This item is the archived peer-reviewed author-version of:

Letters from a Well-Known Woman: domesticity and professionalism in Mary Pickford's Daily Talks (1915-1917)

Reference:

Brouwers Anke.- Letters from a Well-Known Woman: domesticity and professionalism in Mary Pickford's Daily Talks (1915-1917)
Celebrity studies - ISSN 1939-2397 - 8:3(2017), p. 424-444
Full text (Publisher's DOI): <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2017.1304225>
To cite this reference: <https://hdl.handle.net/10067/1431120151162165141>

Letters From a Well-Known Woman:

Domesticity and Professionalism in Mary Pickford's 'Daily Talks' (1915-1917)

Anke Brouwers (University of Antwerp and KASK School of Arts, Ghent)

Prinsstraat 13

2000 Antwerpen

anke.brouwers@uantwerpen.be

Abstract

In the mid-teens of the twentieth century, when cinema had just reached its status as 'big business,' one of the silent screen's most prolific and powerful stars, Mary Pickford, addressed her large and growing audience through a syndicated celebrity advice column, 'Daily Talks' (1915-1917). These columns, often in the form of 'letters,' reveal how Pickford's star image was in the midst of being constructed and adjusted both textually (in the columns and other print publications) and visually (in her films and photographic material in wide circulation). They also illustrate how early forms and discourses of movie star celebrity culture addressed serious matters such as gender politics in the largest sense and reflected on and conversed with social, political and economic trends in contemporary culture. As such, the discourse in the 'Daily Talks' attempts a precarious balance between Pickford's working class girl origins and her successful businesswoman stature, between proto-feminist or progressive attitudes on gender and work, and a peculiar a-feminist, conservative reflex, which would become increasingly at odds with her own career and private life.

Key terms: Mary Pickford, stardom, celebrity columns, gender, professionalism

1. Pickford, Stardom and the Celebrity Column

In Mary Pickford's own fabricated star mythology, the Canadian-born actress (née Gladys Smith) became the family's breadwinner from the age of six after her father had died in an accident, leaving behind a wife and three young children to care for themselves. A series of successful theatrical engagements, acquired through stern determination and hard work, would introduce the child actress, who in the narrative of that same myth had been rechristened 'Mary Pickford' by Broadway director David Belasco, to motion pictures. As a motion pictures actress, she would reach unprecedented heights and become one of the most powerful and enduring international stars of the silent era (Whitfield 1997, Brownlow 1999, Gledhill 2013). Pickford's sob story of childhood hardship seems to have come straight out of genteel melodrama popular in the day and included a self-sacrificing mother, siblings united by love but separated by circumstance, the triumph of character and conviction over adversity and misfortune, and the ultimate fulfilment of a grand dream. The story nicely fitted her sentimental rags to riches persona that was repeated in many of her feature films. Yet, essentially, it was also a 'true' story. The inevitability of hard work and an early understanding of the virtues of professionalism *had been* central to her life from early childhood on and would remain so throughout her adult years. The question of work and professionalism in general and female labour in particular would become a recurring topic in her syndicated advice column, 'Daily Talks by Mary Pickford,' which was published by McClure's between 1915 and 1917.

The 'Daily Talks' became a public forum where the star reflected on serious matters of life, love, beauty, fashion, patriotism, happiness, and work. The importance of these columns to Pickford's development as a star and their ambivalent discourse on gender and work will be the subject of this article. A brief explanation why these texts matter so much seems in order, especially since they (and other texts like them) have not been studied in detail in previous studies of early stardom, nor have they featured largely in analyses of Mary Pickford. Their significance, however, seems self-evident: firstly the "Daily Talks" were published during the formative years of Pickford's movie stardom (1915-1917). In addition to Pickford's varied repertory of roles the columns were instrumental in carving out the 'balancing act' that typifies Pickford's star image, an image that, as Larry May has noted, expanded on the 'perimeters of respectable feminine behaviour' (May 1983, p. 122). This expansion was gradual and provisional and the columns seem to have functioned as testing grounds: if one column was rather progressive and outspoken, a follow-up column could immediately regress and appease. In this process of elaboration and retraction (going beyond and confirming social, cultural, political boundaries) they encouraged a habit of consuming and collecting the various inter-textual identities offered in Pickford's films and they trained the kind of repetitive consumer behaviour analysed by Richard deCordova as central to the star system (2001). In deCordova's analysis, the star's identity (the commodity desired by the movie consumer or fan) was worked through in intra- and extra-filmic discourses. Its purpose was to prolong the pleasurable experience of movie-going and it was designed to 'lead the consumer back to the cinema' (p. 114.) I will add that Pickford's columns far extended this economic and instrumental purpose (of leading fans back to the cinema) and can be seen (inadvertently perhaps) as performing a kind of 'cultural work' of voicing and negotiating the fundamental ambivalences of modern womanhood. Pickford's professionalism put a central rupture in discourses on modern femininity - the eternal struggle between love/domesticity and ambition- into focus.

Secondly, being syndicated columns they were distributed across the United States and for almost two solid years they reached large and steady audiences, ensuring a quasi-uninterrupted media presence.¹ Richard Abel (2015) reminds us that they appeared at a time when the written media (newspapers, magazines, weeklies) were immensely influential and powerful and of particular importance to the burgeoning motion picture industry. Through continuous reporting, developing (movie) stories, tie-ins, advertisements and other promotional material they were integral to movie marketing practices and they influenced how movies were anticipated and (re-)experienced. Pickford explicitly stated her aim to ‘use the press as a medium’ in order to bridge the physical gap between herself and her audience (‘A Word About Myself and my Little Plan,’ Nov 8, 1915).

Thirdly, in terms of agency and control they were Pickford’s most direct and flexible line of communication with her fans, and a site where her on-going and self-controlled narrative and star persona could develop and evolve.

The following sections will describe the form these columns would typically take and how we can understand and contextualize them in terms of authorship and cultural authority. I will argue that their purposefully intimate nature was an important strategy for establishing and connecting with her fans, a nation-wide ‘imaginary community.’ (Abel 2015, p. 170.) Her fans were not connected in any actual physical or geographical sense, but they were discursively united via a stated shared likeness among each other and the star, a strategy that we recognize in a mutated but similar form in star/fan relationships of today (Rojek 2016). Subsequently, I will focus on a recurring and dominant strand in the themes of the columns, i.e. the question of female labour, or the relationship of the modern woman with her work and her home. This contradictory and meandering discourse is at once central to the developing Pickford persona (May 1983)

---

¹ The Anita Loos-scripted Douglas Fairbanks satire from 1916 reminds us that the notion of celebrity (and success) was indeed strongly associated with having one’s ‘picture in the papers’

and resonates with contemporary social changes and upheavals with regard to gender and labour. I will draw connections between Pickford's inclusive star image, her ambivalent discourse on work and domesticity, and the columns' indebtedness to the melodramatic modus and generic 'complaint' context.

