate to the city. The link between girl hawking and prostitution may have begun in the late 1920s, but the government began to take measures to deal with it only when the rates of venereal disease in the army began to increase. The colonial administrators introduced measures to curb child prostitution, but it is also important to note that most of the patrons of child prostitutes were European men.

The colonial girl hawking war that involved the rescue of child prostitutes through the rehabilitation of the girls in domestic training centres and repatriating the girls to their hometowns with help from their tribal unions was to a great extent a success. Opponents of the new regulations believed that the campaign against hawking was at odds with the Yoruba ideology that perceived hawking as the means by which children contributed to their family's income. Nevertheless, the government's campaign against girl hawking led to a considerable reduction in the prevalence of child prostitution. In addition, many young girls voluntarily sought the assistance of women welfare officers in order to escape from working as prostitutes. The Children and Young Persons Ordinance of 1943 undoubtedly provided the framework for the establishment of a welfare system that aimed to provide care and protection for girls under the age of 17.

Notes

1. National Archives, Ibadan (NAI)/ComCol I/2844, 'Child Prostitution in Lagos, 1942–46', 84.
2. A. I. Asiwaju, 'The Western Provinces under Colonial Rule' in O. Ikime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History* (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980), 429.
3. Monsuru O. Muritala, 'Urban Livelihood in Lagos, 1861–1960' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Ibadan, 2014), 138.
4. NAI/ComCol I 2844, 'Child Prostitution in Lagos, 1942–46', 86. See also Saheed Aderinto, *When Sex Threatened the State: Illicit Sexuality, Nationalism, and Politics in Colonial Nigeria, 1900–1958* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 93–112.
5. Muritala, 'Urban Livelihood in Lagos, 1861–1960', 138.
6. Abosede A. George, *Making Modern Girls: A History of Girlhood, Labor, and Social Development in Colonial Lagos* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014), 91–93.

7. Ayodeji Olukoju, 'Population Pressure, Housing and Sanitation in West Africa's Premier Port-City: Lagos 1900–1939', *The Great Circle*, 15, no. 2 (1993), 92. Olukoju suggested that the number of women in Lagos may have been underrecorded due to the sort of work that many women undertook: 'street hawking and retail trading in the markets (both of which engaged women within and outside the city and hampered enumeration) and prostitution (the practitioners of which would have declined a head count …)'.
8. George, *Making Modern Girls*, 91–93.
9. Laurent Fourchard, 'Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency in Nigeria, 1920–60', *Journal of African History,* 47 (2006), 115.
10. Toyin Falola, 'Trade and Market in Pre-Colonial Economy' in G. O. Ogunremi et al. (eds), *An Economic History of West Africa* (Lagos: First Academic Publishers, 2005), 65.
11. NAI/ComCol I/2844, 'Child Prostitution in Lagos, 1942–46', 79–80.
12. Olatunde B, Lawuyi, 'Education, Mobility, and Gender within the Nigerian Informal Economy: The Domestic Service Example', *Sociologus: A Journal for Empirical Ethno-Sociology and Ethno*-Psychology, new series, 40, no. 1 (1990), 41.
13. NAI/ComCol I/248/107, 'Memorandum of Social Problems as it affects Women and Girls in the township of Lagos.', 26.
14. Ibid.
15. NAI/ComCol I/2844, 'Child Prostitution in Lagos, 1942–6', 84.
16. Ibid., 83.
17. Ibid., 86.
18. Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas* (Lagos: CSS Bookshops, 1921), 115.
19. 'Child Prostitution in Lagos', 87.
20. Sogidi, 'Save the Future Mothers,' 21 September 1935; Kabiboy, 'Girl Hawkers' Morals,' *The Comet*, 26 October 1935 as cited in Aderinto, *When Sex Threatened the State*, 197.
21. Editorial Note: 'Street Indecencies', *Lagos Daily News,* 27 May 1932.
22. Aderinto, *When Sex Threatened the State*, 79.
23. Editorial Note: 'These Hard Times', *Lagos Daily News,* 1 July 1932.
24. NAI/OndoProf 1/3, 'Social Welfare in the Colony and Protectorate', 119.
25. NAI/ComCol I/2844. 'Regulations to Prevent Children Trading in the Streets' in 'Child Prostitution in Lagos, 1942–46', 1.
26. Ibid., 98.
27. 'Child Prostitution in Lagos, 1942–46', 79; Olayemi C. Blaize, 'Moral Dangers in the Community', correspondence in *Daily Times*, 24 November 1944.

