

OLIVE SCHREINER ON “TIMES AND SEASONS”

by

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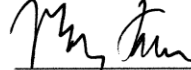
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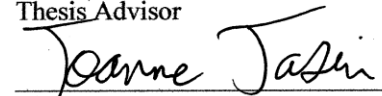
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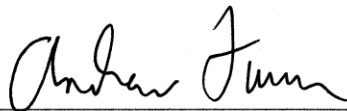
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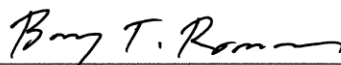
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ABSTRACT

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Olive Schreiner’s novel, *The Story of an African Farm*, and nonfiction work, *Woman and Labor*, have compelled critics to apply the term *New Woman* to her main character, Lyndall, who speaks out for change against the established gender roles. The thesis proposes that by placing Lyndall in a colonial context, Schreiner creates a plot where place and language embody the possibilities for change. Considering that Schreiner’s life consisted of a life in the colonies, first as a governess, later as a wife, one sees Schreiner’s personal interest in change. Analyzing Schreiner’s style of representing Lyndall’s relationship with nature and other characters, one discovers the way Schreiner balances a feminist (and hence radical) shadow discourse of masochism with the discourses of nature and evolution. Schreiner registers an interest in change in her language by turning the linguistic “mental neighborhoods” of Jane Austen inside out in favor of a more extrinsic language, the dialect of real South African neighborhoods. In

her personal details, furthermore, Schreiner brings to life the language and landscape of her beloved country, creating the conceptual groundwork for political change. Read in this way, Olive Schreiner's work can be seen as creating space for more literature about social change like the award-winning work of the South African writer, Nadine Gordimer.

DEDICATION

To my son, Ian.

You are the reason for everything.

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DEFINING THE “NEW WOMAN”

The New Woman character can be defined and identified by the history of Imperial England, the imperial endeavors overseas, the economic status of England and the public perceptions of the middle-class women usually seen as representative of the political New Woman. The definition of the New Woman character is also derived from the literary “traditions of English” (Cunningham 95) and the fictional representation of the New Woman in the novel, which imply that the only places for emancipation are in private spaces, such as the home, where the woman character can be read as reproducing the Imperialist’s agenda, and through colonial settings, where race and gender quickly renegotiate the hierarchy of oppression, placing the white European woman above the male and female natives.

Nevertheless, the New Woman text cannot be defined solely through the history of female politics, England’s Imperialist history, the novel’s setting, or the representation and treatment of the female characters within the novel. W.T Stead (1894) and Cunningham (2001) concur that a New Woman character must be written by a woman author from a woman’s perspective. Burdett states, “the ‘New Woman’ tag is ascribed to articles by, respectively, Sarah Grand and Ouida, written in 1894; but the ‘Woman Question’ had been, and continued to be, a hotly debated issue in the periodical press as much as the novel although the novel became increasingly important and, by the mid-1890’s, dominant medium for ideas about New Womanhood” (Burdett, *Olive Schreiner*

195). Tusan explores the evolution of the New Woman in the periodic press in her article “Inventing the New Woman: Print Culture and Identity Politics during the Fin-de-Siècle.”

The debate over the definition of the New Woman occurred during the late 1800s mostly through articles in the periodical press. The press initially used terms such as “Odd Woman” and “Wild Woman” to refer to the woman of the period who chose a less traditional lifestyle than the role of homemaker. Michelle Elizabeth Tusan states that:

By the 1890s, feminist identity had emerged as a highly contested issue in England. Eliza Lynn Linton started the debate with an article published in *The Saturday Review* in 1868 called “The Girl of the Period” in which she described “a creature who dyes her hair and paints her face, whose sole aim is unbounded luxury and whose dress is the chief object of such thought and intellect as she possesses.” By the 1870s and 1880s, popular journals, magazines, and novels joined the outcry and lampooned politically active women as the “shrieking sisterhood,” labeling them “Wild” or “Odd.” (170)

Linton describes a woman of animalistic and hysterical qualities while ignoring the sentiments behind the emergence of these new characteristics in women. The debate continues as Ouida, pseudonym for English novelist Maria Louisa Rame, evolves the term from “Odd” and “Wild” to “New” thus gaining repute as the first to use the term “New Woman.” In her article “The New Woman” in the 1894 November edition of *The North American Review*, Ouida outlines a New Woman who rejects domesticity, is cruel to animals, possesses a fair amount of over-confidence in both her beauty and intellectual

prowess, and is unendingly at war with the New Woman's most hated and contemptuous adversary: man.

Ouida's article describes the New Woman in less than flattering terms; however, she does point to, albeit cursorily, the New Woman's possible objectives in the political arena. The many descriptions present in Ouida's article include "fierce vanity," "undigested knowledge," "over-weening estimate of her own value," and "lack of common sense" (614). Ouida describes a New Woman speaker as:

middle-aged and plain of feature; she wears an inverted plate on her head tied on with strings under her double-chin ; she has balloon-sleeves, a bodice tight to bursting, a waist of ludicrous dimensions in proportion to her portly person; she is gesticulating with one hand, of which all the fingers are stuck out in ungraceful defiance of all artistic laws of gesture. Now, why cannot this orator learn to gesticulate and learn to dress, instead of clamoring for a franchise? She violates in her own person every law, alike of common-sense and artistic fitness, and yet comes forward as a fit and proper person to make laws for others. She is an exact representative of her sex. (613)

While Ouida's description of the New Woman runs concurrent with the many caricatures published in periodicals such as *Punch*,¹ her references to the political agenda of the New Woman help in furthering to educate her readership. While Ouida's work makes points of convergence with Linton's earlier description of the "odd" and "wild" woman, Ouida's

¹ *Punch*, 28 April 1894 "Donna Quixote" 'A world of disorderly notions picked out of books, crowded into his (her) imagination' -*Don Quixote*.



DONNA QUIXOTE.

[“A world of disorderly notions picked out of books, crowded into his (her) imagination.”—*Don Quixote*.

article created enough stir to entice Sarah Grand's retort in June 1894 in her article "The Modern Girl."

The title of each article, "The New Woman" by Ouida and "The Modern Girl" by Sarah Grand, succinctly encompasses the opposing sides of the Woman Question and its attempts at defining the New Woman through the press. While Ouida's title suggests a sort of maturity and full growth in the use of "woman," Grand's title points to a more youthful and budding woman who develops concurrently with modern advancements. Grand's rejoinder article describes the New Woman as a Modern Girl who demands the opportunity to make the choice of marriage as her own right. Grand's article emphasizes the Modern Girl's need for education in order to make the correct decision for her future. Grand states "intelligence is active, books are plentiful, thought is free, and there are always opportunities for conversation" ("The Modern Girl" 708). While Ouida's article bitterly denigrates the New Woman as a free-wheeling, middle-aged and ugly suffragist who lacks all social graces and form, Grand's article realigns the perspective of the readership to focus on the impressionable female youth growing up in a time of modernity which demands the education of Britain's females; she claims "it is from the horrors of this position that girls have to make their escape, and that not for their own ends only, but for the benefit of the whole human race" ("The Modern Girl" 708). Also attributing the inevitable end of the human race to the lack of female education, Olive Schreiner's 1911 *Woman and Labor* provides an evolutionary-based approach to the Woman's question.

Olive Schreiner's treatise, *Woman and Labor*, published twenty-eight years after the first publication *The Story of an African Farm* and fourteen years since the New

Woman lost the spotlight in the press,² lends a new angle to the emergence of the New Woman and her ideals. Schreiner claims

Much is said at the present day on the subject of the ‘New Woman’ (who, as we have seen, is essentially but the old non-parasitic woman of the remote past, preparing to draw on her new twentieth-century garb): and it cannot truly be said that her attitude finds a lack of social attention. On every hand she is examined, praised, blamed, mistaken for her counterfeit, ridiculed or deified – but nowhere can it be said, that the phenomenon of her existence is overlooked. (*Woman and Labor* 103)

Schreiner declares the political New Woman to be an evolutionary necessity. Unlike other definitions, Schreiner gives the New Woman natural rights to independence and new labor.

An article published in June 1884 edition of *The North American Review* straddles the line between Ouida’s presentation of the New Woman and Grand’s the Modern Girl; in the Notes and Comments, Elizabeth Bisland claims in her article titled “The Cry of the Women”:

Let women run the race, paint, write, teach, speak, as her talents dictate, but let her use these things as being only the pastimes, not the work, of her life. Let the young girl learn the tremendous meaning and sacredness of her functions and their exercise, and make her understand once for all that

² Michelle Elizabeth Tusan claims “by early 1891, the New Woman had faded as a contested icon in British culture. Lectures on the New Woman advertised in *Shafts* in late 1894 and early 1895 had stopped [...] although feminist papers such as *The Woman’s Signal* and *Shafts* kept their virtuous and respectable image until their own demise around 1900, the New Woman was no longer used as a symbol for the movement. Likewise, the New Woman had all but disappeared from the popular press by 1898, referred to only sporadically during the early decades of the twentieth century” in her article “Inventing the New Woman: Print Culture and Identity Politics during the Fin-de-Siècle” (177).

her real work lies in carrying the torch of life from generation to generation. (759)

While Bisland calls attention to the need for women's occupations to expand outside the traditional housework, she still reduces women to their reproductive abilities as "the only thing to be done supremely well," (759) which serves in direct opposition to Grand's declaration that "only a limited number of people nowadays insist in their finite foolishness that all women indiscriminately should undertake the duties of motherhood" ("The Modern Girl" 706).

Ouida, Grand and Bisland's articles share the notion that there is a shift in the role of the English female; the why, how, and what to do about it is the debate. Schreiner states:

It is often said of those who lead in this attempt at the readaption of woman's relation to life, that they are 'New Women'; and they are at times spoken of as though they were a something portentous and unheard-of in the order of human life. But, the truth is, we are not new. We who lead in this movement today are of that old, old Teutonic womanhood, which twenty centuries ago plowed its march through European forests and morasses beside its male companion. (*Woman and Labor* 54)

Schreiner's claim that the New Woman is not new is based in evolutionary theory and the examination of the females' opportunities of occupation. Schreiner's assertion is based on the idea that the advent of technological advancements ousted the woman from her traditional role and occupation within the home. This displacement, while not a wholly new circumstance in the history of women, is cause for attention and action. According

to Schreiner, new occupations must be opened and made accessible to the women of the modern age if the race is to continue just as advancements in past societies forced previous evolutions of occupation for both men and women. The need for occupation is not new, the lack of a new occupation is.

John Kucich in his article, "Psychoanalytic Historicism: Shadow Discourse and the Gender Politics of Masochism in Ellis, Schreiner, and Haggard," helps to place Schreiner in women's literary history. By examining the shadow discourse of masochism, Kucich traces the female tradition of martyrdom through literary history. Kucich claims to "resist such terms as *counterdiscourse* or *textual unconsciousness* to describe this discursive invisibility because unlike most accounts of psychoanalytic reading, [his] stresses the dormancy of shadow discourse, its failure to generate interpretation, and its subsumption within conceptual frameworks that obscure it" ("Psychoanalytic Historicism" 89). Kucich implements recent psychoanalytic theory to bring forth the shadow discourse of masochism prevalent in the history of gender politics. He argues that "feminism has lost sight of a nonsexual form of masochism vital to its own history that could energize its ongoing political projects" ("Psychoanalytic Historicism" 89). The recovery of this discourse could assist in present day gendered debates. Pointing out the shadow discourse of masochism in the novel *The Story of an African Farm* as well as Schreiner's piece *Woman and Labor*, Kucich is able to re-evaluate Schreiner's place in female literary history.

