Women and Work

Feminism, Labour, and Social Reproduction

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The Labour Lens

Why do feminists think about work at all? What makes work—or labour—a compelling lens through which to view the world? I can think of a few good answers to that question. The most obvious perhaps is that the vast majority of women today work, and they work a lot, often under difficult and degrading circumstances. To begin, women do the majority—75 percent—of the world's unpaid care and domestic work. They spend up to three hours more per day cooking and cleaning than men do, and anywhere from two to ten hours more per day looking after children and the elderly.[1] Whatever the hardship or rewards of such work, it remains the case that those who govern our countries and economies do not recompense or adequately recognize it as a contribution to overall social wealth. As for paid labour, women's global participation rates are lower than men's, but after 300-plus years of capitalism, women are still more likely to land in the informal and low-waged sectors. They are still more likely to earn their living doing jobs that are arduous, dangerous, and insecure.[2]

That these patterns prevail makes it not just reasonable, but in fact urgent, to ask what women's work has to do with gender and gender oppression.[3] Feminists began seriously engaging with that question at the dawn of industrial capitalism. That we return to it today is not so much a sign of their failure to find an answer as it is of society's failure to solve the problem of work, and of women's work in particular. This book is about the responses to that question. It stretches back to the earliest Western feminist tracts and leapfrogs the centuries to consider feminist ideas about labour today. It is not, however, a mere review of what wise women (and some men) have had to say. Rather, it reflects upon the ways in which those ideas developed in order, primarily, to understand why the socialist feminist

tradition has struggled to articulate a coherent, inclusive anti-oppression politics, and how the renewal of social reproduction feminism can most effectively contribute to anti-capitalist projects today. I introduce the book's argument and structure below. But this chapter begins with a consideration of what work is, and why it matters so much for those who want to change the world.

CAPITALISM, WORK, AND WOMEN

There's a reason that Euro-Western feminists started thinking and writing about work when they did. It has to do with capitalism. The emergence of capitalist social relations in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, and their imposition and consolidation throughout the United Kingdom, the continent, and the colonies over the next 150 years was founded on a dramatic and violent reorganization of people's working lives. The nature of the work people did, the times of day they performed it, who they worked with and for, and *why* they worked changed radically. Once a means of *supporting* life, work became a means even of *dominating* life as well.

Feudal peasants and serfs did indeed spend their lives working—often under harsh conditions. But work was something they did to survive. They did not also, as those who live in capitalist societies must, *survive to work*. Unlike waged workers, peasants and serfs had direct access to the wider ecosystem on which their subsistence depended. They produced the food they ate and chopped the wood they used for warmth and shelter. And they exercised significant control over the rhythms and pace of daily and seasonal tasks, and over the uses of communal lands and water. Their work satisfied specific, pre-determined needs (needs that exceeded bare subsistence to include spirituality, ritual, and play).[4]

Marx refers to this relation of the peasantry to the land as "the natural unity of labour with its material [*sachlich*] presuppositions."[5] This pre-capitalist mode of existence is premised upon a birth-given (and therefore seemingly natural) position within the wider social order. While that position is dependent upon and subordinate to the direct, personal authority of a lord, belonging to a lord in feudal Europe went hand-in-hand with

belonging to the land. Whatever hardship lords inflicted, the peasantry was already, by custom and law, attached to the land from which its members could (however meagerly) feed, clothe, and shelter themselves.[6] Given their direct access to the means of subsistence, the peasantry can sustain itself outside of the peasant-lord relation. The peasant has "an objective existence independent of labour," writes Marx, similar to a "proprietor," who can shape "the conditions of his reality." But unlike the *nonproductive* proprietor (a lord or capitalist for instance), the peasantry is a community of "co-proprietors … who at the same time work."[7]

This is not to say the peasantry exercised total control over its working conditions. Lords and estate managers decided what got produced on feudal estates, when and how. Moreover, those decisions, and to a certain extent those of peasant households as well, were set according to patriarchal conventions that enforced a traditional (if not absolute) gender division of labour, granting women only precarious and partial control over their bodies and labour. But access to the means of subsistence granted peasants and serfs considerable ability to set the rhythms and pace of their labours. They ceased work for festivals and holidays and, if pushed to intensify production or pay higher taxes, they regularly extended midday breaks or left crops in the fields to rot.[8] Lords responded by exacting penalties and more closely supervising peasant labour. But they could not kick the peasantry off the land, effectively threatening recalcitrant producers with starvation. Though politically subordinate, peasants and serfs were under no *economic* compulsion to obey the lords.

All this changes—over time, and with tremendous struggle—with the rise of capitalism. Capitalist social relations emerge first in the English countryside in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and become the dominant mode of production in rural and urban areas across the continent over the next 150 years. The uneven, violent, and ongoing transition from feudalism to capitalism need not be recounted here in detail.[9] At its heart is the expropriation of the peasantry—the razing of household plots and enclosures of common lands that, in time, sever the direct relationship of the peasant to her own means of subsistence. For Marx, this process

generates the "primitive accumulation of capital": it transforms "individualized and scattered means of production into socially concentrated means of production" essential to kickstart (and sustain) capitalism.[10]

No longer are decisions about what gets produced in the hands of lords and peasants. With the rise of capitalism, the *market* (that is, the competitive dynamic among capitalists and independent producers) determines production. Labour, then, becomes something more than a practical human activity to be set in motion to meet specific needs and desires. It becomes a means of producing commodities: things that the market determines hold economic value—things that will produce a profit. Whereas in feudal society, the needs and desires of the aristocracy were excessive, they were not endless. Capitalist production, however, has no such inherent limit. Unlike the peasant who exercised some control over how quickly and when she hoed fields for the lord, baked bread for her household, and broke from her labours to eat, drink, and sleep, the waged worker is forced to adopt new forms of work discipline.[11] This ensures that one-time "co-proprietors … who also work" learn precisely what it means to be (property-less) workers … who also live.

The work of living, of sustaining oneself when not working for the capitalist, does not disappear of course. It just goes underground. It becomes separated from and subsumed to the work of *making a living*—earning a wage in order to buy what is necessary to create and maintain life. The marginalization of unwaged subsistence work does not occur because waged work is harder or more important. It occurs because the work of subsisting, of reproducing life, is no longer possible unless one, *first*, has access to a wage (or other forms of money income). Some people avoid waged work by selling or trading things they make. But most, unable to feed and shelter themselves by directly and productively appropriating the means of life from the forests, fields, and waters, end up working for a wage—a wage with which they buy food, shelter, and clothing. In this way, work for a capitalist comes to dominate *all* "life-activity"—not just the value-producing activity of the factory floor or other workplace.

As in feudalism, then, most people in capitalist societies certainly work to survive. *But they also survive to work*. More precisely, they survive to become waged labourers. But here's the crux: to become waged labourers is itself a feat of labour—of women's labour specifically. While women's work varied across region and time in feudal peasant societies, women performed the bulk of the tasks required to meet subsistence needs.[12] They cooked, cleaned, and looked after young children. They also tilled the soil and harvested the produce of fields and garden plots, butchered animals, brewed beer, spun yarn, and ground grains. They developed and administered medicines to heal the sick. And they attended other women in labour, gave birth, and nursed new life. In short, women—in a more direct and transparent way than men—reproduced human beings.