28. NAI/ComCol I/248/107, Minutes of the Women's Welfare Council in 'Memorandum of Social Problems as it affects Women and Girls in the township of Lagos', 39–41.
29. NAI/ComCol I/2844, 'Child Prostitution in Lagos, 1942–46', 46.
30. NAI/OndoProf 1/3, 'Social Welfare in the Colony and Protectorate', 6 and 66.
31. George, *Making Modern Girls*, 136.
32. NAI/OndoProf 1/3, 'Social Welfare in the Colony and Protectorate', 163.
33. Ibid., 145.
34. NAI/ComCol I/2786. 'Statement re-Children and Young Persons Ordinance' in 'Children and Young Persons Bill of 1943'. See also *Daily Times* July 3, 1946.
35. Ibid.
36. NAI/ComCol I/2786, 'Children and Young Persons Bill of 1943', 189.
37. Ibid. See also *Daily Times*, 3 July 1946.
38. These streets were the Marina, Igbosere Road, Broad Street, Balogun Street, Victoria Street, Ereko Street, Racecourse Road, Tinubu Square, Moloney Street, Idumagbo Avenue, Ikoyi Road, Moloney Bridge Street, Force Road, Iddo Road, Denton Causeway, and all streets in Ikoyi. See NAI/ComCol I/2786, 'Children and Young Persons Bill of 1943', 189.
39. Ibid., 44.
40. Ibid. *See also Daily Times*, 3 July 1946.
41. NAI/ComCol I 2844, 'Child Prostitution in Lagos, 1942–46', 87.
42. NAI/OndoProf 1/3, 'Social Welfare in the Colony and Protectorate', 128.

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CHAPTER 13

Biopolitics of Dai Girls: Work, Marriage, and a Desirable Lifestyle

Yan Hu

This chapter explores the work and marriage migration patterns of Chinese girls from a rural village to a large city. The analysis is based on interviews undertaken in 2008 in the village of Dadenghan of Jiexiang town situated on the border between south west China and Myanmar in the province of Yunnan. The majority of the 1028 villagers (consisting of 235 households) were from the Dai ethnic minority group. The neighbouring village across the border in Myanmar is also Dai.[1] The area is in the administrative jurisdiction of the county-level city of Ruili, a region that has witnessed considerable economic growth since the 1990s.[2] The main aim of the study is to demonstrate the ways in which girls from rural areas exercised agency in their search for their ideal identities and lifestyles. The girls pursued their preferred choices in life through migration and marriage, and, in doing so, they unconsciously embodied a biopolitical aspiration to and a demand for social justice that is implicit in their movement from their home village to the city. This chapter draws on the concept of deterritorialising mobility or the process by which the cultural ties of the girls to their native villages were severed through their migration to a new urban environment.[3]

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M. O'Dowd, J. Purvis (eds.), *A History of the Girl*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69278-4_13

In a general sense, the aspiration for a better life is shaped in China by the national ideology of rapid economic development and urbanisation, the legendary success of which is promoted in the mass media. For the girls in the village of Dadenghan, their dream of a more comfortable future was also inspired by the example provided by the prosperous lives of Han migrants living in urban areas in the Ruili region. The country girls yearned to break through the boundaries of exclusion from the new consumer society and by their own choices and agency become economically successful. Clearly this life trajectory is a kind of model of *Homo economicus* shaped by the neoliberalist policies of the state, that is, Foucauldian biopolitics.[4] But here I want to stress that this movement of people for an imagined future life is more than biopolitics shaped or controlled by the state. The interaction between the actions of the individuals and of the state, even within the context of biopower discussed by Foucault, leads to the emancipation of individual agency.[5] The agency of the girls is embodied in their mobility and can be interpreted as a combative, if unconscious, response to global neoliberalism. As Foucault explained: 'People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does.'[6]

Biopolitics: Mobility as a Response to Global Neoliberalism and a Demand for Social Justice

In the context of large-scale mobility and the transformation of the whole world into an extended market, biopolitics embodied in migration for work and marriage offers an opportunity to explore ideas about the homogeneity of globalisation. Marriage migration is viewed as 'the strategy for lay people to utilise globalising resources,' and hence it is 'part and parcel of "globalisation from below"'.[7] The intra-Asian flows of cross-border marriage share characteristics of '(1) gender imbalance, in that the majority are between men of wealthier countries marrying women from economically less developed countries; and (2) mediated marriage, in that the majority of the couples are introduced, either by a marriage broker or via social networks, with a prior intention of marriage and involving either no or a comparatively short period of courtship'.[8]

In addition, an analysis of the 'bottom-up' dimension to work and marriage migration can make a useful contribution to the debate on the role of the state in people's lives and, in particular, on how individuals question

and navigate state control. The lifestyle desires of Dai girls are a by-product of global capitalism, which encourages their yearning to live in an urban consumer society. Global capitalism, therefore, actively promotes migration from rural areas to the city. The pursuit of a desirable lifestyle is embodied in the biopolitics of migrants whose decision to move from their home area revealed their aspirations. Hence this biopolitical mobility can be interpreted as a means to combat exploitation and marginalisation and, thereby, to implicitly question the role of the state.[9] In 'globalisation from below', equality, tolerance, and respect are central to the desire for upward mobility as migrants explicitly seek to resist the increasing inequality or wealth gap that is part of the reality of global capitalism.

