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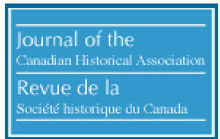

E. Cora Hind's Feminist Thought: "The Woman's Quiet Hour" in the *Western Home Monthly*, 1905–1922

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E. Cora Hind's Feminist Thought: "The Woman's Quiet Hour" in the *Western Home Monthly*, 1905–1922

KATHERINE M.J. McKENNA

Abstract

E. Cora Hind was a turn of the 20th Century 'First Wave' feminist who has received little scholarly attention. This is remarkable, since in her time she was known world-wide as the agricultural editor of the Manitoba Free Press *where she worked from 1901 until her death in 1942. This paper examines her column, "The Woman's Quiet Hour" in The* Western Home Monthly *written from 1905 to 1922. The column provides a rich record of the thoughts of a self-educated intelligent feminist mind which defies easy categorization. Cora Hind was a staunch equity feminist, a union supporter and a resolute advocate for the single working girl. She also often expressed a conventional idealized view of the importance of maternal values. She was an ardent defender of the British Empire and immigrant assimilation, yet opposed discrimination and showed great appreciation of diverse cultural heritages. She was a leading member of conservative middle-class women's organizations, yet her feminist views became so radical that they likely led to the abrupt end of her column. Hind was a complex and at times contradictory character whose social and political thought can teach us much about her own day as well as today's feminist heritage.*

Résumé

Bien que E. Cora Hind ait fait partie de la première vague féministe au tournant du vingtième siècle, elle n'a pas retenu l'attention des historiens. Cet oubli est fort surprenant puisqu'à son époque elle était reconnue internationalement comme la rédactrice agricole du Manitoba Free Press*, où elle a travaillé de 1901 jusqu'à sa mort en 1942. Cet article étudie sa chronique intitulée "The Woman's Quiet Hour" publiée dans le* Western Home Monthly *de 1905 à 1922. Cette chronique constitue*

une riche source d'informations concernant la pensée d'une féministe autodidacte défiant toute classification. Cora Hind était une féministe réformiste engagée ainsi qu'une défenseure du syndicalisme et des ouvrières célibataires. Malgré tout, elle a souvent exprimé des idées conventionnelles par rapport à l'importance des valeurs maternelles. Elle a défendu avec ardeur l'Empire britannique et l'assimilation des immigrants, tout en s'opposant à la discrimination et en démontrant une ouverture d'esprit par rapport à la diversité culturelle. Si elle a été une dirigeante influente d'organisations conservatrices regroupant des femmes de la classe moyenne, ses idées féministes se sont radicalisées avec le temps, si bien qu'elle en a perdu sa chronique. Hind a été un personnage complexe, parfois contradictoire, dont les idées politiques et sociales peuvent nous éclairer sur son époque et l'héritage féministe actuel.

Journalist E. Cora Hind began her monthly column "The Woman's Quiet Hour" in the *Western Home Monthly* in May of 1905. At that time, she had been employed by its publishers, *The Manitoba Free Press*, for four years. The women's column would have been a fairly standard assignment to give to a female journalist and her mandate was clear. The *Foreword* to her début, presumably written by the editor, described the light content that was to be expected. There were to be "no long articles about any person, place or thing, just little items of interesting news, chance gems of knowledge, scraps of fun, a sort of literary flotsam and jetsam, the threads and thrums of life."[1] In selecting Cora Hind for this task, he may have picked the wrong woman. Almost from the start, instead of supplying meringue, she delivered whole wheat bread. Although in the early years of "The Woman's Quiet Hour" she made an effort to include lighter topics, over time these were abandoned in favour of more practical matters and, ultimately, even weighty political and social subjects. After almost 17 years, in 1922, her column abruptly ceased with no explanation given. It may have been that her strongly expressed feminist views were more than the editor's stomach for lighter fare could stand.

Cora Hind was, above all, a serious newspaperwoman. It is remarkable that she is not better remembered today, because in her time she was known world-wide, not so much as a public feminist,

but more so as an agricultural expert. Her fame, at least partly, came from her uncannily accurate predictions of the condition and volume of the wheat crop on the Canadian Prairies — something that was crucial for the western economy and commercial interests beyond. For some 30 years, from 1904 onward, she canvassed the rural west every summer talking to farmers and inspecting their crops. Her stature is aptly described by Susan Crean, who, writing in 1985, observed that, "Today it would be like having the world authority on oil and gas production and the most accurate predictor of energy reserves in the West writing for the *Edmonton Journal*."[2] Marjory Lang agrees, "When Cora Hind spoke on wheat, her words went round the world."[3] In the 1930s, her journalistic pre-eminence was recognized when she travelled the globe investigating agricultural conditions for the *Manitoba Free Press*. Her columns from these journeys were published in two volumes, *Seeing for Myself* and *My Travels and Findings*.[4] In 1935, she was the first woman to be awarded an honorary degree from the University of Manitoba and throughout her long career she received much public recognition, with numerous awards and gifts from agricultural associations.

Cora Hind was also a respected leading Winnipeg citizen. An ardent clubwoman, she was a founding member of many organizations, including the short-lived writer's group the Quill Club, the Women's Canadian Club, the Winnipeg Branch of the Canadian Women's Press Club, the Council of Women and the Political Equality League. In this, Cora was typical of many women of her era who joined with other women to work for common cause.[5] She was a particularly devoted member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and later described herself as the "first lieutenant" of one of the earliest female physicians in Canada, WCTU leader Amelia Yeomans.[6] In addition to working for temperance, she investigated laws relating to women, pressed for prison reform, and spoke across the province and at the first Mock Parliament in 1893 in favour of female suffrage. It is likely, then, that she welcomed "The Woman's Quiet Hour" as a platform to express her feminist social and political views. She was not the only woman journalist to do so in this period in Canada, but she may have been the most opinionated and forthright in her agenda.[7]

