Rethinking First-Wave Feminism Through the Ideas of Emily Murphy

by

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ABSTRACT

This examination of the ideas of Emily Murphy--Alberta reformer, journalist, and magistrate--offers a new portrayal of a first-wave feminist in Canada. Rather than exhibiting the maternalism which historians ascribe to the movement, this prominent feminist believed that men and women were fundamentally equal, with gender differences caused by social and historical forces. This study takes a new analytical approach, combining recent historical interest in the radical potential of the feminist movement, with a study of early feminist ideas of race, class, and gender. Murphy's ideas are contextualized within the range of ideas held by her contemporaries. The result is a nuanced portrayal revealing both feminism's liberatory potential and its flaws. As Murphy has been held up as a typical "racist" and "maternal" feminist--and these designations prove inadequate--this study suggests that historians need to revisit the ideas of the first-wave feminists.

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This thesis is dedicated with thanks to Penny Harvey and James MacKinnon.

INTRODUCTION

In the broadest outline of their vision, first-wave feminists desired the emancipation of all women. However, their campaign priorities were often delineated by their circumstances as primarily middle-class, Anglo-Saxon women. Emily Murphy--western Canadian journalist, magistrate, and activist--serves as a case study of both the liberatory possibilities of the mainstream feminist movement, and the limitations imposed on it by prevailing racist and classist ideas. This study attempts to reveal the complexity of the political ideas of one prominent feminist, and in doing so presents a more nuanced picture of a first-wave feminist than the literature has shown to date. The interconnections between the various reform ideas Murphy espoused are explored, from the "good" to the "bad"--from championing married women's right to work, to demanding the sterilization of the unfit. Examining the complexity of Murphy's ideas leads to a questioning of the utility of the label "maternal feminism," which historians have applied to a movement spanning from the 1880s to the 1930s in Canada. Emily Murphy has been considered a typical first-wave maternal feminist; however, this study shows that her ideas were not, in fact, essentially maternal.

In part, this thesis analyses Murphy within the framework of an ideal feminism of liberatory potential for all women. Feminism can be broadly defined as "an underlying . . . commitment to increasing women's autonomy and collective power" and a recognition of women's distinctive experience from men's.[1] This basic definition accommodates the differences between first- and second-wave feminism, the former

emphasizing the similarities between women and the latter the importance of diversity among women. This thesis takes the perspective that it was the *general intent* of first-wave feminists to liberate all women; however, the results did not always harmonize with this goal. These women activists were not only feminists, but reformers who, aside from their gender, were well positioned within society. Overriding class or race interests could result in reforms that were detrimental to less privileged women. While acknowledging this fact, this study takes care to recognize mainstream feminist hopes for and achievement of reforms beneficial to all women. This thesis integrates the study of a broad range of feminist and "non-feminist" reforms which are generally considered separately by social historians. It overcomes the now-obvious problems of early feminist histories which documented the achievements of "pioneering" feminists. It also moves beyond the work of the recent historians who tend to focus on the specifically racist or classist elements of first-wave feminism, at the expense of early feminists' intent or achievement. While all historians make judgements to a certain extent, and use as a frame of reference modern concerns and ideas, this study also attempts to understand Murphy in the context of the range of political and cultural ideas of her times.

The following brief biography of Murphy offers a sense of the scope of her life and her activism. She was born to a prominent Conservative, Anglican family in Ontario on March 14, 1868. As an adult she joined the wave of westward migration with her husband, a preacher turned investor, when they moved to Manitoba in 1903. With her children safely stowed away in boarding schools from 1898 onwards, she began her writing career, beginning with travel narratives and sketches of Prairie life in her "Janey

Canuck" novels. In 1907, at the age of 39, she moved to Edmonton and became deeply involved in women's reform circles. She helped found municipal hospitals and city playgrounds, and lobbied for bills that she believed would help women and children. In 1916, she was placed in charge of the juvenile and women's courts and became the first woman magistrate in the British Empire. After this point, her writing took on a decidedly political character, and was used to promote her reforms. In the 1920s she was preoccupied with halting the trade in opium, which she viewed as a threat to the moral and social order. With the backlash against women in the workforce she wrote about married women's right to work and equality within marriage. Throughout the decade she and four other Alberta feminists fought to have women declared "persons" under Canadian law, which was finally proclaimed by the London Privy Council in 1929. It is for this that she is chiefly remembered.[2] Murphy's political ideas continued to evolve and she became a vocal defender of birth control, pacifism, and the sterilization of the "unfit" until her death in 1933.

Historians describe first-wave feminism as being made up of two ideological streams: maternal feminism and equal rights feminism. Maternal feminism is considered the dominant form in both the 19th and 20th century Canadian movement.[3] Maternal feminists argued for women's rights on the basis of women's special qualities as women, particularly as mothers, and their role as transmitters of culture and morals in the home. Maternal feminism could lead to an assertion of women as being actually superior to men, and it was usually based on the assumption of fundamental and implicitly unchangeable or biological differences between the sexes. Equal rights feminists argued for women's

equality on the basis of natural human rights, and suggested that there was no fundamental difference between men and women. While recent scholarship acknowledges that feminists often utilized combinations of both arguments,[4] historians still generally consider that first-wave feminists can be characterized primarily as maternal.[5] An examination of the ideas of other individual mainstream feminists may show that the concept of maternalism as encompassing the Canadian movement from the 1890s to the 1930s needs to be altered.[6]

The complex and often atypical[7] nature of Murphy's ideas have caused her to elude an agreed-upon designation. Many historians have included Murphy in the ranks of maternal feminists.[8] On the other hand, to some historians, Murphy is not a feminist at all. For instance, Anita Penner claims Murphy was not a feminist because she was only trying to equalize men and women of the same class, not remove class differences among women.[9] Penner judged Murphy by the standards of 1970s Marxist feminism, which required a serious commitment to working-class issues. However, only a few socialist women in the early 20th century would have met this criteria, not the legions of women's rights activists who inhabited the mainstream.[10] Aphrodite Karamitsanis somewhat reluctantly calls Murphy a maternal feminist, but says she is better classified as a social reformer.[11] Both Penner and John McLaren recognize that Murphy's ideas contained significant equal rights elements.[12] Murphy has also been called a "conservative feminist."[13] This confusion indicates not only the complexity of Murphy's ideas, but perhaps the problems inherent in the polarized definitions of maternal and equal rights feminism.

At the present, designating Murphy a "mainstream feminist" is most appropriate. Veronica Strong-Boag has used this label for Murphy's friend and fellow activist Nellie McClung.[14] The use of the term "mainstream" indicates that these activists were situated at the prominent centre of a movement encompassing a broad spectrum of political positions. A detailed examination of Murphy's positions finds her feminism containing both conservative and radical potential. Under the present available distinctions of maternal and equal rights feminism, Murphy leans more to the latter. However, she occasionally utilized seemingly maternal rhetoric. A careful reading of her work indicates that this combination is more meaningful that historians have indicated when they propose that early feminists were simply pragmatic and ideologically unsophisticated.[15] If Murphy's feminism is to be further clarified, she can be called an "environmental" feminist, in that Murphy believed that men and women were fundamentally equal, and that behavioral differences were socially and historically caused.[16] Although Murphy often discussed and addressed women as wives and mothers, this was from a practical standpoint in that this was women's common experience. Thus the superficial aspects of Murphy's language have led some historians to mistake her as a maternal feminist. Murphy did not believe that women possessed a biologically predetermined special morality. Particularly when discussing women's right to paid work, Murphy utilized strong equal rights arguments. The impact of new sociological ideas about environmental determinants of behaviour on post-World War I feminism has not been examined, and could provide insight into 1920s feminist ideas of gender.

The question of racism and first-wave feminists is one that has occupied women's

historians in recent years. A study of race issues is certainly relevant in the case of Murphy, particularly when examining her writings on the drug trade, and her later eugenic opinions. Mariana Valverde's article, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism," contends that "racist strategies . . . were integral to the women's movement as a whole,"[17] and that Emily Murphy's feminism was "for white women only."[18] This passing condemnation reveals some of the weaknesses in Valverde's analytical technique; her almost exclusive focus on racism results in a uni-dimensional portrait. Murphy's feminism was more complex: it could be inclusive of the needs of all women, while at the same time limited by her general acceptance of the racial stereotypes that were part of the common linguistic fund (and were also considered scientifically valid). Racial stereotypes were reiterated across the political spectrum, including members of the radical left--for instance, by social justice activist J. S. Woodsworth.[19] In the context of the discourse on race prevalent amongst her contemporaries, Murphy's ideas are not extreme; in some cases she challenged the dominant discourse on race, while in others she reinforced it. Valverde, Palmer, Antoinette Burton,[20] and others consider first-wave middle-class feminism to be ideologically bound up with racism. However, this thesis finds that, in the context of her political journalism, it was Murphy's feminist ideas which were freest of racism, classism and other hierarchies of privilege. For instance, Murphy's discussions of women's right to work and gender relations in the home had liberatory potential for all women.

Murphy's ideas about race issues changed over her lifetime. Her writings about the drug trade crossed the line from cultural stereotyping to racism, as she expressed fears

of white race degeneration. In the early 1920s she was obsessive about pinpointing the nationalities involved in the drug trade, with a particular focus on the Chinese. However, both before and after the publication of her anti-drug writings, Murphy specifically denied the threat of white race degeneration--a phenomenon that conservatives and reformers alike generally agreed was occurring. In addition, throughout her life Murphy adhered to the Christian belief that all were equal in the eyes of God. Her ideal "kingdom of God on Earth" and her feminist sisterhood were to be for all people, regardless of race. Murphy wavered between these concepts of racial equality and difference, creating a tension in her writing that will be explored. Murphy consciously grappled with the dual concepts of women as united by their oppression, and women as divided by other cleavages of identity. Tentatively, her vision of sisterhood caused her to conclude that woman-ness triumphed over other identities--though she herself had strong class and ethnic allegiances. However, it is interesting that a middle-class feminist in this period would have considered this issue at all.

As well as drawing upon feminism, Murphy formed her ideas in the context of the reform movement. Feminism can be considered as a subset of the reform movement, in that feminist activists operated in the larger reform context, and were often members of mixed-gender reform groups. Reformers were concerned with a broad range of topics, from immigration control and "Canadianization," to temperance and cleaning up the city slums. In the West in particular both feminism and reform were infused with the social gospel, a primarily Protestant, but multi-denominational, concept arising from religious impulses combined with the desire to improve moral and social conditions in order to

create "the kingdom of God on Earth." The social gospel appeared in Canada in the late 19th century and gained momentum up to World War I; during this time its growing numbers of adherents became convinced that the world was indeed improving and their ideas were becoming part of the social fabric. The movement was characterized by a sense of positive idealism and achievement, which was strengthened by the reforms enacted during the war, such as prohibition and women's suffrage. The war conditioned citizens to accept a greater degree of government intervention into people's lives, for the good of the collective rather than the individual. This was the attitude upon which the reformers of the 1920s pressed home their "sacred crusades," such as the sterilization of the unfit for the supposed improvement of "the race." As the number of reformers and sympathizers was increasing, however, the movement was fragmenting into different and sometimes conflicting causes and perspectives. A major setback was suffered with the collapse of prohibition legislation by the mid-1920s. By the time of the Depression, many people had abandoned reform organizations, whether from apathy, discouragement, or the overwhelming pressures of the economic problem. Those who remained became more radical under the increasing poverty and injustices the Depression revealed.[21] Throughout this period, reformers and mainstream feminists shared important underlying affinities: a sense that society was morally endangered and socially unjust, and that they held out the hope of its improvement.

Veronica Strong-Boag's first, second, and third phases of feminist history are useful as a starting point in examining the secondary literature.[22] The first phase--dominant in academic literature up to the earlier 1970s in Canada--charts the heroic deeds

of these prominent middle-class and primarily Anglo-Saxon activists. The second phase, prevalent in the late 1970s and earlier 1980s, reacts against this "heroizing" tendency by focussing on the inadequacies of these white middle-class women's world view, and suggests these privileged women worked to uphold the status quo which provided them with so many benefits. In the third phase of scholarship, which Strong-Boag considers herself part of, early feminists' demands are seen--despite their flaws--as "potentially radical" and a challenge to patriarchal authority.[23] While applied specifically to histories of suffrage activism, it is evident that Strong-Boag considers these three phases as relevant to other aspects of feminist activism, as she does not restrict her discussion to suffrage.

There are certain disadvantages to this type of division. Strong-Boag's classifications unfortunately imply both judgement and the idea of inevitable advance in historical method. The first phase is still in use primarily by local and non-academic historians. The second-phase perspective--that reformers sought social control--is still in use, particularly by historians interested in racism, imperialism, and state formation.[24] This study maintains some of the pessimism found in second-phase scholarship, epitomized in Canada by Carol Lee Bacchi and her conception of a "liberation deferred."[25] Strong-Boag's third-phase definition does not address the interest of recent women's historians in convergences and meanings of identity of race, class and gender. For instance, although Strong-Boag very briefly addresses the issue of racial and ethnic intolerance in her general overview of the feminist movement,[26] in her study of Nellie McClung she does not examine ideas of class or race, though McClung left behind a huge

body of published work. Instead, Strong-Boag focuses only on McClung's activist achievements. This study maintains an interest in feminists' ideas about class and race, while being careful to acknowledge feminism's potentials for positive change and women's liberation. The tension between racist or classist ideas, and hopes for liberation and equality, are examined in terms of a complex dialogue. The resulting nuanced analysis moves beyond that presented in previous scholarship, and will here be referred to as *multiplexist* scholarship.[27]

The first-phase scholarship relevant to this study consists of two non-academic biographies of Emily Murphy: those of Byrne Hope Sanders (1945), and Christine Mander (1985). Sanders' *Emily Murphy: Crusader* remains the best biography. Sanders had access to the vast array of Murphy's papers, as well as to interviews with Murphy's husband and daughters. She met Murphy in 1930, when they went on a jail inspection tour together.[28] However, Sanders' narrative presents a unidimensional portrait of a hero, as can be guessed from the title. Information about sources is irregular, and there are no footnotes. Sanders strives for harmony and consistency in her portrait of Murphy, ignoring complexity and contradiction. Sanders wants her Emily Murphy to be a dedicated "crusader," but not alarming or upsetting to the social order. To allay the reader's potential fears, Sanders writes that "Emily always decried a militant approach."[29] Murphy is always portrayed as mother and wife, not "just" a crusader. Sanders considers only the most general outlines of Murphy's political thought. Murphy's attitudes about race, when mentioned, are presented only as evidence of cultural compassion, and her opinions on eugenics and birth control are alluded to only briefly--despite the many

articles Murphy penned on these topics.

