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EDITORIAL NOTE

Women's Labor, Self-Fashioning, and Historical Imagination

This issue highlights new interpretations of labor, family, and feminist history as well as divergent uses of biography. Its themes reflect a shared attention to creative reading of sources that range from dowry letters to diaries to family photographs, revealing secrets to feminist historiography. Two articles uncover previously unrecognized patterns of women's work essential to the early modern Mediterranean and trans-Atlantic economies. One study from the world of work bridges the temporal divides between Muslim and Christian rule in Granada, and the other explores Spanish women's control over the domain of household possessions, even when husbands generated income from abroad. The remaining four articles deal with various manifestations of women's self-fashioning. Some strategies were open and collaborative as in the public search for celebrity, others reflected a reforming impulse to refashion science for the non-specialist, and still others mirrored implicit strategies of silence to mask hidden and seemingly shameful genealogical heritages. As you will see, at times these resourceful approaches reveal as much about our authors as their own subject matters.

Our first article by Elizabeth Nutting examines an overlooked episode of women's work. It mirrors a renewed scholarly interest in labor history, which was formative in shaping the questions and challenges of early women's history in the late 1960s and 1970s but then was partly overtaken by the "cultural turn." Nutting consciously positions her article in this modest revival, determined to place "women, their work, and silk production back into the stories of conquest, conversion, and expulsion in Granada and into economic change in the Mediterranean." Her inquiry centers on women's work in the silk industry in Granada, Spain from 1400 until 1571, when Spanish officials permanently expelled Moriscos (Muslim converts to Christianity) from the city. The ban destroyed the foundations of the highly coveted silk industry in this bustling center, which rested on Muslim women's cultivation of silk worms and silk spinning. Christian city magistrates at the time failed to understand this vital female economic contribution; it also has gone unexamined by subsequent historians interested in the early modern Mediterranean political economy. While poorly paid and marginalized, Muslim women were the lynchpin of the industry, insuring its vibrancy and survival in the Nasrid period, from 1400 to 1492, and into the early Christian conquest of Granada. Although the dyeing and weaving industries in Granada were eventually perpetuated by Christian male workers, after expulsion the region lost the sericulture and silk spinning

industry that had been a fixture in the economy since the eighth century. Within a few years after 1571, officials had to import raw silk from Naples and other regions in Spain. The article, Nutting also claims, rests on legal and literary sources beyond the Ottoman archives that scholars of Islamic history have underutilized.

Lauren Beck explores the transatlantic ties between Spain and colonial Mexico through family formation, separation, and letter writing. She draws on many methodological approaches for her fascinating account of family relationships solidified by what she calls "matrimonial materiality" and possessions, a domain of women's influence, power, and work even in the face of geographic separation. Beck temporally examines marriage patterns reshaped by the Council of Trent that, in its requirement of consent, blended the new couples' households and their multiple goods and possessions. In ways reminiscent of earlier women's labor historians, Beck returns historians' attention to the household as a locus for research. But, here, it is not social reproduction at stake but rather dowry bargains that juridically guaranteed women control over the dowries contributed by their fathers and husbands. Beck unexpectedly labels the dowry process "feminist." By Spanish law, women administered their own property when parents died and husbands were absent. And men were absent; many were on the move reconquering Spanish lands from Muslim rulers or colonizing the "new world" for Christianity. If patterns emerged from this matrimonial world, women back home could use matrimonial goods to engage in professional activities or, in the face of illicit relationships (for the "twice married," for example), successfully denounce unfaithful husbands and recover the dowries through litigation. Beck dispels simple stereotypes of abandonment and victimization of wives during separation. In an ironic twist, it was men's well-being that often deteriorated overseas because they were deprived of use of the matrimonial wealth.

Moving away from material goods to another form of social capital that has exceptional resonance in American politics, Susanne Hillman examines celebrity as a historical topic, demonstrating its analytical edge to rethink gender, power, and fame. After a short detour into its etymology, she takes us to post-revolutionary France and reexamines the lives of two well-known female figures of the era: Germaine de Staël, literary writer and patron of salon life, and Juliette Récamier, known far and wide as a "stunning beauty." Both, separately, acquired pan-European reputations through pen, portraiture, and "dazzle." But Hillman has a different purpose in mind. She demonstrates a "situated agency" by showing how these two fast friends purposefully enhanced their reputations through association and collaboration. Staël, the intellect, chafed under societal constraints against lettered women in the aftermath of the French Revolution; she felt her friend's

infectious charm enhanced her own cause and, indeed, used Récamier's traits for her fictional characters. And in turn Récamier, in spreading her legend through portraits and miniatures, demanded depictions that drew partly on Staël's serious stature. As Hillman writes, they "carefully constructed and mutually performed [a] 'double-persona.'" Although not her purpose, Hillman also demonstrates an exciting approach to biography, thus contributing to recent feminist work on new biography, a method that has figured prominently in the pages of this journal. In addition, she challenges many assumptions in celebrity theory, notably, its preoccupation with the individual. Perhaps presciently, Hillman quotes the literary scholar Bärbel Czennia, who sees celebrity as "*the* idiom of the modern era," and warns historians not to dismiss its complex and multifaceted social power.