Intimacy and the Letter-Form

In a 1915 advertisement, 'The Daily Talks' were proudly announced as coming from 'The Most Popular Girl in the World and The Highest paid Artist that Ever lived,' two substantial achievements that ostensibly lent Pickford credibility and authority despite her tender age. After all, she was only 22 when she started writing the daily contributions that promised to be 'in a manner that will inform, entertain and help.' The advertisement further boasted that her expertise derived from her 'continuous and severe' *work* as an actress, which had brought with it 'opportunities of studying human character' (quoted in Abel 2015, p. 161). Thus she was tagged as wise beyond her years, an experienced worker, and something of an amateur psychologist. Before Pickford, there had been other stars, famous personalities, and entertainers, who had written advice columns (stage performers Sarah Bernhardt and Billie Burke, film stars Anita Stewart and Helen Holmes, novelist Laura Jean Libbey) but none would continue to do so for such a long period of time or in such quantities (Midkiff Debauche, 2007; Hallet, 2015; Abel, 2015). The goal of the column, Pickford's 'little plan' behind them, was communicated openly to its readers in its first instalment where the actress explained how, as a motion pictures actress, she missed the 'direct communication' with her public (whom she explicitly identified as 'other girls and young women') and in which she expressed the hope that through the publication of the letters from and to her 'letter friends' she could render their 'association the little, intimate, home-like touch it needs to enable us to be of mutual help.' ('A Word About Myself and My Little Plan' Nov. 8,

1915). So the 'Daily Talks' were originally conceived of and structured as either letters to fans, often directly in answer to their numerous queries, or as 'pages from her diary.'

Pickford's 'little plan' was not altogether new as the letter-form was borrowed from previous successful columns or news paper sections presenting themselves as 'answers to queries' (Abel, 2015 pp. 140 and 160) but the form was more than just a handy or established format as its specific conventions, inbuilt expectations and concrete structure supported the formation and stabilization of Pickford's developing star persona and growing stardom. The letter and the diary, both by convention intimate and private forms of communication, promised the reader a share into the star's thoughts, memories, experiences, and private revelations and as a form of autobiography, which in its Western conception is expected to present 'the truth' or a 'correct' representation of the self, they suggested confidentiality and sincerity, two valued characteristics of a star (Dyer 1987, p. 11). Moreover, the letter-form expressed a *yearning* for communication (while covertly also confirming the inevitable temporal and spatial distance or absence) and star/fan proximity, kindling the fan's desire to be a part of a perceived privileged closeness. Additionally, as Elizabeth Campbell (1995), a scholar of the epistolary form has noted, Pickford taking the time to write a letter could be taken as an act of empathy because it supposes a writer's willingness of imagining the readers' delayed and anticipated response and feelings. An added context that the epistolary form brings is its well-known literary history and usages such as the epistolary novel or essay or novels conceived (fictively or not) as confessions. Emotional self-disclosure as confession is a current, well-known aspect of celebrity culture, and Pickford's columns can be seen as precursory to what Barry King has called 'para-confessions' on television, the ritualized and formalised contexts for and forms of celebrity confession and repentance (2008). Even if the 'Daily Talks' did not contain actual scandalous confessions (as most televised confessions do) they did reveal supposed 'intimate secrets' and staged a repentant disposition on the part of the writer.

Situated between 'public confession and intimate scenarios of psychotherapy' (King, p. 115), this systematized form of revelation of self also recalls religious and vernacular confessional modes (Rojek 2003).

The epistolary form has also been traditionally associated and appropriated by women writers to report and reflect on their experiences as women and its form has been considered by scholars to be similar (fragmented, multiple voices, repetitive, associative) to a specific form of female writing - Cixous' *feminine écriture* - (Showalter 1977, Campbell 1995). As such the form is again fitting for its address to a largely female readership. Surely, Pickford's publicized 'letters' mix the private and domestic with the public and the marketable, and stretches a letter's supposed exclusivity and confidentiality – "a letter from me to you, for your eyes only" - to include a mass-shaped recipient. The reader was of course free to imagine something more personal such as being 'gathered around the same table,' in Pickford's own domestic phrasing.

Within this determined form the tone of voice of the "Daily Talks" was personal and friendly yet also authoritative and occasionally reprimanding. Its rhetorical conventions - in addition to the diary framework or epistolary model, there is much of the style and content of advice and sentimental literature in them – all aided in performing the intimacy and sincerity of Pickford's writings (Brouwers 2013). Intimacy, as much a formal and rhetorical strategy as well as a possible and desired effect in her readers, would seem to have been a central goal as her columns offered insight in private thoughts and emotions that would normally be guarded off by social codes and actual social, geographical, distance. The potential intimacy the columns provided had a visual pendant in the picture galleries that popped up in early fan magazines and that offered close ups of stars and they can be thought of as the textual version of what Jennifer M. Bean has described as 'the camera's intimate probe' (2011, p. 17), there to register in a unique and privileged fashion the details of a star's facial expressions, her gestures, and body posture. The uninhibited access at a star's face during a dramatically

charged emotional display was cinema's spectacular technique that approximated 'the literary concern for the subtleties of feeling' (Marantz Cohen 2001, p. 117). In the advice columns a textual close up of supposedly private thoughts helped to experience the visual, cinematographic and photographic, image in more depth, to possess the desired object (the star) more completely. Pickford textually constructed her readership as if they were her 'girlfriends:' referring to her fans, she gushed that she believes that 'one can never have too many friends- or even "adopted sisters"' ('The Girls and I,' Dec. 10, 1915) and she democratically promised them a say in her columns' topics ('A Long Eventful Day,' September 30, 1916). In return they surely thought of her in the same way and even sometimes expressed a sense of ownership or privilege, or claimed expertise on the subject of 'Mary Pickford,' offering career advice (or responding to Pickford's request for fitting roles) and being protective and conservative about her public persona (Studlar, 2003; Gledhill, 2011.) The press aided in fixing her as such calling Pickford 'the intimate possession of all the people' (Photoplay, 1915, p. 53).

Pickford's 'Daily Talks' consist of anecdotes, memories and recollections. The style is characterised by direct address, flowery phrasing, didactic or pedantic musing, aporia, and rhetorical questions (e.g. 'Sometimes a great sorrow is the trip hammer that crushes out our frailties, isn't it?' in 'Penny Wise' of April 27, 1917.) Some of the 'Daily Talks' are framed by a (fictionalized) external narrator, for example one of Pickford's friends, colleagues or acquaintances, who narrate a particular 'telling' or moralising story. By relying on the stories and experiences of others (e.g. 'The Story of Rose,' 'The Case off Constanza'), Pickford was capable of detracting attention from the specificity of herself as a biographical reality to a proposed generality, to suggest a fundamental likeness among herself and other women and promote a sense of belonging. This nostalgic clinging to the utopian promise to bring together strangers (who existed as a group before they were discovered as such) is something that Lauren Berlant (2008) has identified as a key element of an 'intimate public,' which builds on the 'circulation' of

what is held to be common, to be shared and experienced together in heterogeneous homogeneity, and she frames 'women's culture' as the first mass-marketed intimate public in the United States (p. 5). The common ground Pickford offers her readers/consumers is mostly rested on how she managed life from a shared feminine point of view, working through the many obstacles that she experienced from a gendered position. Pickford commodified a certain girl talk in these columns, lifting the cheering, laughing, caring, and advising, commonly done at a dinner table to the public arena. Pickford's intimate public is also as an example of the early mass marketing of women's *fan* culture, where not just gender (and all its related and shared experiences) but also the particularities of fandom can bind heterogeneous groups closer together.