Christine Mander's book *Emily Murphy, Rebel: First Female Magistrate in the British Empire* is a lengthy work, for which she clearly reviewed a mass of sources; however, it is again non-academic and lacks detailed references to sources. Despite having been published in 1985, it is best classified as a first-phase work owing to the heroic tone of the narrative. Like Sanders, Mander frames her narrative around Murphy's appointment as a magistrate, and the Persons Case of 1929. Even more than Sanders, she uses lengthy passages from Murphy's "Janey Canuck" books to form the backbone of her narrative. Mander also skirts the uncomfortable elements in Murphy's thought. For instance, she contrasts the conciliatory tone of Murphy's 1904 article, "The Other Side of the Chinese Question" with her later opinions by merely observing: "Fifteen years later Emily, from her magisterial bench, would categorize the influx of Chinese into Canada and the subsequent proliferation of drug trafficking and addiction as one of her major problems."[30] However, Mander does not explore the whys and wherefores of this change, nor does she elaborate on how Murphy found Chinese immigration a "problem." Similarly, Murphy's beliefs on sterilization are given only a paragraph, and are trotted out by the author with a shade of embarrassment and the excuse that "writers like Emily Murphy were trying to bring the facts before the people, on the basis that a public danger needed a public warning. . . . It seemed the only way, then."[31]

Howard Palmer's book *Patterns of Prejudice: Nativism in Alberta* (1982) falls into the second phase of scholarship; in it he studies the prejudicial and stereotypical ideas that existed specifically in Alberta--with reference to the Canadian and international

context--from 1880 to World War II. This focus makes *Patterns of Prejudice* highly relevant to this study, although his perspective is rather different; he views reformers and mainstream feminists as narrow-minded, fanatical "puritans."[32] This interpretation has generally fallen out of favour with most scholars in the last decade. Palmer believes that reformers tried to impose their vision of a moral order on the populace through increased government legislation and intervention. He suggests they were a major vehicle of racial and ethnic prejudice. Palmer goes so far as to place the lion's share of blame for poor ethnic relations and prejudicial laws in Alberta with the women's groups,[33] while making a case that the United Farmers of Alberta and other farm groups were tolerant of immigrants and created community solidarity.[34] This study is not concerned with meting out blame to this group or that for racial intolerance, but rather in comparing Murphy's ideas on race to the range of ideas that existed at the time.

Also in the second phase of scholarship, T.L. Chapman's article "The Anti-Drug Crusade in Western Canada, 1885-1925" is the only work to specifically consider the anti-drug movement, which is a significant component of this examination of Murphy's thought. Chapman provides a good background of the groups, campaigns, and legislation involved in the anti-drug campaign, providing a much-needed context for Murphy's actions in this area. However, like Palmer, Chapman uses her evidence to back up the assertion that reformers were puritanical and fanatical. She asserts that the reformers' anti-vice campaigns failed to suppress vice. Their major "achievement," she concludes, was to accustom the Canadian populace to having their morality legislated by government and enforced by its agents.[35] This study does not aim to prove or disprove either of the

above assertions.

The two theses written about Murphy are quite distinctive. Anita Penner's thesis "Emily Murphy and the Intent to Alter the Status of Canadian Women, 1910-31" is firmly embedded in the second phase of feminist history, while Aphrodite Karamitsanis' thesis "Emily Murphy: Portrait of a Social Reformer," is best classified as moving into the third phase. Penner does not find any radical potential in the middle-class women's movement, because she believes that radical class analysis is integral to any feminism worthy of the name. The title of her thesis contains the germ of her position: she carefully chose the word "alter" rather than "improve" to indicate her belief that Murphy's fundamental interest was in consolidating her privileged class position. Penner finds this incompatible with the interests of women in general. On the other hand, Karamitsanis constructs a legal history that examines Murphy's impact on the law and the effects these laws had on women. Karamitsanis takes a very moderate view of the intent and meaning of Murphy's activism: "Murphy was not seeking a radical transformation in the position of women. She believed in the political equality of women and the intention of the law both to protect and improve the lot of women within the family and marriage."[36] Thus Karamitsanis' thesis is transitional in its phase of scholarship, as she recognizes Murphy's intent to work for women's equality, but does not ascribe to Murphy's activism or ideas a real challenge to patriarchal authority. Unlike Penner or Karamitsanis, this study argues that mainstream feminism had some radical implications, at the same time recognizing that feminists' goals of societal restructuring were limited by their acceptance of class and race hierarchies.

Although chronologically in the third phase of scholarship, Mariana Valverde's methodology is not addressed by Strong-Boag's classifications. Rather than focussing on how women's reform activities were potentially challenging--an identified third-phase concern--Mariana Valverde studies the formation and enforcement of race, gender, and class identities through discourse analysis. Valverde maintains the pessimism of second-phase scholarship, as she focuses on the grave inadequacies of first-wave feminism. Valverde's article "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism" examines racism and how feminists reinforced it by utilizing the prevalent "racist theories of biological and social progress."[37] Valverde frames her study of feminism around the interlocking categories of race, class, and sexuality. Valverde's book *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada 1885-1925,* considers various social purity groups and activists, and examines their impact on the formation and reinforcement of race, class, and gender identities. She focuses also on the development of the state through interactions with non-governmental reform agencies. Valverde is extremely useful as she is one of the few authors to consider the woman-centred reform movement in the broader Canadian context. However, Murphy was not a social purity advocate, though she shared some common concerns with this movement.

In her use of discourse analysis and an interest in the social control aspects of first-wave feminism and reform, historian Carolyn Strange has many ideological affinities with Valverde. In her book *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930*, Carolyn Strange views the "working girl" as a signifier of meaning for

the middle class who found her simultaneously to be both "chief victim" and "source" of urban danger.[38] Strange's concept of simultaneous meaning is useful when examining Murphy's ideas of the women she met in her courtroom and either exonerated or hoped to reform. In part, Strange sees reformers as regulators who attempted to use working-class women as a reproductive bulwark helpful in defending a white race they saw as degenerating and threatened by other races.[39] Strange shows how, for many reformers, race fears primarily motivated their moral reform efforts.[40] For Murphy, this reading is only applicable to her anti-drug campaign of the early 1920s. Murphy did not express the fear of the potential weakening of patriarchal control over the family that young working women are said to represent for middle-class reformers and feminists.[41] The only common "conservative" reform motivation identified by Strange that can be applied to Murphy is the tendency to cling to old middle-class standards of sexual propriety in the face of the seemingly loose standards of sexuality of 1920s youth.[42]

Mary Odem's study, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*, has a concern with overlapping meanings of gender, class and race in the manner of Valverde and Strange. Odem's book examines the development and function of separate women's and juvenile courts. She claims that professional middle-class women working with the justice system were "implicated in repressive and discriminatory policies directed against young working-class women who violated dominant codes of female respectability."[43] However, she does allow multiple ideological and social functions to women's work in the legal system. She contends also that working class parents used juvenile and women's courts for their

own disciplinary functions. Odem charts the switch from a Victorian idea of female sexual passivity to a belief in female sexual agency and new ideas of female criminality and culpability. However, she allows little radical potential to this shift. Odem contends that neither social purity advocates nor later Progressive women accepted working-class women's assertions of sexuality; rather, reformers attempted to enforce the middle-class ideal of a modest sexuality contained within marriage.[44]

Angus McLaren has published two major Canadian studies which are utilized extensively over the course of this study.[45] They can be loosely categorized as multiplexist, in that they seek to explore the complexity of racist and classist ideas in the context of a reform movement that had an intent to challenge the existing social order. McLaren's book, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945*, examines the broad political base of the eugenics movement, ranging from members from the right wing--as one would expect--to the socialist left. McLaren is particularly concerned with documenting how progressives could embrace eugenics. Eugenics, while regarded by McLaren as fundamentally dangerous in its impact on human rights and liberties, is restored to its historic complexity. As his book is the only broad study of the movement in Canada, it is an important guide to examining Murphy's thoughts on eugenics and race issues. Its only limitation is that while McLaren examines women reformers who were eugenists, he does not adequately explore how feminism and eugenics could ideologically co-exist. McLaren's other book, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980*--which he co-authored with Arlene McLaren-- examines the ideologies behind the promotion and suppression of birth

control. This book is the most significant source of information in providing the context for Murphy's birth control advocacy. While the McLarens establish that the promotion of birth control was quite widespread by the 1930s, Murphy put her reputation at some risk as her justifications were often more radical than the McLarens credited to middle-class feminists.

The four chapters forming the body of this study are based on major groupings of topics indicated by Murphy's journalistic output; these are loosely chronological. The bulk of the articles utilized were published from 1919 to 1932, the period when her journalism was concerned with overtly political and activist causes. Chapter 2, "Early Life and Emerging Ideas on Reform, the Legal System and Female Criminality," begins by briefly sketching Murphy's upbringing, and the establishment of her writing and activist careers. Murphy's first grouping of political articles appeared in 1919 and dealt with the function and meaning of a separate women's court, over which she had presided since 1916. This chapter shows that, while Murphy's background had some elements typical of first-wave feminists, her earliest published ideas do not fit historians' profile of maternal feminism. Examining Murphy's ideas on women as magistrates, and women as criminals or victims of crime, shows that Murphy was not a maternal feminist: she did not believe women had a biologically-defined special nature or morality, and emphasized women's agency over victimhood. While many feminists and social reformers represented prostitution as one of the major symbolic moral problems of society, Murphy did not view prostitution in that light.

Chapter 3, "The Drug Menace," shows that Murphy was like many first-wave

feminists and social reformers in her preoccupation with pinpointing 'one great problem' to explain society's ills. While most feminists of her age group focussed on temperance and the white-slave trade, Murphy revived the idea of the drug trade as moral scourge, which had been discussed off and on in the press and in legislatures in Canada for decades previously. Murphy's anti-drug book *The Black Candle* and the series of articles it was based on are the primary sources for this chapter. *The Black Candle* has been consistently interpreted as proving her to be racist.[46] Murphy did exhibit fears of race and class degeneration that were more extreme than her sentiments of other years. However, her views were not unusual for the period. Murphy adhered to a complex system of ideas, and she was torn between her belief in the prevalent racial stereotypes and her belief in the equality of all people under the eyes of God. *The Black Candle* has also been interpreted as portraying passive, drugged white women seduced by Asian men.[47] Rather, a close reading of the book shows that Murphy attributed agency to white women, including middle-class women, in their encounters with the underworld. She acknowledged that they chose to become involved in drug use and with men of colour--although she presented this as a degrading choice. The anti-drug campaign of this period in Canadian history has been little studied, with only one 1979 article by Terry Chapman to guide the way. Therefore, this examination of Murphy's anti-drug activism should help open this area to further study.

Chapter 4, "Ideas of Women, Work, and Marriage," is comprised of a grouping of the most distinctly feminist writings Murphy produced, published primarily from the mid 1920s to the early 1930s. In her specifically feminist beliefs Murphy posed her strongest

challenge to existing societal relations, and within them she exhibited the least racism or classism. In her last years, her feminism led her into an economic analysis of women's oppression. In her insistence on women's right to work and to self-actualization, she was more radical than most mainstream feminists. Murphy's defense of women's right to work and the need for women's self-determination in marriage was of benefit to all women, regardless of race or class. Regarding marriage, Murphy makes a firm defense of "the family," (heterosexual couple with children), which one would expect of a middle-class feminist.

Chapter 5, "Interconnections Between Eugenics, Birth Control, Pacifism, and Feminism," focuses mainly on a series of articles written for the *Vancouver Sun* late in Murphy's life, which explicitly linked the above topics. Murphy's anxieties shifted from the drug trade to a concern with over-population and the "unfit." In this context she denied the threat of race suicide, though she did not actually recant her earlier alarmist position. Through a complex interweaving of ideas, Murphy defended women's right to birth control and a radical pacifism that called for complete disarmament. She made eugenics central to these propositions, scapegoating an amorphous group, the "feebleminded," for the societal degeneration which commentators supposed was occurring. Murphy's reasonings are complex and often convoluted; these interconnection and tensions will be explored in depth. In these last years of her life her most militant sentiments were expressed in print. However, Murphy was still unable or unwilling to move outside the dominant discourse of inherent inequalities and "scientific" rankings of humanity.