With the transition to capitalism, women's reproductive labour is radically reorganized. First, as peasants lose their access to land, women lose direct access to and control over the "material presuppositions" of their subsistence-based activities. Men of course lose this too, but women's reproductive work *remains* outside the immediate value circuits of capitalism (even as the product of that work, human beings, move in and out of those circuits as present and future waged workers, and even as women are themselves drawn into waged work on a massive scale). What's more, women's subsistence work is, in this early stage of capitalist development, increasingly distinguished from waged work spatially and temporally. It is generally performed in communities and private households (away from work performed for capitalists) and at times that accommodate the waged workers' workday, week, and year.

Responsible for reproducing workers, women in capitalist societies are at the heart of an intractable dilemma. Capitalist profit-making—and, thus, the existence of capitalism itself—depends upon the availability of the very human labour power whose means of subsistence it has already appropriated. It becomes imperative to regulate women's labour, especially if, as was often the case, there are not enough workers willing and able to submit to the new capitalist disciplines of work. Capitalist states and ruling classes partially resolve this dilemma by turning women's bodies "into an

instrument for the reproduction of labor and the expansion of the work-force."[13] Thus, as Maria Mies and Silvia Federici contend, the primitive accumulation of capital involves more than the expropriation of European workers' land (and the enslavement of African bodies). It also, crucially, requires the expropriation of women's reproductive labour.

Yet *that* was not going to happen without a struggle. Without doubt, feudal society was deeply patriarchal. Women were, for the most part, legally subject to the authority wielded by fathers, husbands, curates, and lords. Still, within peasant households and communities, inequality was tempered, on the one hand, by the control women exercised over their (re)productive labours and, on the other, by the fact that *both* men and women were subject to a higher patriarchal authority, the lord. Capitalism's consolidation then required the gradual, uneven, and ongoing, frequently violent, process of undermining the control and relative equality women enjoyed in peasant households. A burgeoning capitalist state (supported by the Catholic Church and male-dominated craft guilds) variously terrorized, compelled, and induced women to accept new forms of sexist degradation and domesticity. Poor women faced persecution as witches and saw their work as midwives and healers sidelined, diminishing women's control over abortion, live births, and contraception. The state also intensified women's social vulnerability, introducing changes to inheritance laws, criminalizing prostitution, legalizing rape and battery, and ousting women from certain forms of paid labour. "Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries," observes Federici, "women lost ground in every area of social life."[14]

In time, marriage and motherhood (when they were not outrightly forced on women) appeared a reasonable, perhaps the only sensible, option. Many women resisted their disempowerment and fought for control over their own fertility. Nonetheless, modern gender relations (characterized by the separation of a public sphere of industry and politics from the private domestic sphere, and women's relative isolation within and primary responsibility for the latter) eventually prevailed.[15] "Housewification," as Mies calls it, takes hold first within bourgeois households, which could absorb the loss of the wife's income from paid labour or professions. Only

later, in the mid- to late nineteenth century, after the introduction of protective legislation and a period of wages climbing relative to the cost of living, do increasing numbers of married working class women become full-time housewives.

WORK, LIFE, HISTORY

Capitalism thus radically disrupts people's relationship to work and life—a fact Marx spent his life explaining. And while he subjects capitalist forms of work to a brilliant and excoriating critique, his analysis rests on a broader, transhistorical, claim that labour is a precondition of all human life. Grasping what he means by this lends some insight into women's unique relationship to work, to life, and to capital.[16]

Marx arrives at his insight about work and life by pondering how people are positioned in relation to nature. It is not an idle question. Like all social theorists, he aims to understand the dynamics of human society. Society would not be possible, he reasons, without human interaction with the natural world. Rather than conceiving of society and nature as two distinct or opposing realities, however, he begins his analysis by stressing their coherence or identity. That is, the events, processes, and institutions created to serve human ends are produced out of—and are therefore an integral part of—the nonhuman, physical world constituted by plants, animals, land, water, and climate.

Not only is the social world *part of* the wider natural world with which humans also interact, according to Marx, but humans themselves are *of* that world. Humans *are* nature. In his notebooks on economics and philosophy, he observes: "Man *lives* on nature—means that nature is his *body*, with which he must remain in continuous interchange if he is not to die. That man's physical and spiritual life is linked to nature means simply that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature."[17]

This leads Marx to propose that human existence and the reproduction of human life depend upon a person's ability to "appropriate the materials of nature in a form adapted to his own needs."[18] Somewhat confusingly, the term "appropriate" in this passage does not signal the act of simply taking

or owning something (as it does when Marx refers to capitalist appropriation). Instead, it means *production*—"practical human activity" or *work* in the broadest sense.[19] Unless people *productively appropriate* from the oceans, lakes, fields, and forests to create food, shelter, clothes, and more, there can be no human life. Yet in so doing, Marx observes, humans and their society are (*must be*) also distinct from nature. They are, therefore, both part of nature *and* external to it.[20]

Unlike most nonhuman animals, people engage in productive appropriation *consciously*.[21] They interact with nature not simply out of instinct, but with awareness of their needs and the ability and intent to design specific ways of meeting those needs. This is what separates, Marx famously writes, the weaver from the spider, the architect from the bee: the capacity to bring *ideas* and *imagination* to bear on the bio-physical interaction with nature required for human survival. *This* is the essence of human labour or work in general.

As the inescapable precondition for human life, work is a timeless, existential reality—"the eternal natural necessity of human life … independent of any particular form of this life."[22] Yet precisely because work is a conscious, practical activity, it is also the precondition and the substance of human *history*. To suggest that work (or labour or production) is historical is simply to suggest that it is shaped by and is part of shaping the social world (as opposed to being determined by natural or divine forces, for example). Specifically, work sets in motion an open-ended, ever-changing dialectic between human subjects and the conditions shaping their broader world: "Man acts upon external nature and changes it, and in this way he simultaneously changes his own nature. He develops the potentialities slumbering within nature, and subjects the play of its forces to his own sovereign power."[23]

The suggestion that "man subjects the play of [nature's] forces to his own sovereign power" jumps off the page today—evidence, it would seem, that Marx urges the domination of nature to human ends, whatever the cost. That, however, is a gross misreading of his work. Marx posits a *metabolic* relationship between humans and nature: as natural, *embodied* beings,

humans exist inside a wider ecosystem, and thus their survival depends upon the survival of the entire system. As Marx well knows despite the imagery he invokes, humans do not truly exercise "sovereign power." They are not—cannot be—endlessly, relentlessly, recklessly productive. Rather, their creative powers constantly bump up against the limits of that wider system. For instance, the fertility of the soil, the abundance of minerals in the ground, the number of available producers, or the vagaries of climate are all natural, exhaustible features of the world that set real limits to production.[24]

The determining conditions of what does and does not get produced, and how the production and reproduction of life and the world are organized, however, are not simply natural. They are also social. When Marx writes, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past," he is referring to the social relations of dependence and autonomy, of domination and freedom, that adhere among people.[25] For these social relations also comprise the wider ecosystem. And they also, *crucially*, shape the possibilities of how, as Mies puts it, "human beings *produce* their lives."[26]

This is the grounding insight of historical materialism: human labour or work—the practical, conscious interaction between people and the natural world of which they are part—creates the social processes and relations that, in turn, determine the processes and relations of that labour. Our understanding of those relations cannot proceed then without understanding work, just as our understanding of work cannot proceed without understanding the social world. "Work" in this reckoning is expansive. It includes the things people do to create their entire worlds—not just their labour for lords or capitalists. Hoeing fields, assembling cars, and mining coal are certainly part of that work. But so are tasks such as wiping runny noses, clearing dishes from the table, writing poetry, and organizing birding expeditions. As we'll see in the coming chapters, it is precisely this expansiveness that captures feminist imaginations—both as a lever of social critique and as a vision for building alternative worlds.