Surely, as Richard Abel points out, the explicit purpose and willingness to 'share' the purportedly intimate life of the star presages Facebook, Twitter and similar social media that have thrived on the marketability of the seeming oxymoron of an 'intimate public sphere or experience' (Abel 162). In addition to the purposes and uses of social networks that construct star images and create on-going narratives to target affective interest from fans, a modern day equivalent to the 'Daily Talks' can also be found in blog sites written by or hosted by stars, in (co-authored) autobiographies or memoirs, or in self-help or motivational books.² Particularly the latter forms of star/fan communications are clear examples of how these 'intimate publics' were and are connected with the perceived therapeutic potential of preventive self-help discourses, which had appeared in religious, literary, and cultural products throughout the nineteenth century and were also closely connected to sentimental strategies and purposes (Douglas 1995, Berlant 2008, p. 20). This layman's therapeutics also perpetuated the late Victorian obsession with the perfection and fulfilment of an ideal self through introspection, discipline and hard work. Modern ideal selfhood amended these properties slightly and shifted focus to 'the visual, self-made, democratic and

---

² For example: *Goop.com* by Gwyneth Paltrow and *Not that Kind of Girl* by Lena Dunham.

flexible' (Marantz Cohen 133); Pickford strongly held on to both models –Victorian and modern- and tried to represent both continuity and freshness. If we again extrapolate from the particular example of Pickford's 'Daily Talks' and look at contemporary celebrity presence and culture it is notable that Pickford's relationship with her fans (those consuming her as actress and star persona) resembles the 'presumed intimacy' of para-social interaction (Rojek 2016), the strong emotional relationship between media figures and spectators. Pickford's most common strategies to encourage closeness are typical of para-social relationships such as the deliberate domestic nature of the columns (in tone and in its homely subjects), the private and personal air of the settings used for publicity pictures, the private, confessional rhetoric, the centrality emotional disclosure, the use of common, vernacular language, and the recourse to common sense (pp. 13-14). The frequency, quantity and ritualized intimacy of Pickford's medial presence strongly encouraged such an emotional investment usually reserved for actual and (physically) proximate relationships.

Pickford and Authorship

It is important to note that although we know Pickford's close friend and frequent scenario writer Frances Marion (and Izola Forrester) ghosted the columns (Beauchamp 1998, p. 53), I will treat the views and ideas as well as the 'voice' put forth in the 'Daily Talks' as Pickford's own and indeed despite their obvious fictionalization, formulaic dramaturgical structure, and their role as an instrument of self-creation they were framed as 'authentic stories' (Hastie 2007, p. 160-1), as fictions that could just as well be true. This seal of authenticity was confirmed by the presence of a stencil of Pickford's autograph, which was added at the bottom of each column. This signature was instantly recognizable to fans and it literally 'signed' the columns explicitly in her name. The presence of handwritten signatures on promotional materials such as posters and photographs, even on films themselves (as a part of the photographed inter-titles)

had been a popular practice especially with directors in the mid-teens when critical authorship was not necessarily assigned to the director as the literary authors upon which films were based were often given top billing, and companies or producers claimed authorship and so on. D.W. Griffith had been an instigator and many other directors (such as Marshal Neilan, Erich Von Stroheim, Cecil B. DeMille, as well as European directors such as Abel Gance and Marcel L'Herbier) and stars (such as Alla Nazimova, Geraldine Farrar and Pickford herself) adopted this practice of signing their films, claiming authorship. A signature was an apt sign because in both juridical and artistic practice it implies the signer's acknowledgement of the content of a particular 'utterance' to have emitted from him or her or to be in agreement with him or her, so in 'signing' each column Pickford indicated that columns were to be understood to symbolically (and indeed officially) stand in for her, even if she had not penned the words herself (Derrida, 1993; Conley 1991). Pickford and Marion worked together closely during the time these columns appeared and judging from Pickford's overall interest in and rigorous control of her career we can be sure that she was diligently involved with them (Whitfield 2007; Abel 2015).

Surely, the 'Pickford' I will be referring to will denote the Pickford *persona* as it was established through a variety of discursive practices by a variety of people (among them Pickford herself; Charlotte Pickford, her manager-mother; Frances Marion; Adolph Zukor, her producer whom she nicknamed 'daddy') during the second half of the teens and not to the biographical or historical Mary Pickford (or Gladys Smith), even though we may assume some points of convergence. The printed press (from newspapers to fan magazines) was instrumental in the initiation and sustenance of public interest in and knowledge of the new movie personalities and syndicated printing practises ensured a nation-wide dispersion and visibility (Abel, 2015; Hallet 2013, pp. 82-83) and the personalised column seems to have been the most direct and purposeful form to achieve

this. As an apparatus for the creation and extension of fan following, it was quite effective.

As Richard Abel observes, the columns on the whole ‘exhibited certain relative consistent characteristics in a possible effort to centre and control the reception of her star image’ (2015, p. 165). There are indeed some consistent characteristics: she is tagged as white (but with multi-ethnic capacities), pre-sexual (or neutral-sexual), adolescent (but also definitely the ‘beginnings of a lady’ as an inter-title from *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (Neilan, 1917) quips), sensible, and properly rooted in family life (165). Key elements of her mature star persona were already being developed in her columns however, but they did not always emerge with the steady confidence and decisiveness that her career would show later on. This developing public image is at its most vulnerable and contradictory when she explains herself as a working woman. The following section will discuss how Pickford’s discourse on female labour is important in our understanding of her star persona.