Kucich claims that Schreiner's political activism aided in the spread of masochistic behavior to further feminists' political ends. He states:

Schreiner endowed feminism with psychosocial power, for example, by borrowing from Pearson the self-aggrandizing notion that female self-denial was crucial to the survival of not just middle-class women but the entire human race [...] This self-sacrificing grandiosity became standard in suffragist rhetoric, which promised converts that their self-martyring work would save society, not just emancipate women [...] Such rhetoric inspired a generation of women to exploit an entirely new set of methods for political action: for two decades, suffragettes kept their movement in the headlines by courting arrest through civil disobedience and by using techniques of passive resistance such as hunger strikes to martyr themselves for the cause. (“Psychoanalytic Historicism” 98)

Schreiner’s involvement in the feminists’ appropriation of masochism is in alignment with traditional gender ideology of the nineteenth century, which places middle-class women as “guardians of society” and the Empire through their “moral selflessness” and righteousness (Kucich “Psychoanalytic Historicism” 98). Throughout the late nineteenth century, the agenda that called for women’s suffrage was highly publicized, and the activists followed Schreiner’s urgings for passive aggressive and masochistic behaviors. Halting their hunger strikes and postponing their own political agendas, the suffragists gave their support to the nation with the arrival of the First World War in 1914. English women did not gain universal suffrage until 1928. However, in the British colonies of New Zealand and South Australia, the women’s suffrage movement attained the goal of voting rights, 1893 and 1895 respectively.

Examining Schreiner's fiction, *The Story of an African Farm*, and nonfiction, *Woman and Labor*, through John Kucich's approach of examining shadow discourse, one can examine the forces underlying the New Woman identity. Kucich claims:

[t]o appreciate the phenomenon of shadow discourse more generally, we should pause to recall that, as Michel Foucault taught us, historical knowledge is a fortuitous archeology of remembering and forgetting ("Nietzsche" 145). The abrupt discontinuities of theoretical perspective that shape disciplinary genealogy destabilize the writing of history by changing how and what we remember. ("Psychoanalytic Historicism" 90)

Kucich defines "shadow discourse" when he states "shadow discourse remains inert for those who cannot see it. That its degree of visibility shifts over time, as well as among subjects inhabiting a given cultural moment, makes shadow discourse a contingent category, a way of marking perspectives or products of interpretation, not an absolute textual condition" ("Psychoanalytic Historicism" 89). The audience identifies with Schreiner's world because it begins to free the discourse of masochism from the shadows.

Kucich's call for an awareness of lost discourse, shadow discourse, helps to uncover Schreiner's more subtle moments of masochism. Lyndall's plight in *The Story of an African Farm* is not new; presented as the first New Woman character in the mid-1800s, Lyndall embodies all the old characteristics of a woman without occupation. Schreiner states, "the banner which we unfurl to-day is not new; it is the standard of the old, free, monogamous laboring woman, which, twenty hundred years ago, floated over the forests of Europe" (*Woman and Labor* 55). Focusing on the language of the Afrikaners present in the novel, one can identify moments of the New Woman identity.

Schreiner creates interest in the New Woman's story of her beloved country, Africa. Her story requires that the reader experience her experience of the place through the folk language present in the novel. This language is one more sign that the "New Woman" is a dynamic and complex identity, rooted in colonialism and the Imperial project. Olive Schreiner's novel, *The Story of an African Farm*, read in light of the later non fiction work, *Woman and Labor*, has still more to teach us today about the sense of place: Schreiner offers a picture of her South Africa where Lyndall, Waldo, Em, and Gregory make us better for having followed their struggles.

SHADOW DISCOURSE

John Kucich's work on masochism and martyrdom positions Schreiner's *New Woman* in the history of the female writer. Kucich can be seen as a scholar who points to Schreiner as one who takes the discourse of masochism out of the shadows to be the center, the constitutive organic life of Schreiner's interpretation of Lyndall's story or life. The title, *The Story of an African Farm*, serves as a gateway for Schreiner's story of masochism – heretofore unexamined in a nonsexual discourse as an important historical characteristic for women. Schreiner's *New Woman*, Lyndall, may speak as directly as she has with the other characters of the novel; however, Lyndall's pregnancy provides the option of the parasitic female role, a traditional position of masochism for women. Lyndall's option to either reject or accept her role as martyr allows Schreiner to address the Woman's Question. During a conversation with her unnamed lover in the abandoned cottage, Lyndall comments “‘Yes – go on. Do not grow sorry for me. Say what you were going to; ‘Who has put herself into my power, and who has lost the right to meeting me on equal terms.’ Say what you think. At least we two may speak the truth to one another’” (Schreiner, *SAF* 176). Both Lyndall and the Stranger are aware that Lyndall is pregnant and that she can no longer claim as much independence as she had before. She points out the change of both her own and the Stranger's perspective of herself. Lyndall gives voice to the dilemma Schreiner speaks of in *Woman and Labor*: “when woman give up her independent field of labor for domestic or marital duty of any kind, she will not receive her share of the earnings of the man as a more or less eleemosynary benefaction,

placing her in a position of subjection, but an equal share, as the fair division, in an equal partnership” (xiv). The reality of being reduced to a means of production allows the reader to see the dilemma facing the women of the late 1800s. Lyndall deteriorates from a woman who philosophizes and demands independence and occupation to an ordinary woman of the mid-1800s who is relegated outside her traditional domestic work and forced into an occupation of reproduction. Schreiner uses the interactions of Lyndall and the Stranger to point out that the dilemma the New Woman faces is every woman’s predicament.

Schreiner creates Lyndall’s world through her dialogue and interactions with other characters. The interactions between Lyndall and the “Stranger,” or the unnamed lover who is assumed to be the father of Lyndall’s child, are rife with the Victorian gender constructions. Lyndall’s pregnancy places her in a decidedly female position. The ability of the Stranger to communicate with Lyndall in an empathetic manner may be due to Lyndall’s female state and her option to enter a traditional female role and occupation. With Waldo and Gregory, Lyndall’s speech places her in a untraditional role, which halts any possible moments of understanding between the characters. Lyndall and the Stranger occupy their socially given roles as female and male. When Lyndall occupies the traditional female role, the Stranger is able to understand her; when Lyndall rejects the traditional occupation or laments the lack of any non-traditional occupation, the understanding between the two ceases.

Lyndall’s knowledge and insight help the reader to determine the circumstances influencing the New Woman identity. Lyndall speaks to the unnamed lover of his inclination to travel in response to her letter notifying him of her impending marriage to

Gregory. She claims he came because she did not implore him to come. She claims he wants to master her and he will “follow until [he] ha[s] the thing and break[s] it. If [he] ha[s] broken one wing, and the thing flies still, then [he] love[s] it more than ever, and follow[s] until [he] break[s] both; then [he is] satisfied when it lies still on the ground” (Schreiner, *SAF* 178). He responds by feeling a “strong inclination to stoop down and kiss the little lips that defied him; but he restrained himself” (*SAF* 178). Lyndall’s perspective of the Stranger’s desire to possess her proves accurate through his response to her. The potential assumption of the traditional female position and the Stranger’s traditional position as male makes Lyndall uncomfortable as she fights against placement in the traditional gender roles.

Schreiner reveals the masochistic nature of traditional gender roles through Lyndall and the Stranger. Lyndall and the Stranger’s participation in traditional gender roles are necessitated by Lyndall’s pregnancy. Lyndall accuses the Stranger of wanting to own or master her and as soon as that is accomplished Lyndall claims he will either crush her to death or desert her. The Stranger is described as having “keen eyes” (*SAF* 179), treating her “tenderly” (*SAF* 178), and smiling after her admissions of being afraid of him because of her feelings for him. Schreiner also makes note that “it certainly was not in her power to resist him, nor any strength in her that made his own at that moment grow soft as he looked at her” and how Lyndall “looked into his eyes as a little child might whom a long day’s play had saddened” (*SAF* 179) as well as how “a worn look had grown over the little face, and it made its charm for him stronger” (*SAF* 179). In this exchange between Lyndall and the Stranger, Lyndall holds fast to her New Woman ideals; however, she actively fights the role of the parasitic female and the inclination to

rest and lean on her lover: physically, financially, and emotionally. Lyndall suppresses the urge to be complacent with the relationship; accurately guessing the psychological workings of the Stranger's "love" for her or not, Lyndall is incapable of just "loving" him. She analyzes and diagnoses why he loves her and why she loves him. Lyndall's dilemma outlines the decisions presented to women who have failed to find untraditional occupation and have found themselves approaching the occupation of motherhood and potential parasitic womanhood.

When viewing Lyndall's end through its connection with masochism, the reader sees that Lyndall's end performs many of Schreiner's thoughts expressed in her work *Woman and Labor*. The death of Lyndall's child seems inevitable. Stott states:

the mother may be in a position of power over her children because of their dependency upon her, and she may abuse that power; this is likely to happen where she herself suffers from the powerlessness of her dependency on patriarchal power, or where she herself has been inadequately mothered. Cyclical abuses of power seem to Schreiner to be characteristic of the complex dependencies of both motherhood as Western institution and colonialism. ("Scaping the Body" 164)

As an orphan, Lyndall's only mother, Tant' Sannie, abuses and neglects her. Although Lyndall tries to avoid the same for her own child, instructing Gregory to "take [her] cloak [and...] cover it up with that," she still refers to the child as 'it,' whether unwilling, or unable, to name the child, Lyndall continues the oppressive cycle (Schreiner, *SAF* 213).

Lyndall's rejection of the Stranger's patronage shows her rejection of the parasitic role of the English woman. The death of the child further indicates Schreiner's position

on perpetuating the empire in the colonies. Ledger states “Butler’s is very much a ‘maternalized’ imperialism, a species of imperialism which was not untypical of the Victorian feminist movement. The idea of British women as ‘mothers’ of the empire, and as the regenerators of a more specifically white and British ‘race,’ was dominant in the 1890s, and feminists were by no means free of it” (69). The death of Lyndall’s child indicates Schreiner’s rejection of the role as mother of the Empire and imperial mothering. By presenting the only options of occupation to women as parasitic motherhood or death, Schreiner warns English society of its inevitable end. Magnum claims in her work *Married, Middlebrow and Militant*, “using the discourse of the eugenicists, Schreiner seeks a solution to what she calls woman’s ‘parasitism’ through a cross-cultural reconstruction of the history of gender and labor. Yet she assigns much of the blame to the limitations of male development and insists that the race cannot advance until the species creates or acknowledges a new kind of man” (205). Lyndall’s lack of occupation or opportunity for occupation, her inevitable economic dependency on the Stranger, and her regression to the traditional gender role places Lyndall in the dilemma of every English woman of the time. Lyndall is emblematic of the traps of which Schreiner attempts to warn the Englishwoman. Making sure that there is no viable offspring from a New Woman says many things; it shows Schreiner truly commits to the delineation between the New Woman and the traditional gender role of the Angel-of-the-House. It also shows that Schreiner does not see a future for any offspring of the New Woman without the proposed change in social systems. Because Lyndall is a New Woman and cannot ignore her maternal feelings, Schreiner cannot allow Lyndall to live

on. Schreiner does not reject motherhood or maternity; Lyndall's survival would dismiss or attempt to demean all women who feel maternal.

The dreams of Waldo and Em show their inability to grasp the full meaning of Lyndall's feminist project. Em's dream forewarns of Lyndall's impending pregnancy and hints to both the death of Lyndall and her baby. Nonetheless, Em does not recognize the full meaning of her dream. Schreiner implements this dream scenario in order to show the Angel-in-the-House's lack of understanding the New Woman plight. Schreiner uses the dream to show the failed future of the New Woman should the English public continue to deny her voice. Waldo's dream revolves around his relationship with Lyndall, but unlike Em's dream, which does not change Em's outlook on life at all, Waldo's dream sends him through an entire chapter of questioning religion and its spiritual teachings. Schreiner uses the dreams to show the New Woman's influence on those surrounding her as well as the ability of others to define her.

Through identifying the masochism in the dreams of *Story of an African Farm*, the reader can further identify the New Woman characteristics. Schreiner uses dreams to reinforce her most prominent entreaties to the public. Em relates her dream to Lyndall, so the reader gains a second hand version of the dream. Even so, Schreiner chooses to go into great detail, walking the reader through Waldo's dream. Schreiner situates Waldo's dream in its own chapter, thereby placing great emphasis on it. The reader sees inside Waldo as he dreams, experiencing the dream through an omniscient narrator who, at times, voyeuristically views the dream itself and Waldo's reactions to the dream in his bed all the while contributing philosophical comments on the content and impact of dreams; "tell me what a man dreams, and I will tell you what he loves" (*SAF* 220). Em's

dream indicates her lack of potential as a New Woman while Waldo's dream, the only dream the reader is privy to experience first hand, speaks of the rehabilitating aspect of Nature and the importance of hopes and dreams for the future of England.

