

RETHINKING PIGOU'S MISOGYNY

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“...Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
Man for the sword and for the needle she:
Man with the head and woman with the heart:
Man to command and woman to obey:
All else confusion.”
— Tennyson

The declining influence of Keynesian economics in recent decades has helped to rejuvenate interest in the legacy of Arthur Cecil Pigou, one of the most influential but underrated economists of the twentieth century. Slowly but surely Pigou is being recognized as the founder of welfare economics rather than as the popularizer of Marshallian economics or as Keynes' adversary. Pigou's lasting contributions span various fields, including price discrimination, the theory of the firm, social cost (externalities and public goods), theory of unemployment, labor economics and industrial relations, business cycles, monetary theory, valuation of national income (index numbers), and social choice (equity, efficiency, and the distribution of income). [Solow, 1980; Collard, 1981; Cooter and Rappoport, 1984; Shiller, 1987; Aslanbeigui, 1995; Aslanbeigui and Medema, 1998]

All is not praise, however. Feminist economists have berated Pigou for “openly” arguing that “women are weaker and lesser than men” [Strober, 1994, 143] and for trying to “reinforce and legitimize ‘unfair’ treatment of women in the labour market” [Pujol, 1992, 164]. They highlight Pigou's belief that women are on average inferior, both mentally and physically, and his recommendation that they stay in the home—a sphere to which he thought they belonged. At the same time, these critics downgrade Pigou's concern with the double burden of work women face (inside and outside the home), and his calls for legislation that would institute paid pregnancy leaves or regulate work hours and conditions. By today's standards Pigou is considered a misogynist (defined as one who hates women).

The aim of this paper is not to absolve Pigou of sexism; indeed, it will substantiate his chauvinistic attitude toward women. Rather, its purpose is to temper the anachronistic interpretation of these assessments by placing his views in the context of the late Victorian era. What may sound misogynistic in today's context was consistent with an ethos in which “almost everyone was a sexist ... [and] held discriminatory views of women's nature and social role” [Richards, quoted in White, 1994, 75]. The

discussion will take into account biographical information about Pigou's upbringing, education and personality, reflecting the view that the work of economists is correlated with "their personal attitudes concerning women and gender relations, and their early childhood experiences" [Seiz, 1993, 195].

The paper proceeds as follows. A short biographical section will acquaint the reader with Pigou's formative years. With that as backdrop, his views on upper-class and working-class women will be discussed separately. Before the paper is concluded, Pigou's recognition of a third group of women, the emerging group of professionals, will be described. The story is reconstructed using both published and unpublished sources.¹

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Arthur Cecil Pigou was born on 18 November 1877 and died on 7 March 1959. He never married and, judging from his personal correspondence, he was not significantly influenced by the women of his family. He led a life detached from women: at Harrow — a boarding school where he completed his secondary education—Pigou's companions were all male. Harrow, like other public schools "in late Victorian and Edwardian times," was determined to bring up young English gentlemen who did not rely on their "mollycoddling" families. It was also determined to prevent boys from having illicit sex by isolating them from women. As a result, women "in any shape, even that of mother and sister, were unwelcome visitors" [Annan, 1990, 43]. Therefore, throughout his education at Harrow the young Pigou, like his schoolmates, associated with men exclusively for 34 weeks out of the year.

This unnatural but general absence of women led to what Annan calls the "cult of homosexuality," "the public schools acted as a hothouse for its growth" [*ibid.*, 99]. Many of those who graduated from the public schools, including some of Pigou's own friends, went on to heterosexual relationships but Pigou did not. At King's College, Cambridge, he was tutored by the notorious Oscar Browning, who had been driven out of Eton for his relationships with some of his students; he had strong ties to other homosexual students, such as T. J. Sheppard (later the provost of King's) and John Maynard Keynes; and he was infamous for "his choice of good-looking [male] undergraduates to accompany him to the Alps or the Lake District" [*ibid.*, 101-2].² Homosexuality, far from being synonymous with hatred of women, is significant here because it contributed to Pigou's homosocial way of life; he lived without much personal understanding of women (his only contact with women in adulthood was when vacationing friends and colleagues brought their families—including wives, mothers, children, and sisters—to his summer home in the Lake District).