None of this means that work is an inherently good or bad activity (although it does mean it has a definite value to human life). Neither does it mean that there are no other conceptual windows through which one can gain insight into how the world works. It simply establishes that work is an existential reality of our lives and our worlds. It is "life-activity."[27] And because it is shaped in and through people's relationships with each other, work changes in accordance with changes in those relationships—relationships that are characterized by more or less freedom and equality. Work is thus also a premise of human history. Its social form—how work is organized—matters to how freely, or not, people create their worlds, their societies, their lives. Inquiring into the social organization of work, then, is essential if social theory is to serve freedom. And that is precisely why feminists grapple with the question of work. And it is why theories of labour attentive to the dynamics of gender offer valuable insight into understanding the forces of oppression and freedom.

WOMEN'S WORK AND FEMINIST THEORY

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the places, times, and rhythms of women's work changed remarkably. Not only did women lose considerable control over the conditions of their unpaid reproductive labour, their paid labour also changed. Women were swept out of certain occupations only to be swept into others as cheap, expendable labourers. In the process, the conventional gender division of labour took on new meanings. Women's reproductive work in capitalist societies remained essential, and therefore something still to be managed and controlled. But the forms and mechanisms of that control shift. Most pointedly, such work was radically separated from direct production for capitalists and thereby devalued.

It is not surprising then that as capitalist relations in the United Kingdom and Europe consolidated, feminists began to examine women's work, considering its significance to questions of freedom and oppression. Their views challenged contemporary thinking about work by affirming the social value of women's domestic responsibilities and women's competence to participate in occupations from which they had been excluded. In time,

they also insisted that household activities constitute *work* (as opposed to a divinely ordained duty). The significance of this last point bears emphasizing. In identifying caring for the home and family as work, feminists defied the dominant capitalist understanding of labour as something done for a wage—that is, as a directly value-generating, market-based activity. They defied, that is, the perception of labour that informs so much political economy from Adam Smith and on. In so doing, they launched a discussion about work's fuller, fleshier contours, a discussion still carried on today—one that begins not from abstract concepts of value but from concrete observations of work's embodied and gendered realities.

Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century feminists thereby planted the seeds of a radical revisioning of what constitutes labour. This book traces that revisioning as it develops along three trajectories: (i) equality feminism, (ii) critical equality feminism, and (iii) social reproduction feminism. Each trajectory troubles the capitalist organization of the gender division of labour. And each sees women's work—and women's unpaid reproductive work in particular—as significant to women's oppression. But their understanding of its significance varies. The coming chapters explore these distinct, albeit interrelated, lines of thinking about work. Beginning with the pre-capitalist European tracts known as the *querelle des femmes*, and moving through the centuries, I distill from the massive body of feminist literature those texts that best articulate the advance in the equality, critical equality, and social reproduction feminism perspectives.

Whatever their differences, these perspectives share a common impulse to attend to the gendered dynamics of work. They also share a fatal oversight: the tendency to ignore work's racial dynamics. This begins with failing to see the *racialized* underbelly that attended "housewification" and the devaluation of women's waged work. For, as Mies, Federici, and others have shown, the modern European "housewife" is not simply a product of patriarchal capitalism. She is the product of a racist, colonial patriarchal capitalism. She is the product, that is, of the plundering of faraway lands, bodies, and other labouring peoples, whose subjection is justified through

bogus, racist scientific and religious discourse about a white civilizing mission.

To begin, insofar as her demure sexuality and release from paid labour marks her as "civilized" (and therefore distinct from colonized, brown-skinned, "savages"), the white European housewife is part and parcel of the colonial project's racist ideological wrappings. She is literally and figuratively the creation of man's domination of sensual, gritty, uncontrolled nature.[28] Moreover, to some extent, the working class housewife's release from paid labour is bound up with the exploitation of colonial lands and people. In the mid-nineteenth century, the degradation and dehumanization of workers and slaves on colonial estates in India, Africa, Indonesia, and the Americas kept the price of sugar, coffee, tea, cotton, and other staples low. At the same time, the British state passed protective legislation barring women from certain forms of paid employment. Major trade unions, workingmen's associations, and pundits supported the move (which was accompanied by a slight increase in men's wages as compensation), arguing that women's place was in the home.[29] The coincidence of protective legislation and a lower cost of living allowed Western workers to stretch their wages further than before, arguably making housewification possible for many—though certainly not all—working class women by the late 1800s.

Thus, women's household work at the time feminists began to critically examine it is grounded not just in an unequal and oppressive gender division of labour, but in racist, colonial enterprises as well—a fact white, Euro-feminists generally failed to note. Some criticized slavery and supported the abolition movement, but beyond commenting on parallels between the social treatment of women and enslaved people, early white feminists simply did not attempt to think through how racism also shapes women's work. And even though African American abolitionists began drawing attention to this in the nineteenth century, inaugurating a tradition of anti-racist feminist thought that repeatedly insisted on the integrated nature of social oppressions, later white feminists across the three trajectories barely engaged with their ideas. In part, as I argue in Chapter 6,

this has to do with white feminist thinking about labour focusing too narrowly on the very theoretical innovation for which it is most known: attributing positive social and economic value to women's unpaid work in the home. How and why this innovation proves so troublesome becomes clear as we track its development through the centuries of feminist thinking about work.

4
Equal Work For and Against Capital

Chapters 2 and 3 tease apart subtle but important distinctions characterizing equality, critical equality, and social reproduction feminisms. These three trajectories of feminist thought should not be viewed as marking hard and fast divisions. As we've seen, Wollstonecraft, Tristan, Thompson, and Wheeler share many concerns and draw, to differing degrees, on the rational-humanist tradition which revolves around a moral critique of women's inequality with and dependence upon men. Nonetheless, the ways in which their analyses diverge—especially when it comes to conceptualizing *forms* of work, and of women's work specifically—are significant. Grasping these distinctions can help reveal the logic behind the different feminist political orientations taking shape in the early years of industrial capitalism.

While critics tend to differentiate socialist and liberal feminisms by their respective commitments to revolutionary and reformist politics, the picture drawn here suggests that this is too blunt a measure. It fails to capture the assumptions shared by both traditions and the theoretical ambiguities abiding *within* the socialist feminist tradition. On the first point, (liberal) equality feminism and (socialist) critical equality feminism share a commitment to the liberating possibilities of women's waged work, even if they do so with radically different ends in mind. They also share an essentially moral critique of household labour, identifying its arduous, isolating, and unrecompensed nature as the foundation of women's oppression. Their political responses emphasize the need for women to escape unpaid housework's drudgery and gain economic independence through waged work.

These similarities speak to a deeper analytic affinity: both equality and critical equality feminisms position the relation of unpaid domestic work to paid work as a one-way (negative) *externalized* relation. That is, unpaid domestic work is understood as a necessary but separate form of work, outside the processes and goals of the realm of waged labour and capital. The central feminist problem, therefore, is that it is *gendered* work—work for which women take near exclusive responsibility, and which prevents them from partaking in waged work on equal terms with men.