Em's incapability to understand her dream reveals the inability of the Angel-of-the-House to understand the New Woman position. While Lyndall walks back to the house arm-in-arm with Gregory, "Em looked out again at the back window and saw them coming. She cried bitterly all the while she sorted the skins"(174). She later comes into Lyndall's room and shares a dream she just had; she claims "I never had so vivid a dream before"(174). She tells Lyndall that in her dream she is a little girl who sees a dead child on a bed in the corner. She "ran forward to take it; but someone held up her finger and said, 'Hush! It is a little dead baby.' And [Em] said, 'oh, I must go and call Lyndall that she may look at it also'" The people claimed "It is Lyndall's baby"(174); after Em leaves to find Lyndall, she returns to find everyone in black. She "asked them where [Lyndall] w[as] and they looked down at their black clothes, and shook their heads, and said nothing" (*SAF* 174). Em does not realize the full meaning of her dream. In her dream, the people are dressed in black; they do not tell where Lyndall is, yet they refer to their funeral cloths and shake their heads indicating Lyndall's death. Em, neither when awake nor asleep, grasps the meanings of these gestures. Em's dream of Lyndall and her baby's death indicates that Em possesses a woman's consciousness and insightfulness yet it is suppressed or not fully realized. Em is too occupied with the traditional occupation of the female to be able to understand the knowledge given in the dream. Only when the woman is able to escape the traditional occupation will she be able to access this new realm of insightfulness.

Schreiner continues to contribute clues to the New Woman identity through Waldo's dream. Lyndall's presence in Waldo's dream forces him to reevaluate the meaning of death and religion's definitions of the hereafter as well as helps to characterize the New Woman and her interactions with religion and Nature. The narrator states "hour after hour passed, and he was dreaming. For, mark you, men *will* dream; the most that can be asked of them is but that the dream be not in too glaring discord with the thing they know. He walked with bent head" (*SAF* 224). Waldo's dream leads him to question all of the religious thoughts to which he thought he had come to a conclusion. Just as after Waldo's father died he "grasped [Lyndall's] arm and brought his mouth close to her ear. 'There is no God!' he almost hissed; 'no God; not anywhere!' She started. '*Not anywhere!*' [Waldo hissed]" so too after Lyndall's death Waldo seeks out Lyndall in order to further understand the meaning of death (*SAF* 59). Schreiner shows Waldo accepting his dream's knowledge and basking in the folds of Nature not the comfort of the Lord's arms:

when that day comes, that you sit down broken, without one human creature to whom you cling, with your loves the dead and the living-dead; when the very thirst for knowledge, through long, continued thwarting, has grown dull; when in the present there is no craving, and in the future no hope, then, oh, with a beneficent tenderness, Nature enfolds you. (*SAF* 232)

The dream reinstates Waldo's faith and connection to Nature absent debilitating Christian beliefs. The dream gives comfort to Waldo after Lyndall's death and places Nature as loving nurturer and comforter in place of a patriarchal god. Dreams restore hope; "our

fathers had their dream; we have ours; the generation that follows will have its own.

Without dreams and phantoms man cannot exist” (*SAF* 225). Waldo’s dream connects the New Woman with Nature and a rejection of the Christian belief (and its self-serving patriarchal rhetoric). By rereading the narrative concerning Lyndall and the Stranger as well as the dreams of Em and Waldo, the use of John Kucich’s shadow discourse allows the reader to salvage factors of the New Woman identity.

“TIMES AND SEASONS”

In her chapter, “Times and Seasons,” Schreiner’s narrative shifts to a poetic, pastoral and metaphoric narrative that echoes the stylings of the Biblical writer of Ecclesiastes, the Preacher. “Times and Seasons” serves as a symbolic moment to show the growth of the children, Em, Waldo, and Lyndall, but also to provide space for Schreiner’s own voice. The chapter is split into Schreiner’s proposed seven periods of life. These periods are determined by one’s evolving perception of the spiritual and intellectual world. Bookended by Waldo’s narrative, the reader assumes the metaphorical “Times and Seasons” chapter refers to Waldo and his growth. In addition, the chapter can be seen as autobiographical. Schreiner begins the second part of *The Story of an African Farm* with the chapter “Times and Seasons” and fully commits to the third person omniscient narrator’s voice. Using the pronoun “we”, the narrator artistically portrays the evolution of intellectual and spiritual thought shown through the narrative of the novel.

Schreiner tracks the evolution of intellect and spirit from infancy through adulthood. Using an epigraph to commence Part II, she states “and it was all play, and no one could tell what it had lived and worked for. A striving, and a striving, and an ending in nothing” (88). Schreiner echoes Ecclesiastes; “then I [the Preacher] beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek *it* out, yet he shall not find *it*; yea further; though a wise *man* think to know *it*, yet shall he not be able to find *it*” (Eccles. 8.17). Throughout the novel,

Schreiner's narrative concerning Waldo reflects the unending and fruitless "striving" that leads to Waldo's falling away from religion and finding comfort in Nature.

Ecclesiastes's third chapter begins "[t]o every *thing there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die" (Eccles. 3.1-2). Schreiner mimics this sentiment in her introduction of the "Times and Seasons" chapter. She states "[t]he soul's life has seasons of its own; periods not found in any calendar, times that years and months will not scan, but which are as deftly and sharply cut off from one another as the smoothly arranged years which the earth's motion yields us" (SAF 88).

Schreiner's novel walks the reader through these "periods" evidenced through the lives of Waldo, Lyndall, and Em.

Schreiner's "Times and Seasons" chapter outlines these "periods" for the reader in a narrative that borrows its structure from religious discourse. She starts with infancy, "where from the shadowy background of forgetfulness start out pictures of startling clearness, disconnected, but brightly colored, and indelibly printed in the mind" (SAF 88). In period II, Schreiner illustrates "a time to gather stones together" (Eccles. 3.5) when she speaks of the desire to "build little stone houses" (SAF 89) along with the desire to acquire spiritual and intellectual things. Period III addresses the age of religious consciousness with the reading of chapter five of Matthew and his teachings of selflessness and desirable virtues. Period IV brings with it a fear of God's wrath against those who question him: "Hell is the one place for him who hates his master, and there we do not want to go. This is the comfort we get from the old" (SAF 92). The fifth period parallels the Preacher's own journey for spiritual wisdom: "[w]hen I [the Preacher] applied mine heart to know wisdom and to see the business that is done upon

the earth” (Eccles. 8.16). The entrance into the world brings with it disillusionment in period VI. By period VII, Schreiner brings the end to “a new life [...] a new time” (*SAF* 101) where religious devotion gives way to a reverence for Nature; Schreiner states “and now we turn to Nature. All these years we have lived beside her and we have never seen her; now we open our eyes and look at her” (*SAF* 101). The evolutionary sentiments poetically expressed in this chapter are mirrored in Schreiner’s more didactic and instructive *Woman and Labor*. Although the same outlooks are brought forth throughout the other chapters of the novel by Lyndall and her interactions with the other characters, it is important to note this falling away from the direct dialogue and plot sequence. No longer hiding behind a character’s dialogue, Schreiner’s voice takes center stage in this chapter and helps to clarify the rest of the novel.

Schreiner’s creative use of Nature, animals, and landscape make apparent the masochistic foundation of the New Woman identity. Doss, Waldo’s dog, is one of the most active signifiers of the New Woman identity. Doss is emblematic of not only Schreiner’s perceptions of the Angel-of-the-House and the Angel-of-the-House’s attitude of servitude, but Doss is also emblematic of the New Woman’s relationship with the Imperial male. Through the interactions of the characters, most notably Lyndall, with the dog, the relationships between the characters and their thoughts are made clearer. Another animal that is referenced is the chicken. Most telling is the last sentence of the novel, “But the chickens were wiser,” which refers to Em’s inability to recognize Waldo’s death; the chicken knew. The term “chicken” is used by the German overseer, Uncle Otto, as a term of endearment for the children, Em, Waldo, and Lyndall. Lyndall is referred to as a “chicken” during moments of her insightfulness and maturity. She is

called “chicken” when she questions authority and depicts the New Woman’s rhetoric. Lyndall’s ability to see others’ subterfuge is symbolized by Nature’s animal, “chicken”.

Although there is a connection between Nature and Lyndall, the elements of Nature that show moments of understanding and knowledge seem to be inextricable from the character Waldo. Waldo’s character is necessary to complement Schreiner’s drawing of Lyndall; the reader relies on Nature’s landscape in order to gain a full understanding of Waldo’s thoughts. Nature acts as a signifier for knowledge and understanding that would otherwise be lost due to Lyndall’s feminist rhetoric. Waldo and Lyndall access understanding and knowledge through Nature. Throughout the novel, Waldo’s interactions with the African landscape and the kopjes³ in the land lend clues to the defining of the New Woman. When Gregory makes an attempt to woo Lyndall, he accesses Waldo’s connection with Nature and approaches Lyndall in a kopje that she usually shares with Waldo. Waldo’s connection with the landscape and the landscape’s ability to lend clues to the character’s thoughts and feelings transfer to Gregory while he speaks to Lyndall on this ground.

Nature is Waldo and Lyndall’s ‘mother;’ it is in Nature that Waldo and Lyndall find solace, understanding, and knowledge. Both are orphaned children lacking mothers; while Waldo initially clings to religion to serve in helping him through life, he is shown to find relief in the setting of Africa during his moments of pleading for faith to comfort him. Ecclesiastes states, “So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of *such as were* oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors *there was* power; but they had no

³ Kopje is another African term frequently used in the novel. The OED defines this Dutch word as a small hill in South Africa.

comforter” (Eccles. 4.1). Both Waldo’s position as oppressed orphaned child and his ability to access the position of white oppressor fail to offer comfort. When his faith falls short of his needs, Waldo finds his strength and happiness in Nature. Schreiner sets up religion’s failure to comfort juxtaposed against Nature’s success in order to show the ‘natural’ need for occupation and the ‘natural’ evolution that have placed the New Man and Woman in this predicament of new occupations. The African landscape provides clues to recover the New Woman identity.

Schreiner uses references to the African landscape to signify key moments in the characters’, Waldo’s and Lyndall’s, understanding of life. Rebecca Stott explores the myths of the African landscape and its possible connections to the New Woman. She looks at the landscape of Africa in connection with motherhood, mothering, and motherland and its implications in colonial texts such as *She* and *The Story of an African Farm*. Stott claims that the colonial land of Africa:

might be constructed as virgin territory (passive, fertile, untouched by others, unknowing) or *femme fatale* (dangerously seductive, potentially violent, unpredictable, all knowing), or monstrous mother (sexually knowing, malevolent and cannibalistic) and in some adventure narratives mythologized ‘Africa’ is characterized by wild swings between the different types. (151)

While there are moments in Schreiner’s novel where Stott’s assertion that the novel’s “monarch-of-all-I-survey trope is immensely complicated by enormous representational swings between contradictory images of womanhood (virgin, whore, mother, monster),” the landscape of the narrative is best seen as reflective of those who gaze upon it. To

dismiss Stott's arguments concerning Schreiner's "interest in motherhood and the way in which she explores the contradictions of motherhood in her own descriptions of a feminized South African landscape" is to ignore a level of informative depth the novel. Nonetheless, the South African landscape may serve to highlight a character's progression towards understanding and as a reflection of the characters' interactions elicited by that very landscape (Stott, "Scaping the Body" 151, 158).

Through the play between Waldo and the landscape, Schreiner shows Waldo's spiritual growth and knowledge in connection with his potential, as Schreiner's "New Man" (Clayton, *Olive Schreiner* 49), to understand the New Woman. The play between Waldo and Lyndall through the landscape reveals key characteristics of the New Woman. In the beginning, Waldo hides within the landscape to nurture his religiosity, and he is shown as a little boy who fully understands his little girl playfellow, Lyndall. Later, when Waldo comes to the conclusion there is no God, he is literally backed against a wall. While Lyndall speaks to him of feminist views and begins to broaden Waldo's perspective on philosophies, he is shown stumbling over the landscape; and, lastly, as Lyndall ambiguously speaks of her impending role as mother to Waldo, he gives up all hope and looks to the sky with dull eyes fully dismissing Lyndall's communication.