Throughout, this study illustrates how Murphy runs counter to historians' picture of the "typical" first-wave maternal feminist. The various ideas behind her reform campaigns inevitably intersected with her feminism, and could either enrich or contradict her hopes for gender equality and societal restructuring. Her articles exhibit a tension between ideas of equality and inequality. Sometimes her feminism gave her the ability to formulate ideals beneficial to all women, and recognize other forms of inequality. On the other hand, in her fixation on gender as the ultimate connector between all women, she overlooked the strength of other identities of class and ethnicity-- pronounced in her own articulated identity--for other women. On the surface, Murphy' s philosophy sought solidarity among all women for a common liberation, but it was destabilized by the co-existing idea that, as in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, everyone was equal but some were more equal than others. This thesis explores the tensions between Murphy's contribution to women's liberation and her reinforcement of oppressions; hopefully, in the process, historians' understanding of first-wave feminism will be enriched.

1.Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996), p. 3.

2. Murphy only wrote about this campaign after victory was achieved, so the Person's Case is not analyzed in this study. For descriptions of this campaign, see, Byrne Hope Sanders, *Emily Murphy: Crusader* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1945), part four (pp. 213-259) and Christine Mander, *Emily Murphy, Rebel: First Female Magistrate in the British Empire* (Toronto: Simon and Pierre, 1985), chap. 8.

3. Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History*, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), p. 169.

4. For instance: Prentice et al.,*Canadian Women: A History* (1988), p. 170.

5. For instance, Wayne Roberts, "'Rocking the Cradle for the World': The New Woman and Maternal Feminism, Toronto, 1877-1914" in Linda Kealey, ed., *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), p. 15; Carol Lee Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p. 30; Veronica Strong-Boag, "'Ever a Crusader'" in *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History*, 2nd ed., edited by Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1991) pp. 312-313 (although it should be noted that she added the caveat of the 'pragmatism' argument now commonly used, whereby feminisms can be labeled but that most feminists used a range of arguments for their cause, regardless of "the niceties of theory" p. 313). The issue of motherhood was "the cornerstone of both feminist and anti-feminist ideologies," according to the "Introduction," *Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, edited by Katherine Arnup, Andrée Lévesque and Ruth Roach Pierson (London: Routledge, 1990), p. xiii.

6. Study of the political writings of other journalist feminists could prove fruitful, as sources are abundant in the legacy of articles they left behind. In Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred?*, p. viii, it is suggested that amongst the suffrage activists she studied, journalist was one common profession. The membership of the Canadian Women's Press Club could be one helpful starting point, as many of these women were activists, although the bread and butter of women's journalism meant that many members did society and women's page writing/editing, which was often not political.

7.For instance, John McLaren describes Murphy as harboring many "atypical" ideas; he designates her a maternal feminist and social gospeller. In "Maternal Feminism in Action--Emily Murphy," *Windsor Yearbook of Access to Justice*, vol. 8, 1988, p. 234.

8. The following historians have designated Murphy as maternal: Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980* (1986; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), pp. 68-69; Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), p. 94; Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History*, 2nd ed., p. 230; John McLaren, "Maternal Feminism in Action--Emily Murphy, Police Magistrate."

9. Anita L. Penner, "Emily Murphy and the Attempt to Alter the Status of Canadian Women, 1910-31" (M.A. thesis, Carleton University, 1979), p. ii.

10.Joan Sangster, *Dreams of Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1920-1950* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989), p. 8. Sangster also states that most radical leftist women would not have considered themselves feminists (p. 8).

11.Karamitsanis writes that Murphy had a "reform ideology quite different from the maternal feminism which historians usually ascribe to women reformers." (M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1991), p. v. Thus, faced with a choice between designating Murphy as a maternal or a social reformer, Karamitsanis

chose the latter (p. 10).

12. In the context of suffrage, Penner writes that Murphy was more aligned with the equal rights rather than maternal arguments (p. 52). Penner states that she cannot be called a maternal feminist like Nellie McClung, if maternal feminism was defined as embracing the idea " that society's ills could be removed if women's maternal instincts and natural attributes were addressed to public issues." (p. 122). John McLaren states that Murphy was a "harbinger" of modern "rights oriented" feminism. ("Maternal Feminism in Action," p. 234.)

13. Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), p. 111.

14. Strong-Boag, "'Ever a Crusader'," p. 308.

15.For instance, see Strong-Boag, "'Ever a Crusader'," p. 313; and Prentice et al., Canadian Women: A History, 2nd ed., p. 190.

16. Although Murphy was not totally firm from article to article or theme to theme in ascribing women's difference purely to socialization, she did make the following statements:
". . . women differ temperamentally [from men], largely by reason of their upbringing and diverse occupations." From "Now That Women Are Persons--What's Ahead?", *Chatelaine*, Dec. 1929, p. 5.
On motherhood, Murphy both liked to say that 'proper' women wanted to be mothers, but she also said it was not purely due to instinct: "Perhaps, after all, there is not so much credit in being a mother as being fitted to be one." From "Sterilization of the Insane,"*Vancouver Sun,* Sept. 3, 1932, p. 3.

17. Mariana Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism," in *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History*, edited by Franca Iacovetta and Valverde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 3.

18.Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free'," p. 15.

19. See James S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates: Or, Coming Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1972; reprint of 1909 original).

20. Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill, London: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 48.

21.See John Herd Thompson, *The Harvests of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), and Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-28* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971).

22.Strong-Boag, "'Ever a Crusader'," p. 308. This article illustrates how the individual case study can be useful in illuminating the broader women's movement and theories behind it. However, Strong-Boag's focus on a seemingly more 'typical' maternal feminist does not provide a model for my study of Murphy. Strong-Boag does not question the maternal foundation historians ascribe to the first-wave women's movement in Canada but rather only questions our interpretations of what kind of radical potential this ideology held.

23. Strong-Boag, "'Ever a Crusader'," p. 308.

24.For instance, the work of Mariana Valverde tends to focus on the way in which middle-class refomers and feminists sought to impose their vision of society on the working class and people of colour. Valverde emphasizes the problems with feminism, rather than focussing on the ways it might have been " potentially radical." Many of Valverde's ideas were useful to this study.

25.Although Murphy was dissatisfied with certain results of inequality (for instance, see her article "Equality of Justice for the Poor," in *Western Home Monthly*, July 1931) and would have liked to see poverty lessened, she appeared content to accept the existence of a class-defined society as she clearly benefitted by being a member of the middle-class, white elite. This reading fits with Bacchi's conception of a self-interested, elitist feminist movement. However, this is only one facet of Murphy's ideas.

26.Strong-Boag, "'Ever a Crusader'," p. 310.

27. The word "multiplex" is defined as "involving the transmission of several messages along a single channel of communication"; *Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary*, edited by Joyce Hawkins and Robert Allen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 953.

28. Sanders, p. 177.

29. Sanders, p. 289.

30. Mander, p. 57.

31. Mander, p. 117.

32. Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), pp. 42, 85, 113.

33. Palmer, p. 174.

34.Palmer, pp. 71-73.

35. T. L. Chapman, "The Anti-Drug Crusade in Western Canada, 1885-1925," in *Law and Society in Canada in Historical Perspective*, edited by D.J. Bercuson and L.A. Knafla (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1979), p. 107.

36. Karamitsanis, p. 56.

37.Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free,'" p. 4.

38. Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 11. Valverde earlier posited this hypothesis in *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, in the case of prostitutes and the symbolic ambiguity they posed for rescue workers (p. 103).

39. Strange, p. 16.

40. Strange, p. 16.

41.Strange, p. 5.

42.Strange, p. 4.

43.Mary Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p. 5.

44.Odem, p. 188.

45.*Our Own Master Race* does not fit particularly well into the classification of third phase scholarship. While he shows how feminists, reformers and socialists could embrace eugenics, and that the far left could use it to subversive purposes (p. 86), his primary emphasis is on how eugenics was used as a means of social control (e.g. pp . 17, 73). *The Bedroom and the State* does not comfortably fit the designation third phase either. While the book suggests the early birth control movement was radical, its adoption by reformers and mainstream feminists signaled its use as a means of social control, and of shoring up the family (pp. 12-13).

46.Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice*, p. 85; Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free,'" p. 15.

47.Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free,'" p. 15; Chapman, p. 101.

CHAPTER 1

Early Life and Emerging Ideas on Reform, the Legal System, and Women's Criminality

In many ways Emily Murphy was a typical first-wave feminist: she came from the ranks of the middle class, and her activist beginnings were in women's church auxiliaries while a housewife. She spent over a decade in liberal reform campaigns, such as advocating for urban playgrounds, and fighting for legal reforms for women and children, before her political journalism appeared after WWI. This chapter will explore the establishment of the women's court, and Murphy's ideas about its significance after she was appointed as magistrate. It is apparent that many of Murphy's reform perspectives were influenced by her experiences in the women's court. She was interested in the effects of both heredity and environment on women's criminality. Tensions in Murphy's thought surrounding gender equality and difference are revealed when she considers the status of women in the justice system. Murphy exhibited some significant differences from the established profile of mainstream feminists: for instance, when Murphy considered the problem of prostitution, she did not do so in terms of the popular reform narrative of a conspiratorial international white slave trade. Where maternal social purity activists saw women as naive victims of prostitution rings, Murphy--more in the manner of Progressive reformers--saw women with agency making wrong or desperate choices.

Like many Prairie feminists of the time, her family background was Eastern and well-to-do. Emily Jemima Ferguson Murphy was born in the small town of Cookstown, Ontario, in 1868. Her family was firmly ensconced in the privileged establishment of the

province, being staunchly Conservative and Anglican. Both sides of her family had come over from Ireland in the early 19th century. Murphy's uncle was a Conservative politician and judge. Her maternal grandfather, Ogle Gowan, was a long-term Conservative politician, newspaper owner, and the founder of the Orange Order in Canada. Every year the town's Orange parade paid tribute to Murphy's mother by stopping at their home. Her family blithely ignored the strict proscriptions of their mostly Methodist neighbours against drink, card-playing, dancing and other amusements.[1] Her background largely explains why Murphy never got involved in temperance or prohibition activism when so many other feminists did, particularly on the Prairies. Popular temperance groups like the Women's Christian Temperance Union were largely composed of the evangelical Protestant denominations, such as the Methodists.[2] This may also explain Murphy' s relative indifference to the idea of a white slave trade (i.e. worldwide rings kidnapping women into forced prostitution) as it was campaigned against by social purity activists, who often linked it with the alcohol trade.

While Murphy was a typical feminist in having a privileged background, she did not have the university experience which politicized many feminists[3] and women journalists.[4] Murphy attended a prestigious Anglican boarding school in Toronto, Bishop Strachan's School for Girls, from 1883 to 1887. Murphy claimed to have had a fairly egalitarian upbringing;[5] however, she never attended university though her four brothers did.[6] One became a doctor, the other three lawyers. Murphy's route to activism was another commonly tread path: woman-centred organizing through religion.[7] As a clergyman's wife--she married Arthur Murphy at age 19 in 1887--it was her job to chair

the women's missionary society, speak at meetings, and organize bazaars, among other responsibilities. She wrote in later life that these organizational tasks were an important foundation of her reform career.[8] With Arthur's many different church assignments, Murphy moved around a lot in small-town Ontario in the early years of their marriage. She gave birth to four girls in this period, but only two of them survived past childhood. Then followed two years of missionary work in northern Ontario, which provided Murphy with the time to begin writing. With only two weeks at each mission, she no longer had a household to attend to, and there was a nursemaid to care for the children.

Murphy's writing career began following an 1898 trip to England when she accompanied her husband on a preaching assignment; they travelled around the country, and a little in Germany, until the end of 1899. From her travel observations Murphy composed her first book, *Impressions of Janey Canuck Abroad*, which she parlayed into a journalism career. She began producing a prodigious amount of copy for the *National Monthly of Canada* after the family returned to Toronto. While Penner claims that as a middle-class "lady" Murphy only moved into the paid workforce under duress,[9] Murphy actually began writing for pay *before* her husband Arthur's illness made family finances more urgent.[10] Her husband's illness did serve to increase her journalistic output. However, unlike many wives who worked only during times of family need, Murphy remained ever after in the paid workforce.[11]

Like many Prairie feminists, she shared the experience of westward migration, and the common sense of building a "new" society. When Arthur quit the strenuous life of missionary preaching in 1903 due to illness, the family moved west to Swan River,

Manitoba, a town with new railway access that was in the area of a timber lot they had purchased. While it was not primarily Murphy's decision to move west she came to love the "frontier" lands. She was inspired by the unconventional duties she saw women performing in the West. For instance, she wrote,

> Eggie Jr. is a telegraph operator. . . . When he is away from home his younger sister works the code. She picked it up while tending the stove. You can never tell what is up the sleeve of these pioneering women.[12]

For a middle-class woman like Murphy this ethos of Western optimism and egalitarianism could be very liberating. The exceptional circumstances of life in the pioneering West could be used as a justification for "unladylike" activities. Murphy wrote,

> It is a great place this Canada West--the country of strong men, strong women, straight living, and hard riding. Tut! Who wants to go to heaven? . . . Yes! I am riding astride. Most of us do. It is safer, more comfortable, more healthful, and in every way consistent with good taste.[13]

While in Swan River, Arthur was gone weeks at a time supervising operations for their northern timber lot, and the children were sent to a Winnipeg boarding school. Murphy considerably expanded her journalistic career at this time. She began reviewing scores of books for the Winnipeg *Telegram*--averaging 21 books a month[14]--and was literary editor of this paper from 1904 to 1912. From 1902 to 1904 she was the literary editor of *Canada Monthly*; in this same period she was literary editor and women's page editor of the *National Monthly*. She evidently threw herself into her writing to busy herself in her solitude, and apparently had no close friends in Swan River.[15] However, she made many observations of frontier life that appeared in her later "Janey Canuck"

books. As Arthur was no longer a preacher and Murphy no longer a preacher's wife, she evidently felt free to shift from church-based to multi-denominational and secular organizing. Her first large project was establishing a Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) hospital in Swan River. While perhaps a typically middle-class benevolent undertaking as it did not challenge the status quo, improved access to medical care would have benefitted women of all classes. The VON also served to professionalize and increase the status of nursing, improving wages in this female career.