In the name of 'reflexive' globalisation, Beck points out that in the process of globalisation, 'what is new is not forced mixing but awareness of it, its self-conscious political affirmation, its reflection and recognition before a global public via the mass media, in the news and in the global social movements of blacks, women and minorities'. He argues that a demand for social justice is a by-product of global capitalism.[10] I argue that the migrants' desire for a better life constitutes a demand for social justice that is intrinsic to the phenomenon of deterritorialising mobility. Individual biopolitics as represented in the girls' migration to the city effectively demonstrates Beck's assertion of movement from the principle to the practice of social justice. By exploring the migrants' life politics in a Foucauldian sense, a perspective that can include both individual agency and structural factors, this chapter considers to what extent the realisation of desire through biopolitics is equally open to all under state neoliberalism.

In the globalisation process, work and marriage can be channels through which migrants can gain access to a higher-status group.[11] Within the administrative unit of the county-level city of Ruili, both strategies are used by young migrants (particularly girls) to acquire desirable new identities and attractive, urban lifestyles. Due, however, to the injustice resulting from the unequal distribution of educational resources, Dai girls can stay in the city only as temporary worker migrants, working as waitresses in restaurants or assembly workers in factories. It is impossible for them to secure permanent employment in the city. When they reach their early twenties, they are usually asked by their parents to return home to marry. This is why many Dai girls choose to realise their aim of remaining permanently in the city through arranged marriages with Han men.

In the eyes of the rural community, a girl who lives in the city is demonstrating her ability to acquire a better living standard than that available in her home village. The villagers perceive farming as an undesirable way of living. The commonly held view is that farm work is hard and the financial reward is low. The self-deprecation of their own lifestyle is widespread among the villagers in Dadenghan who are very aware of the wealth gap between their income and what can be earned in the city. The critique of rural life also raises questions about the relationship between the city and the rural areas and the personal choice or preference of the individual. At the core of this question is the reality of life for farmers who made the sacrifices demanded of them to support industrial development from the 1950s to the 1980s, when agricultural prices were set by the Chinese government in a planned economy. At the end of the twentieth century, however, the farming community found itself at the bottom of the resulting economic chain.

A Farming Way of Life in the Eyes of the Villagers: Formation of Class and Powerlessness

An Introduction to Ruili: Location and Population

Ruili City, a part of the Zomia area, is a county-level administrative unit that exercises jurisdiction over a wide geographical area.[12] It is topographically composed mainly of mountains (about 80 percent of Ruili) with a small number of plains along Ruili River where the towns and Ruili City are located. It is in these urban centres where rural people, mainly the Dai, meet with migrants of diverse ethnic and national backgrounds. The expansion of the migrant community in Ruili also speeded up the urbanisation and economic development of the region. According to official statistics compiled in Ruli City Hall, the total population of the city in 2008 was just over 168,000. It was a fairly cosmopolitan society composed of a number of ethnic groups, mainly Dai and Han people but also Jingpo, De'ang, and Lisu peoples and migrants from Myanmar. The Dai population was 55,934 in 2008, accounting for 33.2 percent of the total population in Ruili City. Han people accounted for more than half of the total population in the city in 2008 and thus formed the majority.

In the longer history of the region, Dai people had formed the largest ethnic group. According to both Dai and Han historical records, Dai people have lived in the Ruili region for thousands of years. Ruili was one of the

ancestral homelands of Dai people, and several Dai regimes were established with Ruili City as its capital. Han people came to Ruili for different reasons. Initially, they travelled to the area during the Ming dynasty, when the Han general Chen Yongbin stationed garrison troops in the region in order to open up rural wastelands for arable farming. From the Qing dynasty through to the establishment of the Republic of China, Han businessmen continued to be attracted to the area.[13]

After the 1950s, there were several waves of migration of Han people organised by the government, which led to the rapid growth of the Han population in Ruili. The newcomers included officials, soldiers, workers, students (mainly *Zhiqing*, the Young Intelligence), and peasants. Following the introduction of the 'Open' policy in China in 1985, the Chinese government began to promote the development of cross-border trade due to Ruili's geographical location on the Chinese–Myanmar border. This led to an increase in the migration of Han businesspeople and an economic boom in Ruili. By 1990, Han people accounted for 38 percent of the total population in the region with Dai people constituting 47 percent. Correspondingly, the city developed quickly, and the urban area was continuously extended.