The landscape serves as the setting for moments where the reader can examine the forces underlying the New Woman identity; during his play in the kopje with Em and Lyndall, Waldo becomes preoccupied with prayer. Looking through the stones, and "finding him in a very curious posture" Em exclaims:

'Ah! This is not right at all [...] what *are* you doing, Waldo? It is not the play, you know. You should run out when we come to the white stone.

Ah, you do not play nicely.’ / ‘I-I will play nicely now,’ said the boy, coming out and standing sheepishly before them; ‘I – I only forgot; I will play now.’/‘He has been to sleep,’ said freckled Em. / ‘No,’ said beautiful little Lyndall looking curiously at him; ‘he has been crying.’/She never made a mistake. (Schreiner, *SAF* 7)

The kopje and stones serve as hiding place for Waldo’s religious reverie. Just as Em “peep[ed] through the stones,” Schreiner uses the landscape to allow the reader to “peep” into Em’s lack of insight, Waldo’s religious devotion, and Lyndall’s ability to understand Waldo.

Em does not accurately perceive the situation, Waldo’s state of mind, his presentation (“standing sheepishly”) or tone of voice. Em’s reaction to Waldo is very childlike and innocent; she thinks Waldo is just being mean by napping and not playing whereas Lyndall accurately assesses the situation. The way in which Schreiner describes Em versus Lyndall, “freckled” versus “beautiful,” and Lyndall’s “curiously” looking imply a certain understanding in Lyndall. Lyndall’s youth is portrayed through her limited understanding. She is able to discern more of the truth than Em, but she is unable to ascertain the meanings behind the behaviors she is able to identify. At this point, Lyndall is not able to pinpoint Waldo’s reasons for crying in the kopje. Waldo’s sheepish behavior points to his shame knowing that Lyndall will be able to accurately discern the truth. As Lyndall’s experiences broaden during four years away at school and a sexual affair, Lyndall’s ability to understand another’s unsaid feelings and thoughts mature. Nonetheless, the situation on the kopje shows the New Woman as more perceptive and empathetically advanced than the traditional woman of her time.

Waldo's religious moments are bound to the African landscape and point to moments where identity is revealed. One twilight, "when the dew was falling, and the evening was dark," on her way back from putting away an ostrich in its pen, Lyndall heard a sound and called out "'is that you, Waldo?' [...] The boy was sitting on the damp ground with his back to the wall. He gave no answer" Waldo "grasped [Lyndall's] arm and brought his mouth close to her ear. 'There is no God!' he almost hissed; 'no God; not anywhere!' She started. '*Not anywhere!*'" (Schreiner, *SAF* 59). Placed upon ground symbolic of the emotional distress Waldo continues to experience, Waldo is aware that Lyndall will understand and be empathetic to his appalling sacrilegious revelation.

Waldo's rejection of the patriarchal Christian God enables Schreiner to place the questioning of Christianity within her text without making it a necessity of the New Woman identity. The setting of a dark evening represents Waldo's depression and loss of spirituality, and the wet landscape, falling dew and damp ground, indicate the many times Waldo is shown to cry because of his attempts to understand religion and God. Waldo's position on the ground with his "back to the wall" indicates his inability to find a way to believe in a God. He has no other choice but to acknowledge the lack of a God. Waldo's dismissal of a Christian God, although sacrilegious and shocking in any text, is less radical because of the colonial setting of Africa. LeeAnne Richardson refers to the colonial novels as "allied to the transgressive politics of New Woman Fictions" because "[the writers'] attempts to impose a conventional British domestic trope on the colonies, [...] are consistently undermined by the way the colonial situation refuses to conform to British ideals of colonial acquiescence and compliance" (*New Woman and Colonial*

Adventure Fiction 6). Waldo's refusal to conform to traditional Christian rhetoric mimics the New Woman's refusal to conform to traditional gender roles in the colonial space provided.

Lyndall's time at the boarding school begins the New Woman's rhetoric: angry, concerned with only female versus male differences. During a conversation with Waldo after Lyndall returns from school after four years, Lyndall gives voice to her feminist views. Lyndall "drew her hat to one side to keep the sun out of her eyes as she walked. Waldo looked at her so intently that he stumbled over the bushes. Yes, this was his little Lyndall who had worn the check pinafores; he saw it now, and he walked closer beside her" (Schreiner, *SAF* 133). As she does so, she laments to Waldo "I am sorry you don't care for the position of women: I should have liked us to be friends" (*SAF* 134). After her long one-sided homily in which she laments the woman's traditional role, "Waldo looked at her. It was hard to say whether she were in earnest or mocking" (*SAF* 134). Schreiner depicts the notion that Waldo hears and understands Lyndall's thoughts but fails in understanding the feeling and emotion behind the desire for freedom and complete emancipation.

Ultimately, Waldo lacks the empathy to see the meaning behind Lyndall's feminist desires. Waldo's stumble over the bushes signifies his attempt and failure to understand Lyndall and her point of view. Both Waldo and Lyndall are orphans; each struggles in his or her own way to find a path in life and a system of beliefs. Stott claims, in relation to Lyndall specifically, "more and more often this landscape is aligned with the suffering child rather than the neglectful mother. It is itself motherless. It is a feminine presence, which like Lyndall herself, despairs for want of mothering. It is not

cannibalistic, nor man-eating, it does not seduce its children, but it is unable to mother because it is itself unmothered” (161). Both Lyndall and Waldo lack a mother; the landscape, contrary to Stott’s claim, acts as mother, comforter, and teacher to Lyndall and Waldo. The New Woman identity and its roots in masochism, made relevant through Schreiner’s *Woman and Labor*, reveals Nature is history; evolution gives birth to the New Man and New Woman. Therefore Waldo can only find comfort through Nature not man-made constructions like religion. The landscape is shown in relation to Lyndall’s perspectives of colonialism, abuse, and opportunity as well as Waldo and his perspectives on religion, Nature’s flora and fauna as contributors to the cycle of life, and understanding of others.

Lyndall laments the plight of women again on a walk with Waldo, this time hinting of her impending pregnancy and the effect procreation, the lack of useful education, occupation and family have on a woman; “Waldo listened. To him the words were no confession, no glimpse into the strong, proud, restless heart of the woman. They were general words with a general application. He looked up into the sparkling sky with dull eyes” (Schreiner, *SAF* 159). Waldo’s interactions with the surrounding landscape in response to Lyndall demonstrate his lack of attempt to understand Lyndall. Complete hopelessness prevails in Waldo. He looks to the sky, which encompasses all. Waldo views Lyndall’s words as general; as Schreiner states, the New Woman is not New. The plight is not singular to Lyndall. Waldo’s position as the New Man, also searching for his new role and occupation in the new world, leads him to despair and acquiescence. Waldo replies “[B]ut when we lie and think, and think, we see that there is nothing worth

doing. The universe is so large, and man is so small” (*SAF* 160). Waldo’s “dull eyes” indicates his surrender to the state of things. Stott states:

Schreiner’s knowledge of geology and evolutionary theory enables her to write a landscape that has a history, and has memory [...] Thus for Schreiner the feminized landscape, imagined as a geological receptacle of the past, is the site of a pre-colonial history that will outlive all of them. If Schreiner’s landscape is maternal, its neglectfulness, its silence and its passivity are all understood and presented as the result of the history of abuse it has witnessed and suffered, and the wiping out of the old things [...] the colonial landscape, like the state of modern motherhood, has been debased by time and evolution, not raised by it. (162)⁴

Similar to Stott’s claim, the landscape’s guidance and reassurance turns mute to Waldo. Waldo no longer looks to the Earth for comfort; he has been neglected and failed by the Earth, so he looks to the sky for some sort of reassurance. Waldo’s lack of understanding Lyndall is indicative of the deaf ears on which the New Woman’s plight falls. Nonetheless, when put in reference to the New Woman, the Earth has a memory and a history. Lyndall speaks of the lack of mother, history, and her own impending motherhood. Where the New Man finds silence and despair, the New Woman finds memory and legacy, something to fight for, to be angry over losing.

The relationship between Gregory and the landscape suggests what is possible if the New Woman is denied a space and is forced to assume a traditionally male position. As Gregory and Lyndall walk through the kopje, Lyndall proposes marriage to Gregory.

⁴ Just as Schreiner claims the only way to continue species is to educate women, finding or acknowledging a history is claiming a future.

Lyndall states “the reasons I have for marrying you I need not inform you of now; you will probably discover some of them before long’ / ‘I only want to be of some use to you,’ he said. It seemed to Gregory that there were pulses in the soles of his feet and the ground shimmered as on a summer’s day” (Schreiner, *SAF* 173). The landscape is used to portray Gregory’s feelings for Lyndall. His love for and excitement concerning his marriage to Lyndall is shown through the “pulses” and “shimmer” of the ground. Gregory is completely unaware of the meanings of Lyndall’s words. She will have him “serve [her], and to have nothing in return!” She will allow him to provide safety and legitimacy for her unborn child but give nothing back to him. The shift of traditional roles is complete. Lyndall allows Gregory to act out the “love-as-serving” role of the Angel-of-the-House. Lyndall accesses the traditional male role when proposing marriage. However, Lyndall’s access to a traditional male role does not satisfy her want and need for occupation; a switch of traditional roles is not the objective of the New Woman. Access to new modern occupations dictated by her gifts as a person is what women ejected from the domestic space desire. As Lyndall states, “if women were the inhabitant’s of Jupiter, of whom you had happened to hear something, you would pore over us and our condition night and day; but because we are before your eyes you never look at us” (Schreiner, *SAF* 134). By placing the New Woman within a text and on colonial ground, Schreiner places the New Woman on ‘Jupiter’ to be observed and empathized with from the safety of readership.

Just as she methodically argues the New Woman’s desire for occupation is not an attempt to usurp male occupation, Schreiner attacks Evolutionary Theory’s argument of male’s ‘natural’ superiority over females through her use of Doss. In Schreiner’s novel,

the presence of Doss, the dog, helps Schreiner point the reader to moments of evolution, mothering and the New Woman identity. Schreiner refers to dogs repeatedly in her text to connect something or someone symbolically with a lower evolutionary status. Lyndall uses the metaphor of a dog to compare unmothered children: children who are either orphaned or birthed to mothers unable or unwilling to care for them. When speaking of the Kaffir, who possibly beats his wife, Schreiner references the dog and its place on the evolutionary scale: the dog being lowest, followed by the Kaffir, then the white man as most evolved. During a conversation with Waldo about children and the religious aspects of having children when one cannot take care of them properly, Lyndall laments her parents' lack of ability to raise her and the fact that "they created [her] to feed like a dog from stranger hands" (Schreiner, *SAF* 153). She speaks about illegitimate children and the opinion of religion and society on those illegitimate children claiming "when people married, though they should have sixty children, they throw the whole *onus* on God. When they are not, we hear nothing about God's having sent them. When there has been no legal contract between the parents, who sends the little children then?" (Schreiner, *SAF* 153). Schreiner's narrative shows Waldo as unable to understand Lyndall when it states "Waldo wondered at her. He had not the key to her thoughts, and did not see the string on which they were strung" (Schreiner, *SAF* 154). Waldo is unable to understand Lyndall, nor even her thought process concerning the religious aspect of illegitimate children. The reference to a dog indicates the lowly status of orphaned children and the lack of a mother, motherland and mothering. Lyndall's narrative brings to the forefront the New Woman's inability, due to her enforced ignorance and lack of education, to successfully prepare her children for the society in which they will be adults. According

to Schreiner in *Woman and Labor* and Lyndall's end, the New Woman's enforced ignorance will lead to the downfall of society.