The above situation was not ameliorated by the absence of women from the educational scene. The Victorian era did not emphasize education for women as it did for men; schooling was only recommended for those who did not expect the support of a man [*ibid.*, 50]. The few who did attend the women's colleges "lived a segregated existence heavily chaperoned; and girls outside Cambridge appeared only on rare occasions like the college balls at the end of the summer term" [*ibid.*, 102]. Pigou's

own account of women who attended his lectures in the early 1900s, accompanied by "a formidable and sardonic matron, who ostentatiously read a book," is quite revealing [1952b, 2].

This lack of contact with women fortified, if not caused, a severe shyness/fear of women that bordered on panic. Pigou, Donald Corrie tells us, "was scared of female society at the best of times." He relays a corroborating story about a mountaineering venture: the scene a hotel in a Swiss town and the plan to ascend Titlis.

... We had become very friendly with the Proprietor and the Proprietress and one evening we were invited to have coffee with them and meet their very attractive niece. The Prof jibbed at this and went early to bed but I spent a pleasant evening with them in the course of which it was suggested that we might take the niece with us on the Titlis climb. I went up to ask the Prof whether this would be all right — and I will draw a veil over the Prof's reaction! I need only say that we cut short our stay and left Engleberg the next day. There was no female on the rope as we climbed Titlis. [Corrie, 1960]

Pigou's shyness did not die away with the passage of time. In 1949 he still dreaded a meeting with the "female vice-chancellor of London University" [Noel-Baker Papers, 9/58/1, April-May 1949].

Pigou loved children (in general and those of his friends in particular)³ and was concerned for their well-being. This is visible in his writings on welfare but the most vivid example is his account of the devastating effects of World War I. The sorrow and terror of witnessing "children in Dunkirk [being] maimed and killed from the air" and the "pitiful slaughter of the youth of seven nations" [quoted in Aslanbeigui, 1992, 100] affected his personality and outlook for the rest of his life. But as Saltmarsh and Wilkinson have recorded, girls would find Pigou transformed in their adulthood: "they were sometimes bewildered to find, on growing up, that they had become strangers to him" [1960, 16-17].

Lacking personal experience, it seems that Pigou accepted the stereotypical view of women of the late Victorian era. And it was not just Queen Victoria [Altick, 1973, 58] or Darwin and Huxley [White, 1994, 75], who believed women to be inferior mentally and physically. The stereotypes were perpetuated by those who influenced his studies and thoughts. Pigou learned his economics from Alfred Marshall and remained his most faithful student to the end. Alfred Marshall's less than favorable attitude toward women has been well-documented by MacWilliams-Tullberg [1990], Pujol [1992], and Groenewegen [1994c]. Pigou admired Jevons, whom he believed to be very apt in theoretical and applied economics [see Aslanbeigui, 1995]; White [1994] has documented Jevons' belief in women's "inferiority." He has further demonstrated how Jevons manipulated statistics to advocate legislation that prevented married women from engaging in paid work. Pigou started his career at Cambridge studying ethics and was significantly influenced by Sidgwick. Although Sidgwick was in favor

of women's rights and education he believed that married women should not "engage in paid work" [Caine, 1994, 43].

Whether through general public opinion or academic influence at Cambridge, the Victorian ethos left an indelible mark on Pigou. To him women were in fact the "feeble sex," having "on the average" inferior "natural endowments of mind and muscle" [Pigou, 1952a, 564]. If society trained women to "have no opinions lest they seem too formed and too definite for a young man's taste, and thereby unmarketable as a commodity," [Vicinus, 1972, x], it is not surprising to hear that Pigou found them incapable of handling subjects such as physics [1941, 280] or that he felt the proper place for women to be the home [John Maynard Keynes Papers RES/1.2, January 1935].

Missing from the literature is the fact that Pigou did not treat all women equally. He saw women as belonging to either of two groups: the upper class and middle class—who, in his eyes, were merely interested in such futile matters as dress and decor—and the working class, who worked to supplement family incomes and were exploited by their employers through long hours of work, unhealthy work conditions, and meager wages. In his personal correspondence Pigou criticized the first group amply and harshly. His published work focused on ways that the second group could be made better off; he was aware that working-class (married) women were one of the most disadvantaged groups in the labor market [Chinn, 1988, 87]. Pigou did not explicitly discuss those women—well-to-do, or not—who were involved in philanthropic, voluntary, or political work. Neither did he take notice of the many who were fighting for women's rights in society [see Perkin, 1993] or for furthering their well-being in the workplace [see Middleton, 1977]. Pigou's bifurcated classification of women stayed with him for the rest of his life. Any woman who did not fit the mold was categorized as an exception.