The Murphys moved to Edmonton in 1907, as Arthur wanted to speculate on the lucrative land further west in the new province of Alberta.[16] In Edmonton, Murphy became firmly enmeshed in the clubwoman circuit. Before World War I, she was part of the well-to-do women's circles, attending balls and having teas.[17] As Arthur traveled about the province looking for real estate or coal mines to invest in, Murphy went with him and observed the countryside and talked to homesteaders. Even before she was appointed magistrate in 1916 she was involved in many projects, including participating in Women's Institute meetings and lobbying for the right for women to be elected as school trustees.[18] In World War I she was involved in patriotic work, such as attempting to register women for employment. Through these activities, Murphy became part of the community of activist women who concerned themselves with providing services for the rapidly expanding West's population. They viewed the "new society" they believed they were building with great optimism in this period when the West was Canada's golden region.

Murphy expanded her literary reputation with the publication of three more "Janey

Canuck" books from 1910-1914.[19] Her consistent magazine and newspaper writing led Murphy to consider herself a professional journalist. She found some of her most satisfying organizational solidarity through the Canadian Women's Press Club (CWPC); the group was founded in 1904 to serve as a professional and social support group, and an educational forum. Murphy joined the newly-formed Edmonton branch in 1910, and served as the CWPC national president from 1913 to 1920. Its conferences fostered a sense of purpose and sisterhood that could take a political turn. At a 1913 convention, speaker Isabelle Maclean said, "Feminism itself has opened a tremendous area to the woman journalist. . . . The feminist page now embraces the live issues of the day and many problems, common to all humanity."[20] Murphy consistently utilized her journalism as a forum to influence public opinion after WWI.

One of Murphy's early legal reform interests was women's dower rights, with which she and other reformers had some success as a provincial dower act was passed in 1911. While a modest demand, this woman-centred project presented challenges to patriarchal control of government and family. Dower rights, wives' property entitlements enshrined in English common law, ensured that a wife's consent was required for property transfers, and guaranteed her a share (usually one-third) of the property on the man's death. Dower rights existed in Ontario but had been abolished in the West in 1886. Murphy suggested that the decision to eliminate the dower law--which was defended as enabling quick real estate turnover--was not only sexist, but racist. She wrote,

As an exemplification of . . . disrespect of the Indian woman, we find that the

> white man of the Western Plains who had married native women had an enactment put through the Territorial legislature providing that she not inherit his property.[21]

In other words, Murphy felt that white men had been eager to ensure that Native women did not gain property rights through marriage. Margaret McCallum points out how the wide-spread Prairie campaign for dower rights was an example of equal-rights feminist struggle in a period characterized as maternal and conservative.[22] Many men felt threatened at the prospect of female independence that landholding rights conferred. One farmer wrote to the *Grain Growers' Guide*, "Only a few of the more militant of the women want a dower law. These ladies want to be like men--own land."[23] McCallum also concludes, however, that support of dower rights did not necessarily question the role of men as primary landholders and decision-makers for the family unit.

Murphy also joined the campaign to lobby for women's homesteading rights. While men, as citizens, had the right to be granted a homestead, women could only obtain one under their own name if they were widows. The federal government had ensured women's exclusion when they set up the homesteading process to open western lands to non-native settlement. Advocating women's homesteading rights was a strongly egalitarian campaign, representing a strong statement in favour of women's right to self-governance. If women could homestead independently, it symbolized that landholding and family units could exist without a male head. Calls for women to be included were a challenge to the system of male rule. In the pursuit of dower and homestead rights for women, Murphy had to appear in the halls of government and study the law--realms where women were still specifically excluded. As Murphy later wrote of those pre-

suffrage days: " . . . at that time, a woman was laughed at and considered 'kinda queer' who made her way through legislative halls with requests for women's rights."[24] In these campaigns Murphy went beyond the interests of her class to help achieve laws that were of benefit to all women, in fact *especially* to women of less means. Murphy was not of a farming family, and was beyond the need to homestead in the West: Arthur's income allowed him to speculate in the better properties, rather than take a sight-unseen gamble on a free piece of land that had to be "proved up."

Murphy's first published feminist article, expressing her ideas of women and reform work, was the November 1916 article "Women Wanted." In it she decried women's lack of leadership initiative and wrote that: "We need rested, leisurely women with an individuality of their own, who are looking for more work and not less; women who instead of being self-centred, or caste-centred, can be world-centred and inspired."[25] Murphy's message was directed to middle-class women, which was apparent both in the forum--the official organ of the National Council of Women of Canada--and in the talk of leisure. However, she called for these middle-class women to put aside class identification to do work for all women. And in the context of World War I, her call for women to be world-centred countered the jingoistic wartime rhetoric against internationalism, when hatred for Germans and other 'enemy' nationalities ran high. Later in the article, though, Murphy revealed how her feminist vision was to be applied to the non-political woman: "To invent and create these [new activists], we must touch and kindle them with our desire so that we shall hold these in the vise of our hopes; hold them so they cannot but answer to our vision for them."[26] Murphy here implied that the

feminist vision held by herself and other middle-class clubwomen was the correct vision, and one that was to be imposed on recruits (rather than considering that other constituencies might have ideas to offer to feminism). This quotation illuminates the side of middle-class feminism that was self-righteous and coercive.

The story of Murphy's appointment as magistrate began with a case in 1916, in which twenty women had been rounded up by police and charged with being prostitutes. The Local Council of Women had heard rumours that "stool pigeons had been used to gain evidence, and that the women had been given intoxicants prior to their arrest."[27] The Local Council had wanted to attend the trial "to hear the evidence and make sure the women were treated fairly."[28] They were driven out of the all-male courtroom with the admonishment that the evidence was not fit for ladies to hear. Murphy commented wryly, "The bluff worked, for, after all, nothing so frightens a woman as to be told that her actions are unladylike."[29] The Local Council women called Murphy--who had gained a reputation of legal knowledge--and asked her advice. Turning patriarchal logic on its head, Murphy suggested a separate women's court be formed. Murphy herself then met with the Attorney-General of Alberta, Charles Cross, who already knew her well: Murphy was a common presence in the legislature because of the bills she had lobbied for, such as women's dower rights. Shortly thereafter, Murphy was appointed as magistrate of Edmonton's new women's court.

Historians point to the professionalization of women reformers as a conservative influence on their feminism; Murphy did not fit this mold. Wayne Roberts writes that by the early 20th century, "women reformers narrowed their vision . . . to a professionally

circumscribed role based on an extension of 'maternal' abilities."[30] He pins the conservative trend in the women's movement to women's entry into the professional class,[31] and finds that individual women like judge Helen MacGill became more conservative once ensconced in their position of power.[32] This belief in the inherent conservatism of women's professionalization is expressed in a recent work by American historian Nancy Cott. Of the 1920s, she writes, "Professional women on the whole seemed to assume that any connection with feminism would prove detrimental to their professional progress."[33] Emily Murphy became more political and increasingly advocated in print for feminist and reform causes as her professional status increased.[34] Murphy whet her appetite for courtroom work by going to hear cases being tried, which, she says, she enjoyed more than her "visits to the theatre or the horse-ring, much as I appreciate the latter."[35]

The work of historian Mary Odem is useful in contextualizing Murphy's place as a judge in an all-women's court. Women-run juvenile courts were developed--mostly in the early 20th century--to enforce the legislation that women reformers desired and felt was inadequately interpreted by a male court system.[36] Murphy's work took place in an environment similar to women's and juvenile courts across North America, where trained women professionals provided guidance for young female offenders.[37] Odem distinguishes the new Progressives who established these courts from the older social purity advocates who first began calling for protective laws for women in the late 19th century. Progressives replaced the model of female victimization exemplified in white slavery narratives "with one of female delinquency that acknowledged the sexual agency

of young women" even as they sought restrictions upon it.[38] This characterization fits the case of Murphy perfectly. However, some of Odem's generalizations do not apply to Murphy's court. Odem concludes that women-run courts in the U. S. were developed to control the sexuality of young working-class and immigrant women. While Murphy undoubtedly had strict standards of sexual constraint which she tried to impose on women offenders, the existence of the Edmonton women's court was not initially conceptualized as an attempt to control young working-class and immigrant women.

Murphy's ideas on the purpose of the women's court exhibited considerable tension. On one hand, Murphy was determined to give women a helping hand by dealing with crimes by and against women in a protective and sympathetic setting. On the other hand, Murphy was also committed to the idea of equal justice being meted out to men and women, even if this meant that women would receive harsher criminal sentences than those dictated by condescendingly chivalrous male judges.[39] Murphy instituted different rules for the women's court than had been utilized in male-run courts. She tried to ensure women's names were not printed to protect them from their former associates, and she excluded questionable male spectators from the courtroom.[40] Because Murphy was aware that women were unequal in society, she concluded that different penalties were required for them. She wrote, "It is harder for a woman to reinstate herself socially than a man."[41] On the other hand, Murphy prided herself on being able to see through the sentimental ploys women defendants often used on male judges. Murphy condemned male magistrates for letting women off lightly for crimes from a false sense of chivalry--"as though there were sex in sin or sex in soul," she wrote.[42] (It has been observed, however,

that Murphy's sentences were generally no more harsh than those of male magistrates for similar female crimes).[43]

Murphy was very keenly aware that justice was not blind, and pondered the impacts of class, gender, and to a lesser extent, race. She suggested that accused people should be briefed on the rules of evidence and procedure used in a courtroom, as these were hardly transparent to the uninitiated. "There is little doubt that many innocent persons are convicted of offences because they have not known how to tell their story,"[44] Murphy wrote. By 1931, she was calling for a public defender paid for by the state to further improve equality of justice for all.[45] This demand, while not novel--she mentioned that Ontario already had such a system--was an important one for levelling the playing field within the legal system. By the end of her career, she had grown quite disillusioned with inequalities in the justice process:

> Where the rich and audacious defendant is concerned, the soul before the bar is not nearly so naked as generally supposed. This one with his purse-plumped pockets can afford to secure an eminent counsel skilled in the art of breaking down evidence--or of building it up--so that justice is not always the only material factor in the case.[46]

She pointed out that the rich could afford to pay bail when trial was delayed, but the poor were forced to remain in jail. She particularly lamented this fate for the seasonal male labourer, as he could miss earning the year's income for himself and his family. Murphy's considerations of class differences are notable, as they showed a sympathy seldom ascribed to middle-class reformers. To a lesser extent, Murphy worried about cultural discrimination in the court room. For instance, she feared that those who did not speak English were usually charged without an interpreter. She suggested that the state should

be responsible for providing one.[47]

Particularly interesting are Murphy's considerations of the impact of combined gender and class factors in the justice process. In bringing sentence, Murphy acknowledged that she was often forced to grapple with questions of sisterhood versus class differences:

> Once a barrister pleaded that I should look leniently upon his client and not with the unsympathetic eyes which a woman of the higher class so often turns upon a woman of the lower class. The question startled me. Was I doing this? Is it true that the over-worked woman of the so-called 'lower class,' subjected to temptations at an earlier age, becomes more liable to these than the over-fed, idle, and over-developed woman who is reared in more comfortable surroundings? Should a magistrate rule that each class has its specific soul, or is it true, on the contrary, that 'The Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady/ Are sisters under the skin?' In my mind, the question is still unsettled, in that I am forced to change my conclusions from day to day in order that justice may not seem to falter.[48]

She found the circumstances particularly heart-rending when the crimes involved wealthy men exploiting young, disadvantaged women.

> I am off to Fort Saskatchewan in a few moments to try two Gents for 'contributing to the delinquency of juveniles.' (What polite names we apply to hideous crimes!) I have just been trying to identify a young half-breed girl at the undertaker's, who died in a store here from hemorrhage . . . a pretty little girl, almost white, who wore 'whoopee' trousers, a gay cap, silk underwear and lovely slippers . . . all of these soaked with her life's blood. She had been round the city, I believe, serving the taxis, and here she is at the end of the road, and no one knows her name. She had a heart--a lovely crimson heart--and some roses tattooed on her arm. Poor child! 'Only a half-breed.' I'd like to tell the world some of the things I know about 'superior men' . . .[49]

Though the young woman was a prostitute who apparently died of an abortion attempt, Murphy reserved her criticism for the behaviour of men.

Unlike social purity activists and maternal feminists outlined, for example, by

Valverde in her influential book *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, Murphy ascribed agency to women in their criminality and sexuality. Most strikingly, Murphy acknowledged that, while there were far more male than female offenders charged and convicted, "this cannot be considered as a fair proportion of the felonies committed by our sex, nor a fair deduction as to our moral superiority."[50] If Murphy was committed to a maternal analysis, she could have utilized women's lower representation in criminal activity as an indicator of women's moral superiority. She contended that women more often operated behind the scenes of crimes and were thus harder to charge.[51] Mary Odem explores Progressive women's belief in women's agency. Along with the rise of women-run juvenile courts, by the early 20th century Progressive women rejected the Victorian idea of female sexual passivity, and acknowledged women's sexual (and criminal) agency.[52] They believed that young women thus needed their guidance, or even control.

Murphy wavered in her ideas of how much criminality and possibilities for reform were rooted in the environment, and how much in heredity. Heredity itself was ill understood by the scientists of the day;[53] thus not surprisingly Murphy had an unclear conception of the process of how traits were inherited. If people proved unreformable, then Murphy decided they must have inherited traits of feeblemindedness. In other words, it was not the reform standards or techniques that were at fault, but the reformee. Scientific opinion backed this up by commonly determining that up to ninety per cent of "defectives" were made so through heredity.[54] This allowed Murphy to maintain her reformer's zeal in the face of many "failure" cases.