Social reproduction feminism, on the other hand, proposes that the central feminist problem lies in the *division between two forms of work within* the capitalist system—the privatization of what is part and parcel of the overall social process of wealth creation. This perspective stresses not just the capitalist organization of unpaid domestic work, but also its *internal* and *interactive* relation to the realm of waged labour. While the fullest dimensions of that relation have only been fleshed out in the last fifty years, nineteenth-century utopian socialist feminists outlined the broad perspective, laying the essential conceptual groundwork for examining it through the lens of political economy. They applied a social scientific approach to a question that had, theretofore, been discussed in fundamentally moral terms, subjected only to a rational-humanist critique.

True, Thompson and Wheeler also mounted a moral critique that viewed domestic work as obstructive to women's freedom. But insofar as they grasped its significance to processes of overall wealth creation, they reoriented the discussion of what women's freedom and equality might look like. Rather than promoting women's independence from and equality with men through waged labour, they identified the *reorganization of all work* (such that the very distinction between productive and unproductive forms of labour dissolves) as the lynchpin of women's emancipation. Later socialist feminists—as we see in this chapter—would promote this too. But, like Tristan and Owen, they did so without embracing or developing the feminist analytic insights Thompson and Wheeler introduced.

This crucial distinction between the two traditions of socialist feminism is rarely examined. Yet if socialist feminism is to develop a coherent,

nonreductionist account of women's oppression and an inclusive feminist political perspective, that distinction must be acknowledged and explored. In this chapter, I investigate the overlapping and diverging themes as they recur and develop from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. In short, we see liberal equality feminists begin to identify and respond to women's "double burden" of paid and unpaid work, while remaining locked within the logic—and contradictions and limits—of capitalism. Meanwhile, socialist feminists pay greater attention to women's social reproductive work than did Tristan, but they do not *theoretically* advance the analysis begun by Wheeler and Thompson. Instead, they develop the critical equality feminist perspective, working through a nascent (though problematic) theory of class and gender solidarity. They also completely fail to think through the ways in which women's work is racialized. While I consider African American women's theorization of black women's work in the next chapter, I begin this chapter with a brief review of the growing racialization of paid domestic work in order to establish the fuller historical context in which these ideas developed (and with which the theorists discussed here failed to grapple).

DOMESTIC WORK AND THE "SERVANT PROBLEM"

By the late 1800s, the rapid expansion of mechanized production, railroads, and communication technologies had drawn millions into waged labour throughout Britain, Europe, parts of Asia and the Americas. Notwithstanding sexist and protectionist sentiments and practices, women worked on production lines and in the service industries.[1] At the same time, those (mostly white) households that could afford to, adopted the ideals of a genteel domesticity and cleanliness, transferring the heavier, difficult, and dirty tasks feminists identified as central to women's oppression from wives and daughters to servant women and girls.

Yet, in the cities especially, relatively few local (white, native-born) girls and women were willing to cook, clean, and mind other people's children for a wage.[2] The number of white, native-born women in service in the United States, for example, fell by 40 percent between 1900 and 1930.[3]

They preferred positions as shop clerks, stenographers, nurses, phone operators, and teachers—jobs that, until recently, white men had mostly filled. Less formally educated white women, meanwhile, tended to choose factory work (which had expanded as laws banning child labour came into effect) over service. Women continued to find themselves in the crux of capitalism's inability to reconcile the reproduction of labour with its rapacious hunger for labour. But how precisely they negotiated their positions as social reproducers in a racist society largely depended on their ethnic and racial background.

The racialization of domestic service was (and still is) a global phenomenon, bound up with colonial-imperial expansion and patterns of international migration. In Asia, Africa, and the Americas, Indigenous men, women, and children (enslaved and "free") were put to work in colonizers' homes, transplanting their employers' ideals of domestic comfort from the metropole. Some ended up travelling to Britain, where they were, for a time, considered a "fashionable luxury" in the homes of the wealthy.[4] But by the turn of the century, migrant domestic servants from less distant regions were commonplace, with Irish servants soon coming to "be viewed as indispensable to the English economy."[5] Despite their light skin tones, such domestic workers comprised a racialized "other"—their association with dirt and hard labour forming the essential underbelly of and contrast to the comfort and cleanliness of white British middle class homes.[6]

In America, racialization of domestic service developed apace, but along a somewhat different path.[7] About half the 1890 national servant workforce (and a much higher proportion in Northern cities) were international migrants. The Irish were particularly well represented, but by the 1930s most had moved on to other jobs while French Canadians worked in Vermont households, Scandinavians in Minnesota, Germans in Nebraska, and Indians and Mexicans in Arizona. Chinese "houseboys" and cooks were common in California, as were Japanese male retainers in Hawaii.[8] The Southern states alone relied on a local workforce, but notably one in which social segregation was well cemented.

If "race and domestic service were inseparable" in the South, they quickly became entwined in the North as well.[9] Between 1900 and 1920, the proportion of nonwhite female household servants in large cities tripled. And by 1944, 60 percent of domestic servants were African Americans—a fact that may partially explain the shift from live-in to live-out "help." White, native-born women returned to service in the 1930s (displacing some black women), but they remained a minority.[10]

This account makes clear that domestic service was never just a wife's work. Nor was it always unpaid. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century black women writers and activists, whose contributions are the subject of the next chapter, highlight both these facts. Their contemporaries in the feminist and socialist movements dominated by whites, however, paid scant attention.[11] White feminists instead responded to the experiences of white women who were seeing factory, retail, and some professional and (non-domestic) service sector jobs opening up while also negotiating cultural and social pressures to be housewives.

WAGED LABOUR AND FREEDOM: THE PROBLEM OF HOUSEWORK

Calls for political representation and equal access to jobs and pay span the decades of feminist interventions and cross political lines. These themes recur, for instance, in Harriet Taylor Mill's "The Enfranchisement of Women" (1851), American feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Women and Economics* (1898), and the British Women's Social and Political Union (1903–17).[12] For with wages comes the independence necessary to be released from men's arbitrary rule. But if women were to gain equality, it would take something more than changing employers' minds. They needed relief from the isolating and difficult work of caring for house and home. Insisting that unpaid domestic labour constituted work—and, indeed, regularly comparing it to slavery—some feminists turned to figuring out how to release (some) women from housework's drudgery.

American feminist Antoinette Brown Blackwell, writing in 1873, for example, considers women to be the "natural custodians of home" but argues for a "general reconstruction in the division of labor" so that men

can share in "the common household burdens."[13] Her proposal is part of a larger vision in which the workday in all industries is reduced to between three and five hours. Fifteen years later, suffragist and socialist feminist Frances Willard pins her hopes on economic and technological progress: "the next generation will no doubt turn the cook-stove out of doors, and the housekeeper, standing at the telephone, will order better cooked meals than almost any one has nowadays, sent from scientific caterers by pneumatic tubes, and the débris thereof returned to the general cleaning-up establishment."[14]

Some feminists called for industrial standards and regulations to be applied at home. In an era when people "are familiar with liquefied air and Roentgen rays … [and] electric transit," writes Gilman, households remain backward and unchanging sites of women's domestic servitude—the "lowest grade of labor remaining extant."[15] The work of "heating, lighting, feeding, clothing and cleaning" must be organized into a "large, well-managed business combination" that ensures "regular hours of labor and free time of rest" as well as "liberal payment for each grade of service." Only then can "women fulfill their duties in this line and be free human creatures too."[16]

Although willing to disrupt the gender division of labour, many feminists were less inclined to question class or racialized divisions of labour. Blackwell recognized that the poor are unlikely to survive on just a few hours a day of paid labour. Her solution? Poor women should find another job—perhaps minding another woman's children: "No well-to-do household, where there are children under ten years … can afford to let the mother toil for ten hours daily … her nursery should secure some competent and trustworthy supervision during the hours when she needs rest and change."[17] Gilman, for her part, proposed black women be trained in domestic service (and black men as farm workers) as part of a scheme to manage "negroes below a certain grade of citizenship."[18]

Clearly, not all women are to be spared the burdens of domestic labour, paid and unpaid. The question of who will do the dishes and change the diapers if women gain their independence from men by working for a wage

is a persistent and unresolvable conundrum posed by the capitalist tendency to separate production and reproduction. The racial and class biases of these accounts (and the history of white flight from domestic service recounted above) reveal the extent to which the work of reproducing people is considered degrading—and thus work to be done by people that society has degraded and devalued.