Despite Cora Hind's prominence in her time, she remains relatively unknown today. She is not included in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* and has received little more than passing scholarly attention. It was not until 1997 that she was recognized by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada as a person of national historic significance, and a plaque was erected in her honour in 2001 on the site of the former *Manitoba Free Press* building. She has not been ignored by popular historians, however, who have celebrated her as a feminist pioneer of the west.[8] Janice Fiamengo has pointed to the lack of scholarly attention to journalists such as Hind. She writes, "Prairie women journalists such as E. Cora Hind at the *Winnipeg Free Press* … combined an agrarian focus with feminist advocacy to establish outspoken personae as women of the people. Their contributions have been chronicled by scholars ... but they merit more detailed attention."[9]

Part of the reason for the lack of scholarly work on Cora Hind is that only a small number of her personal papers survive. The most comprehensive source about her life is her colleague and biographer, fellow newspaperwoman Kennethe Haig, who wrote for the women's pages of the *Manitoba Free Press*. She published an admiring and anecdotal account of Cora's life three years after her death.[10] Until now, "The Woman's Quiet Hour," a column in the *Manitoba Free Press* supplement, *The Western Home Monthly*, has been overlooked.[11] It consists of 158 lengthy and widely ranging pieces written from 1905 to 1922, and is a rich record of the thoughts and opinions of a self-educated, intelligent feminist mind which defies easy categorization. It is the only significant source that has been found to date that can give us this insight into Hind's political and social feminist views.[12]

Ella Cora Hind was born in Toronto on 18 September 1861, to Jane Carroll and Edwin Hind. After the death of their mother when Cora was 2 years old, she and her two brothers went to live on the family farm with their grandfather and maiden Aunt Alice in Artimisea, Grey County. Growing up in rural Ontario, Cora acquired the foundation for what was to be a life-long love of agricultural matters. Although she completed high school, Cora was not too excited about the prospect recommended by Aunt Alice, of working as a

teacher — one of the few respectable occupations open to single women at that time. Fortunately, her destiny lay in another direction.

In the summer of 1882, two male cousins came to the farm on a visit from their new homes in the Northwest, and spoke in glowing terms of the opportunities that were to be had there. The Canadian prairies were in the process of being appropriated by the Canadian government and vast tracts were being converted from grassland where buffalo had formerly roamed and the Metis had established farms, to land grants for settlers from Eastern Canada and beyond. This frontier, intended to establish and extend Canada from sea to sea, was touted as the "last best west". Catherine Cavanaugh has noted that western settlement was "[f]ramed as a masculine enterprise." It involved a "manly struggle for survival in the harsh prairie wilderness."[13] Increasingly, however, white women were being sought as settlers to "civilize" the west.[14] European men, who had relied on First Nations women as their partners in the fur trade and early settlement days, were now compelled by threat of social censure to set them aside in favour of these new women migrants to the West.[15] The Canadian government, insecure in its hold on the prairies in the face of Metis resistance, wanted it secured by homesteaders of British, or at least European, origin.

Alice and Cora were two of the many women of British descent who responded to the call to go west to seek new opportunities. Thus it was that in August of 1882, just before her 21st birthday, Cora and her aunt boarded the train for Winnipeg. They brought no nest egg, only their own determination and talents. However, they were not interested in finding husbands and becoming farm wives. Alice had skills as a dressmaker that she planned to market, and Cora was armed with a letter of introduction from her Uncle George to W.F. Luxton, the editor of the *Manitoba Free Press.* Their courage in taking such a leap into an unknown future was remarkable in an era when respectable middle-class women were expected to get married, have children, and live out their lives in the domestic sphere, whether in Ontario or on the frontier.

W.F. Luxton's reception of the young Miss Hind was certainly not the first or last time that she was confronted with the prejudice that came with such Victorian stereotypes. Although he received her

kindly and enquired after her uncle, Luxton greeted her request for a job as a reporter with astonishment. He explained to her that it, "was hard, often rough work, late hours, and sometimes involved meeting not quite nice people."[16] It was no job for a woman. Disappointed, but undaunted, E. Cora Hind looked about for another source of employment. She went to Winnipeg's only typewriter agency and rented one of the new office machines for a month. When she returned the typewriter to the agency and asked about work, she was referred to the law firm of Macdonald, Tupper, Tupper and Dexter, which had just bought a machine but had no one who knew how to operate it. Cora Hind was hired on the spot, at the salary of six dollars a week.[17] She had the distinction of producing the first typed legal brief in the West.[18]

Winnipeg was a bustling frontier town when Cora and Aunt Alice arrived there. Settlers poured into the west, lured by the promise of rich farms and prosperity. As typist and receptionist, Miss Hind met many of these new farmers while they were waiting for their appointments, and she was able to hold knowledgeable conversations with them about their trials and triumphs. This ability to relate to ordinary working people of either sex was her great strength and contributed toward her later success as a journalist. During these years, she built up knowledge and experience, and contributed occasional pieces to the *Manitoba Free Press* as a freelance journalist. Finally, in 1893, she felt ready to strike out on her own. She took out a bank loan for $300 and opened the first public stenography business west of the Great Lakes. Although there were some lean days when she and Aunt Alice were down to their last nickel and forced to subsist on tea and toast, she was able to not only make a living for herself, but also to develop many valuable contacts that would serve her well in the future. "At my bureau," Haig quotes her as saying, "I worked for all classes and conditions of men and from every one of them I learned something."[19]

Shortly after Cora opened her business, the Manitoba Dairy Association asked if she would take minutes of their meetings for them. She wrote these up for the *Manitoba Free Press* and her career as an agricultural journalist began. Farming was her passion and she made it her business to become thoroughly knowledgeable about all aspects of Prairie agriculture, and the state of western settlement. Her

big break came in 1898 when an especially rainy summer postponed the crop so that threshing started only at the beginning of October. Eastern financial interests were desperate for information. Colonel John B MacLean, whose publishing dynasty continues today in the form of *Maclean's Magazine*, decided to take action. He had met Cora while in Winnipeg and was impressed with her knowledge and ability. He wired from Toronto, asking if she would undertake, at his expense, to travel the West and make a survey of the state of the crop. Aunt Alice filled in at the office while Cora took to the railway and the road. Her report reassured eastern interests to the extent that wholesalers resumed suspended shipments of goods to Manitoba, confident that their bills would now be paid.[20] After these successes, she was increasingly asked to contribute to other papers specializing in agriculture.