In the field, I found that the suburban development of Ruili was at the expense of the villages in the hinterland of the city. Newcomers (mainly Han) gathered in the expanding urban area while most local people continued to live in rural areas. The rising economic gap created by the economic boom of recent decades is reflected in the divergent lifestyles of different ethnic groups, particularly those of Han business people and the nearby Dai villagers. The contrast embodies the concept of 'two worlds and two societies'. The villages along the borders on the plains are characterised by Dai culture while the cities are increasingly dominated by Han culture.

Villagers' Livelihoods: Hardworking Farmers with Low Incomes

Dai farmers are busy for three quarters of the year and have about three months of agricultural slack time. Although the villagers interviewed for this study had no worries about survival, they felt that their hard work was not sufficiently rewarded, and they complained that they were busier than before, yet money was always scarce. Essential investment in agriculture, such as seeds, tools, fertiliser, and other industrial products, was becoming increasingly difficult and the prices that they received for their produce

were unstable. For example, on average, the gross income of a family of four persons, including parents and two children, was about 10,000 yuan annually. After essential investments were deducted, their net income was only 4000 or 5000 yuan annually. This meant that the family had enough food but could not save sufficient money for a better life or to pay the cost of their children's education.

In the meantime, increased commercial awareness was evident in the lifestyle of the farmers through the renting of land by Han business people and their employment of Dai villagers as rent collectors. A small number of villagers exerted their agency to earn extra money in relatively traditional ways, such as building houses during the agricultural slack period, raising pigs or cattle, or selling cloth in local markets. Others took advantage of emerging opportunities in the new market economy by following the example of Han people to rent large expanses of farmland in Myanmar to plant watermelons or bananas or to work as buyers' agents or collect harvested vegetables, corn, and millet. Through such means, some members of the local community acquired a more profitable position within the food business than others, which, in turn, led to a growing economic gap between the rich and the poor within individual villages. In general, however, due to the low price of agricultural produce and the high price of industrial products, the farming population has remained at the bottom of the economic hierarchy. Farming families lacked the purchasing power to engage with the new consumer society, which young men and women found particularly frustrating.

Vulnerability to Drug Abuse and AIDS

Another consequence of the impact of commercialisation on rural life has been the increase in drug addiction, particularly among young men. In the 17 families (encompassing 70 people or so) whom I interviewed in the village of Dadenghan for this study, seven men were drug abusers. My informants told me that farming was laborious. During breaks in working in the fields, some villagers would take drugs to relieve stress and fatigue, gradually becoming addicted. Several men were selling drugs in the village, and some vegetable sellers sold drugs secretly in local markets. Villagers had easy access to drugs due to the border trade routes and were vulnerable to drug abuse, as a result of both cultural habit and geographical location. Drug abuse has led to the increased poverty, divorce and even the death of abusers and of their wives through AIDS, which in turn led to the orphaning of their children.

Miserable Farming, Attractive City

The growth of the market economy, therefore, presented the villagers with a dual challenge to their way of life. On one hand, they found themselves at the bottom of the economic hierarchy, facing an increasing wealth gap that made the life of a farmer seem laborious, unrewarding, and miserable. On the other, the easy access to drugs seemed to offer a temporary escape from that misery, which ultimately served only to compound it. Hence, it is not difficult to understand why young villagers commonly viewed farming as an unattractive form of life.

By contrast, the urban setting seemed to represent an easy life with good pay and colorful entertainment. Young rural inhabitants were drawn to the culture of consumption projected in the mass media (particularly on television, which they watched every day) and which was visible in the lives of the apparently successful inhabitants of the city who had come from their own village. They too aspired to a similar way of life. This imagined future, together with the deprecation of a farming lifestyle and the expectations of their parents, drove the young villagers to seek a better standard of living and acquire new identities rather than reproducing their parents' identities as poor farmers in a Dai border village. The young people recognised what they wanted out of life and sought to achieve their desires through their own agency and physical migration. Their desire for a future life in an urban setting also implied a demand for equality and social justice. Most migrants were, however, only dimly conscious of this. Their main motivation for leaving their native village was the attraction of the consumer society and their perception of the economic powerlessness of rural society. An additional compounding factor was the ideology of national economic development that was disseminated through the mass media and the education system.

Human Capital and Biopolitics among Dai Girls: Desire, Mobility, and Marriage

Inequality in the Geographical Distribution of Educational Resources

There was an inequality in the educational resources accessible in rural and urban parts of the Ruili region. The wealth gap meant that, proportionally, the cost of sending a child to secondary school was significantly higher in the countryside. This cost constituted a significant investment for farmers,

which resulted in high drop-out rates in rural schools, not to mention the difficulties of accessing higher education in colleges or universities.