Schreiner's use of the dog differs throughout the novel. Unlike other moments where Lyndall speaks directly of dogs, and she candidly provides the metaphor which Waldo fails to understand, Schreiner's narrative shifts to focus on the interactions between Lyndall and the dog in order to uncover the masochism of the narrative. These interactions, bookended with Lyndall's speech, lead the reader to define the New Woman. Schreiner implicates meaning through her positioning of Lyndall and Doss, the dog. The conversation on the kopje between Gregory and Lyndall moves to the subject of Waldo. Although Lyndall continues to speak directly about Waldo, Gregory's misunderstandings are shown through Lyndall's affectionate treatment of the dog, and Gregory's mistreatment of the dog. Doss's injury serves as a transition from Lyndall's philosophical discussion on love-as-a-flower to Waldo; Schreiner states:

but unexpected relief came to [Gregory] from Doss, who, too deeply lost in contemplation of his crevice, was surprised by the sudden descent of the stone Lyndall's foot had loosened, which, rolling against his little front paw, carried away a piece of white skin. Doss stood on three legs, holding up the paw with an expression of extreme self-commiseration; he then proceeded to hop slowly upward in search of sympathy. (Schreiner, *SAF* 171)

When notified of Doss's injury, Lyndall "replied indifferently, and reopened her book, as though to resume her study of the play." Gregory misreads Lyndall's behaviors and states "He's a nasty, snappish little cur! [...]" calculating from her manner that the remark

would be endorsed.” Nonetheless, Lyndall “seemed absorbed in her play,” and in response, Gregory attempts to attack Waldo’s character. Meanwhile Lyndall “spread[s] her skirt out softly with her left hand for the dog to lie down on it.” Gregory attempts to guess at Lyndall’s thoughts and asserts himself in the attitude he *thinks* he reads from her; ““yes, I don’t expect *anything* of him either,’ said Gregory, zealously.” When his assertions fall short of aligning with Lyndall’s, Schreiner states “Gregory felt that what she said was not wholly intended as blame”, showing a certain level of perception (*SAF* 172). Throughout the rest of the conversation, Gregory continually fails to recognize Lyndall’s intentions; he states ““Oh, you *are* making fun of me now, you really are!’ said Gregory, feeling wretched. ‘You *are* making fun, aren’t you, now?’” which shows his insecurity in reading Lyndall’s intent (Schreiner, *SAF* 172).

When Lyndall seriously criticizes Gregory’s acceptance of her poor treatment towards him comparing him to “a little tin duck floating on a dish of water, that comes after a piece of bread stuck on a needle, and the more the needle pricks it the more it comes on” as well as his incompatibility with Em when she claims Em “is like many accompaniments – a great deal better than the song she is to accompany,” he does not recognize the derogatory connotation of the similes (Schreiner, *SAF* 172). Lyndall shows the dog attention and “softly touch[es] the little sore foot as she read, and Doss, to show he liked it, licked her hand” (*SAF* 172). In response to Lyndall’s proposal, Gregory “started, and turned his burning face to her. ‘You are very cruel; you are ridiculing me,’ he said.” When she replied to assure him of the veracity of her proposal, “he looked up. Was it contempt, loathing, pity, that moved in the eyes above? He could not tell; but he stooped over the little foot and kissed it. She smiled. ‘Do you really mean it?’ he

whispered” (SAF 173). Gregory’s actions are mimicked by the dog as Lyndall “held out her fingers for Doss to lick” (SAF 173). Lyndall’s insightful speech points to this parallel when she states ““Do you see this dog? He licks my hand because I love him; and I allow him to. Where I do not love I do not allow it. I believe you love me; I too could love so, that to lie under the foot of the thing I loved would be more heaven than to lie in the breast of another” (SAF 173). Using the dog, Schreiner foreshadows Lyndall’s, and possibly all New Women, eventual fall into parasitic womanhood due to her desire for love.

Using a Nature-based symbol, the chicken, Schreiner connects the link between Nature and New Woman’s ability to read others’ actions. The first reference to the term ‘chicken’ occurs early on in the novel when the children are small, and Bonaparte comes to the farm. Lyndall questions the veracity of Bonaparte’s story, which he tells to Uncle Otto, the German overseer. The Overseer dismisses Lyndall’s questions, “*If!* Why, he told me *himself!*” and continues to reprimand Lyndall ““Bish! Bish, my chicken,’ he said, as Lyndall tapped her little foot up and down upon the floor. ‘Bish! Bish, my chicken, you will wake him.’ [...] The child’s gray-black eyes rested on the figure on the bed, then turned to the German, then rested on the figure again. ‘*I* think he is a liar. Good night, Uncle Otto,’ as she slowly turns away” (SAF 19). Lyndall’s behavior of tapping her foot up and down mimics a chicken’s actions of pecking the insects and grain from the ground. Although Otto’s reference of ‘chicken’ may stem from Lyndall’s similar physical behavior, the term signifies moments of the New Woman identity. Lyndall is able to see through Bonaparte’s lies and is agitated with Uncle Otto’s lack of clarity.

One can continue to connect the New Woman with Nature and reveal that there is little to no understanding between the two characters, Lyndall and Uncle Otto. Lyndall questions Bonaparte's story, and, by doing so, Lyndall not only questions Uncle Otto's religious beliefs but shows her ability to understand what others do not. Lyndall asks:

‘and how do we know that the story [Bonaparte's story of his traveling adventures] is true, Uncle Otto?’ The German's ire was roused. ‘That is what I do hate!’ he cried. ‘Know that it is true! How do you know that anything is true? Because you are told so. If we begin to question everything – poof, poof, poof, what will we have to believe left? How do you know the angel opened the prison door for Peter, except that Peter said so? How do you know that God talked to Moses, except that Moses wrote it? That is what I hate!’ The girl knit her brows. Perhaps her thoughts made a longer journey than the German dreamed of; for, mark you, the old dream little how their words and lives are texts and studies to the generation that shall succeed them. Not what we are taught, but what we see, makes us, and the child gathers the food on which the adult feeds to the end. When the German looked up next there was a look of supreme satisfaction in the little mouth and the beautiful eyes. ‘What dost see, chicken?’ he asked. The child said nothing. (*SAF* 25)

Uncle Otto does not accurately read Lyndall's look. He saw “a look of supreme satisfaction” and read it as an understanding of his religious rhetoric and faith-based argument when, truly, Lyndall smiles due to her own recognition of Uncle Otto's ignorance. During this passage, Schreiner illustrates that Lyndall learns “not what [she

was] taught,” but what she observes in the lives around her. The New Woman relies on her observations, not the rhetoric of a patriarchal education. The ‘chicken’ is shown with similar ability to understand things that other characters do not.

The last line of the novel, using the term “chicken” to uncover the New Woman roots in masachism, allows the reader to dissect Waldo’s passing and fully identify the New Woman. After Waldo comes to terms with Lyndall’s death and the loss of his faith in religion, he sits “at the side of the wagon house [where] there was a world of bright sunshine, and a hen with her chickens was scratching among the gravel” (*SAF* 230).

Waldo observes the world around him and sees that:

a balmy, restful peacefulness seemed to reign everywhere. Even the old hen seemed well satisfied. She scratched among the stones and called to her chickens when she found a treasure; and all the while clucked to herself with intense inward satisfaction [...] and to sit gloating in the sunlight was perfect [...] Waldo did not sleep and coming back from his sunshiny dream [...] he sat there in the yellow sunshine, muttering, muttering, muttering to himself [...] the mother hen was at work still among the stones, but the chickens had climbed about him, and were perching on him [...] Em did not drive them away, but she covered the glass softly at his side. ‘He will wake soon,’ she said, ‘and be glad of it’.

But the chickens were wiser. (*SAF* 233)

Em is unaware of Waldo’s death while the chickens are shown as wiser. The chickens are portrayed as emblems of Nature and its ability to have knowledge to which others are not privy. The last paragraph of the story revisits Schreiner’s earlier descriptive narrative

centered in the landscape and environment of South Africa. Connecting the description of the mother hen calling to her “chickens when she found a treasure”(*SAF* 233) with Schreiner’s earlier reference to Uncle Otto and his chicken, Lyndall, as she “gathers the food on which the adult feeds to the end”(*SAF* 25), one can view Lyndall as the gatherer of knowledge, calling out when she has found her treasure. *The Story of an African Farm* is Olive Schreiner’s calling out, sharing her knowledge of the New Woman.

SCHREINER AS WRITER

If we examine Olive Schreiner's, *The Story of an African Farm*, through the Linguistic Theory discussed in Lisa Zunshine's essay, "Why Jane Austen was Different and Why We May Need Cognitive Science to see it", we see that the direct speech of Lyndall, the New Woman protagonist, does not achieve the same effects as Jane Austen's deeply embedded thought structures within her narrative. Zunshine uses the cognitive science concept of a Theory of Mind to examine dialogue and narrative for moments of subversive text. Theory of the Mind, or mind-reading, refers to "our ability to explain observable behavior in terms of underlying thoughts, feelings, desires, and intentions" (276). She claims that by not saying what is being said, the "I know that you know that I know that you know," the author taps into a cognitive (empathetic) process that makes the audience 'feel' the characters' plights. Jane Austen's language includes these deeply embedded clauses which beg for the reader's interpretation of the character, their actions and thoughts, while Schreiner's narrative cannot afford this excess. While Jane Austen reveals the active minds of her characters in courtship matters, Olive Schreiner does not. Schreiner's objective differs from Austen's in that Schreiner attempts to reject the traditional roles of society and the traditional portrayal of those roles in literature. She attempts to shift the social constructions of female and male behavior through her direct language. Due to the suffragist activism of women during the late 1800s, Schreiner is able to use her talents as a woman writer to create an audience for change.

Since Schreiner's 1911 work, *Woman and Labor*, women continue to long for and demand a space to work. Schreiner warns of the possible parasitic female's reduction to her reproductive function, which makes her financially dependent through sex and dies in ambiguity and obscurity. The lack of other opportunities of labor outside the home place the woman of the late 1800s in a situation of limited productivity; Schreiner claims the changes of "'modern civilization', have tended to rob woman, not merely in part but almost wholly, of the more valuable part of her ancient domain of productive and social labor; and, where there has not been a determined and conscious resistance on her part, have nowhere spontaneously tended to open out to her new and compensatory fields" (*Woman and Labor* 9). Lyndall's talents fail to find occupation; she forces Tant' Sannie to allow her to attend boarding school where Lyndall is frustrated with the curriculum that promotes skills needed for a homemaker. Lyndall learns how to drive the horse and wagon (which angers Gregory possibly because it threatens his own labor) and tries to learn how to make a kappje (the occupation of the traditional woman). Despite Lyndall's many attempts to find occupation, she finds none. Schreiner describes a world in which the New Woman's plight is made vivid. Stylistic approaches to Jane Austen's novels emphasize the differences between her English neighborhoods and Schreiner's 'neighborhoods.' Jane Austen's readers will see how different Schreiner's sentences had to be in order to break away from Austen's sentences: long, flowing, deeply embedded clauses matter to Jane Austen for representations of English neighborhoods. By looking at Schreiner's use of Africa's oppressed people's language, "kappje,"⁵ "Boer,"⁶

⁵ The OED defines "kappje" as South African for a sun-bonnet or coal-scuttle bonnet.

⁶ According to the OED, "boer" is Dutch and describes 'a peasant, a rustic, with lack of refinement implied; a country clown' who breeds cattle and lives in the Transvaal or British colonies.

“Hottentot,”⁷ and “kaffir,”⁸ one is able to examine Schreiner’s direct language and focus on the placement of women in South African ‘neighborhoods’ in order to define the identity of the New Woman.

One can see the kappje as a symbol of womanhood; those who wear the kappje are portrayed in the terms of the Angel-of-the-House: gentle, subservient, marginal, and of-service to those around them. Schreiner defines Em through the use of the kappje and the insects of Africa. Schreiner uses the poetic South African language to help create the colonial experience for the reader. Nonetheless, the use of a kappje, sun-bonnet, is a reminder of the traditional gender roles of England. Although “colonialist literature is an exploration and a representation of a world at the boundaries of ‘civilization,’ a world that has not (yet) been domesticated by European signification or codified in detail by its ideology,” the use of South African words for items of the colonists’ culture signifies the seemingly insignificant influences of the colonists on the colonized, whether domestic or foreign (Janmohamed 19). As a symbol of class and socioeconomic status, women wore hats and bonnets to keep their skin white to prove their place in the home and out of the fields with the slaves and the colonized. By simple definition, the kappje is a reminder of England’s presence in Africa and the removal of the English woman from her traditional occupation. Within the story, the New Woman, Lyndall, is never seen in a kappje,⁹ while

⁷ “Hottentot” can refer to either a people or a language. It is considered out-of-date and derogatory; It may also refer to “.a person of inferior intellect or culture; an uncivilized or ignorant person” (OED).

⁸ Arab for “infidel,” “kaffir” is also a derogatory term used to refer to the people and language from the South African race belonging to the Bantu family (OED).