2. Daily Talks: A Discourse on Labour

In this section I will focus on Pickford’s discourse on her own and women’s relationship to labour and the growing female work force. As will be clear from the start, Pickford responded to an on-going and by no means unproblematic debate that brought into sharp focus central issues, inconsistencies and opposing ideals concerning women and labour. The ambivalence on the subject of women and labour reflects the ambivalence of her star persona.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the ‘domestic code,’ a staple of nineteenth century Victorian culture that had created the ideal of the ‘non-wage earning lady of the house,’ was increasingly out of tune with reality (Kessler-Harris 2003, p. 50). All kinds of jobs and professions were opening up for women, especially in the West and particularly in a newly emerging and booming business such as the movie industry

(Ward Mahar 2006, Cooper 2011, Hallet 2013). Single women made up the bulk of the work force, but the number of married women increased steadily between 1890 and 1920 as the total number of women in the work force rose significantly (Goldin, 1980). Depending on their marital status, race and ethnic backgrounds women had jobs ranging from factory work, domestic service, department stores, and secretarial work or teaching positions. (Peiss 1986; Kessler-Harris 2007). Ironically, by 1910 the particular notion of feminine virtue, which had bound women spiritually and physically to home and children, had expanded and now included providing economic support through working *outside* of the home (Welter 1976; Kessler-Harris 2007). This contradiction clearly informed Pickford's repeated working through of the work/home tension. These growing numbers of working women intensified the public debate on the relationship between women and labour, women and professionalism. Pickford's motives to ponder as well as address these working women were diverse: first, wage earning women were simply a part of *reality*, an actual growing social group to be reckoned with socially, economically and politically; second, they constituted a large part of her *audience*, and these working girls and women actively consumed the mass culture of which Pickford was an exponent; third, they could use both *defining* and *defending* as social and cultural debates about the separate spheres and proper place for women remained unresolved (Pickford's columns appeared before women would gain the national vote in 1919); and fourth, she was a working girl *herself*. Her remarkable life story of becoming the family's breadwinner, was reiterated in her very first column in 1915, where she describes with pathetic flair her feelings when she was carried downstairs the morning after her father's death and how she realized with 'tragic precocity' that she 'was her mother's oldest child, and now must help her' ('A Word About Myself and My Little Plan' Nov, 8. 1915).

But more than a working girl, she was a true *professional*. If we again look at her career we find that from 1916 onwards Pickford would quasi-independently produce

films for the self-named Mary Pickford Corporation. With the formation of United Artists in 1919 she would become unambiguously corporate and a truly independent producer (Balio 2009).³ Already in 1915, when the first columns appeared, Pickford's powerful position and professionalism ('the best paid actress that ever lived') was publicly known and occasionally created cause for gender-based critiques (Whitfield 1997, p. 145, Basinger 2000: p. 16) as the propriety of a *woman* earning so much money (and being good at it, and loving it) was under debate. Yet, the image of the big-earning, tough-bargaining, business-like Mary Pickford, which was quite at odds with contemporary ideas on 'femininity' was tempered (and perhaps legitimated) through other dominant characteristics of her developing star persona: that of 'cute Little Mary,' of the innocent girl-woman who still took her mother everywhere (May 1983; Brownlow 1999; Brouwers 2007; Gledhill, 2013). The columns aided in toning down Pickford's professional ambitions but they took care not to overstate their case, as Pickford's actual career would contradict too conservative a position. As such, the views expressed in the column betray the ambivalence of someone trying to speak to and for a large audience but whose own situation demanded a constant negotiation between contradictory positions and ideologies.

Rags and Riches

Although the focus here shall lie principally on these written texts, it would be interesting to analyse how representations of work pervaded and shaped Pickford's filmography. Pickford played both privileged upper class heroines (who as a rule do not work) and poor working class waifs who toil and grind, but the dominant pattern that would emerge in her career fixed her as capable of incarnating both, of maintaining a

---

³ This type of production is labeled 'quasi'-independent, because the films were financed, distributed and released through regular established companies such as Paramount and First National.

precious and maybe slightly utopian balance. This incarnation of 'both' – both upper and lower class, both young and old, both leisurely and hard-working, both private and public- was part of her inclusive persona, which would come to full fruition once she had gained substantial creative power by becoming her own producer (from 1916). She would manage these oppositions beautifully in her later screen roles through the literal *embodiment* of 'both.' Larry May notes how Pickford's stardom was based on the principle that she could 'play a wide variety of roles without ever losing her central identity' and sees 'metamorphosis' as central to Pickford's star personality (1983, pp. 123-4). This duality, this balance of opposites, manifests itself most clearly in those films in which she played both types either alternately in double roles or in transformation plots or simultaneously when playing characters posing or passing as either working or leisure class. The rags to riches transformation plot (or vice versa), a popular dramaturgical strategy of the day, was well matched for Pickford's incorporation of 'both'. She would for example perform both upper class leisure and working class toil in *Cinderella* (Kirkwood, 1914, an adaptation of the fairy tale), *The Foundling* (O'Brien 1916, riches to rags to riches), *The Little Princess* (Neilan 1917, riches to rags), *Stella Maris* (Neilan 1918, a double performances), *Daddy Long-Legs* (Neilan 1919, rags to riches), *The Hoodlum* (Franklin 1919, riches to rags) and *Suds* (Dillon 1920, rags with a riches fantasy life) to offer but a few examples. She perfected these formal, structural and thematic patterns with frequent collaborators Frances Marion and Marshall Neilan. (It should be noted that most of these rags to riches narratives were made after the cessation of the 'Daily Talks.' During the publication years of the 'Talks' other, more edgy and tragic dramaturgical structures were common as well, such as *Hearts Adrift* (Porter, 1914) and *Madame Butterfly* (Olcott, 1915), two films in which the star commits suicide.) Significantly, the rags to riches structure similarly matched Pickford's own permanent transformations (from actress to star; from maiden to wife; from 'little Mary' to businesswoman) or the oscillation between multitudinous, if complementary, selves.

As a plot device it was also a metaphor for the inevitable transformation girls face when they mature from girlhood to womanhood or from maidenhood to wifehood (and presumably wealth.) In the latter case, the emphasis on a change in material circumstances is quite apt, as marriage was, if not in spirit than at least in effect, an economic transaction where sex and intimacy are traded for (material) security and respectability (Coontz 2005). Also, from a purely commercial standpoint, a visual transformation was immensely pleasurable to watch in and for itself: as pure spectacle it offered viewers the chance to peruse and compare dress, coiffure, and make up and as May again notes, it offered actresses the chance to show off dramatic versatility and range (1983, p. 124). Placed against the backdrop of a growing female work force still faced with the sharp class distinction that the domestic code had helped create (in which ideal womanhood was a privilege for the rich as the working woman could not be a lady of leisure and tender care), the rags to riches plot spoke to the desire to overcome class boundaries and conform to gendered expectations of a fulfilling life. Finally, as Kristian Moen (2015) has pointed out, Pickford's own autobiographical narrative, which was reiterated and reimagined in the plots of her films, suggested that this fiction (the Cinderella plot, the stuff of fairy tales) could be transported to reality. He further notes that the Cinderella plot was one of the most frequently adapted plots in the teens, and indeed, it crossed the boundaries of fiction and perceived reality, most clearly in (fairy)tales of a girl's rise to stardom (p. 115). But Pickford herself was careful to warn her readers that her own transformation had not been brought about by a 'wishing ring or genii from Aladdin's lamp,' but through, hard work (*Yesterday's Hard Work is Today's Success*, January 5, 1916).