According to the interviewees, parents who could find the means to send their children to study in an urban area were often able to arrange for them to study in primary schools in the city centre, before entering the middle schools. Students who attended primary school in in the countryside and achieved scores of 170 and higher (in Mandarin and mathematics) were eligible to attend Ruili Minzu Primary School in Ruili City when they were 10 years old and above. The best students from the primary schools chose to go to Ruili No. 1 Middle School. Other good students who were not qualified to enter this school and whose families were comparatively rich could be sent to the second best school, Ruili Minzu Middle School, also in the city centre. Only a small number of students from the countryside attended these schools. Usually fewer than 10 rural students annually were able to gain admittance to Ruili Minzu Middle School. Although access to urban schooling seemed to offer children an opportunity to transcend their roots in rural poverty, the discrepancy in educational resources during their early years left them at a disadvantage by the time they entered middle school. The differential enrollment reflects differences in class and the varying access to social and economic capital among the villagers.

Only a small proportion of rural children, therefore, benefited from the educational resources of the city during their early years. The majority were educated in the countryside, and the drop-out rate increased as students progressed through the grades and the investment in education required by the family became higher and higher. It was a commonly accepted view among many Dai people that education was of little value even if their children went to work in urban areas. Consequently, if the children were not good at school, their parents would discourage them from continuing their education, and many left school after graduating from the junior middle school at 16 years of age. Even some good students who had received admission letters from Ruili No. 1 Middle School were not permitted by their parents to continue their studies due to financial reasons.

This experience was summed up in an interview with a 17-year-old Dai girl who had discontinued her education several years before:

> Few students can enter the high school, usually one or two in a class. And Dai students dislike studying. It was too hard. We like to play and enjoy ourselves. I used to go out to play or drink with my previous classmates at night. There were fewer and fewer students in our class in the middle school

> year by year. On average, each year there were four or five drop-out students in a class.
>
> I do not worry about the future. I worked in a restaurant in the village for a short time. I am just staying at home to help my mother do some housework. I will go to work if there is any suitable chance. But at this moment, I do not want to go. Most girl classmates or friends are working in restaurants and boys are staying at home to help their parents. I have an older brother. He was recently married. Before marriage he worked in Fujian Province for good wages, over 1000 yuan each month. His wife, my sister-in-law, was my classmate. She worked as a dancer in Beijing. They knew each other not because of me, but because my brother was in the same factory in Fujian where her parents worked. They met when she went to visit her parents. They both returned home and married. Now they stay at home. My brother wanted to work in Fujian but my father would not allow him [to] go there as labour was short at home. And my father rented land to plant fruit, bringing in a good income, so he thinks it is unnecessary for my brother to work out of the village, instead he should stay at home to give a hand. (Interviewed at her home on the morning of 8 August 2009)

The discouragement from families and the lack of self-motivation is reflected in the high number of young people who leave high school before they graduate. The drop-out rate for the rural junior high school where this girl once studied had reached 30 percent by 2008 and continued to rise in subsequent years.

By contrast, Han parents supported their children in remaining at school, regardless of whether they were doing well or not. The differing perceptions of the value of education among ethnic groups also led to varying attitudes to work among young people. The contrasting views were noticed by the Dai girls whom I interviewed for this project. As one Dai girl said:

> Han men are more hardworking than Dai men. Dai men are used to playing and seldom work at home. Now the situation is getting better. Still, usually Han men learn a certain skill to make a living and support their family. So reasonably speaking, I intend to find a suitable Han man to marry. But it is hard to say. I cannot control my fate. I will marry if I meet Mr. Right, no matter what his ethnic background. (Interviewed at a jewelry shop in Jiegao District on the afternoon of 13 July 2009)

In the view of this girl, the skill to survive within the rapidly transforming urban world was connected to ethnicity and was also implicitly due to the

unequal distribution of education resources and the acquisition of cultural capital. She could also rationally identify why she was likely to choose a Han man as a husband rather than a Dai man who was incapable of surviving in the urban environment.

Dai Girls Working Out of the Village: Two Perspectives

Most of the girls whom I interviewed expressed their preference for securing employment in the city. Many young villagers, particularly girls, who graduated from the junior middle school went to work in big cities like Kunming, Shenzhen, or other places. In the year of 2009, only two unmarried girls stayed in Dadenghan Village; the others moved away.