WAGED LABOUR AND FREEDOM: AN ANTI-CAPITALIST PERSPECTIVE

Having identified domestic labour as oppressive, feminists turned their attention to women's paid labour in the formal economy. Explanations of how and why waged work leads to women's freedom varied. Many left-leaning feminists became suffragists, maintaining that political representation was an essential step in gaining access to jobs, which would in turn secure women's independence from men. Others proposed collective responses, promoting vaguely worked out ideas about sisterhood. And a small minority of communitarians *and* suffragists continued to experiment with socializing the practices and spaces of domestic work.[19] But the ideas that most strongly influenced the socialist movements of the day reprise those introduced by Flora Tristan: equal work and wages place women in a better position to bring down capitalism, which will free everyone, including women.

This perspective is confirmed, developed, and popularized by German socialist and theorist August Bebel's enormously popular *Woman and Socialism* (1879), as well as by Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884).[20] Bebel and Engels both argue that relations between men and women are grounded in and respond to changes in the material organization of societies. To prove his thesis, Engels draws heavily on Lewis Henry Morgan's 1877 anthropological study, *Ancient Society*. He (and Bebel picks up this argument in later editions of his book) explains that as private property supplants communal property, egalitarian clan-based systems of production and distribution break down. A patriarchal, monogamous familial system arises in order to ensure that male property owners pass their wealth on to their own offspring. This involves

the "overthrow of mother right," which represents "the *world historical defeat of the female sex*. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children."[21]

Bebel and Engels also contend that while class and private property perpetuate women's oppression, capitalism draws women into the orbit of paid labour, placing a new era of equality and freedom within reach. As workers, women are degraded equally alongside men (thereby losing their "womanliness," and "turn[ing] things topsy-turvy"). Yet, at the same time, women escape "*the narrow sphere of strictly domestic life* … to [fully participate] in the public life of the people."[22] They gain economic independence from men while also fortifying the ranks fighting capital's power at the point of production. And in toppling capitalism, women and men together destroy the material base of women's oppression, private property.[23]

These socialists thus called, like equality feminists, for women's full entry into the workforce on equal terms with men. As for unpaid domestic tasks, Bebel and Engels promote the utopian socialist feminist solution: socialize them (without, however, challenging the idea that women take responsibility for them). With collective responsibility for reproducing life, women are relieved of their dependence upon men and free to participate in the "productive" workforce. They can enter freely into marriage and motherhood, or choose not to.

Although they resolve the capitalist conundrum about women's reproductive work by endorsing its socialization, Engels and Bebel introduce other dilemmas. As critics note, their "stageist" strategy (which ties the end of women's oppression to the end of capitalism) ignores sexism *within* workplaces and working class organizations, while also deferring women's struggle for equality and respect in the here-and-now for some unknowable day in the future.[24] Moreover, like Owen and Tristan, they promote the ideal of collectivizing housework without an analysis of how women's unpaid work in the household sustains the capitalist system as a whole.

Paradoxically, their exclusive focus on the gendered nature of housework leads these and other leading socialists to relegate feminist concerns with women's oppression to the backburner—conceiving of them as issues distinct from, and ultimately subsumed to, the struggles of paid workers. Here we find the seeds of socialist feminism's purported "economic reductionism" (as it comes to be known in the 1970s): the claim that socialist feminism treats all struggles that do not immediately advance the "class" struggle against capital as distractions, dismissing them as self-defeating because true and total emancipation rests on the (waged) workers' overthrow of capitalism.

Without denying the force of that critique, it is worth stressing that which is often forgotten: for Engels, Bebel, and others, the call for women to join the revolution was accompanied by a call to relieve them of the burdens of housework and childcare. That is, women, in their estimation, stood to gain something significant and real from this strategy. They were not simply asked to sacrifice feminist interests to "class" interests. The difficulty is that they had no explanation for why the socialization of housework was bound up with overturning capitalism. As a result, support for "women's issues" is treated as distinct—and therefore separable—from the general workers' struggle. This critical equality feminist approach—taken up and reiterated by individual socialists and party cadre—was to dominate for the next 150 years. And its interpreters did indeed regularly water down its *feminist* elements to a thin soup in the name of building the "class" forces of revolution.[25]

Yet not all are guilty as charged. Two early twentieth-century socialist feminists to push against that tendency are Alexandra Kollontai and Clara Zetkin. Kollontai was a member of the Russian Bolshevik Party's Central Committee prior to the 1917 revolution and became the Commissar for Social Welfare in the new government. As founder of the Woman's Department, she supported and won woman-friendly policies around abortion, divorce, and more. Zetkin was on the left of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Secretary of the International Bureau of Socialist Women. She edited the women's paper, *Equality*, and organized

the first International Women's Day in 1911. In 1916 she co-founded the anti-war Spartacus League, and went on to play a leading role in the German Communist Party and Third International.

Whereas Tristan, Engels, and Bebel called for gender solidarity, Kollontai and Zetkin engaged in practical political debate to convince party members to support the struggle for women's equality alongside and as part of the struggle for socialism. Adopting the view that women's emancipation is contingent on capitalism's destruction, they nonetheless equally contended that women's issues needed to be specifically addressed as part of that struggle—and not put off for a later day. Their efforts—which are early (maybe *the* earliest?) attempts to think through a socialist feminist theory of class solidarity—underline the difficulties of foregrounding women's issues in a socialist movement deeply committed to masculinist and gendered traditions.[26] Yet, while party members' sexism and anti-feminism obstructed those efforts, Zetkin's and Kollontai's theoretical framework did not prove fully adequate to the task they set. Notwithstanding the advances their contributions represent, they too left open the possibility that workers' and women's struggles were ultimately distinct struggles.

Kollontai and Zetkin stress that women's experiences of oppression vary by class position and that working class women's oppression is integral to the very conditions that sustain the lives of wealthy women. Because families must fend for themselves under capitalism, *all* women are dependent upon their husbands and therefore vulnerable. They thus supported the demands of the mainstream women's movement for equal access to training and paid work. "The question of women's emancipation is the question of work," writes Zetkin. "Just as workers are subjugated by the capitalists, women are subjugated by men and they will continue to be in that position as long as they are not economically independent."[27] Kollontai is equally adamant: "only by taking this path [of paid labour] is the woman able to achieve that distant but alluring aim—her true liberation in a new world of labour … step by step she transforms herself into an

independent worker, and independent personality, free in love." And free, she adds, to fight "in the ranks of the proletariat."[28]

To a point, according to Kollontai and Zetkin, the interests of working class and wealthier women converge. But only to a point: whereas middle class women can rest content with economic independence, the problems working class women face are more deeply rooted in the capitalist system. Capitalism, they observe, degrades all workers and uses women's lower wages relative to men to intensify that degradation. Moreover, those low wages make women's responsibilities at home that much harder. As Zetkin explains:

> The proletarian woman has gained her economic independence, but neither as a human being nor as a woman or wife has she had the possibility to develop her individuality. For her the task as a wife and a mother there remain only the breadcrumbs which the capitalist production drops from the table.[29]

The enemy is not men, nor unfair employers even. It is capital. "Equal rights … are, for proletarian women, only a means of advancing the struggle against the economic slavery of the working class."[30]

From those breadcrumbs working class women feed and clothe their families and raise their children. And while Kollontai and Zetkin bemoan the hardships involved in such work, neither analyzes the significance of domestic labour to wider processes of wealth production. In their eyes, women's work at home is burdensome (and must be socialized), but it has no *economically significant productive function*. Rather, as capitalism consolidates, writes Kollontai, "the marital/family union develops from a production unit into a legal arrangement concerned only with consumption."[31] Women's domestic labour is thus largely superfluous. "The machine superseded the wife. What housekeeper would now bother to make candles, spin wool or weave cloth? All these products can be bought in the shop next door."[32] Zetkin seems to agree: "Large-scale industry has

rendered the production of goods within the home unnecessary and has made the domestic activity of women meaningless."[33]

But neither socialist feminist entirely dismisses the wider social value of domestic work—at least when it comes to creating a communist society. In an 1896 speech to the SPD Congress, Zetkin urges that party propaganda encourage women "to carry out these tasks [of wife and mother] better than ever in the interests of the liberation of the proletariat." The notetaker at that meeting records "Vivid agreement" from the audience when she continues, "Many a mother and many a wife who fills her husband and children with class consciousness accomplishes just as much as the female comrades that we see at our meetings."[34]

Kollontai extends that argument to the post-revolutionary, transitional, phase of Bolshevik rule. As a leading member of that state, she oversaw the establishment of creches, maternity homes, children's clubs, and communal kitchens, all intended to reduce women's responsibility for the home. But she also argued that maternity itself is a social obligation:

> The social obligation of the mother is above all to give birth to a healthy baby. The labour republic must therefore provide the pregnant woman with the most favourable possible conditions; and the woman for her part must observe all the rules of hygiene during her pregnancy, remembering that in these months she no longer belongs to herself, she is serving the collective, "producing" from her own flesh and blood a new unit of labour, a new member of the labour republic. The woman's second obligation is to *breast-feed* the baby; only when she has done this does the woman have the right to say that she has fulfilled her obligations.[35]

Kollontai's clear willingness to sacrifice women's bodies to the state might seem highly naïve and possibly alarming. But it appears less so if the reader appreciates that she, first, presumes a genuinely democratic state where women have a collective and equal voice in creating maternalist policies; second, stresses that the state *educates* (rather than forces) women to

comply; and third, believes maternity itself is transformed under socialism. Whereas capitalism is hostile to maternity and bad for women's and children's health, under socialism women's reproductive tasks are fully supported: "Maternity is no longer a cross. Only its joyful aspects remain; only the great happiness of being a mother, which at the moment only the [wealthy] Mashenka ladies enjoy."[36]

Regardless of how we judge this discussion, it is clear that Kollontai in particular has some notion that women's reproductive labour figures in the economic well-being of a society—at least in a communist society. That is, she picks up on the thread spun by Thompson and Wheeler that assigns an economic function to women's domestic work. But she doesn't develop this line of thought, instead resting her case for feminism on a rational-humanist critique that foregrounds the burdens of domestic labour and urges women's economic independence as a path to equality and as a necessary step on the longer path to freedom.

CONCLUSION

These founding texts of the dominant socialist feminist tradition treat women's unpaid work in the home as a key component of women's oppression. Yet this theme is common to all three feminist approaches to thinking about labour. The distinction between both versions of equality feminism, on the one hand, and social reproduction feminism, on the other, is not whether domestic labour is a site of oppression. It is how that labour is theorized in relation to capitalistically "productive" labour. And despite some provocative statements, Engels, Bebel, Kollontai, and Zetkin fail to seriously engage with a political-economic conceptualization of unpaid domestic labour.

They do, certainly, identify the division of productive and reproductive spheres that typifies capitalist society as a structural component of capitalism—a division that ultimately devalues the work women do. But they don't investigate the peculiarly *capitalist* devaluation of domestic labour. They do not, that is, examine how the degradation of that labour and of the women who do such work features as part of the edifice that sustains

private property and capitalism. Instead, they suggest that the material basis of women's oppression is the presence of private property and an uninvestigated tendency for men to pass that property on to their biological heirs; and the gender division of labour that attends the separation of productive activities from reproductive activities.[37]

Housework and childrearing in their estimations are necessary labour, but they are necessary to *life*, not to the workings of *capital*. While essential to life, unpaid domestic work figures conceptually solely as a burden, unfairly relegated to women who then lack the time and energy for paid, "productive," labour. Thus, the gender division of labour—not the relation of unwaged domestic work to waged work—is the key feminist problem, responsible for women's dependence on men. *Dependency* in this view is the essence of women's oppression, and women's equal treatment as workers is the feminist solution to that problem. Their (additional) struggle as workers is the socialist solution to a related but different, class, problem. And the socialization of housework reconciles "the woman question." It doesn't reconcile the problem of class society.

Two political conclusions follow from this analysis—neither of which are anticipated nor consciously promoted by those who established critical equality feminism as the dominant socialist feminist perspective in the nineteenth century. First, given that the two sets of power relations are fundamentally different in nature, a dualist strategy of struggle makes sense. The feminist struggle is for equality within the system; the class struggle is to overturn the system. Each enjoins distinct subjects (women *versus* workers) and pursues distinct goals (equality *versus* communism). The feminist struggle is a *prelude* to the class struggle (insofar as it is required if women are to be paid workers), but it is not necessarily *part* of it.

Second, it is unclear how exactly the socialization of domestic work figures in this analytic. It is alternately a *means* to a greater end (insofar as it facilitates women's entry into the labour market); or a logical extension of socialist principles (and therefore made possible by successful class struggle.[38] One thing is for sure: it is not the goal or telos of either feminist or class struggle. As a result, it (and feminism more generally) can be—and

indeed was often—considered optional to overturning capitalism. If women can enter the workforce without the full-scale socialization of housework and childrearing (as they do now, for instance) or without being fully equal to their male co-workers (as is also still the case), then the class struggle can carry on whether or not sexism is challenged. After all, the stageist, economic reductionist logic in play already suggests women could logically defer their demands. Is it too much of a stretch for them to defer the socialization of domestic labour until after the revolution as well? Such are the pitfalls of the critical equality feminist perspective.

Notes

All websites accessed 29 July 2019.

INTRODUCTION

1. Clare Foran, "Hillary Clinton's Feminist Triumph," *The Atlantic* (July 28, 2016), www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/hillary-clinton-presidential-nomination-dnc/493556/.
2. "Our Platform," International Women's Strike USA (no date), www.womenstrikeus.org/our-platform/.
3. See Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya and Nancy Fraser, *Feminism for the 99%: A Manifesto* (London: Verso, 2019).
4. Diana Broggi, "Argentina's Popular Feminism," trans. Nicolas Allen, *Jacobin* (March 8, 2019), www.jacobinmag.com/2019/03/argentina-feministmovement-womens-strike.
5. Class reductionism means prioritizing economic or workplace-based struggles over community-based movements against social oppressions, and dualism refers to the idea that patriarchy and capitalism are parallel systems of exploitation and oppression.