PIGOU ON THE WOMEN OF THE LEISURE CLASS

Women of the "better-to-do" classes [Pigou, 1952b, 2] only made passing appearances in Pigou's published work. Such is the discussion of the "large entry of women into industry during the [first] war" performing war-related work [1952a, 33, fn. 1]. It was in his personal correspondence with Philip Noel-Baker, a labor MP and a life-long friend, that upper- and middle-class women emerged explicitly. Pigou's targets were wives, mothers, sisters, or acquaintances of his friends who visited him in his summer home on holidays. Scattered but harsh passages in the Noel-Baker papers demonstrate vividly what Saltmarsh and Wilkinson meant when they claimed that Pigou "reveled in misogyny" [1960, 18].⁴

Some of Pigou's apparent hostility to this group of women stems from his "less than indifferent" attitude toward "the ornaments and innocent vanities of life" [*ibid.*, 16], a position that may sound feminist by today's standards.⁵ Several letters attest to his distaste for women who used cosmetics, which he believed made them lose "the appearance of a human being as created by Providence" [Noel-Baker Papers, 9/58/2, November 1944] or to his contempt for "diamond-ringed nail painted horrors" [Noel-Baker Papers, 9/58/3, March-April 1942]. On different occasions he proposed to Noel-Baker that cosmetics be banned by the government of the time [Noel-Baker Papers, 9/58/3; 9/58/1].

But Pigou was no feminist. His belief in women's mental and physical inferiority comes through clearly in these papers. On numerous occasions during World War II, he asked Noel-Baker to purchase foodstuff, that were short in supply, presumably because he had easier access as a member of the government. On one such episode, Noel-Baker informed Pigou of his wife's failure to procure Pigou's request: "Day by day, in every way, she more and more egregiously fails; not because of any lack of assiduity or brain-power, but because the food is just not there" [Noel-Baker Papers, 9/58/3, 10 April 1943]. As a postscript to the same letter, Noel-Baker wrote: "My wife points out that whenever a really important task has to be undertaken, it is her 'contemptible' sex who are called upon to deal with it" [*ibid.*]. One could only venture a guess that "lack of assiduity" or "brain-power" and "the contemptible sex" had been Pigou's vocabulary in describing women — there is no evidence that Noel-Baker himself shared his friend's chauvinism.

Not all women had so negative an image in Pigou's eyes. As the following letter indicates, Pigou held some in high regard: "11:30 a.m. The lovely one is here. Her feet have touched the garden and made the daisies ready!" [Noel-Baker Papers, 9/58/3, 17 April 1942]. But even she was accused of what Pigou called "female incompetence" on another occasion [Noel-Baker Papers, 9/58/1, July 1947].

The lovely, you'll regret to hear, has 3 broken ribs on account of the incompetence of an airplane which 'bumped' in a thunderstorm when she hadn't been told to strap her fair form to a seat, and she was hurtled across the cabin! Gallant husband, being male and intelligent, suffered no such ignominy. ... [Noel-Baker Papers, 9/58/1]

Perhaps Pigou's chauvinism climaxed when a naive American graduate student contacted him shortly after his retirement from the Chair of Political Economy, a position he had occupied for thirty-five years. "It has come to my attention," wrote she to the internationally renowned Professor:

that you must know a great deal about economics in general. I am particularly interested in the theory of business cycles and their relation to the principles of economic planning and laissez faire. ... I should be grateful if you could be kind enough to state your opinion of the following: ... (1) Theoretical assumptions of economic planning. ... (2) Positive theory of laissez faire. ... (3) The contrast or the comparison of the above two ideas. ... I am gathering this material for use in preparing a thesis for the master of art's degree ... I will reimburse you for any postage or other expenses entailed. Enclosed is a stamped self-addressed envelope for your reply. [Noel-Baker Papers, 9/58/2, 28 April 1944]

Pigou's only reaction was a marginal note which needs no further comment: "I'm shortly starting a great work called 'Woman, a psychological study'! This will be the frontispiece!" [Noel-Baker Papers, 9/58/2, May 1944]