The Parents' Perspective

A middle-aged Dai woman of Dadenghan Village told me (in an interview at her home on 14 October 2008) that her youngest daughter was working in a restaurant in Kunming, a job commonly taken by Dai girls in big cities. Her daughter went there on 30 December 2006 and had never returned home but planned to be back for the spring festival of 2009. Her daughter's salary was initially 400 yuan per month and had subsequently been raised to 500 yuan with board and lodging supplied by the employer. I asked whether her daughter mailed money back to support the family. A wry smile settled on my interviewee's face. She responded that her daughter had not sent any money back home but that it was sufficient for her daughter to support herself because the income through farming was enough to maintain the rest of the family. It seemed that the woman's daughter had become accustomed to urban life in Kunming and wanted to stay in the city. Her parents were, however, short-handed during the busy periods and had to pay other villagers to help them.

During the interview, another woman, one of this family's neighbours, came to the house. Both of her daughters also went out to work. The eldest one was a dancer at a tourist site in a large city, for which she earned a monthly salary of over 1500 yuan. There, she had met her husband, whom she had married in 2007. Later the couple had gone to Shenzhen, where her husband was now running a restaurant. Expecting to acquire their own house in the city and to live there for the rest of their lives, this couple seemed to present a success story of urban migration. The neighbour's younger daughter was also married, and she and her husband were working in Ruili City centre. They were well paid compared to the income

of farmers in the village. The neighbour told me that her family's farmlands were rented out. Both she and her husband were healthy now, but if they became sick, they would expect their younger daughter and her husband to return to the village to live with them. It was not clear, however, if the young couple would be willing to do this.

The Girls' Perspective

I met two female Dai cousins from Tengchong County, aged 19 and 24. They had once worked in restaurants catering to Han taste in Tengchong. During the Water Splashing Festival in Tengchong, Dai's New Year celebration, they had met two young Dai men who had worked in Ruili City and had returned home for the festival. Having learned a little about Ruili City, the cousins decided to migrate to the urban centre and improve their skills in restaurant work. They soon moved on to Luxi City, capital of Dehong Prefecture, after the older cousin had learned through contacting friends online that there were several Thai restaurants there. The older cousin had once run her own stall selling *ersi*, a kind of rice noodle made in Yunnan Province, on a street in Tengchong. She planned to learn how to cook Thai food and work in a number of restaurants in Luxi in order to acquire the culinary skills and knowledge necessary to start her own restaurant. Other girls in Dadenghan Village whom I interviewed upon their return were in similar situations, working in restaurants, earning just enough to support themselves, and spending their free time with work colleagues who were usually also Dai people.

The girls liked working in the city. Although the pay was low, they thought that it was an easier life than farming. Modern technology combined with broader social networks accelerated their increasing geographical mobility. Some managed to survive well, as demonstrated by the dancer and her husband. Most aimed to be financially successful, as was the case with the Dai girls from Tengchong, but only a small number achieved such goals.

A significant number of Dai girls managed to stay in cities through cross-ethnic marriage, another biopolitical strategy by which they sought to realise their dreams or desires. Driven by both their desire to stay in urban areas and their fear of the potential drug addiction of Dai men, the Dai girls in the village preferred to marry Han men from other parts of China. In most cases, they were introduced to these men through paid matchmakers. The marriages, which would also have required the payment of a bride price, or dowry were, therefore, commodified.

Commodified Marriage: Another Aspect of the Biopolitics of Dai Girls

The preference of young Dai women for urban Han husbands can be demonstrated statistically. According to the records collected by the village committee that oversaw the administration of 10 villages, there were 97 marriages in Dadenghan Village in 2008. They included 43 unions between Dai women and Han men. Of the remaining 54 Dai couples, about half consisted of Chinese Dai marrying Myanmarese Dai and half of Chinese Dai marrying Chinese Dai. In 2008, 44 percent of marriages were transprovincial (Dai girls marrying Han men) and about 23 percent were transnational marriages (usually Chinese Dai men married Myanmarese Dai women); the remaining 23 percent consisted of marriages in which both partners were Chinese Dai.

The paid matchmakers who arranged introductions of Dai young women to Han men were referred to by the Dai term *miexiu*. They were paid by unmarried men to find suitable brides, according to their requirements, usually including a suitable bride price. In recent years, many Han men from the interior of China had offered high bride prices to find wives from Ruili or Myanmar. A number of families accepted the money and agreed to the marriage after meeting the men several times over a short period of time.

In November of 2008, I learned from the villagers that a Dai girl was going to marry a Han man from Shandong Province and that the bride price was 50,000 yuan. These two young people had known each other for only a few days when the marriage was agreed. The man was 24 years old and the would-be bride was 18. She had just returned from Kunming where she had worked in a Dai restaurant run by a relative for a short time, as many of the other unmarried young girls of the village had done. She had earned 400 yuan each month, and her accommodation and food were provided by the restaurant, which was the norm for such work. The girl told me that her salary was just enough to support herself, and it was, therefore, impossible for her to save money or post money home.