After almost 20 years of hard work and preparation, Cora was finally to fulfill her life's ambition and become a reporter at the *Manitoba Free Press*. A new editor, John W. Dafoe, who did not share the Victorian prejudices of his predecessors, was able to recognize her sterling qualifications for the job of "special writer on agricultural and marketing matters." He later recalled that when he hired her in 1901:

> Miss Hind brought to the Free Press a considerable reputation as an accurate and competent reporter of agricultural matters based upon secretarial work done for farming organizations; and her association with the newspaper was at the outset in this branch of newspaper work. But her field rapidly widened until she became the paper's expert authority on agricultural and marketing questions; and the advisor in these fields in the shaping of editorial policies.[21]

Three years after she joined the *Free Press*, a crisis in western agriculture sent Cora back out into the countryside. Black rust disease had attacked the wheat crop and experts from Chicago had estimated the yield at 35 million bushels. Dafoe wrote, "It was the desire of the Free Press to challenge this estimate, which it believed was made for speculative purposes, but a bare general denial, it was recognized, would not do." Accordingly, Cora undertook her second

crop survey, and she came in with an estimate of 55 million bushels. "This was the joke of the year with the Chicago 'experts'," Dafoe recalled, "but when the official figures at the close of the crop year showed a yield of something over 54 million bushels the reputation of Miss Hind as a real expert was made, subject of course to the possibility that subsequently she might lose it. But in fact this she never did."[22]

In 1905, when Cora Hind was assigned to "The Woman's Quiet Hour," these career successes as an agricultural journalist were still ahead of her. One wonders if she was disappointed to be given the column, or if she sought out the job. Marjorie Lang has observed, "the status of the women's page and of those who made it was ... ambiguous." Even if they "might celebrate the achievements of their peers, their collective pride was hard to maintain in a profession that mocked their creation."[23] If Cora considered her column to be a burden and an embarrassment for a serious journalist, she did not reveal this to her readers. On the contrary, she took the responsibility seriously, and wrote for her female audience with a conscientious determination.

Cora Hind made an effort in the early columns of "The Woman's Quiet Hour" to deliver on the content promised by her editor. She wrote about things such as "The Influence of China," in which she extolled the virtues not of the country, but of using porcelain cups, declaring, "The mere daily use of a delicate and beautiful cup, has a refining and restraining influence on both boys and girls, and fosters their love of the beautiful."[24] She discussed household hints, recipes, presented edifying verse and even gave tips on the latest fashions. Staples of her column that continued over time were her accounts of the women's displays at major agricultural exhibitions, conventions, and meetings of women's organizations of all kinds, visits of important or interesting people, advocacy for women's education, and reviews of books. As she found her voice in writing the column, the "heavier" content grew, and she increasingly saw her mandate as being anything that affected the welfare of the women of the West. Although she was cautious at the beginning, her tone became more openly and obviously feminist over time. Gradually, the "flotsam and jetsam" all but disappeared from her writing.

Historians of the early "First Wave" women's movement in Canada have pointed to two main strands of ideology found in feminists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Canada — "maternal" or "social" feminism, which argued that women deserve rights because they are different from men, and "equality" or "liberal" feminism, which contended that women deserve the same rights with men because they are equally citizens under the law.[25] Most historians acknowledge that these two strains are often intertwined in "First Wave" feminism, although the "maternal feminist" perspective has been seen as dominant. The legacy of the early feminists who fought for the vote and other social reform has been complicated and often difficult. Early "Second Wave" feminists of the 1970s tended to idealize them as pioneers for women's rights and womanly heroines.[26] Reacting to this, and perhaps also reflecting a sense of disappointment that their efforts seemed to have brought little change to the status of women in Canada, some historical work of the late 1970s to early 1990s has been highly critical of them, dismissing the late nineteenth and early twentieth century feminist leaders as ineffective conservatives.[27] Carol Bacchi contends that farming and labouring women refused to work with them because of their narrow class vision. In her words, "the suffragists were predominantly members of an Anglo-Saxon, Protestant social élite, dominated by professionals and the wives of professionals who endorsed woman suffrage as part of a larger reform programme designed to reinstate Puritan morality, Christianity, the family, and the rule of the professional."[28] Worse, they have been portrayed as racists. Marianna Valverde argues that maternal feminism, with its emphasis on women as mothers of "the race" drew on the biological determinism of early Darwinism, which saw some types of people as more highly evolved than others. Valverde asserts, "Since the consequences of the racism and enthno-centrism are still being felt in the 1980s, it is important to understand not only that many suffragists were racist, but exactly how they were racist."[29] This approach laid out the boundaries for work on Canadian First Wave feminism for a generation of scholars. The result has been that scholarship on First Wave feminists has languished, while many scholars of the 1980s and 1990s moved on to topics that were more politically appealing.[30]

Since then, the discussion has shifted somewhat. While still recognizing class and racial biases where they are found, it has been acknowledged that a more complex and nuanced reading of the early suffragists might be possible. Janice Newton observes that women's organizations such as the WCTU could be political training grounds for women's radicalism, even if the working classes had an uneasy relationship with them. Newton also saw links between the suffrage movement and socialism. "While it may not have been their primary agenda at the outset," Newton argues, "these women's organizations played an important role in fostering women's radicalism. They challenged the restriction of women to domestic life, educated women in social issues, eased their transition into politics, and provided training in basic political skills such as public speaking and parliamentary procedures."[31]