Women's physical competence shocked Pigou: Mr. and Mrs. X earned "merit by considerable wood-chopping and mowing! *She* actually showed a moderate competence with the heavy area!" [Noel-Baker Papers, 9/58/2, July 1945, emphasis in the original]. Only those who were competent on the hills — Pigou himself was a deft mountaineer — won praise from him. Joan Robinson's expertise on the rocks and Pigou's reaction are captured well in an undated letter from Kahn to Robinson:

The Prof. delivered an encomium on your climbing powers so lavish that I would hesitate to repeat it. But it is clear enough why you have made such a hit with him. The bit which you could not manage was really out of the way and he had not intended to include it. But he suddenly realised that there was some danger of your coming it over Austin [Robinson's husband] and decided that something must be done before irreparable injury had resulted [Joan Robinson Papers, vii].

In Pigou's eyes, the change in the dress code for women of post-Victorian era was a sign of improved status, very likely because it meant more freedom to capture the hills:

Members of the fair sex, clothed in garments which no man dare attempt to describe, make difficult expeditions on English, and even on Swiss, mountains not merely "sans guides", but, as some of them proudly proclaim, actually "sans hommes" [1952b, 3].⁶

When women did in fact display such competence, Pigou awarded them "the very high degree of Honorary male for good work on the hills!" [Noel-Baker Papers, 9/58/2, 1944].

PIGOU ON WORKING-CLASS WOMEN

The end of nineteenth century was a period of expanding job opportunities for young unmarried women. By 1911 they were engaged in manufacturing, transport, textile, food processing, and clothing manufacture [Stearns, 1972, 109-110; see also Groenewegen, 1994b]. With the exception of textile workers the majority of these women left their job in their early twenties, upon marriage. The conception of women's roles as wives did not change with economic trends; in some cases, the conception "grew more limited" [Stearns, 1972, 112]. Married women were still not supposed to work in paid jobs; if they did, it was from the home. Working outside the home offended the husband's "manhood" because it demonstrated his incompetence "to provide." The majority of married women in the labor force were widows [*ibid.*, 113-114].

There is very little on working-class women in Pigou's personal correspondence (it was not proper for an English gentleman to associate with women of the working class).⁷ But in the context of his publications on labor they were discussed frequently. His observations were drawn from careful studies of labor markets and organizations, economists' reports and government documents.

For Pigou labor markets were clearly segmented along gender lines. Women overcrowded a few low-skilled, casual occupations. They held jobs as tailoresses, bookbinders, and jam-makers [1952a, 503]; made "artificial flowers" and prepared "quills for hat-trimming"; worked at "typewriters and telephones"; waitressed in restaurants and did clerical work for the railway. Working-class women were "liable to leave" after getting married [*ibid.*, 504-8]; therefore, "the obligations of marriage [made] the average length of a woman's stay in industry especially short" [*ibid.*, 496]. Pigou estimated women's age of marriage between 21 and 25 and their average industrial life at eight years [*ibid.*, 564]. If gainfully employed, married women would be engaged in low-paid "home work" due to the "non-economic compulsion of family cares" [*ibid.*, 553].

Pigou discussed working-women's plight when addressing the topic of low wages. Wages were low because (i) the value of the marginal product of labor in a certain occupation was low due to human capital factors, statistical discrimination, occupational segregation, and custom/tradition; or (ii) because labor did not receive the value of its marginal product in a specific occupation and was therefore "exploited" [*ibid.*, 551]. Women's low wages included elements of both.

Women did not receive the same wages as men did partly because of "choices" they made, and partly because of socially desirable conventions. More specifically, Pigou blamed women's low wages, at least to some extent, on lower natural abilities, lack of mobility,⁸ and intermittent pattern of work.

Women, looking forward, as they do, to matrimony and a life in the home, are not trained to industry as men are, and do not devote to it that period of their lives when they are strongest and most capable. ... In these circumstances, even though women's natural endowments of mind and muscle were equal to those of men, which, on the average, they are not, it would be surprising if their day wages were not lower. [*ibid.*, 564]

Pigou blamed women's lower wages on occupational segregation as well. Aside from the demarcation rules of trade unions which attempted to "reserve particular jobs to workers at a particular trade" [1913, 163], the "most serious artificial restrictions" came dressed as traditions and customs:

There are a number of occupations in which the value of the marginal net product, and, therefore, the wage, of women's work would, if women were admitted to them, be larger than it is in occupations where they are in fact engaged; but they are excluded from these occupations by

tradition and custom. When new occupations, such as the working of typewriters and telephones, are introduced, or when old occupations are transformed by the introduction of new types of machinery, women are, indeed, generally offered a free field. But in occupations which men have for a long time been accustomed to regard as their own, even though under present conditions women could adequately pursue them, tradition and custom frequently exercise a powerful excluding influence. [1952a, 507-8]⁹

Employers' perceptions were also crucial in determining female-male valuations and hence wages. Stereotypes could affect employers' perceptions about women. They could believe, "rightly or wrongly":

that ... men are less likely to panic or become hysterical in a crisis; or that women will be absent from work more often than men through temporary ill-health; or that he is not so likely to find among women employees as among men people suitable for promotion to higher posts; or, maybe, because he or his foremen enjoy an occasional burst of swearing, and swearing is more enjoyable in male than in female company. There are, or may be, any number of other considerations that have relevance. ... If in any occupation they value a woman worker less highly than a man because they believe that she would faint at the sight of a spider or mouse, this opinion plays its part in the general wage set-up equally whether it is true or false. [1952b, 220-21]

Pigou was opposed to raising wages in the above contexts for two reasons. On economic grounds, this would mean wages higher than those set by the market and higher unemployment among women (at equal wages, men would be hired instead), defeating the very purpose of intervention [1952a, 570]. Such an argument was extended to the institution of minimum wages—designed to protect all labor, male or female [*ibid.*, 616].¹⁰ On social grounds, such interferences could have detrimental long-term effects:

"Improvements" in the organisation of wages, if they divert women into industrial activity away from home-making, child-rearing and child-bearing may have implications which extend much beyond the sphere of economics and about which economists as such have no qualifications to speak. [Pigou, 1952b, 224-5]

His only concession came in the form of concentrating "on removing barriers and taboos that obstruct the flow of women into industries suitable for them, leaving wage rates, except, of course, in special cases of exploitation, to look after themselves" [*ibid.*, 226].

Pigou advocated government policy to remedy the second type of low wages, i.e., "exploitation," most probable in occupations where workers were not organized. In such cases, the employer possessed "considerably greater strategic strength than his opponents" [*ibid.*, 559]. Lack of unionization was particularly noticeable among the "poor," those who were "widely scattered in space," or those who had intermittent work patterns [*ibid.*]. All of these conditions plagued women much more frequently than men.

Government legislation to eradicate exploitation had the potential of improving the well-being of the exploited [*ibid.*, 563] without causing harmful unemployment. The benefit:

is partly physical, resulting from increased strength due to better food and better conditions of life. It is also partly psychological, resulting from a sense of fair treatment, an increased feeling of hopefulness, and the knowledge that, with the increased wage, slack work is more likely to lead to a loss of employment. [*ibid.*, 607]

Wage legislation was hard to enforce, however, especially in the case of home-based paid work where "households and workshop labour can so easily be intermingled. ... when a home-worker works alone in her house for an outside firm, these things are not regulated" [Pigou, 1952a, 533-4]. This led Pigou to advocate the formation of unions — most unions outside textiles ignored women workers, or opposed their membership [Stearns, 1972, 115].¹¹ In his calls for the promotion of unions among women (and men), Pigou echoed Sidney and Beatrice Webb, who "were ardent advocates of the unionization of women workers and the enactment of legislation that was designed both to ensure all people were provided with at least the minimum requirements of a civilized life and which compelled employers to provide minimum standards of employment" [Nyland and Ramia, 1994, 110]. For Pigou, unions solidified the movement among workers, "a distinct class ... divorced from ownership of the means of production," people whose "prospect of becoming ... master[s]" was reduced to "an infinitesimal chance" [1905, 6-7].¹²

Pigou also advocated government intervention to shorten the hours of work for married women [1952a, 563]. He recognized that women who were in the labor force faced the double burden of taking care of their families. Shorter hours increased women's aggregate efficiency [*ibid.*, 467] and gave them the opportunity for "better care of their homes" [*ibid.*, 463].¹³

Children and women, particularly women who, besides industrial work, have also the burden of looking after their homes, can, in general, stand less than adult men. Further leisure for them yields a bigger return — for children in opportunities for healthy sleep and play, for women in opportunities for better care of their homes. [1952a, 463]

Unlike Marshall [see Groenewegen, 1994c], Pigou realized that a reduction in hours of paid work for women was equivalent to a reduction in income and perhaps to increased poverty. As a result, he proposed a "universal endowment for motherhood" [1952a, 722] especially before and after child birth.