⁹ Lyndall mentions learning how to make a kappje to Waldo when speaking to him while he teaches her how to drive horses and a buggy, “I got the Hottentot girl to show me how to make sarsarties this morning; and Tant’ Sannie is going to teach me to make kappjes” (Schreiner *SAF* 144).

the Angel-of-the-House, Em, and Gregory, the ambiguously gendered male, are shown in conjunction with the kappje and the colonized state of Africa.

Using the kappje, Schreiner highlights the interactions between the Imperial male, the New Woman and the Angel-of-the-House. Placing Em outside of the interaction between the New Woman and the Imperial man, Em's Angel-of-the-House marginal status can be seen; "But Em was that evening in no hurry to enter [...] opposite the open window of the parlor she stopped [...] beside the lamp at the table in the corner sat Lyndall [...] at the center table, with his arms folded on an open paper, which there was not light enough to read, sat Gregory. He was looking at [Lyndall]" (*SAF* 163).

Schreiner places Em outside of the Imperial home, the farmhouse, noting the Angel is in "no hurry to enter" and take a place with the Imperial male and New Woman. The New Woman is placed in a corner next to the lamp while the male is in the center of the room with "not light enough to read" (*SAF* 163). The New Woman's educated and 'enlightened' perspective is hinted at with Lyndall's proximity to the lamp while the male's unenlightened yet prominent perspective is shown with Gregory's placement in the center of the room away from the lamp. The exclusion of the Angel-of-the-House is shown as "the light from the open window fell on Em's little face under its white kappje as she looked in, but no one glanced that way" (*SAF* 163). Schreiner shows that although Em does not fully fall within the light of the lamp, it does, nevertheless, touch her; the future of women does not necessarily include the Angel-of-the-House, but it does impact her.

Schreiner uses Em's manipulation of the kappje to place Em firmly in the role of the Angel-of-the-House. After observing Gregory admiring Lyndall from the window,

“Em entered; she had been sitting all the while on the loft ladder, and had drawn her kappje down very much over her face” (SAF 164). Em uses the colonial clothing to shields and gird herself against her eventual displacement by the New Woman. She attempts to hide within her traditional gender role. Em confronts Gregory in a low voice ““I want to talk to you, Gregory’ / ‘Well, make hast,’ he said, pettishly. ‘I’m awfully tired”” (SAF 164). Gregory’s gruff manner and lack of patience is his effort to act within the traditional male gender. After informing Gregory that she no longer thinks it is a good idea for them to be married, Gregory’s reliance on the social constructions of the traditional gender roles is shown in his reply: ““Even a woman can’t take a freak all about nothing! You must have *some* reason for it”” (SAF 164). “Even a woman” suggests. Through this phrase, Gregory demeans Em’s ability to think and act rationally. Gregory baits Em to confront him directly as Lyndall, the New Woman, would. However, Em stays within the traditional gender roles and acts out the quiet, subservient role of the Angel-of-the-House. In comparison to the traditional woman, the New Woman identity is shown as forthright, insightful and intellectually progressive.

Gregory’s character initially portrays the traditional gender role and occupation of the Imperial male; however, through the use of the kappje, Schreiner shows his encroachment on the traditional female occupation. The kappje signifies womanhood and the traditional female gender role as love-as-serving. Schreiner’s narrative during Gregory and Em’s interactions helps the reader to see the traditional roles filled by Gregory and Em. She states ““Oh, well,’ [...] drawing himself up, ‘if you won’t enter into explanation you won’t; and I’m not the man to beg and pray – not to any woman, and you know that! If you don’t want to marry me I can’t oblige you to, of course”” (SAF 164).

He attempts to assert a patriarchal outlook, not begging or praying to any woman, in order to keep himself within the realm of the Imperialist, the higher class, man. Schreiner uses Gregory's character to display the loss of male occupation and assumption of the Angel-of-the-House role. Gregory pretends to be ignorant of the dissolution of his relationship with Em in order to keep the façade of 'manhood' intact and continue to perform his gender's occupation.

Gregory's transformation from male to female is shown through Schreiner's descriptive use of the kappje. After Lyndall surreptitiously leaves with her lover early one morning, Gregory and Em are left alone together on the farm. After months pass, Gregory finds a sun-kappje in the attic;

Gregory's mind was very full of thought. He took down a fragment of an old looking-glass from behind a beam, and put the kappje on. His beard looked somewhat grotesque under it; he put up his hand to hide it—that was better. The blue eyes looked out with the mild gentleness that became eyes looking out from under a kappje [...] and when an increase in the patter of the rain at the window made him drag it off hastily. (SAF 185)

He put away the clothes and went downstairs. Using the kappje, Schreiner foreshadows Gregory's eventual assumption of the traditional female occupation.

Gregory's appropriation of the traditional female occupation is complete as he transforms into a female nurse with the stolen clothing from the attic. After shaving and dressing himself, Gregory looks into "the glass [which] showed a face surrounded by a frilled cap, white as a woman's, with a little mouth, a very short upper lip, and a receding chin" (SAF 207). The "grotesque" beard gone, Gregory's physical transformation hastens

his emotional transformation. Gregory obtains a position as Lyndall's nurse; the woman at the boarding house saw "nothing of the morning's [male] traveler [...] in the white face under the queer, deep-fringed cap" (*SAF* 207). Gregory comes to encompass all that it means to love through serving. When applying for the job to nurse Lyndall, Gregory states "nursing was to him [...] his chosen life's work. He wanted no money" (*SAF* 209). He revels in the ability to serve Lyndall as he states "his hands were to him glorified for what they had done" (*SAF* 209). Gregory's desire to give Lyndall "everything [he] has" and "to be of use to [her]" (*SAF* 173) finally comes to fruition as he serves as her nurse; he shows the self-sacrificial characteristic of the Angel-of-the-House as "hour after hour passed, but he had no wish for rest, and sat on, hearing the rain cease, and the still night settle down everywhere" (*SAF* 214). Nevertheless, even as Gregory takes on the sacrificial physical and emotional role of the Angel-of-the-House, he is shown as unable to fully access the New Woman's spirit.

After a few weeks of post partum depression, Lyndall seems to make a decision to regain her strength. Her purpose and intent are lost on Gregory when Lyndall asks for food: "wondering, Gregory brought a tray with all that she had asked for" (*SAF* 211). Lyndall's thoughts and intentions are lost on Gregory as he serves and plays nurse at Lyndall's bedside. Her struggles in grieving the death of her newborn and in reconciling the position and role of a strong, intelligent woman are concealed from Gregory. The meaning of Lyndall's empathetic statement "how terrible when the rain falls down on you" fails to resonate with Gregory: "He wondered what she meant, and they sat on in the still darkening room. She moved again" (*SAF* 213). Unable to anticipate and understand Lyndall's thought process, Gregory is unable to access the thoughts of the New Woman.

Through the use of the kappje, one can see that Lyndall's loss of occupation places her in the New Woman position. Schreiner continues to create the South African colonial experience for her readers as she uses the terms "Kaffir," "Boer," and "Hottentot." These terms help to examine the forces that influence the New Woman identity.

The oppressed English female accesses a voice by exploiting the colonized overseas. Considering LeeAnne Richardson's claim in *New Woman and Colonial Adventure Fiction in Victorian Britain* that "New Women were colonizing masculinity by both questioning its basis in Nature and assuming the mantle of power,"(56) one can track the use of power through the New Woman movement and Woman's Question time period. Feminists see woman as the colonized, silenced subject and masculinity, tradition, and religion as traits of the oppressive colonizers. Imperial England, although headed by a matriarch, provided its feminine subjects a space for voice within its colonized space of otherness over seas. The failure of the presiding matriarch to accept her power and aid in the feminist rebellion on the home front sent the war for independence to the colonies, the only space left open for the woman to rise from subaltern to colonizer, through proxy of her European status, and gain her voice. By using the derogatory terms for the South African natives and non-English immigrants, Schreiner places her character, Lyndall, above the other women in the novel. The novel's colonial setting allows Schreiner to use South Africa's Nature to point out the oppression of women.

These passages concern the natives of the land as well as other minor characters who are portrayed as homeless meanderers in Africa: the Hottentot maids, Tant' Sannie (a Boer woman living in her dead husband's house until Em is old enough to take over),

Bonaparte (his ethnicity and original nationality are never made clear), and Waldo's father (a German overseer who lives in a broken down cottage on Tant' Sannie's land). Many of Schreiner's peers have criticized Schreiner's treatment of the natives in *The Story of an African Farm*; looking at the narratives through which these characters are presented, however, one can bring another perspective to Schreiner's treatment of the marginal characters as well as her definition of the New Woman.

Many of Schreiner's critics claim that she continues the imperial project in her novel by keeping the black characters in the margins and denying them a voice: "[i]n contradistinction to her late work, Schreiner's first published novel fails to provide a way out of white Western points of view, allegorical or otherwise. Black characters are relegated to the sidelines and treated with little or no sympathy" (Heilmann 139). Schreiner's marginal placement of the Kaffir is an attempt to portray a realistic example of the African colonies as well as the New Woman's own interaction with and against the colonized subjects of England. Schreiner is able to stress her central project, the evolution of women's place in society, while bringing into focus the marginality of the colonized natives. In her criticisms of Grand, Schreiner and Caird, in *New Woman Strategies*, Heilmann states that "even the African setting – a moral as well as a geographically specific landscape – underscores the invisibility of blackness"(132). If Schreiner had placed the African native Kaffir in a more central position of the novel with a more distinct voice, she would fail to highlight the influence of the colonial condition on the English woman, nor would she have been able to accurately represent the native subject. Although "middle-class feminists often enthusiastically welcomed such a [n Imperialist] responsibility as part of their strategy to legitimize themselves as

exemplary, important imperial citizens,” Schreiner’s novel rejects the political strategy to gain suffrage through exploiting others; the novel is not an attempt to prove the worth of women as Empire builders nor to give voice to the native subject but to give voice to the Empire’s women and to show the shared silence and invisibility of the New Woman and the native (Ledger 69).

Compared with her later work *Woman and Labor*, one can see race and gender oppression as inextricably linked under Imperialist thought within her novel. The novel consists of characters who occupy the layers of the colonialization. Considering England’s ongoing imperial project, Schreiner’s inclusion of race ideology is inevitable. Schreiner is a creature of her time; the New Woman, and her role in the Imperialist agenda, speaks to the aspirations of England. In order to express the English woman’s desire for more equitable opportunities and treatment, Schreiner places her New Woman in a space that allows the female to rise above her oppressed status by juxtaposing her with the Others. Schreiner’s New Woman character does not adhere to the cycle of oppression as she rebels against authority and refuses to subjugate others in her moments of aggression; while the non-English racial Other, the Dutch peasant, Tant’ Sannie, is shown as the epitome of the desire Elsie B. Michie explains in her criticism, *Outside the Pale: Cultural Exclusion, Gender Difference, and the Victorian Woman Writer*; “the colonial grounding of fantasies of upward mobility, however, also made visible what mid-Victorian audiences wished to deny: that the desire to elevate oneself in class implicitly involved a desire to dominate others” (46). Through her characters, Schreiner displays the cycle of oppression from the Imperial male to Angel-of-the-House to the Dutch peasants to children and servants to the Kaffirs and, placed outside of the cycle

observing and commenting on it all, the New Woman. As LeeAnne M. Richardson states, “explicit references in women’s novels to the colonies, racial characteristics, or enslavement are often cited to support claims about women’s relationship to empire” (6). Schreiner must place the New Woman in a setting of racial Otherness in order to exemplify the fact that the English Imperialist project displaces the English woman, relegating her outside of her traditional occupations and silencing her completely.

Sally Ledger’s assertion that “even one of the heroines of ‘first-wave’ feminism was to some extent complicit with the racial ideologies of Imperialism” brings to light the fact that Imperialist thoughts are not entirely escapable even when one is aware of them (66). Lyndall’s awareness of the oppression in Africa does not stop her from privileging her own struggles above the struggles of others. Heilmann states:

identifying with South Africa’s struggle against British capitalist interests and siding with the Boers during the Anglo-Boer war, [Schreiner] also condemned the oppression of the black population by both British colonists and Boers, and left the South African Women’s Enfranchisement League she had helped found because no provision was made for the rights of black women; in her fiction, however, she tended to deal out stereotypically raced roles and inevitably perhaps, wrote from a white perspective even as she gave voice to the racial Other. (123)

Schreiner’s ability to identify Imperialist thought and inequality does not permit her to displace her own perspective to focus solely on the racial Other, and this is evidenced through Lyndall’s perspective, voice, and behavior.