Janice Fiamengo has recently called for an appreciation of "ambiguity, complexity and contradictatoriness"[32] when discussing Canadian First Wave feminists. She makes the valid point that polarizing the debate between the stereotyped opposites of heroine worship and condemnation of the racism of the suffragists has not been productive in achieving a nuanced reading of their life, writing, and work.[33] Similarly, Nancy Forestell has observed that historical work on First Wave feminism has stalled in recent decades and "remains underdeveloped. There is deficient information about an array of individuals, organizations and forms of interaction or non-interaction, and of how gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, region, and nation intersected with one another in shaping ideas, actions, and relationships."[34] Two examples of historians who have risen to this type of challenge are Catherine Cavanaugh in her work on Irene Parlby[35] and Patricia Roome in her article on Henrietta Muir Edwards.[36] This recent research has also been accompanied by a more self-reflexive consideration of the legacy of First Wave feminism. Cecily Devereux has argued that not only was maternal feminism inextricably tied to eugenics and the project of empire-building, but that similar issues about race and cultural imperialism continue to be a concern for what has been called "Third Wave" feminism of the early twenty-first century. Veronica Strong-Boag, who moved on to other areas of investigation after her path-breaking work on Nellie

McClung, has recently returned to the First Wave feminist reformers in her new work on Lady Aberdeen. She admits, "It is only too easy to find in our foremothers reminders of our less worthy selves and views we have learned to hold responsible for many of the ills of the world."[37] Nonetheless, she concludes, "Feminists don't have to be perfect to deserve a respectful hearing."[38]

This paper does not intend to do any more or less than attempt to accomplish the respectful hearing that Strong-Boag proposes. Cora Hind was a complicated individual with some qualities and beliefs that we would admire today and others that we would reject. Her feminist thought as revealed in "The Woman's Quiet Hour" both confirms the uncomfortable stereotypes of First Wave feminism, and in others defies them. She was a maternal feminist in that she often acknowledged and never challenged the importance of women's role as mothers and nurturers of the nation. Yet in her own life, she remained resolutely single and defended her never-married state in the name of personal freedom. She was an ardent defender of the British Empire and felt strongly that immigrants should assimilate, yet she showed great appreciation of their cultural heritages and sensitivity to the discrimination they faced, even to German immigrants during World War I. She was a staunch equity feminist, yet took her political position even further than this, with an analysis of economic inequity that moved her position to the left of the political spectrum. She was a leading member of conservative middle-class women's organizations, yet in the end expressed a feminist viewpoint that was so radical that it likely caused her to lose her column.

From the beginning of "The Woman's Quiet Hour," Cora was concerned, like many of her day, with the dangers of the city for rural girls leaving the family farm to seek jobs. In 1905, Eaton's opened a department store in Winnipeg and she anticipated an influx of young women in response to the potential employment. Repeatedly, she urged their mothers to warn them of the dangers that lay in their path. In 1908, she lamented that according to the local maternity homes, "the percentage of girls who entered the dark road of lost virtue last year was very high."[39] Cora wrote often and approvingly of the work of the WCTU and the YWCA in assisting the single girl in the city. They inspected accommodation for young women and kept

a list of "safe" places to stay, raised funds to build more residences for the single working girl, and established a Traveller's Aid, which sent a badged female representative to meet every train that arrived in Winnipeg looking for vulnerable single women travellers. This would all help to avoid the "constant tragedy of the young girl gone astray through going, in sheer ignorance, to places where she should not go."[40] "As a woman who has long earned her own living," Cora wrote, using an evocative martial metaphor, "I feel responsible for the girls that are just entering the fight and cannot rest in my bed for remembering those who have fallen by the way." She warned their mothers, "I hope no reader of his column will ever have to weep over a lost daughter remembering that she allowed her to leave the home roof without tender counsel on such dangers as she was likely to meet in the world of men."[41]

Cora Hind's perspective on this problem was not just to look, as many of her day did, to the control and monitoring of girls in the city.[42] She laid the cause squarely at the feet of their fathers. "I know that one of the great reasons that girls in the country, come to the city, " she pointed out, "is the fact that no matter how long they work on their father's farm they have no money of their own." The situation was very different for sons. "It does seem rather unfair that the farm should belong to the son and if there is more than one, others are got for the younger ones while in many cases all the girl gets is her board and clothing until she is married."[43] Under these circumstances, "It is scarcely to be wondered that girls leave the farms," she declared. Once in the city, wages and working conditions were often so poor that young women could scarcely make ends meet, which drove them to overwork, forced them to endure miserable, crowded living conditions, or to seek favours from men. Cora cited as an example a strike in Winnipeg of women tent workers that she witnessed in 1899. Covering the story as a freelance journalist, she observed:

> At that time 35 girls ... went out because their employers were trying to cut the wages down to $4 per week and even less .... I went among these girls to find out who they were, where they came from and how they lived. It turned out that 28 of the 35 were farmer's daughters and in every

> instance when I talked to them, they admitted that they could have stayed at home but their fathers would never have paid them wages for their work. Some of these girls were sleeping five in a room.[44]

Cora Hind urged fathers to pay their daughters for their labour and repeatedly she wrote about the kinds of money-making activities that young women could undertake on the farm such as training horses, butter making, and raising poultry and eggs. She was a strong advocate for women's access to agricultural colleges in subjects such as dairying and home economics. Refusing any economic benefit to their daughters was false economy for farmers, she argued. Often after the young women left for the city, their fathers were forced to hire help to replace their labour. She commented dryly, "Whether this is good business or good management, I leave the fathers of girls in the country to decide."[45]