There is no defence for the policy of "giving poor widows and incapable fathers permission to keep their children out of school and take their earnings." Rather, the Committee on the Employment of Children Act are wholly right when they declare: "We feel, moreover, that the cases of widows and others, who are now too often economically dependent on child labour, should be met, no longer by the sacrifice of the future to the present, but, rather, by more scientific, and possibly by more generous, methods of public assistance." The same type of reasoning applies, with even greater force, to the common plea that women should be allowed to work in factories shortly before and shortly after confinement, because, if they are not allowed to do this, they and their children alike will suffer shocking poverty. In these circumstances it is the duty of the State, not to remit the law, but to defend those affected by it from this evil consequence. [*ibid.*, 760]

It is true that Pigou's policy recommendations to improve women's well-being sent the women back to the home environment, or trained "the girls of the present generation to become competent mothers and housewives" [1952a, 114, fn. 1]. This may have helped reduce women's long-run ability to attain economic equality but in the Victorian context it may have had positive results for the family as a whole. Peter Groenewegen has documented the consequences of married women's work in terms of the care their children received:

Among the worst consequences of the all too frequent inexperience, youth and negligence of the child-minders, were excessive use of sleeping draughts for quietening their charges, accidents from burns or scalds, and exposure to the influence of bad weather ... many employment opportunities for women were highly unsuitable for those involved in the rearing of children. [Groenewegen, 1994c, 90]

Moreover, Jane Humphries has argued that "the retreat of certain family members [the women] from the labour force" may have helped raise the "standard of living of the working class" by reducing the competition for jobs in the labor markets [1977, 252].

PIGOU ON THE EMERGING FEMALE PROFESSIONALS

Pigou held on to his Victorian views long after that era was over, and women had the right to vote, entered such professions as university teaching or dentistry, and held visible positions of university vice-chancellorship. His economic writings on la-

bor continued to assume that labor markets were being segmented by gender, with lower-income women performing unskilled jobs. Pigou implicitly admitted, however, the entrance of well-to-do women into the labor force and that "the areas of direct competition [between men and women] on strictly equivalent work" had become larger. Yet, he believed that the changes were exaggerated by statistical imprecision in the classification of jobs; many men and women performed jobs that were not similar [1952b, 217].

Pigou's general attitude notwithstanding, it seems that he accepted many professional women as exceptions to the "inferiority" rule. He did not mind, for example, having a female dentist, whom he found far from "incompetent": "At present I am suffering from the removal of a pre-molar tooth which was very obstinate and which my lady dentist battled with heroically yesterday morning with me looking on" [Noel-Baker Papers, 9/58/1, 1951]. The very elaborate mathematical tables for Pigou's *Employment and Equilibrium* were "worked out and very carefully checked" by a woman (Mrs. Glauret) (Pigou, 1949, vii). And there were many citations in Pigou's publications to women economists, some of them feminists. Among them were the now well-known Clara Collet, Ursula Hicks, Joan Robinson, and Beatrice Webb.

The most significant female economists known to Pigou were Beatrice Webb and Joan Robinson. He respected Beatrice Webb, perhaps because as a student of "economics and social institutions" he had "for very many years been under a heavy debt" to her and her husband [Pigou, 1936, 88]. There is evidence that he supported her nomination and election as a fellow of the British Academy: "The first time we put up Mrs. Webb with Bonar as second-string, they had the impression to pass over Mrs. Webb and chose the second" [John Maynard Keynes Papers BA/1, January 1942]. Beatrice Webb's diaries record no chauvinistic behavior from Pigou directed at her, although they do voice such complaints about Marshall [Groenewegen, 1994c]. Pigou's review of Beatrice Webb's joint work with her husband Sidney Webb, *Soviet Communism: A new Civilisation* [1935], was declared by Beatrice as "one of [its] most 'selling' reviews" [Mackenzie, 1978, 410]. Pigou was so stimulated by this work, he reported to Beatrice, that he was "making up some popular lectures about socialist central planning" [in Beveridge Papers, 1937]. These lectures were later printed as a popular book, quite a successful one, entitled *Socialism vs. Capitalism* [1937].