In the early twenties at least, Murphy had a fair amount of faith in the power of a

positive and constructive environment, in the tradition of Christian reform tactics. Regarding "neglected and degenerate" criminals, Murphy wrote that "the most astonishing thing about these unfortunate persons is the ease with which they yield themselves to healing, affirmative forces, and how they absorb the fine spiritual qualities of others."[55] On the other hand, a bad environment could permanently blight. She suggested that young women prostitutes and delinquents were reformable, but that older prostitutes were not. This she blamed largely on drug addiction.[56] The older woman "may promise better things, but the experiences have registered themselves on her nerves and fibre until she seems powerless to help herself."[57]

Murphy implied that once depravity became deeply rooted in an individual's way of life, one crossed over into the realm of biology. Murphy carried this further in the tale of a prostitute who stole some clothing:

> Having laughed at Bet's ignorance, we might look into the underlying causative factors and enquire whether she had not inherited an heredity of incapacity from generations of untaught, underfed, loutish clodpates--that she was the natural fruit of the family-tree, rather than a sudden, perverse, wrong-headed criminal.[58]

In part, Murphy utilized eugenic ideas in a benevolent manner in that she suggested that Bet was not to blame--her inherited genetic traits combined with her upbringing were at fault. However, Murphy appears to believe that being "untaught" is something that could possibly impress itself upon the gene pool after a few generations. Murphy's eugenic beliefs set up a hierarchy of women that was bound to be detrimental to the emancipation of all women. Her eugenic and environmental views combined to moderate her ideas of women's agency in criminality, as she suggested that people were molded by poverty and

genetics to a greater likelihood of committing crimes.

Murphy's ideas about the nature of prostitution had much more in common with American Progressive ideas of women's agency and criminality than those of female victimhood that historians like Valverde have ascribed to the maternal feminists and social purity reformers of the Canadian Prairies. Murphy believed there were a variety of possible causes for prostitution: women could choose the life, or fall into it through bad upbringing, heredity or poverty; she observed that drug addiction was a major factor that kept women locked into lives of prostitution. Unlike social purity reformers, Murphy did not believe that innocent women were kidnapped into the life by criminals operating international rings. In essence, she did not believe in the white slave trade, when so many moral reformers did.[59] The realities of prostitutes, pimps and brothel keepers that Murphy faced routinely in the courtroom made the social purity narrative of "urban villains and innocent maidens"[60] seem unlikely. Social purity activists viewed prostitution as the ultimate symbol of modern moral and social decay;[61] for Murphy, the drug trade held centre stage as society's worst scourge (as will be examined in chapter 3). While she viewed prostitution as a serious problem that needed to be solved, she did not call upon her sisters to undertake a "sacred crusade" against it as she did for other pet reforms. She was concerned with the fate of prostitutes on an individual basis, and wherever possible sought to reform them, and help them find respectable work. She had mixed feelings about prostitutes themselves; she was not above referring to these women as "evil, idle 'queens'."[62] However, she was also capable of feeling great sympathy for them and often went far out of the line of a magistrate's usual duties to help women who had been

charged in her court.[63]

Murphy believed there were many causes of prostitution. For instance, she condemned the narrow-mindedness and prejudice of charitable women, and the view that prostitutes were unredeemable:

> Almost every ["fallen"] girl has been persuaded into the belief that she is an outcast and irretrievably lost, and that no respectable occupation is open to her. This is one of the hardest impressions to root from her mind. But this is not to be wondered at when many of the most excellent Christian women have been hypnotized into thinking the same thing about erring girls.[64]

She was also prepared to blame the individual middle- or upper-class woman, suggesting that one servant's "downfall" was caused by a hard mistress locking her out for the night when she came in late.[65] Murphy also blamed female delinquency on the mothering (not fathering) received by the girl,[66] a common position of Progressive activists in the United States.[67]

Murphy attempted to pinpoint some of the broader, societal causes of prostitution. Murphy stated that domestic work was the most "dangerous" job for women; she claimed U.S. statistics showed that 80 per cent of "fallen women" were former domestics.[68] A case study of women arrested for prostitution in Vancouver from 1912-1917 supports these numbers; out of hundreds of women, domestic and personal service were by far the most common occupations listed, comprising 80.2 per cent.[69] However, Murphy did not use this opportunity for an economic analysis of prostitution, nor to condemn the society that relegated so many women to positions of servitude. Progressives commonly did not attack capitalism itself for causing prostitution, and thus only proposed remedial solutions.[70] Murphy was similarly inclined. To reduce the impact of prostitution, she

suggested: curbing the drug trade; initiating shelters for homeless girls and women; and founding "industrial homes" where delinquent women could be cured through hard work, education and occupational training to make their way honestly in the world.[71]

Although Murphy was a prominent and well-known feminist considered part of the mainstream maternal movement, a closer examination of her views on the law and prostitution shows her to be substantively different from her peers. While her privileged background is in many ways similar to other feminists of the day, her Anglican, Conservative background put a different slant on her activism than that of many of her Prairie cohorts, grounded as they were in temperance and anti-white slavery activism. Her early reform campaigns, such as women's dower and homestead rights, were of universal benefit to women, challenged the male rule of society, and were egalitarian in character. Murphy's ideas about women and the justice system had two contending aspects, based around equality and difference. As women faced certain disadvantages, she envisioned a different courtroom procedure and rehabilitative process for women than men; yet, she wanted women to receive impartial treatment in the courts by eliminating what she perceived of as the condescending chivalry of male judges--even if this resulted in higher conviction rates for women. In her writings on prostitution, Murphy did not concern herself with its symbolic moral meaning. She did not employ the "fallen woman" or white slavery narratives, and exhibited a strong belief in women's agency. Thus her position was closer to that of American Progressive reformers than social purity reformers in Canada.

1. Sanders, *Emily Murphy*, p. 12.

2.Sharon Anne Cook, "'Sowing Seeds for the Master': The Ontario WCTU and Evangelical Feminism 1874-1930," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 30, no. 5 (fall 1995), p. 175.

3. Roberts, "'Rocking the Cradle for the World'," p. 32.

4.Marjory Lang and Linda Hale, "Women of *The World* and Other Dailies: The Lives and Times of Vancouver Newspaperwomen in the First Quarter of the Twentieth Century," *B.C. Studies*, no. 85 (spring 1990), p. 4. Many women journalists were also women's rights activists: see Susan Jackel, "First Days, Fighting Days: Prairie Presswomen and Suffrage Activism, 1906-1916," in *First Days, Fighting Days: Women in Manitoba History*, edited by Mary Kinnear (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1987), p. 53; and Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred?*, p. 6. Of Bacchi's study of 156 leading suffrage women, 25 per cent were identified as journalists and authors.

5.Mander, *Emily Murphy*, p. 17.

6.While a career in law was closed to Murphy at the time as women were not admitted to the bar in Canada until 1897, New Brunswick's Mount Allison University admitted women from 1875, and the University of Toronto accepted women in 1884.

7. Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History* (1988 edition), p. 172.

8.Sanders, p. 31.

9. Penner, p. 20.

10.Mander, pp. 56-57.

11. There are various statistics about women and paid work which show that Murphy was atypical. For instance, in one detailed case study of Vancouver clubwomen, it was found that only three per cent of married women (and twelve per cent of the total women) were identified as working at paid jobs from 1910 to 1928. (From Gillian Weiss, "The Brightest Women of Our Land: Vancouver Clubwomen 1910-1928," in *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia*, edited by Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984), p. 204. On the other hand, Bacchi identified 60 per cent of women *suffrage* leaders (of 156) to have held positions in the paid workforce; p. 4. In the general female workforce--15.5 per cent of the total paid workforce--7.19 per cent of women were married and working for pay in the 1921 census year. From Veronica Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939* (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books, 1988), p. 50.

12.Emily Murphy, *Seeds of Pine*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1914), p. 89.

13.Emily Murphy, *Janey Canuck in the West*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975; reprint of 1910 original), p. 213.

14.Sanders, p. 82.

15.Sanders, p. 81.

16.Sanders, pp. 95-96.

17.Sanders, p. 101.

18.These early reform activities included: president of the Canadian Women's Press Club (CWPC) 1913-1920, convenor of National Committee on Peace and Arbitration, 1914-15, member of the Imperial Order of Daughters of Empire (IODE), organized Women's Canadian Club of Edmonton, member of local Women's Institute; sat on Edmonton hospital board, worked on Children's Protection Act. (From Sanders,

pp. 345-348.)

19.While undoubtedly opinionated Murphy's Janey Canuck books were not fundamentally political in intent (except perhaps as pieces of Western boosterism) as they were structured as travel narratives, composed of sketches of Prairie life. While these books fall outside of the category of political journalism chosen for analysis in this study, they are quoted from to illuminate where possible her views on various matters before her political journalism appeared.

20.Lang and Hale, p. 14.

21.Quoted in Penner, p. 46, from a manuscript Murphy wrote c. 1932.

22.Margaret McCallum, "Prairie Women and the Struggle for a Dower Law, 1905-1920," *Prairie Forum*, vol. 18, no. 1 (spring 1993), p. 20.

23.Quoted in McCallum, p. 30.

24.Emily Murphy, "A Woman on the Bench," *MacLean's*, Nov. 1919, p. 34.

25.Emily Murphy, "Women Wanted," *Woman's Century*, Nov. 1916, p. 6.

26.Murphy, "Women Wanted," p. 6.

27.Sanders, p. 131.

28.Sanders, p. 132.

29.Murphy, "A Woman on the Bench," p. 34.

30.Roberts, p. 15.

31.Roberts, p. 40.

32.Roberts, p. 29.

33.Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 231.

34.Murphy began working in women's auxiliaries in the 1890s as a young preacher's wife. Her first book, *The Impressions of Janey Canuck Abroad*, was published in 1901; she joined the Canadian Women's Press Club in 1911; and yet her most political writings were published from 1919 to her death in 1933, after she became a magistrate.

35.Murphy, "A Woman on the Bench," p. 34.

36. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters*, p. 5.

37.Odem, p. 109.

38.Odem, p. 4.

39.For instance, in 1917 Murphy wrote to the Deputy Attorney-General to suggest that the word "herself " be inserted in the Criminal Code after "himself " to ensure women could be prosecuted for vagrancy and other crimes as easily as men. From Karamitsanis, p. 94.

40.Murphy, "The Woman's Court," *MacLean's*, Jan. 1920, p. 28.

41.Emily Murphy, "A Straight Talk on Courts," *MacLean's*, Oct. 1, 1920, p. 57.

42.Murphy, "A Straight Talk on Courts," p. 56.

43.Karamitsanis performed a detailed analysis of Murphy's court cases, as recorded in her notebooks, from 1917 to 1918 (the only period available) and found Murphy's sentences to be comparable to her male counterparts (p. 97).

44.Murphy, "A Woman on the Bench," p. 35.

45.Emily Murphy, "Equality of Justice for the Poor," *Western Home Monthly*, July 1931, p. 4.

46.Murphy, "Equality of Justice for the Poor," p. 4.

47.Murphy, "Equality of Justice for the Poor," p. 4.

48.Murphy, "A Woman on the Bench," p. 81.

49.Letter to Isabella Scott, June 14, 1930, quoted in Sanders, p. 309.

50.Murphy, "A Straight Talk on Courts," p. 56.

51.Murphy, "A Straight Talk on Courts," p. 57.

52.Odem, p. 95.

53.David Barker, "The Biology of Stupidity: Genetics, Eugenics and Mental Deficiencies in the Inter-War Years," *British Journal for the History of Science,* 22, Sept. 1989, p. 353.

54.Barker, p. 348.

55.Murphy, "A Straight Talk on Courts," p. 56.

56.Murphy, "The Woman's Court," p. 27.

57.Murphy, "A Woman on the Bench," p. 81.

58.Murphy, "A Woman on the Bench," p. 36.

59. Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*, p. 77.

60. Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem*, p. 90.

61.Strange, p. 28.

62.Murphy, "A Straight Talk on Courts," p. 10. Progressive magistrates commonly adopted this tone of moral judgment and righteousness; like middle-class social purity advocates, they placed themselves in the position of moral arbiter and guide. (Odem, chap. 4).

63.For instance, Murphy would sometimes pay a woman's bail herself, and she wrote hundreds of letters to women she had sentenced. She also got jobs--albeit usually as domestic help--for many of the women, some in her own home. (Sanders, pp. 149, 173, 268).

64.Murphy, "The Woman's Court," p. 27.

65.Murphy, "The Woman's Court," p. 27.

66.Murphy, "The Woman's Court," p. 27.

67.Odem, p. 107.

68.Murphy, "The Woman's Court," p. 27.

69.Deborah Nilsen, "The 'Social Evil': Prostitution in Vancouver, 1900-1929" in *In Her Own Right: Selected Essays on Women's History in B.C.*, edited by Barbara Latham and Cathy Kess (Victoria: Camosun College, 1980), p. 222.

70.Strange, pp. 109-112. This section applies primarily to non-feminist Progressives, so there are some divergences from Murphy's gendered consideration of prostitution; however, the lack of in-depth economic analysis Strange ascribes to her Progressives is comparable to Murphy.

71.Murphy, "The Woman's Court," p. 27.