To illustrate her point, Cora told the story of a young woman she met who was waiting on tables in a restaurant. She "had been on her feet for 12 hours and her cough and tired eyes took away my appetite." Cora knew of the girl's father, a farmer who sold butter in Winnipeg, "and who could always have sold twice as much as was made on his farm. I also knew that he hired help to make the butter." When Cora asked the young woman why she worked so hard in the city when she could have lived much more comfortably on the farm and made butter for her father, she answered, "Would you like to make butter all week for nothing but your board and clothes, and very little of the latter? ... My father would never pay me a cent for making butter, he thinks he has a right to the work of his children, but I don't think so." The story had a tragic ending. "That girl long ago filled a consumptive's grave," due to overwork. "You will say that was an exceptional case,." Cora observed. "I would like to believe it was, but experience and inquiry have taught me that it was not."[46]

The working conditions of rural settler women were also a great concern for Cora Hind. Pioneer life on the prairies was often grinding toil for all, but as men's work tended to decrease with prosperity, women's grew. The more land a woman's husband acquired, the more hired hands he employed and the more the labour of his wife and

daughters was increased. "Between eight and nine thousand men came in to help reap and thresh the great harvest," she reported in 1905, "but the additional women that came to help cook for these hungry mouths could be counted by a few hundreds. The herculean task of providing three, and even four meals a day for this army has fallen on the shoulders of the keepers of the home."[47] She wrote, "Through the long scorching days when the city seemed red hot my heart has ached for the women who have toiled all day in hot kitchens cooking for the harvest hands."[48] Cora saw the need for domestic help for women as urgent. "It is the West's greatest problem to-day, no matter what the legislators may talk about," she asserted.[49] Again, she blamed men for creating the situation. Although they purchased new farm equipment to make their lives easier, they did not do this for their wives, leaving them to cook on wood-burning ranges in the heat of summer in stifling small houses. "On not a few such farms large barns have been erected, money or credit has been found for the purchase of a top buggy, but the housewife still toils in a two or three roomed house, with a great range, which like a vampire is sucking her very life's blood."[50] "A man should be almost as much ashamed to have his wife go without a wringer and washing machine as he would be to have her go without shoes," she wrote.[51] Furthermore, the wife was given no share in the profits of the farm, which should be her right. "I wonder how many of the farmers realize that fully one half of the profit of the crop [should be] the absolute property of the wives and daughters who have made possible, by their unselfish toil, the saving of it," she asserted.[52]

Cora agreed with the conventional wisdom of the day in idealizing women's domestic role. She quoted a poem with the lines:

> In this world are many stations
> In whatever clime we roam
> But there's nothing more ennobling,
> Than the keeper of a Home.[53]

Their husbands, however rarely appreciate them, she pointed out. "In the West with its many toils, its lack of help, women grow despondent over their failures," Cora wrote. She admonished their spouses

to remember why marriages are unhappy and provided a helpful list of the reasons, which included: "He never talked over his affairs with his wife." "He doled out money to his wife as if she were a beggar." "He looked down on his wife as if she were an inferior being." "He thought of his wife only for what she could bring to him." And, "He thought his wife should spend all her time doing housework."[54]

Cora Hind also addressed the "Woman Question," which was being popularly debated: "Take first of all the question 'Should women go into business?'" She wrote, "It is so foolish to ask that question for if both men and women would look conditions fairly in the face they would understand that as society is at present constituted women have no option in the matter. They must go into business or starve."[55] She presented an historical analysis of the economics of women's work that had an almost Marxist ring to it:

> Men grow quite indignant over the iniquity of women going into factories and shops and crowding them out, quite forgetting that they ruthlessly went into the homes, carried all the homes' industries out into factories and shops, and women are but attempting to reclaim a fragment of their own. There never was a time, even in the tribal days of the race, when men as a whole supported women as a whole, and there never will be.[56]

Those women in the workforce, Cora Hind argued, were entitled "to equal pay for equal work."[57] She also addressed the question of the single woman. "Very few men, no matter how passionately they may desire perfect freedom for themselves can understand the desire of a woman for independence and the power to do as she pleases and go where she likes." This often made women, who had lived on their own and supported themselves, not very receptive to marriage. In response to the argument that this would mean less children would be born, often referred to as "race suicide," Cora tartly replied, "this is one of the punishments that men have brought on themselves and the race by their long subjection of women and I cannot see that the individual woman should hold herself responsible for it."[58] However, for her, "the real crux of the women's question is the economic independence of married women."[59]

Like other feminists in Manitoba, a key issue for Cora Hind was the loss of the dower right for married women, which had been abolished by the Manitoba legislature in 1885.[60] This meant that a woman could work on a farm for her whole married life, and be left with nothing if her husband chose to sell it. Cora cited some notorious examples from Winnipeg where women with young children had been abandoned by husbands who had sold their homes and absconded. "It may be said that these are isolated cases," she wrote, "but if the law was what it should be, such cases would never occur. It would not be possible for the husband to sell the home over the head of his wife and children without her at least knowing about it beforehand and having some check on the money."[61] Cora felt strongly that this "only goes to show how men will make laws to suit themselves without the slightest regard for the rights of women."[62]

After writing her column for almost four years, Cora Hind raised the subject that was closest to her heart — woman suffrage. Although she had been publicly speaking in support of it since at least the first Mock Parliament held in Winnipeg in 1893, she began somewhat apologetically. "A discussion of the suffrage question is not particularly amusing or restful, for it excites some, disgusts others, while still others consider it to be a bore," she admitted.[63] She appealed to the maternal side of her readers in introducing the topic:

> But it must be borne in mind that men and women regard politics in an entirely different way. If a woman sees that her child is in danger from the saloon, or the race track, or the filthy condition of the streets, she immediately wonders if she could not right things if she had a franchise. When the prairie woman sees her child die because medical attendance cannot be procured, or sees him growing up in ignorance because there are no schools, she wishes she had a little say in the affairs of government. The man is different. When he is interested in politics he considers it almost entirely from the commercial standpoint. He accepts the condition of the streets, the lack of school privileges and proper medical attendants as inevitable and consoles himself and others by saying that things will be better in time.[64]