Pigou's relationship with Joan Robinson was more complicated. At a personal level he displayed the same intolerance he did toward women and strangers in general. On 8 April 1942, Robinson wrote to Richard Kahn that she and Austin Robinson were to "go to tea with Prof. ... Apparently he was indignant at my coming and made a great speech about how lucky James was to have got rid of his wife" [Richard Kahn Papers, 13/90/4]. At the professional level, however, the relationship did not include the chauvinistic element. Of Robinson's *Imperfect Competition* Pigou wrote:

Had their work [Robinson's and Chamberlin's] appeared a few years earlier, I should, no doubt, have given a proper place to this subject in my book .. But Mrs Robinson and Professor Chamberlin came on the scene too late to help me and I had not the vision to help myself. [1952a, 833]

A letter from Joan Robinson to Kahn indicates that when Pigou "found a fundamental objection" to one of her articles, he had numerous discussions with her until the point was resolved [Richard Kahn Papers 13/90/1, 13 January 1933]. In the aftermath Pigou produced "a very elegant algebraical version of [her] article," which later appeared in the *Economic Journal* [*ibid.*, 23 January 1933]. Robinson reported to Kahn that:

The Prof's algebra is introduced by a most touching tribute ending "This note attempts only the subordinate task of improving, on a rather bleak ice-wall, a staircase which has already been made and ascended." So that I don't do badly on the whole. [*ibid.*, 20 February 1933]

Other letters to Kahn contain many positive references to Pigou. Joan Robinson found him "perfectly reasonable," calling any course she offered "well received" [Richard Kahn Papers 13/90/1]. He was also "very thorough" in his comments on *The Economics of Imperfect Competition* [*ibid.*, 13/90/1, 4 July 1932?].

This positive professional relationship changed with the conflict generated by the publication of Keynes' *The General Theory* [1936]. Pigou believed Robinson to teach with a high dose of Keynesian bias. This is evident from his undated letter to her regarding her lectures at Cambridge.

The Lecture List Committee yesterday approved the plan of asking you to give lectures on monetary theories pertaining to Keynes' lectures on his own stuff. I approve of the plan, but should like, if you will let me, to explain why I have felt a slight hesitancy about it. ... [I]t would be a great pity if [students] got the impression that everybody who wrote about money before Keynes was an imbecile and that his was a sort of sacred gospel of which every word was inspired. My hesitancy was that you, being so very much a Keynesian, might unconsciously treat other people's theories as merely stepping stones to his. I hope very much that you will teach them objectively. Of course I don't suggest that you shouldn't criticize them or should suppress your own views. It's really a matter of degree; but I am sure you will see my point? [Joan Robinson Papers, undated]

Robinson's "dogmatism and arrogance, when equipped with a pen" [Pigou to Keynes, John Maynard Keynes Papers BA/1, undated] irritated Pigou immensely.¹⁴ This was the reason for his refusal to support Robinson's nomination to the British Academy: "I don't think I could support ... Mrs. R." said he to Maynard Keynes [*ibid.*, BA/1, undated]. Pigou could not accept the argument that "Mrs. S[idney] W[ebb] was female and was an F.B.A. Mrs. R is female and therefore ought to be" [*ibid.*]. However, he went on to say that Robinson was very capable intellectually: "... she has, no doubt, produced a most substantial body of stuff than anybody else of her standing except Hicks. So she certainly ought to be seriously considered" [*ibid.*].

The paradigmatic differences did not prevent Pigou from inviting Joan Robinson to convalesce in his summer home in 1939 [Joan Robinson Papers] after her nervous breakdown or from commissioning her to lecture on Jevons in the early 1940s.¹⁵

CONCLUSION

Judged from the appropriate personal and historical contexts Pigou was a typical Victorian man whose writings preserved the patriarchal status quo. And given his shyness and disengagement from women — the only woman known to have kissed Pigou since his childhood was Lydia Keynes when he was almost 70 years old—¹⁶ it is not curious that he did not change his thoughts over time. Nevertheless, it has been shown that Pigou was willing to accept many exceptions to the Victorian declaration that women were inferior.

To assess our past through feminist lenses has the potential of producing a more accurate history of economic thought. Our field "is a history of certain descriptions and constructions of features of our economy-world, and as that world is gendered, so too are our accounts, our histories of economists' ideas, gendered" [Weintraub, 1993, 117]. But we must be careful that in our enthusiastic efforts to reassess history we do not produce inaccuracies of our own.