CHAPTER 2

The Drug Menace

Murphy's campaign against the drug trade--which motivated the majority of her writing in the early 1920s--was among her least overtly feminist concerns, in that the drug trade was not something she identified as being particularly a woman's problem. Murphy's alarm over Chinese involvement in the drug trade coincided with the peak of "nativist" sentiment in the years immediately following World War I. For Murphy, the drug trade was society's worst scourge, and she conceived of it in the manner that other reformers saw white slavery or alcohol--as symbolic of society's decline. Like many reformers, she was torn between her humanitarian conscience and the "facts" of Chinese involvement in the drug trade. In this chapter, Murphy's writings on the drug trade provide a context in which to examine her overlapping race, class and gender concerns. The threat of the drug trade also tapped into her fears surrounding the degeneration of the white race and the upper class. She seemed particularly alarmed at the tendency for upper and lower classes, and white women and men of colour, to mix under the influence of drugs. Murphy's belief in women's agency continued, placing her more in line with American Progressive reform ideas than those of the maternal or social purity movements. Murphy's ideas about the drug menace can be compared with general reform attitudes in the period, but there are virtually no secondary sources on the anti-drug campaign, so these examinations are breaking new ground. Further study on the anti-drug campaign is warranted.

The process of contextualizing Murphy's racism within her thought and the historical period is a difficult one. Certainly, imperialist sentiments and assertions of cultural superiority abounded in Anglo-Saxon Canada in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is also true that many western Canadians were opposed to "foreign" immigration while federal (eastern Canadian) policies dictated massive influxes of non-Anglo Saxons into the West. Thus it could be described as normative in western Canada to be prejudiced against "foreign" immigrants. While distasteful or even shocking today, Murphy's assumptions of Anglo-Saxon superiority and her use of stereotypes to describe cultures and races were commonplace; that there were ascribable national characteristics was not in the realm of debate in this period. Early theories of evolution and the development of taxonomic systems were founded on ranked hierarchies, which were therefore considered scientific and natural.[1]

Today, the issue of racism is so highly charged that it is difficult to paint it in shades of grey; historical studies of race issues[2] tend to avoid the use of the difficult word "racist" by substituting terms like nativism, prejudice, anti-immigrant, or anti-foreigner. While some authors differentiate nativism from racism by suggesting that nativism also encompasses religious and ethnic prejudice, and nationalism,[3] the terms are fairly interchangeable. In this study use of the term "racism" is reserved for indicating the most prejudiced sentiments within Murphy's thought, which appeared most frequently in *The Black Candle*. I will define racism as encompassing a belief in racial/cultural/ethnic differences backed by hatred, fear, and/or a desire for prejudicially differential laws. Thus it was in her anti-drug "crusade" that Murphy pushed her opinions into the realm of

racism, because of the new element of fear--fear that the white race was on the wane and other races on the rise, possibly even campaigning to eradicate the white race.

Even in her early writings, Murphy never lacked for descriptions, stereotypes and opinions of the various other cultures she encountered in the burgeoning West. Murphy has lent herself to contradictory historical analyses partly because of her habit of debating with herself in her writing. Historians such as Valverde point her out as notably racist, while John McLaren's assessment suggests that she was actually "less judgmental and more cosmopolitan" than most of her reform contemporaries; she wrote in defence of Eastern Europeans, Doukhobors, and Mormons, three generally unpopular immigrant groups in the West.[4] Excerpting one sentence from Murphy's writing reveals a pioneering crusader for women's rights or multicultural tolerance;[5] add the next sentence or paragraph and one can call her a narrow-minded reformer or a racist.[6] On the black peoples of Chatham, Ontario, Murphy wrote,

> These blacks are people of many virtues and some glaring defects. I know whereof I speak, for I lived in Chatham once. The negro cook has a dire genius for music, and her relations have fearsome appetites. She works hard, but, like grandfather's clock, stops short in a most irrational and wicked way. Still, it is highly unreasonable to expect a cook to observe all the commandments and eschew the seven deadly sins for a paltry five dollars a week. I would not do it myself. Once they had a negro councillor here. He was [as] black as Boanerges, but good and wise. Still, white citizens were uncivil to him, and some showed undisguised rancour. This used to trouble me and I spoke of it . . . .[7]

Murphy showed herself capable of acknowledging class differences among black people, and the constraints of working for a low wage. Her use of stereotypes to describe people of different cultures was typical for the period.[8] She exhibited a tension between

slotting people into prevailing stereotypes, and a desire to be humanitarian, that was common to many reformers.[9]

In 1904, Murphy wrote "The Other Side of the Chinese Question," an article in defence of Chinese immigration. Murphy had lived in the West only one year at this point, and was discovering that Westerners often held different ideas about immigration and "foreigners" than people in the East. Murphy wrote, "In the West one hears much about the fusing of the race, or what some term 'the yellow peril,' . . . but this is entirely the spectre of the imagination, which has its birth in political and inter-racial prejudice and hatred."[10] Murphy decried anti-Chinese legislation and even suggested that it was a mistake to exclude the families of Chinese men from Canada.[11] She denied the popular myth that cheap Chinese labour took work from whites, saying they only did work that whites would not do.[12] She wrote that there was work to be had for "any industrious white man"[13]--suggesting only lazy whites were unemployed. Murphy pointed out the necessary work the Chinese did in the mines, the fishing canneries, and on the railway. In this article, Murphy's viewpoint seemed to be aligned with the position of big business in that she defended the Chinese partly on the grounds that they were cheap, hard-working labourers. Murphy was after all a member of the elite employing class. When her husband was away surveying potential investments she was left in charge of their brief coal mine venture when the workers were on strike.[14] She was speaking in opposition to the view of the labouring class, who have been identified as one constituency that typically expressed anti-Chinese prejudices.[15] She suggested it was a fear of their "formidable" or even superior abilities that led to anti-Chinese racism.[16] While unspoken,

this accusation must have been directed more at the working class; as Chinese labourers did not compete at Murphy's level of economic activity, she had nothing to fear from them in that regard. Murphy's racism in *The Black Candle* was based on cultural and moral, not economic, fears.[17]

While Murphy showed sympathy for the Chinese position in her 1904 article, she exhibited a belief in racial stereotypes and hierarchies. She described Chinese people in terms of commonly-accepted stereotypes: that they were "phlegmatic to pain"[18] and had "immobile, taciturn face[s]."[19] The stereotypes she utilized in this period were fairly positive, but by thinking in terms of racial generalizations she left herself vulnerable to taking on the negative packet of stereotypes that were associated with Chinese people. While Murphy's "defence" of the Chinese in this period was somewhat unusual, she did not challenge ideas of inherent inequalities between races. Part of the reason that Murphy could afford such a benevolent attitude towards the Chinese was due to the fact that in 1904 Murphy believed unquestioningly in Anglo-Saxon superiority. She wrote that Canadians did not need to fear "that he [the Chinese] will orientalize Canada, for he has too much to learn from us."[20] Murphy did not seem to question that there existed a hierarchy of labour, and that Chinese people were restricted to menial jobs. She wrote that Canadians should be thankful for Chinese immigrants as they performed domestic work that "Canadian girls" would no longer do. She wrote, "Female menial service to any extent will soon be practically annihilated among the white women of America. Their opportunities now embrace employments that have hitherto been enjoyed and claimed by men alone."[21]

Before World War I, Murphy recorded various statements denying the threat posed by people of colour and "race suicide." These are worth quoting at length, in light of her later opinions. In one instance, she wrote:

> Our preachers and teachers disquiet themselves in vain about race-suicide and, at the same time, make collections to convert the women who worship the Ganges, the Nile, or the sun, oblivious of the fact that all these are symbolical of fecundity. I have a shrewd idea that a short return . . . to Nature worship and to primitive conditions would do more to swell the vital statistics of America than centuries of sermons . . . .[22]

This is quite a surprising position for someone who headed up a women's missionary society a decade earlier as a preacher's wife. While she seemed to think it would be good for white women to have more children, she expressed no fear about the child-bearing of women of other races; rather, she seems to suggest that the problem was with modern western civilization for stifling more woman-centred, healthy religious impulses. Given the dismay she later expressed about racial and cultural mixing in *The Black Candle*, the following statement--published in 1912--seems even more surprising:

> Humanity is to be thrown into a common melting-pot, but no seer may tell what impress the coinage will bear. . . . Love, both fraternal and sexual, will be the alchemy . . . that will make for a universal citizenship. We are learning, even now, that our common traits lie deeper than caste, colour, trade, or politics, in the depths of a common humanity. This is why the so-called 'yellow peril' is not to be extinguished by the breath of the mob. As easily might they blow out the sun.[23]

While today the ideal is a multicultural mosaic, Murphy's belief in the possibility of Asian assimilation was a tolerant approach in the early 20th century. Most western Canadians considered the assimilation of Chinese people not only impossible, but undesirable.[24]

Two factors were instrumental in Murphy's change of view on race issues: World War I and her appointment as magistrate in 1916. The war is commonly cited by historians as creating a profound change in the reform movement and among Canadians in general. The war exacerbated societal cleavages, and, combined with anti-foreigner propaganda, caused many people to call for tighter immigration restrictions and heightened their fear of racial degeneration.[25] Murphy was evidently swayed from her optimistic humanism by the rising tide of nativist sentiment that peaked following World War I.[26] Thus Murphy's increased racial anxieties in this period followed the flow of mainstream and reform opinion. As well, with her appointment as magistrate part way through the war, Murphy was suddenly confronted with the underworld in its intimate details. She would have come into disproportionate contact with Chinese people, a group she had had little experience with before. The over-representation of Chinese people in the legal system is demonstrated by the 1921 statistics for federal drug-related convictions: of 1,864 people, 1,211 (or 65 per cent) were Chinese.[27] Murphy formed her opinions of "the Chinaman" in the unfavourable venue of the courtroom.

In *The Black Candle*, Murphy pointed to the drug trade as the cause of most social problems. However, she did not view opium as the only cause; she tended to see social breakdown as a vicious circle, with poverty, drugs, crime and prostitution in a symbiotic relationship. Temperance and anti-white slavery activists had successfully promoted the idea of vice as national moral crisis--as opposed to an individual problem--in the late 19th century.[28] Increasingly through the 20th century, vice was not primarily regulated personally or by the community, but legally. Thus Murphy was in line with public

opinion in this regard. T. L. Chapman has interpreted the anti-drug movement as a subsidiary to the temperance cause for Canadian reformers.[29] Murphy's concern about the drug trade was primary, which put her at odds with other Prairie feminists, like her close friend Nellie McClung.[30] But regardless of the particular vice, its function was quite similar. For instance, blaming vice rather than the economic system for society's ills was a "comfortable belief" for middle-class reformers,[31] whose privileged position depended upon the existence of structural inequalities. On the Prairies, anti-alcohol agitation has been described as a "xenophobic" reaction to the immigrant groups (like eastern and southern Europeans) that were perceived to drink to excess and rejected prohibition.[32] Liquor was also cited as causing the degeneration of 'the race.'[33] Essentially, Murphy exchanged alcohol for opium, and "Galicians" for Chinese.

It is important to put Murphy in the context of the history of the anti-drug campaign in Canada, which can be done by drawing on the able--and solitary--account by T. L. Chapman. Otherwise, *The Black Candle* appears to be an historical anomaly. As early as 1882, the Nanaimo *Free Press* reported on anti-opium activity by the Quakers. In 1890, the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress linked the ruining of young men through drugs to the Chinese. A group called the Anti-Opium League was active in British Columbia in the early 20th century. In 1908 MacKenzie King headed a government investigation which published a report called "The Need for the Suppression of the Opium Traffic in Canada." In July of 1908, the Opium Act limited the importation of the drug to medicinal purposes only. In 1910/11 there was a Royal Commission investigating Pacific coast Chinese drug operations which advocated harsher

criminalizing measures. Its findings and recommendations influenced the 1911 Opium Act, which made the possession or selling of opium for non-medical purposes a criminal offence. Numerous American investigations into the drug trade in the early 20th century also fuelled the Canadian anti-drug campaign. While the anti-drug campaign died down during the war, by July of 1919 the *Morning Albertan* was sounding the alarm that imports of cocaine and opium were up dramatically. (It should be noted that this was a year before Murphy's first article against the drug trade was published.)[34]

Murphy came to see the drug trade as causing the deterioration of the white race, the Canadian nation, and all of humanity, in the manner that most reformers viewed the evils of alcohol or venereal disease. Reformers were profoundly affected by the wartime loss of life and promoted society's need for social and moral "regeneration."[35] The loss of the "best stock" during the war intensified people's racial fears in this period. These concerns affected Murphy and spilled over into her anti-drug campaign. In February 1920, her first in a series of articles on the drug trade appeared in *MacLean's*; these articles formed the backbone of her book *The Black Candle*. In her first article one of her stated purposes was "to discuss its relation to insanity, crime, racial deterioration and social wastage" and to urge the federal government to enact further legislation against the trade.[36] Murphy provided the following alarmist observation, which she ascribed to the British eugenicist Dr. C. W. Saleedy and paraphrased as follows: ". . . in a generation or so, these prolific Germans, with the equally prolific Russians, and the still more fertile yellow races, will wrest the leadership of the world from the British."[37] Other doctors provided Murphy with the expert material to feed her fear that the British were not as

fertile as other ethnicities, and that white people were not as hardy as people of other races. For instance, according to Murphy, an American doctor found that "the native born were more liable to drug psychoses than the foreign born."[38]

As a result of Murphy's habit of debating with herself in print--and her self-perception of being humanitarian--one often finds what appear to be contradictory opinions side by side. For instance, in *The Black Candle* she wrote, "We have no very great sympathy with the baiting of the yellow races, or with the belief that these exist only to serve the Caucasian, or to be exploited by us." Somehow, Murphy appeared to believe that she was not among those who "baited" other races, despite her numerous anecdotes implicating the Chinese in the drug trade. In fact, on the very same page Murphy wrote that she suspected "that there is a well-defined propaganda among aliens of color to bring about the degeneration of the white race."[39] She went so far as to state that Chinese drug peddlars were central pawns in this international conspiracy,[40] an inherently racist fear. Howard Palmer has described the dual nature of this dialogue in the context of *The Black Candle*. Palmer writes,

> Murphy combined both [tolerant] cosmopolitan and nativist sentiments . . . . She typified the dilemma of the reformer who wanted to correct social evils and yet not exacerbate the hostility toward the ethnic groups which were viewed as the cause of the evil.[41]

Conservatives and reformers alike believed that racial degeneration was occurring. Mainstream debate simply revolved around *why* this was so.[42] In this debate Murphy's humanitarian conscience came into conflict with her tough stance against the drug trade, which she believed was the main cause of social and racial degeneration. Murphy

accepted the widely-promoted premise that Chinese involvement was the mainstay of the opium trade. In the mind of the public she further reinforced this notion through her journalism, which held the authority of truth because of her courtroom experiences.