In her study on modern women who extensively wrote about modern work, Francesca Sawaya notes that modern professionalism was built on the idea of 'specialization' 'differentiation' and 'heterogeneity.' In this view of modernity, domesticity (the sphere of female experience, influence and identity) was at once

included because it refers to a separate and thus differentiated kind of labour but also excluded because it consisted of untrained labour (Sawaya, 2003, pp. 3-4). Also, unlike modernity's narrative of rupture and change, domesticity was associated with the rigid and continued structures of the past. She lists women from all kinds of modern occupations -from settlement workers, social scientists, to journalists to anthropologists- who were influential in shaping the contours of 'modern work' and she notes how their discourse was hinged *interchangeably* on both the principles of the 'old-fashioned' cult of domesticity and the 'modern' culture of professionalism. In her survey, Sawaya could have included Mary Pickford or the vast and at times very vocal army of female film pioneers as the budding movie industry represented a major playing ground for female work opportunities and professional ambition. All the more so because Pickford too turned to both the cult of domesticity as to the culture of professionalism to explore and define the ethical, political, social and cultural position of the modern working woman. Actually, the domestic code, which stipulated a meek, passive, silent lady, an ideal that widened the gap between the classes, had as a side effect that domestic work ('the art of homemaking') was professionalized and that it was seen as requiring training (Kessler-Harris, pp. 50-53). What we read in the 'Daily Talks' is an amalgam of both discourses and a rhetoric, ironical in effect if not in tone, which defends opposing views with similar arguments: the professional woman is sanctioned through her domestic incentives, while the domestic woman is authorized through her modern professionalism.

The Empty Heart of the Career Woman

When turning to those 'Daily Talks' that address the issue of work for women a set of contradictory, ambivalent attitudes emerge. Work is explicitly addressed in the columns that describe the *everyday reality* of motion picture making. These 'studio life columns' as we could label them are at once anecdotally descriptive and cautionary:

Pickford reiterates time and again that – contrary to public opinion - the motion pictures business is actually hard work and that it requires a professional attitude from all involved. The columns fit early discourse on the star that emphasized that cinema was morally healthy (deCordova p. 103). Pickford clearly felt it her duty to do away with false expectations and to correct often-heard stories that emphasized glamour and easy living and depicted the industry and its ‘people’ as loose and immoral. She writes: ‘If you would become a motion picture actress forswear all late-hour pleasures and all lazy habits for we are beavers, we toilers of the camera’ (‘All in a Day’s Work’ from January 27, 1916). A column from October 1916 reads ‘So you see, you who would think that ours is a bed of roses how many thorns are among them’ (‘Fashions and Fifth Avenue’ from October 6, 1916). In another column from May 1917 she states that movie-struck girls ‘do not seem to realize the long, steady hours of patient actual labor’ (A Day in the Studio, from May 17, 1917) and elsewhere she bemoans that ‘they [aspiring movie stars] have no conception of the patience, the tireless effort, the terrible strain, and above all the practical knowledge of what is required of you’ (‘Lost- A Girl’ from May 11, 1917). In ending a January 1916 column in which she relates working at the studio until after midnight, she confesses that her work has made her ‘so sleepy I shall just have to put this lazy old pencil aside.’ (‘Midnight at the Studio’ Jan 28, 1916). These statements leave no doubt: making a motion picture is truly hard work. Apparently, her cautions were so convincing that a letter writer complained that she simply was too discouraging and that she ought to focus on the positive and attractive side of picture making (‘Lost – A Girl’ from May 11, 1917).

We could read Pickford’s industry columns as something of an addendum or response to Louella Parsons’ inspirational success stories of women working in motion pictures. Parsons was a Hearst-employed columnist who was among the first to take a sustained and later exclusive interest in the film industry and its personalities (Barbas 2005). In fact both Pickford and Parsons stressed similar qualities or conditions – such

as the willingness to start from the bottom and a Protestant work ethic – but Parsons’ ‘master plot’ equally emphasized sheer luck as well as that tricky combination of ‘brains and beauty.’ What resulted is a contradictory set of sound advice that equally focuses on factors that could be controlled (effort) and those that were up to chance (the discovery or recognition of talent) (Hallet 2013, pp. 74-75). Pickford’s discourse focused much more on traits that could be acquired or perfected through exercise, endurance and study and that stressed agency through hard work instead of luck and providence (although she admits these were always unforeseen factors or chance to be measured in). In November 1916 Pickford devoted a series of consecutive columns to ‘A Cure for Movie Madness’ and here the emphasis is persistently, and a little pedantically, on hard work, concentration, punctuality, charisma (rather than looks), self-knowledge, and patience.

Yet, despite these warnings, the descriptions of studio life are also *promotional* and positive in that they are an attempt to correct the negative image of the motion picture business. One of the motion pictures industry’s strategies had been to cater to the ladies and families by producing and advertising more respectable films (with inoffensive content) and upgrading viewing conditions to accommodate families (see Stamp 2000). Pickford similarly relied on the sanctifying potential of female endorsement and presence, and repeatedly describes the film studio as a specifically feminized and female-friendly work environment. She achieves this through what one could call a ‘domestication’ of the work environment. Repeatedly the studio and its employees are likened to ‘one big family,’ and the studio is compared to a ‘veritable refuge’ (quoted in Abel 2015, p. 162) or a harmonious place, where everyone is willing to help everybody else. Pickford even calls in the undisputed guardians and representatives of moral superiority when she writes that ‘every studio has several mothers on guard in it’ (‘Morality at the Studio’ from May 29, 1917). Adding to the homey atmosphere are the studio pets and even the clicking sound of needles, for if the

studio is run efficiently, the women can find time for knitting and embroidery ('A Day in the Studio,' May 17 1917). As working at the studio is so demanding there really is no danger of Satan – 'an inveterate idler' ('Morality in Studio's,' from May 29, 1917, 'Moral Conditions of Studios' from November 1916 made a similar point)- coming over for a visit. Finally, an added bonus are the home-and-family-friendly working hours: Pickford bragged that working at the studio was more wholesome than working for the stage because it gave women the opportunity to spend their evenings in their own homes and have a 'normal' and 'respectable' social and domestic life. (Except when they were working late of course.) This explicit comparison to life in the theatre was common in the discourse that circulated the movie star and distinguished him or her (favourably) from the stage actor, whose association with immorality and a detachment from family life and values was generally expected (deCordova 2001).