In order to preserve power structures and the concept of Otherness, Eugenics is used as a weapon to marginalize. The idea of Eugenics became popular in the Victorian age as it furthered the legitimacy of the Empire's expansions into Africa and India. The ideology of race and gender are linked even more when placed together on colonial ground. Often Schreiner is criticized for repeating the Imperialist ideology of Eugenics within her works. Burdett claims:

an evolutionary conception of 'race' did remain important to Schreiner; very often she used it to support a common-enough western view of distinctions between 'advanced' and less-advanced races. But increasingly [...] her liberal insistence that 'lower' races must be nurtured and 'raised' is radicalized by, on the one hand, a growing emphasis on the importance of *difference* (of peoples, cultures and ways of doing things). On the other hand, [Schreiner] is bitter about claims of 'progress' which fail to understand or recognize common humanity – the sameness which exists in relation to difference – and thus achieves advance for some at the cost of others' suffering and exploitation. (*Olive Schreiner and the Progress of Feminism* 89)

It is evident in *The Story of an African Farm* that Schreiner is unable to eradicate all Imperialist sentiments from her English characters. Nonetheless, the "importance of difference" in Schreiner's work serves to put into relief Africa's diversity: English and Africans, Africans and Boers, Boers and Hottentots, Hottentots and Kaffirs, adults and children, females and males.

Schreiner's characters serve to show difference, the effect of colonization on all peoples, and the need for recognition of that difference while still providing equality to all. Schreiner's novel contends with Burdett's claim that Schreiner's "growing emphasis on the importance of *difference*" implies an education and civilization of 'lower' races. Ledger agrees with Burdett when she states "it was Schreiner's relationship with Karl Pearson, the linchpin of the Men and Women's Club, which confirmed her allegiance to eugenic theory which, at root, was a 'racist' ideology masquerading as science" (73). Lyndall seems to recognize difference while advocating a need for universal equality even if she emphasizes the English woman's agenda; when she is a little girl locked in her room with Em, Lyndall claims "when that day comes, and I am strong, I will hate everything that has power, and help everything that is weak" (*SAF* 51). Lyndall's awareness of the oppressor's, Tant' Sannie's, abuse towards those different and less powerful than she points to Schreiner's own knowledge of difference and recognition of the necessity for equality. Lyndall focuses on the Woman's Question when she speaks to Waldo and states:

To you [life] says- As you approximate to man's highest ideal of God, as your arm is strong and your knowledge is great, and the power to labor is with you, so you shall gain all that human heart desires. To us it says – Strength shall not help you, nor knowledge, nor labor. You shall gain what men gain, but by other means. And so the world makes men and women [...] the less a woman has in her head the lighter she is for climbing.
(Schreiner, *SAF* 135)

Lyndall's ability to see the social construction of male and female worth points to Schreiner's rejection (either outright or part of) the Eugenics theory (Schreiner, *SAF* 135). Lyndall continues to speak directly against the Eugenics theory when she points out its self-serving basis to Waldo: "there was never a man who said one word for woman but he said two for man and three for the whole human race" (Schreiner, *SAF* 138). The creators and perpetuators of the Eugenics theory, mostly politically high powered males, continue this ideology by keeping it in the center of their rhetoric. Lyndall's comment clearly points to Schreiner's understanding of Eugenics theory's placement of women as evolutionarily lower than males as well as shows Schreiner's acknowledgement of the devices used to successfully disseminate falsehoods. Lyndall's tone and subsequent actions show her frustration with and disdain for society's unequal treatment of the two sexes.

The colonized state acts as an appropriate backdrop for Lyndall's feminist agenda; in her work *Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women's Fiction*, Susan Meyer's conclusions concerning the novel *Jane Eyre* can be attributed to *The Story of an African Farm*:

[*Jane Eyre*] suppresses the damning history of racial oppression and slavery, its ending betrays an anxiety that imperialism and oppression of other races constitute a stain upon English history and that the novel's own appropriation of nonwhite races for figurative ends bears a disturbing resemblance to that history. Thus although the ending of the novel does essentially permit the racial hierarchies of European imperialism to fall back into place, *Jane Eyre* is characterized not by Spivak's 'unquestioned

ideology' of imperialism but by an ideology of imperialism that is questioned – and then reaffirmed – in interesting and illuminating ways.

(Imperialism at Home 66)

Just as Meyer sees Brontë's novel as ultimately affirming Imperialist ideas while at the same time presenting Imperialist ideas for scrutiny, so too one can read Schreiner's work.

Schreiner is able to give voice to the New Woman's perspective of race and gender politics. Meyer states that "given the intimate and inextricable connection between race and gender as constructed in nineteenth-century British thought, it would seem logical to look for an interest in race in the fiction of some of the women novelists of nineteenth-century English who manifest the most overt discontent with the constraints of gender" (24). Lyndall brings attention to the hierarchy of oppression in Africa at the time and the connections between race and gender oppression. When Lyndall returns from school as a young woman, she speaks to Waldo about her observations as a white single woman in Africa. She states that if she came to the same place as a man instead of a female alone in the world she "w [ould] have strange questions asked me, strange glances cast on me. The Boer wife will shake her head and give me food to eat with the Kaffirs and a right to sleep with the dogs [...] Waldo looked in wonder at the little quivering face; it was a glimpse into a world of passion and feeling wholly new to him" (*SAF* 136). Schreiner's descriptive narrative helps the reader to imagine Lyndall's plight. Schreiner shows the state of an Imperial colony as well as the New Woman's empathy and insight into others' perceptions and thoughts.

Lyndall's dialogue reveals society's perspectives and its influence in forming the identity of the New Woman. Lyndall enlightens Waldo about the placement of a single

woman with “the Kaffirs” and “the dogs.” Lyndall is aware of society’s view of a single woman in a way that Waldo has never needed to be. Since he is placed in a position of power and has access to an occupation he does not have the need for Lyndall’s social consciousness. However, when exposed to these thoughts in a personal and intimate way, by a woman he loves and cares for, Waldo is able to come to a better understanding of the oppressed. Through this narrative, Schreiner indicates that some men, when open to and educated of the problems of oppression, are able to overcome traditional ideology. On the other hand, Gregory is unable to comprehend Lyndall’s perspective even though he asks to be spoken to as Waldo is.

Schreiner uses the African language of “kopje” and “kaffir” to frame the differences between Lyndall’s New Woman perspective and Gregory’s. While sitting on the kopje, Gregory asks Lyndall to speak as she does with Waldo; she begins by analyzing the Kaffir who walks by. She states:

[t]here at the foot of the kopje goes a Kaffir; he has nothing on but a blanket; he is a splendid fellow- six feet high, with a magnificent pair of legs. In his leather bag he is going to fetch his rations, and I suppose to kick his wife with his beautiful legs when he gets home. He has a right to; he bought her for two oxen. There is a lean dog going after him, to whom I suppose he never gives more than a bone from which he has sucked the marrow; but his dog loves him as his wife does. There is something of the master about him in spite of his blackness and wool. See how he brandishes his stick and holds up his head! (*SAF* 169)

Schreiner uses the African setting and language in order to convey the New Woman's ability to see the circle of oppression and speak directly about it as well as the Imperial male's lack of recognition of oppression. Lyndall is able to recognize, diagnose, and speak of oppression through the representation of the Kaffir whereas Gregory is unable to grasp Lyndall's unconventional rhetoric. Gregory is unable to comprehend Lyndall's concepts because he does not view the Kaffir as someone or something to be considered as acted upon or able to react. The idea of the Kaffir responding to oppression by enacting that oppression within his own life, the idea of considering the outcome of a Kaffir's life, is alien to Gregory; "“Oh, but aren't you making fun?” said Gregory, looking *doubtfully* [emphasis added] from her to the Kaffir herder, who rounded the kopje [...]

Gregory was not quite sure how to take the remarks. Being about a Kaffir, they appeared to be of the nature of a joke; but, being seriously spoken, they appeared earnest; so he half laughed and half not, to be on the safe side” (SAF 169). Gregory's doubt reflects his commitment to Imperialist ideologies. Although Gregory's uncertainty of Lyndall's message is clear through his physical behavior and is a clear indication of Schreiner's purpose for Gregory's character to act as the Imperialist male, Lyndall's speech points to the New Woman's own perpetuation of Imperialist thought.

If Schreiner is to be seen as writing specifically to portray and question certain ideologies through her characters' actions and voices, then one must conclude that she does so through Lyndall. Lyndall's characterization of the Kaffir, although it elicits empathy and admiration from the reader when she describes his 'beautiful legs,' how those legs kick and abuse shows Lyndall's racist tendencies; he is a 'master' "in spite of his blackness and wool” (SAF 169). Lyndall's pro-racial equality description of this

random Kaffir's life is undone with her derogatory statement, which outlines the two main differences between the Kaffirs and the Imperialists: skin color and hair texture; "while the surface of each colonialist text purports to represent specific encounters with specific varieties of the racial Other, the subtext valorizes the superiority of European cultures" (Janmohamed 19). Lyndall's dialogue informs the reader of the New Woman identity, but Schreiner cannot fully eradicate all Imperialist ideology from her narrative. Although this moment in the novel explores "the intersections between gender and 'race'-based oppression," it uses Imperialist ideology to privilege the Women's Question above race equality (Ledger 77). According to Schreiner, the Imperialist project is one of the forces that places women in a position of unemployment and possible parasitism. Schreiner's sentiments from *Woman and Labor* claim that colonialism cannot be undone; women's old occupations cannot be reestablished. Therefore, the Woman's Question, facilitated by the delegation of domestic labor to the colonized people, is the most pressing matter at hand.

Schreiner's novel can not help but contend with both race and gender equality issues because of their interconnectivity; nonetheless, Schreiner would not have been effective in either battlefield if she had compromised one for the other. Bill Ashcroft states "in many different societies, women, like colonized subjects, have been relegated to the position of 'Other,' 'colonized' by various forms of patriarchal domination" (233). Although recognizing the link between race and gender politics, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak states:

[A]gain they [the oppressed and the representative] are related, but running them together, especially in order to say that beyond both is where

oppressed subjects speak, act, and know *for themselves*, leads to an essentialist, utopian politics that can, when transferred to single-issue gender rather than class, give unquestioning support to the financialization of the globe, which ruthlessly constructs the general will in the credit-baited rural woman even as it ‘formats’ her through UN Plans of Action so that she can be ‘developed’” (“Can the Subaltern Speak?” 29)

Combining women’s emancipation with racial equality, one begins to fuse the two and consider women just as savage and heathen as the colonized subjects. The woman becomes another imperial project to be developed for the good of the Mother Country.

Critics of the political and fictional New Woman further the connection of the New Woman with the Empire’s subjects in the category ‘savage.’ Linton, one of the New Woman’s most ardent and vocal critics states, “‘What is ‘New’ about the New Woman is ‘the translation into the cultured classes of certain qualities and practices hitherto confined to the uncultured – and savages’” (Ardis, *New Women, New Novels* 24). Linton points to the connection between all Imperial subjects, whether discriminated against through race or gender; the inability to fall under the white male category of the binary leaves women and the colonials on the side of “savage.” The New Woman’s attempts to claim occupation provide her with the options to reject the parasitic domestic occupation granted her and strive to either regain occupations relegated to the savages, the colonized and poor, or appropriate those occupations already claimed by males. Nonetheless, Schreiner’s focus in her novel on the Woman’s Question keeps the umbrella of oppression from encompassing women and natives under the essentialist eye. Despite Linton and others’ attempts to place all oppressed peoples into one group, Schreiner is

able to focus on the question of gender oppression while peripherally noting the similarities and differences of oppression of the natives. These differences are brought forth through the white Afrikaner and Dutch exploitation of the black natives. Schreiner imaginatively uses the South African terms “Boer,” “Hottentot,” and “Kaffir” to keep the reader aware of the colonial setting.