CHAPTER 1: THE LABOUR LENS

1. *Unpaid Care and Domestic Work: Issues and Suggestions for Viet Nam* (Hanoi: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2016), www.un.org.vn/en/publications/doc_details/534-unpaid-care-and-domestic-work-issues-and-suggestions-for-viet-nam.html, 8; *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development* (Washington: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2011), https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4391, 80.
2. *Women at Work: Trends 2016* (International Labor Organization, 2016), 11, 30–5, www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_457317.pdf.
3. By women's work I mean quite literally the work women do in the paid and unpaid workforce. Much of this is work conventionally understood as best suited for women (for example, domestic work), but I use the term more broadly. When I refer to more conventional understandings, I add scare quotes ("women's work") or specify women's (paid or unpaid) reproductive, household, or domestic work.
4. Peasant societies, and noncapitalist societies generally, are characterized by people moving relatively seamlessly between instrumental activity (work) and pleasure-seeking activity (play). See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968); Barbara

Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy* (New York: Henry Holt, 2007); and Cindi Katz, *Growing Up Global: Economic Restructuring and Children's Everyday Lives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

5. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1993), 471; see also Alfred Schmidt, *The Concept of Nature in Marx*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: New Left Books, 1971), 172. Maria Mies challenges the claim that this direct relationship is "natural," observing that "female productivity is the precondition of male productivity and of all further world-historic development." Along with biologically reproducing societies, she points out, women's work supplies the bulk of subsistence needs. See her *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour* (London: Zed Books, 2014), 58.
6. To be sure, not all hardships were imposed by feudal masters, as the peasant economy was also vulnerable to famine and plagues. See Rodney Hilton, "Introduction," in *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, ed. Hilton (London: Verso, 1978).
7. Marx, *Grundrisse*, 471.
8. Rodney Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism*, revised 2nd edition (London: Verso, 1990), 57–8; Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (New York: Autonomedia, 2004), 26.
9. See T.H. Aston and C.H.E. Philpin, eds., *The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); and Hilton, *Transition*.
10. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, 1867 (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 927–8.
11. See E.P. Thompson, "Time Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism," *Past & Present* 38 (December 1967): 56–97; and Jonathan Martineau, *Time, Capitalism and Alienation: A Socio-Historical Inquiry into the Making of Modern Time* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015).
12. Claude Meillassoux, "From Reproduction to Production: A Marxist Approach to Economic Anthropology," *Economy and Society* 1, no. 1 (1972): 93–105.
13. Federici, *Caliban*, 91; see also Thompson, "Time Work-Discipline."
14. Federici, *Caliban*, 100; see also Margaret George, "From 'Good Wife' to 'Mistress': The Transformation of the Female in Bourgeois Culture," *Science & Society* 37, no. 2 (Summer 1973): 152–77; and Moira Ferguson, "Introduction," in *First Feminists: British Women Writers 1578–1799*, ed. Ferguson (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), 3–6. Federici's important insights hold notwithstanding her tendency to overgeneralize about the witch hunt's connection to burgeoning capitalist relations across Europe from the fifteenth century on. See David McNally, *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires and Global Capitalism* (Chicago: Haymarket Press, 2012), 45, n. 74.
15. See Wally Seccombe, *Weathering the Storm: Working Class Families from the Industrial Revolution to the Fertility Decline* (London: Verso, 1993).
16. I use the terms labour and work interchangeably throughout the book because the literature I engage with tends to do the same. At the same time, however, I argue that work/labour is internally differentiated between the timeless "practical human activity" that is a condition of all life, and the historically specific capturing of that activity by capital, and its distillation through relations of exploitation and oppression.
17. Karl Marx, *The Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, 1932 (Moscow: International Publishers, 1984), 112, emphases in the original. Marx regularly used the gender-neutral *Mensch*,

which his translators recorded as "men" or "man." See Roberta Garner and Black Hawk Hancock, eds., *Social Theory: Continuity and Confrontation. A Reader*, 3rd edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 39; and Adam Tooze, "Gendered Language in Marx Translation," *Notes on Social Theory* 9 (November 2017), www.adamtooze.com/2017/11/09/notes-social-theory-gendered-language-marx-translation/.

18. Marx, *Capital*, 283.
19. Marx, *Manuscripts*, 111.
20. While claiming nature is inherently social and society is natural, Marx still relies upon common sense meanings of those terms, positing a distinction between geological and physiological things and events (nature) and things and events that have been consciously constructed by and for humans (social). I follow Marx in this usage.
21. For a discussion of animals using tools, see Robert W. Shumaker and Kristina R. Walkup, *Animal Tool Behavior: The Use and Manufacture of Tools by Animals* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).
22. Schmidt, *Concept of Nature*, 169. Jean Baudrillard disputes the claim that work is existential. See his *The Mirror of Production*, trans. Mark Poster (St. Louis: Telos, 1973). Kathi Weeks draws on Baudrillard to critique the "productivist" tendencies of much feminism (see Chapter 2).
23. Marx, *Capital*, 283.
24. See John Bellamy Foster, *Marxist Ecology: Materialism and Nature* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000); and Chris Williams, *Ecology and Socialism: Solutions to Capitalist Ecological Crisis* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2010).
25. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonapart* (1852), Marxist Internet Archive (undated), https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/18th-Brumaire.pdf: 5.
26. Mies, *Patriarchy*, 49, emphasis in the original.
27. Marx, *Manuscripts*, 113.
28. See Mies, *Patriarchy*, 83–90; and Annie McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 152–5.
29. Mies attributes this increase to colonial profits from exceptionally low wages of Indigenous labour. This is questionable, however, since high profits tend to accrue from technically advanced sectors which colonial plantations were not.

CHAPTER 2: THE RATIONAL-HUMANIST ROOTS OF EQUALITY FEMINISM

1. Although not widely used until the early 1900s, the term feminism is used today to refer to women's "advocates" in prior centuries. Joan Kelly, "Early Feminist Theory and the 'Querelle des Femmes', 1400–1789," *Signs* 8, no. 1 (Autumn 1982): 4–28, 5, n. 3.
2. Ibid., 11.
3. Ibid., 5; see also Rosalind Brown-Grant, "Introduction," in *The Book of the City of Ladies*, 1405, Christine de Pizan, trans. and ed. Brown-Grant (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1999), xix–xxiii.
4. Utopian socialist feminism emerges in the 1820s and ties women's liberation to the communal reorganization of work, family, and society.
5. Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, 6.
6. Ibid., 57.
7. Ibid., 58.

49. The one exception to this attentiveness to class divisions is found her earliest book, *Pérégrinations d'une paria* (Dijkstra, *Flora Tristan*, 50).
50. Flora Tristan, *Flora Tristan: Utopian Feminism. Her Travel Diaries & Personal Crusade*, trans. Doris Beik and Paul Beik (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 166, 167.
51. Tristan, *Workers' Union*, 93.
52. Ibid., 123.
53. Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (London: Duke University Press, 2011), 8.
54. Ibid., 12.
55. By individualism, I mean the tendency to see individual economic advancement (with attendant changes in personal behaviour, morals, and psychology) as the key to creating a just society.
56. Tristan, *Promenades*, 57 (my translation). Regardless of whether we agree leisure should be used for cultivating minds (as opposed to pursuing more bodily pleasures), Tristan is not positioning *work*, in itself, as a virtue.