However, she argued, "the basic reform which would make all others easy, is for women to possess the franchise and it is passing strange to me that so many women cannot see this ... the dower law, the right to homestead, the right to guardianship of their children, and a score of other reforms which are so sorely needed would come very readily."[65]

When asked about the militancy of the English suffragists, Cora refused to condemn them, suggesting that they were being given the worst possible press coverage.[66] "It is very worthy of note," she observed:

> That never in the history of Great Britain has the government treated as conspirators any body of men who were simply seeking an extension of their rights, or what they conceived to be their rights; and in proceeding against the militant suffragettes as conspirators they are demonstrating the fact that a woman who shows herself ready and willing to fight, possesses more terrors for government leaders than does a man under similar circumstances.[67]

Cora wrote admiringly of the Pankhursts, pointing out that when Mrs. Pankhurst visited Winnipeg, many men had to admit, "that hers was by far the finest political address they had ever heard delivered by man or woman."[68] She also praised the work of American feminists, notably WCTU activist Frances Willard, suffragist Susan B. Anthony,[69] and anti-slavery crusader Lucretia Mott.[70]

Although Cora had appealed to the maternal nature of her readers in arguing for suffrage, for her it was a question of equal rights. She was highly amused when one politician made the point that women would be less womanly if they had the vote and therefore men would no longer give up their seats to them on streetcars. "I assured him that, speaking of women as I knew them, the majority of women would greatly prefer a vote to a seat in the streetcar, as it was much the more useful possession." Cora Hind's position was uncompromising. "There is to-day absolutely not one sound argument against the extension of the franchise to women," she asserted.[71]

Cora Hind's concept of equality was one that she extended beyond her own ethnicity and class. She reported disapprovingly of

two speakers at a meeting the Grain Growers of Saskatchewan. The first, a woman, objected to the proposal that all women in a district should be allowed to vote for school trustees. She argued that it should only be the wives of ratepayers because, "We don't want the hired girl voting." The second was a man who had criticized the woman, but later objected to planned communities that would include "Dukhobors, Mennonites and Galacians." Cora was highly critical of them both:

> The woman who would not let the "hired girl" vote belongs to the class that are so largely responsible for a good type of young woman refusing to engage in housework as a profession and a means of livelihood. As for the man, he must have sorely lacked in observation if he has not realized that there are many things which we may, with great profit to ourselves, learn from our foreign communities.
>
> There can be no true democracy in Canada until we sink the spirit which prompted these two remarks.[72]

The assimilation of immigrants into Canada was a concern that Cora often addressed in her columns. In the early twentieth century, the massive immigration into the Canadian West brought many newcomers with different ways. "Many of us do not approve of the government having brought so many of these people in from southern Europe," Cora observed, "but they are here and the only wise thing is to make the best we can of them." She urged her readers to help their new neighbours and to "be patient with these people and not to do anything to antagonize them with Canadian ways." She felt that "women of the community are the ones who can do this work the best and most effectively." She suggested that they "seek to know and help the foreign women .... Assist them in acquiring English and when they have made a little progress in the language carefully, little by little, bit by bit, instil into their minds something of the advantages that come to a woman from being a Canadian." This "task is not impossible of achievement," she argued, "as has abundantly been proved by the work done by All People's Mission in Winnipeg," the work of socialist J.S. Woodsworth.[73] This was not a multicultural

vision of Canada, but one that had assimilation as its goal. It applied equally to immigrants from Great Britain. She also wrote disparagingly of the chronic problem of the "Englishwoman who refuses to assimilate."[74]

Cora Hind was optimistic that things were changing for the better at the start of 1914. When Alice Jamieson was appointed as a Juvenile Court Judge, she observed, "Five years ago this would have been an utter impossibility .... The world is moving slowly but surely into the light and women are coming into their own."[75] She saw the success of the second feminist Mock Parliament in Winnipeg led by Nellie McClung as a positive sign. The growth of the Political Equality League, with both men and women members, also showed that "Political equality sympathy is fast gaining ground in Manitoba."[76] When war was declared later that year, Cora jumped into its support with enthusiasm. She was a staunch advocate of the British Empire. "I never see a Union Jack run up a flag pole without wanting to cheer," she wrote.[77] She was even prepared to temporarily set aside the struggle for women's equality, although women should continue to work for their causes behind the scenes. "Personally," she wrote, "I think that there should not be much in the way of campaigning or anything that would tend to suggest to the outside world, dissensions in the camp of the nation."[78] She was convinced of the justice of the British side. "It is a war to establish the right of the weak against the strong. It is really a war to preserve civilization," she asserted.[79] She tirelessly exhorted her readership to do whatever they could for the war effort — conserve food, write letters and send parcels to soldiers, knit socks, make bandages, and raise money for the Red Cross.[80]

Cora was gratified in 1916 when four provinces granted the vote to women — Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. She was not so pleased when the federal Union Government extended the franchise only to female relatives of servicemen. Her column was not published from July until December 1917. When it reappeared she explained that the hiatus was due to "a difference of opinion between myself and the editor of the magazine over an article on the confining of the Dominion vote to the next-of-kin." During wartime, criticism of the government was seen as

providing aid and comfort to the enemy, but Cora did not agree with this censorship. "I had intended to withdraw definitely," she wrote, "but in view of the present crisis in Canada probably no writer is justified in missing an opportunity of speaking to the women earnestly and faithfully on the subject of conservation and control."[81]