In an effort to define the New Woman through contrast, Schreiner’s female figures are not all characterized as aware and sympathetic to the colonial subjects’ plight. The Boer woman, Tant’ Sannie, although a minority herself and not a citizen of the Mother Country, finds her own power and social rise in the oppression of others. The traditional English domestic occupation the Boer woman inhabits suggests her access to the role of colonizer. Schreiner relegates Tant’ Sannie to her Boer racial category during moments of overt oppression; she refers to Tant’ Sannie as ‘the Boer woman’ to universalize Tant’ Sannie’s behavior to the Boer group in Africa dispelling reader’s possible excuses of the character’s behavior as individual circumstances. Although Schreiner’s depiction may be seen as an effort to further equality in colonized lands, Cherry Clayton points out potentially real life experiences that may have informed Schreiner’s characterizations; “English colonial farming families (like [Schreiner’s] friends the Cawoods, sometimes called ‘English Afrikaners,’ whose daughters may have been one source of Schreiner’s emphasis on young female potential in the karoo); demoralized and exploited indigenous servants and laborers from the broken tribes of the Cape frontier wars” (43). The opportunity to subjugate others allowed oppressed peoples, like the Boer woman and Bonaparte, to access the Imperialist’s occupation.

Schreiner's use of the South African terms informs the reader of the cycle of oppression present within the colonized. Although the Kaffirs are seen as too savage, uncivilized and animal-like to be included in the religious ceremony of the Dutch woman, the Hottentot maids occupy the place between the Kaffir and the Boer woman, which relegates the Hottentot to a space of hybridity. Bill Ashcroft states "hybridity occurs in post-colonial societies as a result of conscious moments of cultural suppression, as when the colonial power invades to consolidate political and economic control, or when settler-invaders dispossess indigenous peoples and force them to 'assimilate' to new social patterns" (137). While the Kaffir is dismissed due to his perceived non-human status, seen as lower than and beneath the white woman, the Hottentot is exposed to and expected to conform to the customs of the colonizer. The Hottentot's attempts at conformity are discerned in her unspoken communications with the Boer woman. Studying the interactions between the Hottentot and the Boer woman, one can see the Boer woman's respect and admiration for the Imperialist male mirrored in the Hottentot. During a church service led by Bonaparte, Schreiner states:

the Kaffir servants were not there, because Tant' Sannie held they were descended from apes, and needed no salvation. But the rest were gathered for the Sunday service, and awaited the officiator [...] At the front door Bonaparte removed his hat with much dignity, raised his shirt collar, and entered. To the center table he walked, put his hat solemnly down by the big Bible, and bowed his head over it in silent prayer. The Boer woman looked at the Hottentot, and the Hottentot looked at the Boer woman. There was one thing on earth for which Tant' Sannie had a profound

reverence, which exercised a subduing influence over her, which made her for the time a better woman – that thing was new, shining black cloth [...]

There was no doubt he was a very respectable man, a gentleman. (SAF 31)

Schreiner shows the Boer woman and the Hottentot consult each other through looks; both agree and view Bonaparte as a religious, righteous gentleman. Schreiner shows the Boer woman's internal colonization through stating the "one thing on earth for which Tant' Sannie had a profound reverence for, which exercised a subduing influence over her" is black cloth worn by a respectable gentleman, a colonizer (SAF 31). Since Tant' Sannie attributes Bonaparte with such reverence, so does the Hottentot. Schreiner's use of the South African terms allows the reader to see the underlying circumstances that inform the New Woman identity.

Schreiner's descriptions help the reader to understand the New Woman and her interactions with others. While others are portrayed as active participants in the imperial project, Lyndall is outside the cycle of oppression as an observer for most of the novel; however, during Em's bout with Tant' Sannie's violence and Bonaparte's beating of Waldo, Lyndall is compelled to leave her role of omniscient observer and extricate the children, Waldo and Em, out of the oppressive violence. After Bonaparte manipulates the Boer Woman to fire the German overseer, Schreiner states:

Em, sobbing bitterly, would have followed him; but the Boer woman prevented her by a flood of speech which convulsed the Hottentot so low were its images. 'Come, Em,' said Lyndall, lifting her small, proud head, 'let us go in. We will not stay to hear such language' she looked into the Boer woman's eyes. Tant' Sannie *understood the meaning of the look if*

not the words (emphasis added). She waddled after them, and caught Em by the arm. She had struck Lyndall once years before, and had never done it again, so she took Em. (SAF 49)

Similar to the looks Tant' Sannie shares with the Hottentot, the looks exchanged with Lyndall reveal an understanding between the two. Lyndall's ability to communicate with Tant' Sannie is due to her power over Tant' Sannie. Lyndall enters and claims her place as the oldest English woman and leader in the domestic sphere, above the colonial slaves and servants. Em, on the other hand, is perceived by Tant' Sannie as a child in her care able to be victimized. Although Em is an English woman and landowner, she is still a child and a victim. Schreiner states:

For one instant Lyndall looked on, then she laid her small fingers on the Boer woman's arm. With the exertion of half its strength Tant' Sannie might have flung the girl back upon the stones. It was not the power of the slight fingers, tightly though they clinched her broad wrist – so tightly that at bedtime the marks were still there – but the Boer woman looked into the clear eyes and at the quivering white lips and with a half-surprised curse, relaxed her hold. The girl drew Em's arm through her own. "Move!" she said to Bonaparte, who stood in the door; and he, Bonaparte the invincible, in the hour of his triumph, moved to give her place. The Hottentot ceased to laugh, and an uncomfortable silence fell on all the three in the doorway. (SAF 50)

Lyndall's entrance into the cycle of oppression is evident in Schreiner's use of the pronoun "it". Referring to Tant' Sannie, "it" conveys Lyndall's view of the Boer woman

as non-human in this moment of violence. Lyndall's shift to the traditional occupation of the English woman places Tant' Sannie on the level of the African natives and allows Lyndall to access the place of power. Schreiner's narrative continues as it shows Lyndall's entrance into the circle of oppression to extricate the Angel-of-the-House.

Lyndall's rejection of the traditional female occupation helps to place Lyndall outside of the cycle of oppression. Emblematic of the New Woman's own struggles, Lyndall has been a victim of oppression in the past. Nonetheless, she chooses to abandon her position outside the cycle of oppression and rescue the Angel-of-the-House. When Lyndall inserts herself within this cycle, she is seen as dominant; both Tant' Sannie and Bonaparte acquiesce to Lyndall. The shift of power from the Boer woman and Bonaparte to Lyndall leaves all in an "uncomfortable silence" (*SAF* 50). The severity of the shift of power is elucidated as Schreiner expounds on Bonaparte's access to and triumph in power through manipulating Tant' Sannie to fire the German overseer just moments before. She describes Bonaparte as "invincible" and at the peak of his power, "in the hour of his triumph" when Lyndall supersedes him with one demand, "Move!" (*SAF* 50) When the New Woman chooses to enter the cycle of oppression and access her traditional role, if only to rescue another female, she is unquestionably placed above the Dutch immigrant farmer, the hybrid servant, and the non-descript male.

Lyndall's behavior allows her to access the power of a white English woman. When entering the traditional occupation of the English woman, the New Woman is easily understood by others. Lyndall only has to place her hand on Tant' Sannie's wrist and look the woman in the eyes to communicate her demand for the beating to stop. Bonaparte, a male, needs a verbal cue, yet he acquiesces to Lyndall's power when he

moves aside instead of attempting to challenge it. The Hottentot's understanding of the New Woman is shown when her contribution to the oppression of Em, her laughing, halts. Lyndall accesses the traditional role of English colonizer, above Hottentot, Boer and non-landowner male in order to be an agent of change.

When Bonaparte beats Waldo, the New Woman's identity as an agent of change is solidified. After Em speaks to Lyndall of Bonaparte's refusal to let Waldo out of the shed, she says "I wonder you can cut out aprons when Waldo is shut up like that" (*SAF* 81). Lyndall continues working at a traditional domestic occupation for ten minutes then she:

folded up her stuff, rolled it tightly together, and stood before the closed door of the sitting room with her hands closely clasped. A flush rose to her face; she opened the door quickly, walked in, and went to the nail on which the key of the fuel room hung. Bonaparte and Tant' Sannie sat there and saw her. 'What do you want?' they asked together. 'This key,' she said, holding it up, and looking at them. 'Do you mean her to have it?' said Tant' Sannie, in Dutch 'Why don't you stop her' asked Bonaparte, in English 'Why don't you take it from her?' Said Tant' Sannie. So they looked at each other, talking, while Lyndall walked to the fuel house with the key, her underlip bitten in. 'Waldo,' she said, as she helped him to stand up, and twisted his arm about her waist to support him, 'we will not be children always; we shall have the power too, someday.' She kissed his naked shoulder with her soft little mouth. It was all the comfort her young soul could give him. (*SAF* 82)

Schreiner relegates the Boer woman and Bonaparte in their separate subjugated categories when she points out the lack of communication between the two. Tant' Sannie reverts to her native tongue, Dutch, which impedes her communication with Bonaparte. Bonaparte's power over Lyndall is reliant upon the Boer landowner's support. He looks to Tant' Sannie to assert power over Lyndall, but as Schreiner points out by placing Tant' Sannie in her subjugated Dutch peasant position, the Boer is beneath the white English female. Both the ambiguous male and the Dutch peasant are unable to assert power over the New Woman when she chooses to access her power as an English woman. Although the identity of the New Woman is shown as a resilient and aggressive agent of change, Schreiner hints that the New Woman is hesitant to take on this role.

During Em's rescue, there are no clues either before, during or after that hint of any underlying fear or apprehension on Lyndall's part. Nonetheless, before walking into the room to take the key of the wall in front of both Tant' Sannie and Bonaparte to rescue Waldo, Lyndall's anxiety is shown through her "flushed" face and "closely clasped" hands. Later, Lyndall's walk shows her with "underlip bitten in" (*SAF* 82). Lyndall is absent for Waldo's beating and not until an overnight stay in the shed and morning passes does Lyndall rescue him. Lyndall is successful in rescuing Waldo from the shed but not from the beating itself. Lyndall is present for Em's beating and "for one instant Lyndall looked on" while Tant' Sannie beat Em "first upon one cheek, and then upon the other" (*SAF* 49). The timing of Lyndall's rescue may be attributed to the type of oppression exhibited. In Em's case, the oppression was female to female, Boer peasant to child, Othered Woman to white landowner child. It is also in a broader sense Non-English Woman, "it," to landowner English girl, female Imperialist. While the oppression

exhibited in Waldo's case is male to male, nondescript white male to German boy, Waldo's scenario lacks a connection to the New Woman agenda. Not until Em comments on Lyndall's lack of action while another person's rights are violated does Waldo's position touch upon one of the precedents of the Woman's Question, equality for all.

Lyndall's ability to access her traditional role as she sees fit portrays the New Woman's access to a traditional role in a colonized land. Schreiner claims that the evolution of society cannot be turned back; once an occupation is lost, it cannot be regained. However, on colonial land, the English woman is not without occupation. Lyndall, the New Woman, if given a choice, chooses to reject the available traditional occupation because it is one that demands the subjugation of others.

CONCLUSION

The simplistic discussions of New Woman/New Man have served to limit how Olive Schreiner has been represented. This essay proposes that, like John Kucich's sophisticated psychoanalytical historicist approach, a critical approach that addresses the poetic and philosophical elements of her South African world serves to continue to distinguish Olive Schreiner as an inspiration for better living for all. Nadine Gordimer is one contemporary author whose life mirrors Schreiner's. Born and raised in South African, Gordimer has used her experiences to inform her writing and aid in the political struggles toward equality in the 20th and 21st centuries. Her narrative creation of the South African landscape as a setting for change helps the audience today to admire Olive Schreiner's contribution to the beginnings of the creation of an audience for a woman's voice. Through her nonfiction writings, *The Essential Gesture* and *Living in Hope and History*, Gordimer claims that "the harsh lessons of daily existence, coexistence between human and human, with animals and nature, could be made sense of in the ordering of properties by the transforming imagination, working upon the 'states of things'" (12). Gordimer carries the tradition of literary representation of South Africa into the 21st century. In the light of Gordimer's successes, this essay proposes that Olive Schreiner deserves critical attention beyond the too familiar question of the New Woman.

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