At times, Murphy was capable of cultural relativism and humanitarianism. In 1904 she had asserted that Chinese "opium joints are little worse than our whisky joints."[43] While that opinion had certainly changed by the 1920s, she maintained the ability to employ cultural perspective on occasion. In *The Black Candle* she wrote,

> Once I asked a Chinaman if there was a cure for the disease, for all Chinamen do not smoke opium, as all white men do not drink intoxicants. He said there was no cure except by taking relics from the altars. . . . Maybe it does help him too, just as the pledge, the amulet, and the vari-colored ribbons help some folk of our day and nationality.[44]

Murphy thus suggested that Chinese cultural methods of dealing with addictions were as valid as those employed by groups like the WCTU. Also in *The Black Candle*, Murphy indicated that she was not only concerned about the degeneration of the white race through drug use:

> Here are men of all colors and races; shuffle-gaited, foundered fellows, who have started on a downward course from which, to most of them[,] there is no retreat. Here, too, are battalions of black men who, from likely lads, have become derelict in body and soul.[45]

However, this kind of cross-cultural concern finds only a minor place in *The Black Candle*, compared with the enthusiasm Murphy exhibited in exploring and appreciating the ways of life of other immigrant groups in her earlier books.

While Murphy made many racist comments in *The Black Candle*, she was well within the range of public acceptability. For example, Chapman states that *The Black*

Candle was very well received by the press, particularly the western press, which supported the anti-drug campaign with "moral fervour."[46] *The Canadian Magazine* printed a short review of the book, with an excerpt as follows:

> Only knowledge can bring reform, and this book has not been written too soon. The reading of it is easy, lightened as it is by many an apt quotation and life story. In the cause of social betterment it is hoped that "The Black Candle" will circulate widely.[47]

Race issues surrounding the drug trade were mentioned in the review only to the extent that it was pointed out that whites, not just Asians, commonly used opium, so it was a threat to all Canadians. However, issues of racism were not pointed out at all. It appears that Murphy's implication of the Chinese in the drug trade, her use of stereotypes and fears of the degeneration of the white race were not cause for remark; the book was viewed instead as a morally bettering force. The reviewer also remarked that Murphy's book was the first comprehensive study of the "drug evil."[48] The *Canadian Magazine* reviewer's assessment serves to point out Murphy's importance as a commentator in this field. Indeed, Chapman identifies Murphy as the foremost anti-drug crusader of the period.[49]

Murphy appeared obsessed in *The Black Candle* with pinning down the nationalities of drug users and sellers, and the nations that produced opium. In the end she blamed nearly everyone, including whites and the "better" classes, but in the process she dredged up a host of unpleasant stereotypes and racist aspersions. Only one piece of evidence suggests that among Murphy's contemporaries there was any dissent from the discourse of race evidenced in *The Black Candle*. Murphy was to hear a drug selling

charge against two Chinese men, and their defence lawyer argued that Murphy was unfit to try them because she was "prejudiced" against the drug trade, and Chinese people in particular, to such an extent so as to preclude a fair trial.[50] In arguing Murphy's prejudice against the drug trade and Chinese people, the defence lawyer used *The Black Candle* as his primary piece of evidence.

In the end, the presiding judge ruled in Murphy's favour--and sidestepped the race question. The judge hinted that it was sensible to be prejudiced against Chinese men who were involved in the opium trade. He said,

> There is nothing here to lead me to think that the Magistrate is biased against the two accused . . . I am biased against those who unlawfully deal in narcotics as I am biased against those found guilty of murder, but that is not enough to prevent a fair trial.[51]

Murphy sentenced the two Chinese men to six and eight months each, plus fines and deportation. Murphy remarked, "'I am imposing the minimum sentence . . . as deportation will automatically follow, and for this reason you are getting a much lighter sentence than would be given to a white man for the same offence.'"[52] The reporter covering the trial utilized racial stereotypes when describing the reaction of the two Chinese men to their sentence, saying they "maintained the impassive demeanor of the Mongolian race, and when removed to the cells by the R.C.M.P. constables exhibited no outward signs of either contrition or distress."[53] Murphy's racism against Asians was not remarked upon by the judge or the reporter covering the case in the newspaper, because they were part of the same environment of stereotypes and prejudice that shaped Murphy's writings.

Murphy's racism was tempered by her belief in the higher morality of the upper

classes, which she ascribed even to the Chinese population.[54] She believed middle and upper-class Chinese were more likely to be Christianized and "Canadianized," and felt they could act as a moral liaison with the rest of the Chinese community in quashing the drug trade.[55] Murphy wrote: "There is no doubt that on this continent there are thousands of Chinese of . . . honesty and sturdiness of character and that if these men were allowed to deal with their renegade countrymen much could be done to stay the progress of the drug traffic."[56] Murphy went so far as to allow that upper-class Chinese were *actively seeking* to end the trade.[57]

In *The Black Candle*, Murphy's fear of the degeneration of the "better classes" (implicitly Anglo-Saxon) was closely linked to her fear of the degeneration of the white race. This placed Murphy squarely in the middle of the American and British traditions (as a Canadian often tended to be); Angus McLaren suggests that Americans were more concerned with race degeneration, the British with class degeneration.[58] She wrote, "The Rings [drug cartels] are looking for new worlds to conquer, and for this reason 'the underworld' has gradually encroached upon and laid siege to the upper classes, until these are threatened with dissolution."[59] There was an ambiguity in Murphy's use of the term "the upper classes;" Murphy did not use the term middle class, although it is clear that the middle-class champions of the moral reform ethos were her prototypes for the "better classes." Like many middle-class reformers, Murphy believed the very rich were susceptible to decadent and immoral tendencies. Implicitly, they were therefore a likely target for introducing the white population to drug use. Even the supposed higher morality of the middle class was suspect, and Murphy feared that they could not hold up

against a concerted onslaught. Murphy had seen enough middle- and upper-class addicts in her court to know they were not immune.

Interestingly, Murphy emphasized the point that some middle- and upper-class whites both used and sold drugs. This seems to be partly due to an egalitarian impulse. For instance, Murphy quoted an American, Dr. James A. Hamilton, the Commissioner of Corrections for New York, as saying, "'Drug users may be classified into two groups, the rich or "social" addicts, and the poor or "slum" addicts, the only difference between them being a matter of dollars and cents. . . . when the drug is withheld in either case, you will find them exactly alike.'"[60] Murphy went so far as to insist, "In Canada many persons prominent in the 'learned professions,' in social and business circles, police officials, chemists and even newspaper men are engaged in this trade . . . . "[61] This insistence might be partly attributable to Murphy's desire not to implicate only the Chinese as did the fear-mongering journalists she condemned.[62] However, Murphy did not spend the time writing about these Anglo-Saxons criminals that she did with the Chinese. Murphy offered that this was due in part to practical difficulties. She said that the rich had the necessary money to purchase drugs and did not have to steal like their poor counterparts. Therefore, they came through the court system much less often,[63] and slipped through the statistical cracks.

In the ultimate collusion of race, class and gender fears, Murphy wrote,

> A man or a woman who becomes an addict seeks the company of those who use the drug, and avoids those of his own social status. This explains the amazing phenomenon of an educated gentlewoman, reared in a refined atmosphere, consorting with the lowest classes of yellow and black men.[64]

By the time of *The Black Candle* Murphy had developed a great distaste for the idea of white women and men of colour mixing sexually, an unquestionably racist concern. Thus we come to Mariana Valverde's interpretation that the book "raised the spectre of white women being lured to (perverted) sex through opium."[65] However, this is a misreading of Murphy's ideas. In the manner of early 20th century American Progressives who were influenced by sociological concepts surrounding women's criminality,[66] Murphy was notable for her belief in women's agency. Murphy did not demonize men of colour as luring or attacking white women--as was the common trope in the rhetoric of white women's honour and purity (and passivity). Murphy wrote:

> Much has been said, of late, concerning the entrapping of girls by Chinamen in order to secure their services as pedlars of narcotics. . . . Personally, we have never known of such a case. It is true, of course, that hundreds of girls are living with Chinamen, and are peddling drugs, but almost invariably the girl has put herself in the way by visiting Chinese chop-suey houses, or other places of business. Generally speaking, the girl goes to the Chinaman because she has learned the drug habit and wants to get her drugs secretly. . . . It is not true, however, that a white girl or woman who is keeping to her own preserves is hunted like game, stalked to windward, and trapped by the Chinaman in order that she may be bent to his criminal purpose, or minister to his libidinous desires.[67]

Though she found the idea distasteful, Murphy granted women agency in that they actively sought out encounters in Chinatowns. She suggested, therefore, that if white women kept to their own "preserves" and did not mix with the Chinese population, they would find it easier to stay out of trouble. While Murphy thus implied that drugs were to be found in Chinatowns, she vigorously denied the prevalent belief that white women were invariably victims of the Chinese--a comfortable belief for racists who did not want to believe that white women would willingly mix with Chinese men. Murphy condemned

the many journalists who employed narratives of Chinese men entrapping white women as she said that it "stirred up racial hatred."[68] Valverde writes that anti-Chinese agitation was buttressed by sexual stereotypes of voracious dark-skinned men and chaste white women, and that feminists usually did not challenge these myths.[69] Murphy proved herself to be atypical of the majority in this regard, because of her rejection of the maternal conception of women's superior morality, chastity and passivity.

Murphy believed that once a white woman "sunk" to the level of choosing to live with an Asian man, her life was guaranteed to have a tragic end. Pearl, a working-class woman determined to date the Chinese man Woo Keen, came under Murphy's scrutiny. Murphy wanted to stop their relationship, but was powerless to do so as Pearl had not actually committed a crime. Murphy warned that "Pearl will come back to us one day, but it will be either as a prisoner or one who seeks a place to die."[70] It was not just working-class women whom Murphy believed would engage in inter-racial relationships. Murphy thereby challenged the concept of middle-class women as more moral than their working-class sisters. Murphy recounted the story of one "respectable" woman who caught her accountant daughter receiving letters from a Chinese man. With resignation, Murphy wrote that "when all the facts are available, the more one is convinced, that in marital relations between white women and men of color, the glove is always thrown by the woman, or at least deliberately dropped."[71] Interestingly, this is a conclusion being reached by some modern women's historians. Vron Ware found that in the lynchings of African-Americans--carried out under the pretext of protecting white women's purity and honour--that in the cases where liaisons could be proved, the relationship was initiated by

the white woman.[72]

The case of a white woman named Betty and her boyfriend, a Chinese school teacher named Tai You, particularly brought out Murphy's anxiety over racial mixing and the degeneration of the white race. Betty had been charged with a drug-related offense, for which she had been sentenced to a month in jail and three months in a convent, under the hope she would permanently leave Tai You. Betty would not. Such encounters likely buttressed Murphy's belief in the American Progressive model of female agency and delinquency, rather than the purity reformers' concept of female victimization.[73] Murphy observed Tai You and wrote,

> When he first became acquainted with Betty, this young Chinaman was comparatively rich, but at the time I came to know him she had dissipated his wealth . . . . As he strove to control the girl's irritability and cowering agitation, while arranging her bail at the station, he was noticeably a strong intelligent man, and one with wide patience. One becomes especially disquieted--almost terrified--in the face of these things, for it sometimes seems as if the white race lacks both the physical stamina to protect itself, and that maybe the black and yellow races may yet obtain in the ascendency.[74]

In a more unusual turn of events, Murphy threatened to deport Betty back to the United States if she didn't quit drugs and leave Tai You. Although Murphy noted that Tai You did not use drugs and often tried to make Betty quit, Murphy considered the woman's rehabilitation to require giving up her relationship with the Chinese man.

After an intense output of anti-drug writings from 1920 to 1922, Murphy wrote nothing further on the drug trade until 1928, when she published two articles that showed her feelings on the drug trade had changed. By 1928 Murphy had lost faith in the efficacy of laws to end the trade, as there already were "laws as strong as words can make them"

but the trade was not even dented.[75] Surprisingly--in light of her earlier faith in bureaucracy and experts--Murphy wrote that "the matter is everybody's responsibility--meaning in particular, yours and mine--and must not be relegated to experts, philanthropists, legislators, or even the League of Nations."[76] She felt that international efforts needed to be taken to end drug production, and that the League of Nations--while in agreement in theory--was standing idly by. She believed that Britain was failing in its self-appointed world leadership role by not forbidding drug production in its colonies such as India. By this point she believed that such measures were absolutely crucial, as once opium was produced it would find a market.