More than just female presence, Pickford puts in an effort to describe the type of women typically employed by a studio (or women working in the arts, as actresses, in general). They are all, she stresses, despite their professional proclivities unmistakably feminine and domestic at heart. In a series of columns entitled 'Personalities I have Met' Pickford discusses several women from artistic professions and emphasizes the homey side of these professional women. She has actress Ethel Barrymore ponder how 'she would just like to give up the stage and devote my whole life to my children' (from July 25, 1916) and describes how actress Gail Kane 'had always loved to potter around the house and even into the kitchen for she has perpetrated and perpetuated some remarkable and savory recipes' (from August 30, 1916). Pickford herself professes she 'never had such a good time in my life' as when she was spring-cleaning her house with her mother ('I Spring Houseclean' from June 10, 1916). Even the most successful and brilliant of professional women are portrayed as harbouring doubts or small regrets about their chosen paths. The difficulty or impossibility of the work-family balance experienced by these women resonate with current debates of why women can or (still)

can't have it all up until today (see Slaughter 2012). In Pickford's framework, the work-family balance is tied to essentialist notions of what 'femininity' or the culturally most respected and preferred form of it, would entail. Echoes from Victorian definitions of True Womanhood such as domesticity, spirituality and purity (see Welter 1966) can be grasped from the natural assumption to associate femininity with domestic desires. In one of her 'Personalities' columns, Pickford quotes a successful opera singer (who remains unnamed) reflecting on her life: 'I should have chosen [...] the uneventful life of the 'homespun woman.' These regrets are what Pickford calls 'penalties of [professional] success' ("Stop! Look! Listen!" Jan. 15 1917) and this emphasis on domestic desire and frustration and the suggestion that professionalism needs to be 'paid for,' could lead us to conclude the actress is after all an advocate for a rather rigid version of the domestic code. Pickford's texts however also supply her readers with motivations and justifications for the life choices of the professional women she profiles (all of whom of course are like herself.) The incentive is somewhat perverse as the rationalization for the public life and professional ambitions of the artistic woman rests on the fact that she is -ultimately- 'working for a home'. Pickford also ventures the comparison that it is something of a maternal responsibility or filial duty towards her audience, which stands in for children, a family or loved ones, that keeps the female artist loyal to her profession. No artist could let her audience down, as no mother could leave behind her child. The artist/audience relationship is thus described as personal, maternal, and intimate and the female artists' motives are domestic: the public can become intimate as the intimate is publicised. In contrast, Pickford's portraits of the male personalities she has met only seldom address their domestic or private lives. Instead these columns recall funny, heroic or adventurous anecdotes about what happened on set or stage, or are stories that illustrate positive character traits of the stars such as their generosity, a sense of humour, and professional integrity.

Managing the Home

Thus far, I have illustrated Pickford's ambivalent discursive construction of the professional woman. When we turn to her description of the domestic woman we find that this is not straightforward either. While a life of domesticity, matrimony, and motherhood is honoured, several of the 'Daily Talks' explicitly call for women to be self-reliant and emancipated, both of which, Pickford stresses, can only be attained through work outside the home. In 'Casting of a Pearl' (from January 7, 1917), she recounts with approval the story of a woman who refused her philandering ex-husband's offer to come back to him. She refuses him because after having regained her pride and dignity through work she no longer needs him. And so, she marries a worthy man instead. A variation on this story is related in 'The Leopard's Spots' (January 16, 1917), which is the tale of a woman married to a lazy and self-willed man. She is treated badly by him and after she has left him, she becomes independent and self-supporting through her work (all the while looking prosperous and glorious, Pickford notes). Eventually this woman triumphs too because her husband returns to her, completely reformed, and the marriage is saved. In these stories, work grants women independence and moral superiority but also, ultimately, the domestic ideal of a male provider who will take care of his wife (even if it is the second time around.) In the aptly called 'Adaptability' from February 1917, Pickford ends her ponderings with this rhetorical question: 'What do you think, girls? Even if you never had to earn your living, isn't it best to know how?'

Furthermore, Pickford takes care to describe the type of work done by the homemaker by using a professional or business vocabulary, and by resorting to telling metaphors. Instead of upholding the barrier between the public and the private, between a market and domestic ideology, she shows how both spheres interact or are imbricated. In 'Donning Dust Cap and Apron' (March 7 1916) a housewife is credited with 'governing the expenditure of the family income' and like the most cunning of businessmen she understands how to 'make one dollar do the work of two.' This is more

than the traditional frugality expected from women, because in Pickford's description housewives are praised for their independence and good business judgment, as they 'are almost in the position of the man who owns his own little business.' Pickford describes the skills of a housewife not as feminine or natural -*she* for one does not possess them, so clearly they are not innate- but rather as learned and acquired (even if not through institutionalized education). Good housewifery is the result of exercise and accomplishment (although sometimes '*of genius*' she admits). She proves her point by recounting a story of her own failed efforts at cooking a surprise family dinner because she lacks the expertise, practice and specialization required for good housekeeping ('I Don a Kitchen Apron' from February 7, 1916), but of course we know, she had other skills. If domesticity, as Sawaya writes was indeed 'imagined as a full time occupation for women, comparable in its aim and in its specialized description to the divided work of men' (2003, 4), Pickford explicitly supports that comparison.

3. A Question Unsettled

The public debate on professional female labour is the explicit subject of the column 'A Question to Be Settled' (January 17, 1917). Here, Pickford recalls a discussion about woman's suffrage between friends at dinner. As reported by Pickford, the discussion turned into a reflection on women's proper role in life (and the core question of whether they should pursue work outside the home or not). Predictably, two radically opposing views emerged: those in favour of women carving out professional careers in the public space and those firmly against it. There is the 'women can and should have it all' position, and the other that deems a working woman 'unnatural and unhealthy' (but mostly for reasons of supposed physical and emotional unmanageability). Both positions are given equal space to develop, but then Pickford adds her own: 'Faces of many professional women passed before my mind and they are women whose lives are overcrowded between their public and their home duties. On the one hand they have

attained eminence in some art – on the other they are successfully devoted wives and mothers.’ Despite the negative evaluation of these women’s lives as ‘overcrowded’ (a complaint still valid today), they are ‘successful’ (‘eminent’ or ‘devoted’) too in both fields. Sadly, this observation does not settle the question and is followed by an afterthought in which Pickford develops a counterargument through the story of ‘a scrubwoman’ who had seven children and an invalid husband to take care of. In her narrative, this woman is a ‘professional woman,’ managing both a private and a public life like herself, but to describe her situation as ‘successful’ would be unkind according to the actress. She notes:

Was it from choice? No! It was because fate had thrust the need upon them and they had risen to the occasion. They are very few women whose domestic instincts are not dominant and who would not prefer, like Goldilocks, to sit on a cushion and sew a fine stream.’

For this particular toiling woman the rags to riches template did not materialize but at the same time the reference to a fairy tale character (Goldilocks) paradoxically ties domestic desires with fantasy. This confusing and contradictory message remains at the core of Pickford’s persona and the discourse about herself as a working woman: is Pickford telling us that only the artistic professional career (which has been described time and again in surrogate domestic terms) is a career of choice and that all other public, professional work is a cruel separation from woman’s ‘true instincts?’ ‘Choice’ does seem a key element here, but it seems incompatible with instinct and natural female desires, both of which are oddly tied to a fairy tale reference, which also signals inauthenticity and falsehood. This ‘settlement’ perhaps reminded the faithful reader or newspaper clippings collector of the answer Pickford gave ‘Phyllis’ in her very first ‘Daily Talks’ in 1915: ‘Phyllis’ had written to her to ask which is of the two is greater: a

home life or a career? Pickford's answer was 'We who were foolish enough to have chosen a career have nothing but empty arms and hands when we are old. And empty hearts, too' ('A Word about myself,' Nov 8, 1915). After this initial clearly negative answer, the columns that were to follow provided a much less straightforward, more struggling answer.