When I interviewed the young couple, the girl had known her fiancé for just 10 days, but they both asserted that they liked each other and had agreed to marry. They had been introduced through the matchmaker and, in the prospective husband's words, 'the money worked'. There were six or seven Dai women from Ruili marrying men from his native village.

During the interview, the fiancée told me that she knew nothing about Shandong where she would move on marriage but she had no worries about her future life there. Her fiancé described to her the situation in his hometown in Shandong. He had sought a Dai girl through a professional matchmaker because many of the Han girls in his village had also gone away to larger cities to work and married men whom they met there—a geographical trajectory of marriage according to the degree of urbanisation of different cities or regions. When the girl's fiancé suggested that perhaps some girls who married into the area found it difficult to adjust to life in Shandong, particularly in relation to the food and the weather, the young girl interrupted to say that she loved to eat food made of flour and that, therefore, moving to Shandong would not be a problem for her. She was clearly excited about her future married life. The couple decided to hold the marriage ceremony in the girl's village, according to Dai custom, on 19 November. Then they would go to Shandong on 21 November and invite close relatives of the man to a celebratory dinner.

The conversation moved to marriage and ethnicity. This young girl admitted that more and more Dai girls married Han men, explaining that girls who married Dai men had to work hard in the farmlands and face the worry that some Dai men might become drug-addicted. Her mother, who came home during the interview, agreed.

This kind of commodified marriage was also reflected in a comparatively new regulation in each village. It stipulated that a man from outside who lived in the village following a marriage to a local girl was obliged to pay a sum of money to the village, which would be used for public activities. The amount differed according to the ethnicity: the price was lower for a Dai man than for a man of another ethnic background, such as Han. The money was used for a change of identity and a communal recognition that transformed the newcomer from excluded outsider to included insider. According to the villagers, similar customs had existed in the past, but they were not objectified in the form of money. The newcomers had been asked to contribute rice or other food to the community, which had a symbolic significance and would not have been as costly as a cash payment. Again, the commercial value of this tradition was objectified, and commercial awareness, particularly concerning the scarcity of land due to rapid urbanisation, was integrated into custom.

Several months later, I interviewed this bride's cousin, a teenage girl who had just entered junior middle school. Her cousin told me that the new wife was happy following her marriage. So at this point, it seemed

that the young woman I had interviewed had achieved her desired new identity as an urban inhabitant through commodified marriage.

The positive feedback from migrant brides could stimulate similar desires among younger girls, such as this bride's cousin. Family networks also provided valuable support and advice for would-be migrants to urban centres. The bride's cousin told me that she would go to work in Guangdong Province after graduating from high school, as her sister, who was living in Guangdong following her marriage to a Han businessman, insisted that she continue studying until she graduated with a high school diploma, the basic requirement for enrolling in factories in highly urbanised areas such as Guangdong. The young cousin's plan for her imagined future was motivated by her recognition that her relatives had achieved their desires. This in turn gave her the personal power and inspiration to control her own life trajectory and exercise a similar form of biopolitics.

Under such circumstances of commodified marriage, the average bride price or dowry was raised to new heights that sometimes were unreachable by Dai men, whose potential choice of partner was thus limited. Consequently, some Dai men preferred to marry girls from the interior region of Myanmar who wanted to live in China and for whom the bride price requirement was, initially, lower. Again, introductions were arranged by matchmakers. With an increasing numbers of Dai girls leaving the village, however, the bride price demanded for Myanmar partners also rose. Thus the chain of migration extended into different communities. Young Han women from regions such as Shandong moved to more urbanised areas; Dai women from the Chinese border areas moved to other parts of China; and Dai men in the border areas sought brides across the border in Myanmar. The marriage trajectory or biopolitics of young women mapped the intensity of urbanisation.

The vital role of professional matchmakers, who profited by commodifying marriage, could be controversial. Men who successfully married wives following the payment of a fee were grateful to the matchmakers. For the young women, the issue of morality or even legality might arise if the girls disagreed with their parents and were forced or pressured into marriage. Some of the most problematic marriages were those in which Myanmarese girls were willing to marry men and travelled to other parts of China without following the necessary legal procedures, which led to a marriage viewed as legitimate in the eyes of the actors involved but was illegal according to state law. There were also incidences of abduction of

Myanmarese teenage girls or children by matchmakers who transported them into China through mountain paths.

Some arranged marriages, however, as noted, had a happy outcome with the bride living the life that she had desired. Girls could, therefore, exert agency through their marriages and thereby exercise control over the trajectory of their lives. They did so in the context of considerable social change and the commercialisation of the marriage process. Nonetheless, the statistics suggest that a significant number succeeded in acquiring the life that they preferred through their own biopolitical agency.