Cora Hind was not exaggerating the importance of her influence. In the 12 years since she began writing "The Woman's Quiet Hour," her stature as a journalist had grown significantly. She was known world-wide and in 1909 had become the agricultural editor of the *Manitoba Free Press*. Around the time of her quarrel with her editor, she had been actively recruited by federal Conservative leader Robert Borden to support the Union Government and advise the Dominion Food Controller in its war-time rationing efforts. She swallowed her objections for the good of the empire, and wrote a pamphlet that was published by the Union Government Publicity Bureau entitled *Why Women Should Support Union Government*.[82] Her argument was simply that a promise had been made to England and it must be kept: "God Almighty hates a quitter." "If honor of country and faith in our own men fails to bring support," she asserted, "the thought of the women in France and Flanders who have suffered the unspeakable Hun, and the terror of the women of England of a Hun invasion, should at least stir the instinct of self-preservation." Germany, she pointed out, has long desired to conquer Canada and is full of "unspeakable hatred" towards it because of its support of Britain. "Picture to yourselves the fate of the Canadian women if the Huns ever set foot in Canada," she warned darkly.[83] She also addressed the issue of the limited franchise:

> Having for 27 years, by voice and pen, striven for a vote for women: being to-day disenfranchised by the accident of being without male relatives; knowing the condition in western Canada intimately and thoroughly, I am satisfied that in confining the votes of women to those with men in the war, the Government of Canada did the best thing under the circumstances, and accept without question, and to the utmost of my limited ability I accord the Union government my support.[84]

Although she also warned in a disturbingly racist manner in "The Women's Quiet Hour" that "[t]he condition of the women of Germany today makes the position of the women of the savage tribes of Africa a paradise in comparison,"[85] she did not extend this judgement to the immigrants from enemy nations within Canada. When others criticized them for not volunteering for war duty, she cautioned, "To me the first great undertaking would be to some extent get their point of view, to find out what they are thinking and feeling, to get to know their different nationalities and respect them." She chided her readers that:

> We are too apt to think that the foreigner within our gates regards us as superior beings, but if we could get their true point of view, we would find that far too frequently they despise us and, I am afraid, not wholly without cause …. Among the peoples who have come to us there is a vast amount of talent lying dormant which we have made absolutely no attempt to develop .... Is it any wonder that these people are not loyal, that they are not developing any Canadian spirit and that their attitude of mind toward us is largely one of contempt?[86]

When some ladies of the Women's Council of Winnipeg became upset that the granting of the franchise to women would mean that foreign women who married Canadian men would gain the vote even if they could not speak English, Cora thought this was ridiculous. "It did not seem to occur to them," she observed, "that the real injustice was that a woman on marrying loses her nationality in that of her husband's."[87]

Throughout the war, Cora wrote often of the great sacrifices the men were making and how women should endeavour to prove themselves worthy of this. The granting of the vote provincially and federally during these years gave women great responsibility. "Canadian women having the power to vote are fully entitled to bear the burdens as well as share the privileges of citizenship," she asserted.[88] She was painfully aware of the debt that the women of Canada had to the men who had given their lives. She wrote:

> With the exception of the heroic nurses on the west front, no woman has been called upon to make the supreme sacrifice in this war, while not only thousands but well nigh millions of men have made that sacrifice. Sometimes it comes over me like a wave to wonder, "Are we worth all that has been sacrificed for us?" Certainly much, if not all, the sacrifice will have been in vain if the women of Canada do not rise to the present emergency and undertake the great task of production.[89]

After the war, Cora Hind expected a new world, one that reflected what she saw as the high moral values that had been fought for. Instead, there was economic deflation and labour unrest. "The history of 1920 has been a history of strikes and unrest in the industrial world, the loss of time and money has run into hundreds of millions; the agricultural world has not escaped the contagion of unrest," she observed, although this was "no argument against organized labour or against the rightness of making every reasonable endeavour to improve our condition as workers."[90] She had hoped for a more harmonious and socially progressive society after the war and had felt that women's votes would have helped move politics away from partisanship and more toward a concern for the greater good. Instead, she saw important reform legislation, such as the Manitoba Child Welfare Act, stalled in the legislature. Her columns became increasingly concerned about these issues. One of her male colleagues at the *Free Press*, she reported, thought himself very witty by pointing out that her column should not be called the "Quiet Hour" but the "Battle Hour ... as he claims my space is chiefly spent in fulminating against something."[91]

When the labour unions which she had supported began to protest the employment of women rather than advocate for exploited female workers, Cora was dismayed. The Grain Growers' Association subsequently proposed joining forces with unions, which outraged her. In August 1921, under the inflammatory title "Is It To Be a Sex War?" she lambasted them for seeking to "unite with large bodies of men who declare that women shall not have equal rights with them even when they work in the same industry." Farm women, who had only recently "after much travail" been granted equality in the Grain

Growers' Association, "seem blind to where this may lead." "Of course," Cora pointed out:

> The attitude of union labour on this question is not difficult to understand. During the war women committed the unpardonable crime of doing most of the men's jobs not only as well, but in many cases much better than the men had ever done them; moreover they were quite willing to turn out more product. Jealousy and fear are at the root of all the attempts at repression which men have exercised towards women through the ages, and the ability shown by women during the war has only increased that fear and jealousy. … If there is to be a sexes war it behooves women to stick together, do nothing unnecessary to stir up antagonism between the sexes but steadily, quietly and determinedly hold for their rights and upon every occasion, where they have a franchise, use it to protect the rights of women and children.[92]

In the meantime, Cora advised her readers, "every woman should lay this truth to heart, men may tolerate you in business but they do not want you in a profession where you come in competition with themselves and the sooner women in business master that truth and keep it ever before them, the better for them."[93]

Cora Hind, who had fought so hard for the franchise because she felt that with it would come real change in Canada, found herself frustrated by its implementation. In her final column of January 1922, she wrote, "The recent general election emphasizes the fact that men do not want women in parliament and they intend to keep them out just as long as they can. There will be just as big a struggle to secure enough women to parliament to have an effective influence as there was to secure the vote." There had only been one woman nominated to run for office, from the Progressive Party, which showed an, "unexpressed but nevertheless strong determination on the part of men to keep women out of parliament." As evidence of men's resistance to women's equality, she pointed to "All these letters to the paper against married women holding jobs and single women holding jobs when their fathers could support them." This showed that "Women made too good during the war and men are afraid of

them ... [and] combine together in an effort to shove women back into the their old state of economic dependence." The result of this, she warned, is that "at present the men ... are doing their ... best to foster the spirit which will flame into a real sexes war in the not too distant future if they do not see the light and mend their ways."[94]