We have seen how Pickford's discourse is waylaid by inconsistency and ambivalence and neither position vis-à-vis work can satisfactorily be explained without recourse to the other. While working is legitimated in all cases, Pickford ultimately seems to feel the need to supply a clear motivation for why women 'repress' the '*dominance of domesticity*' in their natures. The contradictory nature of what from the 1910s onward counted as feminine virtue (domesticity understood not only as loyalty to the home but as contributing financially to it as well) is worked through in her discourse, a discourse which, however emancipated, does not completely move away from a sentimental albeit modernised version of that old-fashioned virtuous womanhood where domesticity and what I would rephrase as 'feminine modesty' (instead of submissiveness) were central to female fulfilment (Welter 1976).⁴ Yet, ironically, the only reason *she* is holding the public forum from which to express these thoughts, is because her *work* has made her a celebrity who can speak to a large audience. In the end Pickford 'settles' the argument with the old-fashioned consensus that a women's 'place' or role lies where '*the interests of her loved ones*' will take her, which can be either in or outside the home. As we have seen in the case of the artistic women, the category of 'loved ones' is quite open and flexible; it can mean either woman's kin or her devoted fans. Surely, the consensus nicely fits Pickford's own origins story, her role as 'daddy' of the family by the age of six and her promotion of the work

---

⁴ For Welter the 'Cult of True Womanhood' meant piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. But as several studies have shown, this cult was more flexible and negotiable than it would appear from Welter's strict definition. If the model's notion of feminine virtue is redefined as centring on (Christian) faith, compassion, self-sacrifice and domesticity (Hart 2004) it becomes more palatable and modern.

space as an extension of the home or from homespun and domestic instincts and desires but it does not settle the question.

The Pleasures of Ambivalence

The indecisiveness of the consensual columns ultimately became antithetical to the career she had established by 1917 and would be more radically out of tune to the one that she would develop from the late teens and early twenties onwards. (And the films show a marked increase in rags to riches plots, where the 'problem' of work is solved through marriage and class rise.) Also, as the columns 'never, ever' presented her as a 'sexualized figure, a married woman or a savvy businesswoman' (Abel 2015, p. 165) they could not have lasted anyway: she would soon come to divorce her first husband Owen Moore, marry Douglas Fairbanks, and become an independent producer and real estate investor, all by 1920. This growing contradiction was surely clear to Pickford too. Of course, the oscillation between conventionality and unconventionality was not uncommon or at odds with the cultural and social climate (nor is it incompatible with star images as such, as Judith Mayne (1998) has argued). Ben Singer's work (2001) on the contexts and forms of melodrama in the 1910s can be a explanatory reference here: Singer has noted how during the transitional era this historically permeable and flexible genre incorporated many contemporary cultural and social issues, concerns and figurations such as gender relationships, the new realities of modern womanhood and the New (working) Woman. The heroines of what Singer has termed 'Serial-Queen melodramas' were women with narrative agency, who sought out adventures and saved both the day and their lovers as they jumped, ran, swam, and rode on horseback to achieve their goals. Yet, this display of physical control and empowerment was balanced, time and again, with temporary victimisation, the reaffirmation of a woman's essentially passive and vulnerable side, and the series' progressive narrative was trumped by conservative codas of marriage and the heroine's re-domestication in the series' final

episode (Singer 2001).⁵ So even these icons of modernity, progress and emancipation kept the work/home tension intact. Bearing in mind Christine Gledhill's important observation that 'melodrama is not about revolutionary change but about struggles in the status quo' this tension was to be expected (1886, p. 45). Yet, this tension is also inherent to the serial form and an important characteristic of seriality. Shane Denson (2014) notes that both the serial-queen narratives and the socio-cultural changes they charted developed *over time* and so the recurring topics of work, gender, and domesticity were 'negotiated in the process of their unfolding' (2014, p. 67). This process contains and would explain some of the apparent contradictions of the serial melodrama form. Pickford's columns were experienced serially as well (there is no 'what happens next' drive but there is the on-going macro narrative-of-the-star that ties them together) and they too show the signs of a negotiation process, typical of seriality and the melodramatic modus. As the daily letters shift between complaints of and compliances with the cultural status quo they continue in the tradition of a sentimental ethos that, according to Lauren Berlant (2008) is by definition ambivalent. As part of a 'complaint genre' they thrive on this ambivalence and, perhaps unconsciously, confirm it as 'pleasurable in its own right' (2). Pickford's stardom is enjoyable too exactly for its ambivalence (confirming and surprising) and is imbricated in a sentimental view of the social, political and cultural world that typifies the complaint genre. Via passionate appeals, direct address, emotional explication, emotional knowledge, and intimate disclosures the 'Talks' imagined (but not quite realized) a 'cultural power' in the vein of sentimental authors of previous century, whose heartfelt but unrealized designs on the world can likewise be assessed (Tompkins 1986). Like melodrama, Pickford's columns

---

⁵ Susan K. Harris (1990) has suggested, with regard to sentimental or domestic fiction, that the powerful fantasies of emancipation that make up the books' middles are more important and lasting than their conservative and patriarchal endings. Perhaps this is true also for the serial queens' temporary emancipation and Pickford's progressive stances.

fall short as forceful social or political analyses because they are too much part of the social order they address and like the complaint genre ambivalence lies at its core.

Pickford's conciliation of what modernity framed as oppositional (the domestic, the feminine, the non-specialized), was a strategy employed by many women writing in the larger 'transitional era' of female emancipation (overlapping in part with cinema's transitional era, roughly 1908-1917)⁶ and who carved out a workable and socially acceptable space (Sawaya, 2003; Clark, 1991). But this space could only function as a temporary refuge. Pickford's career would be much more radical than the consensus she was compelled to defend in this earlier stage of her career. This picture of herself as a star and woman of her time and its occasional contradictions seem to fall apart most strongly or seem to be under the most pressure when the subject of female labour is addressed (and re-addressed.) In those columns where work is an explicit topic (and as we have seen, they are quite numerous) we encounter a woman trying to negotiate a position for herself that will allow her to remain simultaneously inside and outside the boxes of traditional patriarchal definitions of femininity and modern personhood. A constant ambivalence or the persistent search for a balance in this complicated, contradictory, and sometimes vexed discourse characterises Pickford on all levels of her public existence and her formation and articulation of her stardom in particular. Paraphrasing, and slightly modifying Richard Dyer's famous definition of stardom, Pickford's stardom articulated what it was like to be an ambitious woman in her contemporary society (1987, p. 8). The columns reflect the ambition and intent if not actually the achievement of Pickford and the hordes of (future) working women she is explicitly and implicitly addressing in her intimate public letters, to making modern femininity work.