Caitlin Harvey studies a different pattern of collaboration, a published diary coauthored by two female medical students enrolled in the London Women's School of Medicine: Louise Lind-af-Hageby and Leisa Schartau. At the time, both were involved in contemporary feminist and reform causes, including suffrage, peace, and housing. As part of their study of physiology, they attended laboratories where "modern" doctors experimented on animals for scientific purposes. Appalled by what they saw, in 1903 they wrote a scathing exposé of the practice of vivisection, which ignited widespread public debate in the press and the courtroom. Harvey argues it was precisely the stylistic innovation of their particular mode of intervention that was so subversive at the time. Lind-af-Hageby and Schartau purposely used the diary form—a typical female genre of writing—not only to interlink feminism and antivivisection, but also to overturn assumptions about the uninformed female animal rights advocate. Indeed, the authors appropriated the language of science, "speak[ing] as doctors" and deploying first-hand and graphic observations about animal cruelty. The diary worked as a powerful platform to demonstrate women's intellectual capacities and talents, yet it persuaded by its familiar "feminine aesthetic." Harvey's article serves as a model of close textual reading, both for dissecting the writing techniques in the diary and for the historian's work of contextualization. In drawing interpretations, Harvey brings in a wider range of women's writings on nature in late Victorian and Edwardian England and the world view of feminist antivivisectionists, who, at this moment in time, capitalized on societal fears of physicians and presumed links between violence against women and animals.

Karina Smith and Lou Smith offer a highly personal and methodologically fascinating account of their efforts to fill the gaps in what they know about their genealogy through theoretically informed reading of family photographs and other "snippets" from the past. The authors are two grown granddaughters (born in Australia) of Doris Butcher, a twice migrant from

Kingston, Jamaica to London, United Kingdom to Newcastle, Australia who carefully guarded her memories. Karina Smith is a literary and gender studies lecturer and Lou Smith is a poet. Together, they bring their feminist cultural imaginations to the task of using a life study to discuss and uncover the complexities of "race, class, and gender relations in the Caribbean" in the face of fragmented knowledge that is characteristic of the disruptions of movement and migration. The inquiry also led them to examine more about themselves as non-Indigenous Australians and how they are seen in the wider culture. Doris, they explain, was an "outside child," born out of wedlock, making the inquiry complex. Given the marriage choices and passage of time—through which the "'touch [of African ancestry] becomes progressively fainter'"—their narrative connects to the question of race passing. It is from this situated but uncertain racial and gender knowledge that the authors offer their sensitive and textually rich rendering. It also is well positioned within recent historical and literary scholarship on women's history as well as family and race relations.

We turn from personal family politics uncovered through feminist inquiry to the political assumptions underpinning the scholarship of one of today's leading feminist historians, Linda Gordon. John Pettegrew assesses Gordon's published work from 1970 to 2010 with an eye to providing new insights into US feminist history, including its ability to maintain radical inquiry through the turbulent challenges posed to historical research and methodology by the postmodern critics. He opens with a familiar question in the field: "What happened to the radical feminist orientation of academic women's history in the United States?" The dominant narrative is clear: feminist history lost its political and radical edge as it moved from a marginalized to more central place in academic scholarship. Yet Gordon's scholarship causes pause; it opens an alternative interpretation, grounded in what Pettegrew labels "perspectivalism," a type of historical imaginary allowing commitment to feminist and democratic politics while maintaining fealty to the academic principles of balanced, objective, and fair historical scholarship. It rests on acknowledging the "situatedness" of knowledge, a reflexive sensitivity to various subject positions, including the historian's. It is indeed "conducive to the rich legacy of feminist history." The article offers a careful reading of the notion and explores Gordon's key publications through its lens. Pettegrew's approach is largely framed within Gordon's corpus, examining the continuities in her method of analysis over time; it does not address the wider impact of her work. His insights, nonetheless, are a graphic reminder of the need for historians to remain aware of the methodological assumptions behind researching and writing, a point serendipitously demonstrated by the book review essays as well.

Three topically diverse and instructive review essays round out this issue. Sharon Block writes explicitly about the choice of books and the methodological questions that underpin her review of four publications in early American women's history. She openly reads them "against one another" to address vital questions about the "nature of the archive, the boundaries of American history, and the foundations of modern mores and institutions." And she intervenes to demonstrate the limitations of the authors' analyses through cross referencing. Similar to the articles by Smith and Smith and Pettegrew, Block prods us as historians to address openly the choices we make in our use of sources and analytical methods. Her essay persuades by example. Shelley E. Rose complicates the boundaries of history as well. She brings together several studies on German and American transnational interactions from the mid-nineteenth century into the long post-World War II era. She employs a spatial metaphor to structure the review, examining what she calls "transatlantic spaces" that opened new avenues for "cultural and intellectual exchange." The books under review deal with the translators of popular German literature for American audiences; the lived experiences of German immigrant women activists confronting the nativism of the American women's movement; and the similarities and divergences in the writing of German women's and gender history in Germany and the United States. The review is a model for rethinking the national in the transnational and vice versa. The final review essay is by Laura Shelton, who brings together three books dealing with transitions from the late colonial to the early republican eras in Latin America. These studies offer different perspectives on how reconstruction of the patriarchal family inflected new republican politics for elites and plebeians alike. The cases come from Chile, Colombia, and Guatemala. Of particular interest is Shelton's detailed assessment of the legal and literary sources making possible new interpretations of love, marriage, and family obligations during these turbulent times.

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