Conclusion

It is clear that through two aspects of biopolitics, work and marriage, young Dai girls endeavoured to shape their preferred identities. Reflected in their aims and mobility was a developing demand for equality and social justice, of which they themselves were largely unaware. Their desire for a change in lifestyle and identity was fostered through images in the media and through their encounters with successful urban migrants.

Due to the gendered division of labour and the requirements of the labour market, girls easily found jobs, mainly working as waitresses, cashiers, or dancers. This form of employment was generally poorly paid and without opportunities for promotion. Some young women acquired their desired identities through marriage, and their social ambitions were fulfilled through the interconnection between marriage and status. The perceived success of girls who used marriage or work in this way encouraged other village girls to initiate and shape similar life trajectories for themselves.

Young Dai men faced competition from Han men in commodified forms of marriage arrangements, and they were generally at a disadvantage, due both to their lack of the skills required to live in urban areas and their vulnerability to drug addiction and AIDS, exacerbated by the geographical location of the village on the border between China and Myanmar. The increase in the numbers of transprovincial marriages also resulted in an increase in transnational marriages, reflecting a marriage market with a geographical trajectory. Again, a double exclusion was imposed on Dai men as they were excluded both from urban life and from marriage.

Tackling disadvantage in the areas of both education and security of livelihood requires improvement from the state and government, which

frequently takes advantage of its control of mass media to disseminate stories of economic development and individual success in order to evade responsibility. Examination of the issues from a bottom-up perspective reveals the biopolitics of the villagers. It also points to the social problems they encountered. Low incomes, limited education resources, and, as a result, a lack of employable skills imposed restraints on their agency and their ability to realise their ambitions. These circumstances also shed light on the role of the state in the formation of these disadvantages. A wider study of the problem suggests also that the contrasting circumstances of the different ethnic groups are the product of a policy-driven exclusion.[14]

In the village, families and older people faced a difficult situation. Due to a shortage of labour, families were obliged to hire workers in the busy periods. Increased wages affected the distribution of farmland and created economic divisions within the village. Older people, therefore, were obliged to work for longer, which has also led to the emergence of tensions between the older and younger generations. In other words, the structure of the village has been affected. The village appears to be at a crossroads, with its future direction uncertain. Further research and action are required to help the rural community find a way forward. Such action will also help everyone sharing the same geographical space to move in a positive direction. In other words, the realisation of justice in practice is a vital requirement for all in China and across the world.

Notes

1. I lived in the village for one year from August 2008 to August 2009. My study is based on interviews with 42 villagers (22 females and 20 males) including 26 young people (14 females and 12 males). The interviews took place mostly at the interviewees' homes but also at a grocery business in the village. I also interviewed 12 Dai people in six other rural Dai villages, 27 Dai people in the urban areas of Ruili City, and two Dai female teachers in Jiexiang Town.
2. A county-level city is an administrative unit in China that includes cities and towns as well as a wider regional or 'county' area.
3. For an anthropological interpretation of deterriorialisation, see Arjun Appadurai, 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', *Theory, Culture and Society,* 7 (1990), 295–310.
4. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics.* Translated by Graham Burchell, edited by Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

5. Michel Foucault, 'Governmentality' in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1979/1991), 87–104.
6. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (University of Chicago Press, 1986), 187.
7. Yen-fen Tseng, 'Marriage Migration to East Asia' in Wen-shan Yang and Melody Chia-wen (eds), *Asian Cross-border Marriage Migration* (Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 45.
8. Melody Chia-wen Lu and Wen-Shan Yang, 'Introduction' in Wen-shan Yang and Melody Chia-wen Lu (eds), *Asian Cross-Border Marriage Migration* (Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 15.
9. Iris Marion Young, 'Five Faces of Oppression', *Philosophical Form*, 19 (1998), 270–90; David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2005).
10. Ulrich Beck, *The Cosmopolitan Vision*. Translated by Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 21.
11. Saskia Sassen, 'Women's Burden: Counter-Geographies of Globalization and the Feminization of Survival', *Journal of International Affairs*, 53 (2000), 504–24.
12. The Zomia area consists of portions of eight Asian countries: China, India, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Bangladesh. James C. Scott uses the concept of Zomia to describe this highland region which centralising governments have found difficult to rule and control. See James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). See also note 2 above.
13. Jiang Chen, *Ruili Shizhi (History of Ruili City)* (Chengdu: Sichuan Cishu Publishing House, 1996).
14. Yan Hu, 'Displaced Locals in an Economic Boom: a View from Three Waves of Migration in Ruili City' (unpublished PhD thesis, Queen's University Belfast, 2013).

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