CHAPTER 4: EQUAL WORK FOR AND AGAINST CAPITAL

1. Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Ruth Milkman, ed., *Women, Work & Protest: A Century of U.S. Women's Labor History* (New York: Routledge, 1985).
2. Since wages for domestic service were comparable to or higher than those for other unskilled or semi-skilled jobs, reasons for this reluctance can only be surmised. Historians often emphasize that paid domestic work was scorned for its "nonproductive," privatized and personalized nature. Certainly, its low social status, unregulated hours, and private, intimate setting increased the potential for abuse. But industrial work shared some of these features. And factory workers had less control over the space and pace of work, qualities domestic servants cited as advantages of their positions. Phyllis Palmer offers an alternative, psychoanalytic, explanation: "sex, dirt, housework, and badness in women are linked in Western unconsciousnesses [such] that white middle-class women sought to transcend these associations by demonstrating their sexual purity and pristine domesticity." See *Domesticity and Dirt: Housewives and Domestic Servants in the United States, 1920–1945* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 138. See also David M. Katzman, *Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).
3. Katzman, *Seven Days*, 53; see also Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, *Living In, Living Out: African American Domestics in Washington D.C., 1910–1940* (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 2010).
4. Victoria K. Haskins and Claire Lowrie, "Introduction. Decolonizing Domestic Service: Introducing a New Agenda," in *Colonization and Domestic Service: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Haskins and Lowrie (New York: Routledge, 2015), 5.
5. Rosie Cox, "From Our Own Backyard? Understanding UK Au Pair Policy as Colonial Legacy and Neocolonial Dream," in *Colonization and Domestic Service*, ed. Haskins and Lowrie, 261.
6. Bronwen Walter, "Strangers on the Inside: Irish Women Servants in England, 1881," *Immigrants and Minorities* 27, no. 2–3 (July/November 2009): 279–99; see also McClintock, *Imperial Leather*.
7. Outside the United States, American imperialist ventures in Latin America imported black British Caribbean labour to maintain their households; see Nicola Foote, "British Caribbean

Migrants and Domestic Service in Latin America, 1850–1950: Race, Gender and Colonial Legacies," in *Colonization and Domestic Service*, ed. Haskins and Lowrie, 280–308.

8. Palmer, *Domesticity*, 67; Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor,' *Signs* 18, no. 1 (1992): 1–43. For a discussion of capitalism's continuing reliance on migrant labour, see Susan Ferguson and David McNally, "Precarious Migrants: Gender, Race and the Social Reproduction of a Global Working Class," Socialist Register (2015).
9. Katzman, *Seven Days*, 62.
10. Ibid., 291–2; Palmer, *Domesticity*, 13, 67 n. 4; Palmer attributes this shift to the dovetailing of black women's preferences and their employers' racist fears of black-white intimacy.
11. Their neglect cannot be explained by a lack of exposure as white and black women were active in both the abolition and suffrage movements; see Teresa Zackodnik, *African American Feminisms 1829–1923* (London: Routledge, 2007).
12. While John Stuart Mill is usually credited with presenting the first sustained critique of women's political exclusion, his work reprises Wheeler's and Thompson's arguments. And although Mill agreed women should not be barred from the occupations, he advocated that they oversee domestic affairs—a position contested by his wife, Harriet Taylor Mill (Rendall, *Origins*, 286–7).
13. Antoinette Brown Blackwell, "Relation of Women's Work in the Household to Work Outside," 1873, in *Up from the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism*, ed. Aileen S. Kraditor (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1975), 151, 155.
14. Frances E. Willard, "How to Win: A Book for Girls," 1888, in *Pedastal*, ed. Kraditor, 318.
15. Charlotte Perkins Gillman, "Economic Basis of the Woman Question," 1898, in *Pedastal*, ed. Kraditor, 176, 177.
16. Ibid., 177–8.
17. Blackwell, "Relation," 156.
18. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "A Suggestion on the Negro Problem," *The American Journal of Sociology* 14 (July 1908). For an analysis of Perkins Gilman's "racialized reproductive thinking," see Alys Eve Weinbaum, "Writing Feminist Genealogy: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Racial Nationalism, and the Reproduction of Maternalist Feminism," *Feminist Studies* 27, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 271–302, 271.
19. See Rendall, *Origins*, 316–19; and Delores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982).
20. Bebel's book saw 50 editions between 1879 and 1910, with the 1891 9th edition (further revised in 1895) considered a "socialist classic"; see Lise Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 98. Neither Bebel nor Engels credits Tristan, although Djikstra detects her possible influence on Engels (*Flora Tristan*, 142–7).
21. Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, 1884 (New York: Pathfinders Press, 1972), 120-1, emphasis in the original.
22. August Bebel, *Woman Under Socialism*, 33rd edition 1904, trans. Daniel De Leon (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 180, 187, emphasis in the original.
23. According to Engels, the material basis for oppression does not exist within propertyless working class households, although backward ideas linger.
24. Vogel, *Marxism*, 101; Bryson, *Feminist Political Theory*, 61.

25. See Chapter 6. For more recent examples of class reductionist theories, see Tony Cliff, *Class Struggle and Women's Liberation* (London: Bookmarks, 1984); David Harvey, *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Vivek Chibber, "Rescuing Class from the Cultural Turn," *Catalyst* 1, no. 1 (2017).
26. See Philip S. Foner's introduction to *Clara Zetkin: Selected Writings*, Clara Zetkin (New York: International Publishers, 1984), 33–8; and Alix Holt's introduction and commentaries in Alexandra Kollontai, *Selected Writings* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1977), 52–7, 201–2.
27. Zetkin, *Selected Writings*, 45, 46.
28. Kollontai, *Selected Writings*, 63.
29. Zetkin, *Selected Writings*, 77.
30. Kollontai, *Selected Writings*, 60.
31. Ibid., 225. Capitalism's interest in maintaining the family against forces that seek to destroy it, suggests Kollontai, are political—not economic: "For the capitalists are well aware that the old type of family … constitutes the best weapon in the struggle to stifle the desire of the working class for freedom and to weaken the revolutionary spirit … The worker is weighed down by his family cares and is obliged to compromise with capital" (257).
32. Ibid., 254.
33. Zetkin, *Selected Writings*, 47. It is unclear here if Zetkin refers to women's social reproductive work or just to home-based industry as she fails to differentiate these in the preceding passage.
34. Ibid., 82.
35. Kollontai, *Selected Writings*, 144, emphasis in the original.
36. Ibid., 134; see also 228.
37. See Vogel for a more fulsome methodological critique of Engels and Bebel (*Marxism*, 73–103).
38. Hayden makes this second argument (*Domestic Revolution*, 5–8).

CHAPTER 5: ANTI-RACIST FEMINISM AND WOMEN'S WORK

1. Although the contributors to this discussion did not identify as feminists, scholars situate them within the "black feminism" tradition; Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000). I follow this convention while not wanting to homogenize all currents of black feminism, which adhere to—as this chapter shows—divergent and sometimes contradictory positions.
2. Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South*, revised edition (W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), 158–85; Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family, from Slavery to the Present*, revised edition (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 26–37.
3. White, *Ar'n't I a Woman*, 123–30.
4. Leslie A. Schwalm, "'Sweet Dreams of Freedom': Freedwomen's Reconstruction of Life and Labor in Lowcountry South Carolina," *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 1 (1997): 9–38, 10–11.
5. Gerald Jaynes, *Branches Without Roots: Genesis of the Black Working Class in the American South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 228–33. Although some black feminists encouraged women to become better housekeepers and to "make the homes of the race the shrines of all the domestic virtues rather than a mere shelter." Fannie Barrier Williams, "Club