NOTES

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1. Given the nonexistence of official Pigou papers, the unpublished evidence in this paper had to be glued together after many years of research in various archives that hold some of Pigou's letters to his friends and colleagues. The copyrights for the unpublished writings of Joan Robinson (as well as the King's College files) belong to the Provost and scholars of King's College, Cambridge, 1997.
2. See E.M. Forster's novel *Maurice* [1993] for an account of homosexuality at Cambridge.
3. Pigou had written many children's stories, which he tried unsuccessfully to publish late in life [see the Macmillan Archive, 12 January 1953, ADD 55200-364C].
4. A word of caution is in order. Most of the correspondence in the Noel-Baker papers was written in the 1940s; by this time two World Wars, the Keynesian-classical conflict, and retirement had turned Pigou into a terrible recluse. As a result, he displayed exaggerated animosity toward strangers, be they male or female.
5. Saltmarsh and Wilkinson amusingly recount Pigou's indifference for clothes: "In the first year of his Professorship his predecessor [Marshall] noted with dismay ... 'Fay, I do wish you'd speak to Pigou on a personal matter — a rather delicate matter. I saw him coming out of Bowes' shop in a Norfolk jacket with holes in both elbows. So bad for the Economics Tripos!' For many years his only concession to sartorial elegance at the High Table was a double-breasted lounge jacket filched from a parcel of clothes which his aunt was sending to a Church Army shelter" [1960, 18].
6. In his presidential address to the Royal Economic Society Pigou remembered the old days of mountaineering for women and claimed to "be the only occupant of a professional chair who has ever been kicked on the head by any denizen of a women's college" [1952b, 3].

7. Hiley, 1979. The only known exception is Pigou's housekeeper, whom Pigou nicknamed "The Queen" and generously remembered in his will.
8. The "non-economic compulsion of family cares" [Pigou, 1952a, 553] reduced mobility for both men and women. A man's decision to move from one job to another in a different location was dependent on his wife's job prospects. This he termed as one type of "cost of movement" [*ibid.*, 505]
... the men workers, in a district where there are opportunities for their women folk to earn wages, might know that they themselves could earn more in other districts where these opportunities do not exist. But, in reckoning up the advantages and disadvantages of movement, they would need to count as a true cost the prospective loss of their women folk's contribution. This cost may be very large ... [*ibid.*, 506].
Pigou took heart in "all improvements in the speed and all cheapening in the cost of passenger transport" which enabled "different members of a family, while living together, to work in places more widely separated from one another" [*ibid.*].
9. Employers did not fight custom and tradition because of women's intermittent pattern of work and because of opposition from their male employees [1952a, 508].
10. Pigou believed that labor's poverty should be addressed through welfare-type policies; if the family's income was insufficient to satisfy basic needs, the state was obligated to make up the shortfall.
11. According to Stearns the union movement in cotton textiles "actively recruited women and placed women on governing committees" [1972, 114].
12. Trade unions were an essential component of a "permanent scheme of 'general' peace-promoting machinery, which, once the difficulties of initiation have been overcome, will possess a high degree of stability" [Pigou, 1905, 17]. Pigou encouraged unions to moderation, however. In case of industrial disputes, he advised mediators to rule for wages comparable to those determined by markets [*ibid.*, 21].
13. Pigou's concern that women could not perform their home-making activities properly seems to have been a common observation about British working-class women. Stearns relates this to women's work in crowded factories, their poor diet, and psychological discontentment — "a sense of hopelessness and despair that was not simply economic" [1972, 103-4].
14. Harcourt has described Robinson as a "giant ego" [1995, 50], "an uncompromising militant" [*ibid.*, 55], someone who "used to stereotype people very quickly" [*ibid.*], and who would not listen to people during debates: "You had to pound the table and scream and yell at her" [*ibid.*, 45].
15. In the beginning of the second World War the London School of Economics Faculty were evacuated to Cambridge. Potier reports that Pigou decided to organize a conference on "great economists." Joan Robinson was commissioned to speak on Jevons [1987, 58].
16. Saltmarsh and Wilkinson, 1960, 14. After that "it happened quite often, and the Prof seemed to like it" [*ibid.*].

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