It was the last column of "The Woman's Quiet Hour." Shortly after, the *Manitoba Free Press* sent their star agricultural journalist on a quite unnecessary tour of England to determine why a 30-year-old embargo on Canadian beef could not be lifted.[95] It may have been editor Dafoe's way of dealing with a tense situation among his staff. When she returned, she continued her high profile role at the *Manitoba Free Press*, but she did not continue to write a women's column. It is likely that any other female journalist would simply have been fired for such provocative writing.[96]

Cora Hind's "The Woman's Quiet Hour" supports the view that not all First Wave feminists presented their arguments for equality within a primarily maternal feminist framework, nor were they simply advocates of middle-class moral and social control. Cora Hind was well respected in her day and among her cohort of feminists, her opinions were not seen as exceptionally radical. If anything, she was seen as rather forceful in her conservative imperialism. Even her good friend Nellie McClung felt distanced from Cora on the issue of war. She herself inclined to a pacifist perspective, but Cora was "chief among the Empire's defenders .... Her views were clear cut and definite. We were British and must follow the tradition of her fathers. She would have gone herself if women were accepted."[97] Yet Cora combined this with a feminist political and economic analysis that was left-leaning, supportive, and appreciative of the working class and immigrants, and sensitive to the needs of rural women. Although she unfailingly praised women as mothers, her feminism was founded on a belief for equality rights and, by the end of her column, one wonders if she regretted her support of Borden's government and the empire's cause. Her disillusioned writing in "The Woman's Quiet Hour" following the war foreshadows a late twentieth century radical feminist analysis of patriarchy. It is not necessary to embrace Cora Hind's imperialism or to ignore it in order to appreciate aspects of her thought that are more appealing to us today. Like most feminists of

any era, she was a complex and at times contradictory character whose social and political thought can teach us much about her own day, as well as what we have carried forward from it into our own time.

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2 Susan Crean, *Newsworthy: The Lives of Media Women* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1985), 26.
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6 Hind, "The Woman's Quiet Hour" (hereafter WQH), *Western Home Monthly*, 22.

7 See Crean, especially "In Women's Realm: The Evolution of the Women's Sections," 140–61; R.E. Hawkins, "Lillian Beynon Thomas, Woman's Suffrage and the Return of Dower to Manitoba," *Manitoba Law Journal* 27, 1 (1999-2000): 45–113; Barbara E Kelsey and Angela E Davis, eds., *A Great Movement Underway: Women and the Grain Growers' Guide, 1908–1928 Selected Letters and Editorials from the Women's Page* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Record Society, 1997).

8 See Jean Bannerman, *Leading Ladies Canada 1639–1967* (Belleville, Ont.: Mika Publishing, 1977), 226–30; Kennethe Haig, "E. Cora Hind, 1861–1942," in *The Clear Spirit: Twenty Canadian Women and Their Times*, ed. Mary Quayle Innis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 120–41; Carlotta Hacker, *E. Cora Hind* (Don Mills, Ont.: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Ltd., 1979).

9 Janice Fiamengo, *The Woman's Page: Journalism and Rhetoric in Early Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

10 Kennethe M. Haig, *Brave Harvest: The Life Story of E. Cora Hind, L.L.D.* (Toronto: Thomas Allen Limited, 1945). Unless otherwise stated, most of the details on Cora's life come from this source.

11 I owe a debt of gratitude for the discovery of "The Woman's Quiet Hour" to the kind generosity of my colleague Georgina Taylor, who found it in the course of her own work on Violet McNaughton.

12 Although Hind wrote two books, they were travelogues about agricultural matters, reprinted from her columns sent home from a world tour in 1935–1937. Other than this, all that can be found is a newspaper account of her speech at the first Mock Parliament in 1893, *Manitoba Daily Free Press* (10 February 1893), some Christmas essays she included in cards to friends, a pamphlet she wrote in support of the Union government in World War I, *Why Women Should Support Union Government* (Ottawa: Modern Press, 1917), and drafts of three speeches given later in life, which are in the University of Manitoba Archives. It is to be hoped that further exploration of newspaper sources will provide more source material.

13 Catherine Cavanaugh, "'No Place for a Woman': Engendering Western Canadian Settlement," *Western Historical Quarterly* 28 (Winter 1977): 499.

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Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670–1870 (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer Publishers, 1980); Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997); Sarah Carter, "Categories and Terrains of Exclusion: Constructing the 'Indian Woman' in the Early Settlement Era in Western Canada," in *Telling Tales: Essays in Western Women's History*, eds. Catherine Cavanaugh and Randi Warne (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2000), 60–81.

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19 Ibid., 43.

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21 John W. Dafoe, "Foreword," in Hind, *Seeing For Myself*, v.

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23 Lang, 142.

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26 A couple of examples of this are Bannerman and Innis.

27 An exception to it is a book that remains the most comprehensive discussion of early feminism in Canada: Catherine Cleverdon, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950).

28 Carol Lee Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 148–9.

29 Mariana Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction and Sexuality in First Wave Feminism," in *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History*, eds. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 21.

30 An example of an exception to this is Randi Warne, *Literature as Pulpit: The Christian Social Activism of Nellie* McClung (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier Press, 1993).

31 Janice Newton, *The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left 1900–1918* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 19–20.

32 Janice Fiamengo, "A Legacy of Ambivalence: Responses to Nellie McClung," eds. Veronica Strong-Boag, Mona Gleason and Adele Perry, 154.

33 See also Janice Fiamengo, "Rediscovering Our Foremothers Again: Racial Ideas of Canada's Early Feminists, 1885–1945," in *Rethinking Canada: the Promise of Women's History*, eds. Mona Gleason and Adele Perry, 5th ed. (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2006), 144–63.
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