---

⁶ In Charlie Keil and Shelley Stamp's periodization.

References

- Abel, R. 2015. *Menus for Movieland. Newspapers and the Emergence of American Film Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Coontz, S. 2005. *Marriage, a History from Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage*. New York: Viking.
- Denson, S. 2014. "The Logic of the Line Segment. Continuity and Discontinuity in the Serial- Queen Melodrama." In: *Serialization in Popular Culture*. Allen, R. and van den Berg T (eds.) 65-79.
- Balio, T. 2009. *United Artists. The Company Built by the Stars*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Barbas, S. 2002. *Movie Crazy. Fans, Stars, and the Cult of Celebrity*. New York: Palgrave. MacMillian.
- Basinger, J. 2000. *Silent Stars*. London: Wesleyan University Press.
- Beauchamp, C. 1997. *Without Lying Down. Frances Marion and the Powerful Women of Early Hollywood*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Brouwers A. 2007. "There was Something about Mary: Mary Pickford's Little American' In: H. Carvalhão Buescu and J. Ferreira Duarte, eds. *Portraits and Stories of the Self*. Amsterdam: Rodolpi. 307-320.
- Brouwers, A. 2013. "If it Worked for Mary... Mary Pickford's Daily Talks with the Fans. "In: *Researching Women in Silent Cinema : New Findings and Perspectives*
- M. Dall'Asta and V. Duckett, and L. Tralli eds, Bologna, University of Bologna, Department of the Arts. 197-219
- Brownlow, K. 1999. *Mary Pickford Rediscovered. Rare Pictures from a Hollywood Legend*. Los Angeles: Henry N. Abrams and Ampas.

- Campbell, E. 1995. "Re-Visions, Re-Flections, Re-Creations: Epistolarity in Novels by Contemporary Women." *Twentieth Century Literature*, 41 (3), 332-348.
- Clark, S. 1991. *Sentimental Modernism. Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Conley, T. 1991. *Film Hieroglyphics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cooper, M. G. 2010. *Filmmaking and Constitutional Change in Early Hollywood*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1993. *Limited Inc*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Douglas, A. 1995. *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the Twenties*. New York: Noonday.
- Dyer, R. 1987. *Stars*. London: BFI Publishing.
- Gledhill, C. 1986. "Dialogue. Christine Gledhill on Stella Dallas and Feminist Film Theory" *Cinema Journal*, 25 (4), 44-48.
- Gledhill, C. 2011. "Mary Pickford. Icon of Stardom" in J. Bean J. ed. *Flickers of Desire: Movie Stars of the 1910s*. Rutgers University Press. 43-68.
- Goldin, C. ,1980. The Work and Wages of Single Women, 1870-1920. *Journal of Economic History* 40(1): 81-88.
- Gurkin Altman J. 1982. *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- Hallet, H. 2013. *Go West, Young Women! The Rise of Early Hollywood*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Harris, S.K. 1990. *19th Century American Woman's Novels: Interpretative Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hart, Hilary. 2004. *Sentimental Spectacles. The Sentimental Novel, Natural Language, and Early Film Performance*. Thesis (PHD). University of Oregon.
- Keil, C. and Stamp. S. 2004. *American Cinema's Transitional Era. Audiences, Institutions, Practices*. Berkeley: California University Press.

- Kessler-Harris, A. 2003. *Out To Work. A History of Wage-Earning Women in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kessler-Harris, A. 2007. *Gendering Labor History*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- King, B. 2008. 'Stardom, Celebrity, and the Para-Confession', *Social Semiotics*, 18:2, 115-132.
- Mayne, J. 1998. *Cinema and Spectatorship*. London: Routledge.
- Midkiff DeBauche, L. 2007. "Testimonial Advertising Using Movie Stars in the 1910s" How Billie Burke Came to Sell Pond's Vanishing Cream in 1917." In *Marketing History at the Center*, B. Branchik, ed. Durham, North Carolina: CHARM Association.
- Pickford, M. 'Daily Talks with Mary Pickford, 1915-1917' available on archive.org. Online Source.
- Moen, Kristian. 2013. *Films and Fairy Tales. The Birth of Modern Fantasy*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Peiss, K. 1986. *Cheap Amusements. Working Women and Leisure in Turn of the Century* New York. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Rojek, C. 2003. *Celebrity*. London: Reaction Books.
- Rojek, C. 2016. *Presumed Intimacy. Para-social Relationships in Media, Society and Celebrity Culture*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Sawaya, F. 2003 *Modern Women, Modern Work. Domesticity, Professionalism and American Writing 1890-1950*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press.
- Showalter, E. 1977. *A Literature of Their Own. British women novelists from Brönte to Lessing*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Simmon, S. 1993. *The Films of D.W. Griffith*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Singer, B. 2001. *Melodrama and Modernity. Early Sensational Cinema and its Contexts*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Slaughter, A-M. 2012. 'Why Women Still Can't Have it All.' *The Atlantic*. July-August. 84-102.

- Stamp, S. 2000. *Movie-Struck Girls. Women and Motion Picture Culture After the Nickelodeon*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Studlar, G. 2002. ' "Oh Doll Divine": Mary Pickford, Masquerade, and the Paedophilic Gaze' in J. M. Bean and D. Negra, eds. *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema*. Durham: Duke University Press. 349-373.
- Tieber, C. 2013. 'Mary Pickford – As Written by Frances Marion.' In: M. Dall'Asta, V. Duckett and L. Tralli, eds. *Researching Women in Silent Cinema. New Findings and Perspectives*. Bologna: University of Bologna.
- Tompkins, J. 1986. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ward Mahar, K. 2006. *Women Filmmakers in Early Hollywood*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Welter, B. 1966 'The Cult of True Womanhood: 1800-1860' in *American Quarterly* Vol. 18 (Summer), 151-74.
- Welter, B. 1976. *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Whitfield, E. 2007. *Mary Pickford. The Woman who Made Hollywood*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.

Film

- Cinderella*, 1914. Directed by James Kirkwood. USA: Famous Players Film Corp.
- Madame Butterfly*, 1915. Directed by Sidney Olcott. USA: Famous Players Film Corp.
- Hearts Adrift*, 1916. Directed by Edwin S. Porter. USA: Famous Players Film Corp.
- The Foundling*, 1916. Directed by John B. O'Brien. USA: Famous Players – Mary Pickford Company.
- A Little Princess*, 1917. Directed by Marshall Neilan. USA: Mary Pickford Film Corp.

Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm, 1917. Directed by Marshall Neilan. USA: Mary Pickford Film Corp.

Stella Maris, 1918. Directed by Marshall Neilan. USA: Mary Pickford Film Corp.

Daddy Long-Legs, 1919. Directed by Marshall Neilan. USA: Mary Pickford Film Corp.

The Hoodlum, 1919. Directed by Sydney Franklin. USA: Mary Pickford Film Corp.

Suds, 1920. Directed by Francis Dillon. USA: Mary Pickford Film Corp.