By 1928 Murphy still felt that the "Anglo-Saxon race" was "doomed" unless drug trafficking was ended, but she had broadened her concern for the degeneration for the entire human race as well.[77] "We are also moved by a like desire for the safety of other people, irrespective of line or latitude, caste or colour," she wrote.[78] While there are only two articles by which to judge her sentiments on the drug trade in the late 1920s, she no longer specifically mentioned the Chinese or non-white people in even an anecdotal sense. This contrasts with her earlier work, when she was obsessed with the race of drug users and sellers, and based her arguments around anecdotal courtroom evidence. An examination of her articles on other reform and feminist topics in the later 1920s and the 1930s--as shall be undertaken in the following two chapters--shows that her race-based fears had subsided, albeit in favour of the dangers of the "feebleminded." She spoke of anti-drug work in more religious terms than in earlier years, stating that "there is no other humanitarian movement . . . more nearly approaching a sacred crusade."[79] This tone is

also consistent with that of her early 1930s articles on pacifism, birth control and eugenics.

In her discussions of the drug trade as a moral problem of the utmost gravity, Murphy succumbed to the social anxieties common to the post-war period, and common to reformers in particular. Her racial concerns were at their highest peak, consistent with the mood prevailing immediately following the war. Her writings on the drug trade are a fertile field in which to examine her overlapping race, class, and gender concerns. Murphy developed fears of miscegenation that she did not have previously. In her attitude towards women's agency, Murphy had little in common with the maternal and social purity attitudes said to prevail in the feminist and reform movements in Canada. Like the American Progressives documented by Mary Odem, she believed in women's agency--but did not care for the choices they made when they did not live up to her moral code. In her fears for the degeneration of the upper classes, Murphy showed she ascribed a higher value and morality to this class in general. This belief formed the foundation for her later eugenic opinions and an interest in ranking human worth, to be explored in chapter 5.

1. Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*, p. 110.

2. Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice*, and A. McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*.

3.Palmer, p. 7.

4. J. McLaren, "Maternal Feminism in Action," p. 250.

5.Isabel Bassett, "Introduction," *Janey Canuck in the West* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975; reprint of 1910 original), p. xvi; and Mander, *Emily Murphy*, p. 13.

6. Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free'," p. 15.

7. Murphy, *Open Trails*, p. 205.

8.Palmer, p. 18. It should be noted that Murphy described her own Irish heritage in terms of stereotypes, albeit more favourable ones. For instance: "How the itch to fight lies close under the skin of every woman with Irish blood!" In Murphy, *Janey Canuck in the West*, p. 68.

9.Palmer, p. 44.

10.Emily Murphy, "The Other Side of the Chinese Question," *The National Monthly*, May 1904, p. 287.

11.Murphy, "The Other Side of the Chinese Question," p. 286.

12.Murphy, "The Other Side of the Chinese Question," p. 287.

13.Murphy, "The Other Side of the Chinese Question," p. 287.

14. Murphy, *Seeds of Pine*, p. 257. Both in "The Other Side of the Chinese Question" (p. 288) and in as late as 1912 in *Open Trails* (p. 74) she stated that Chinese labour was an economic benefit to the country.

15.Palmer, p. 33.

16.Murphy, "The Other Side of the Chinese Question," p. 287.

17.Murphy only became concerned about the Chinese "problem" when she was alerted to the moral and cultural evils of the opium trade through her presence in the women's court after 1916; through this experience, she became convinced that it was Chinese immigrants that most fundamentally supported the existence of the opium trade. Hilda Glynn-Ward, *The Writing on the Wall* (1921; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), is an example of primarily economically based racism against Asian immigrants.

18.Murphy, "The Other Side of the Chinese Question," p. 286.

19.Murphy, "The Other Side of the Chinese Question," p. 287.

20.Murphy. "The Other Side of the Chinese Question," p. 286.

21.Murphy, "The Other Side of the Chinese Question," p. 287.

22.Murphy, *Open Trails*, p. 72.

23.Murphy, *Open Trails*, p. 75.

24.Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*, p. 87.

25.Berger, p. 151.

26.Palmer, p. 53.

27.Chapman, p. 103. According to the *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, vol. I (Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1924), there were 39,587 Chinese (p. 353) of a total population of 8,788,483 (p. 3); this is .45 % of the population. In Edmonton, there were 518 Chinese (p. 543) of a total population of 58,821 (p. 220).

28.John McLaren, "Recalculating the Wages of Sin: The Social and Legal Construction of Prostitution in Canada, 1850-1920," *Canadian Legal History Project Working Paper Series*, (1992), p. 14.

29.Chapman, p. 90.

30.Emily Murphy to Nellie McClung, Aug. 9, 1926, B.C. Archives, Nellie McClung papers, Add. MSS. 0010, Box 11, file 9.

31.Wendy Mitchinson, "The WCTU: 'For God, Home and Native Land': A Study in Nineteenth-Century Feminism," in *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s,* edited by Linda Kealey (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), p. 155.

32.Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, "'John Barleycorn Must Die': An Introduction to the Social History of Alcohol," in *Drink in Canada: Historical Essays*, edited by Krasnick Warsh (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), p. 17.

33.Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, "'Oh, Lord, pour a cordial in her wounded heart': The Drinking Woman in Victorian and Edwardian England," in *Drink in Canada*, p. 84.

34.Chapman, pp. 91-99.

35.John H. Thompson, "'The Beginning of Our Regeneration': The Great War and Western Canadian Reform Movements," Canadian Historical Association *Historical Papers* (1972), p. 232.

36.Emily Murphy, "The Grave Drug Menace," *MacLean's*, Feb. 15, 1920, p. 9.

37.Emily Murphy, "The Underground System," *MacLean's*, March 15, 1920, p. 55.

38.Emily Murphy, "Fighting the Drug Menace," *MacLean's*, April 15, 1920, p. 12.

39.Emily Murphy, *The Black Candle* (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1922), p. 186.

40.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 188.

41.Palmer, p. 85.

42.Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free'," p. 8. In *Our Own Master Race*, Angus McLaren does an excellent job of establishing the widespread interest in the eugenics movement, and the belief in race degeneration held across the political spectrum.

43.Murphy, "The Other Side of the Chinese Question," p. 287.

44.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 95.

45.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 122.

46.Chapman, p. 102.

47."The Black Candle," *The Canadian Magazine*, Dec. 1922, p. 180.

48."The Black Candle," p. 180. There was at least one American book published on the subject in 1920: Ernest S. Bishop, *The Narcotic Drug Problem* (1920; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1976). However, it was very different from Murphy's study. Bishop's style was clinical, and he focussed on the efficacy of different types of cures for addicts. He did not view addiction as a symbolic moral problem.

49.Chapman, p. 100.

50."Woman to Try Two Chinese," Edmonton *Bulletin*, May 10, 1924, p. 1.

51."Woman to Try Two Chinese," p. 3.

52."Chinese are Sentenced," Edmonton *Bulletin*, May 17, 1924, p. 1.

53."Chinese are Sentenced," p. 1.

54.Patricia Roy writes, "Antipathy to immigrants was sometimes as much a matter of 'class' as of 'race.' Japanese traders, diplomats, and military heroes were welcome visitors; Japanese workingmen were not." *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989), p. x.

55.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 109.

56.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 108.

57.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 178.

58.McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, p. 9.

59.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 165.

60.Murphy, "Fighting the Drug Menace," p. 12.

61.Emily Murphy, "Curbing Illicit Vendors of Drugs," *MacLean's*, July 15, 1922, p. 19.

62.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 239.

63.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 119.

64.Murphy, "The Grave Drug Menace," p. 9.

65.Mariana Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free'," p. 15.

66.Odem, p. 4.

67.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 233.

68.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 239.

69.Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free'," p. 14. Murphy appears not to have believed the common stereotype that men of colour were necessarily more 'animal,' immoral and sexual than white men. For instance, in *Seeds of Pine* (1914) she wrote, "Scores of ill-instructed novelists to the contrary, no Indian has ever assaulted a white woman . . . The Indian has lived rough and hard, but, in this particular, he is morally the most immutable of all God's estimable menfolk." (p. 191).

70.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 238.

71.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 238.

72.Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London: Verso, 1993 reprint of 1992 original), p. 196.

73. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters*, p. 4.

74.Murphy, *The Black Candle*, p. 210.

75.Emily Murphy, "How to Stay the Drug Traffic," *Social Welfare*, Feb. 1928, p. 110.

76.Murphy, "How to Stay the Drug Traffic," p. 110.

77.Murphy, "How to Stay the Drug Traffic," p. 110.

78.Murphy, "How to Stay the Drug Traffic," p. 110. However, Murphy still maintained lingering anti-foreigner sentiments in this later period, as seen in her accusation that foreigners made up 70 per cent of Alberta's insane population (Murphy," Sterilization of the Insane," *Vancouver Sun*, Sept. 3, 1932). However, race concerns were no longer her main focus; the 'feebleminded' took centre stage in her alarmist rhetoric.

79.Murphy, "Drug Addiction: Is There a Cure?" *Social Welfare*, March 1928, p. 132.

CHAPTER 3

Ideas of Women, Work, and Marriage

It is in her most directly feminist writings on the status of women that Murphy posed her greatest challenge to the existing order of gender relations. The majority of her articles in the second half of the 1920s dealt with the themes of women, work, and marriage. Like many other feminists in this period, Murphy realized that women's second-class status was closely linked to employment.[1] Accordingly, she fought the post-World War I backlash against women's paid employment which intensified in the Depression, particularly against married women. Murphy asserted that all women had the right to work outside the home for pay. Murphy used myriad arguments in defence of this cause, including the importance of the self-actualization accompanying paid work, women's inherent right to work, and their economic need to work. While Murphy was concerned for all women's right to paid employment, she focused particularly on middle-class issues. In this period, Murphy also defended the institution of marriage, particularly by opposing common-law or "companionate" marriage. This was partly for conservative moral reasons, and partly for feminist reasons. Some of her feminist arguments, primarily directed at protecting younger women, sound maternal. While Murphy defended the institution of marriage she cannot be seen simply as defending the status quo, as she imagined a profoundly changed set of relations between husband and wife.

While most recent women's historians argue that middle-class feminism of the period was bogged down by imperialist, racist, and classist sentiments,[2] this study argues

that Murphy's specifically feminist thought contained liberatory potential. She was indeed limited by the imperialist and classist sentiments common to the times; however, her developing insights on gender relations and oppressions led her to a greater understanding of other oppressions, especially class-based ones. While her overtly feminist writings exhibited less overt racism than her other reform commentaries, she did not embrace racial equality in her feminist ideology. Her lack of racial commentary in regards to women and oppression is a weighty silence in light of her extensive racially-based discussions around the drug trade. Thus Murphy left unchallenged prevalent racial stereotypes which divided and ranked women unequally. Be that as it may, Murphy's feminism had potentially beneficial applications outside of her class and race--that is, for all women.

Murphy was on the front lines of the defence of married women's right to work when the post-World War I (and post-suffrage) backlash against women's rights occurred. As men returned from the war, women were called upon to give up their place in the paid "male-sphere" workforce so that men could resume their proper place and support their families. Married women were the first target in this campaign. It was argued that they were being greedy working when husbands could be supporting them. Feminists in the 1920s recognized that employment inequality was a central issue in women's oppression; therefore, defending women's employment rights was a significant priority for activist women.[3] Arguments based around self-fulfilment and women's inherent right to work dominated in the 1920s, with needs-based arguments secondary.[4] The configuration of Murphy's arguments in the 1920s matched this pattern, as evidenced in the article

"Married Women and School Teachers;" she wrote it in 1925 in response to Manitoba legislation which threatened married women's ability to work as teachers.[5] While Murphy focused her arguments about women's right to paid labour around the teaching profession, arguably a more middle-class career, women's workplace discrimination occurred across class boundaries. Women in factory work were segregated in certain industries like textile manufacturing, and there the supervisors above them were almost always male[6] (as supervision was not considered women's work). Thus Murphy's feminism here could easily be applicable to all women, though Murphy herself did not usually explicitly make this leap.

Murphy was quick to point out the hypocrisies of those who argued that married women should not work for pay. She utilized both gender- and class-based arguments to this end. Murphy recognized that the idea of classifying work as male or female was socially constructed. Bluntly, she pointed out that when teaching paid badly it was considered women's work, but "when the profession became better paid, the unemployed male decided of a sudden that this was a 'man's job'."[7] Murphy was evidently aware that women, when allowed to work for pay, were often relegated to the very lowliest of tasks, related to domestic labour and poorly paid. Drawing attention to the class biases of her opponents' arguments, Murphy wrote,

> Up to the present, no one has ever been found who argued that a married woman should not work, but many argue that she should not choose her work or be paid for it. No one ever argues against the employment of the married woman who scrubs miles of marble floors in hotels or public offices, or stands over the tubs in laundries. I have never yet seen the charwoman who was dismissed because her work interfered with her home; because it tended to injure her children, or because it was unwomanly.[8]

Murphy attempted to debunk the class-based standards of womanhood that were applied against all women's interests to keep them out of better employment. Murphy did not explicitly challenge women's supposed suitability for this type of employment. Her use of the above example to forward the interests of women in higher-status paid employment could be seen as opportunistic, as Murphy spent little time arguing for better wages for poor working women. However, she was not portraying working-class women as "Other;" Murphy presented middle-class women and working-class women together as a united front in her feminist defence of women's right to work. A similar argument was utilized by Vancouver union activist Helena Gutteridge[9] when defending married women's right to paid work in the Depression,[10] which indicates that it had appeal across the political spectrum.

As well as arguing that working-class women were conveniently exempted from the ideals of family and "true womanhood," Murphy showed how these ideals were applied only selectively to middle-class women. She suggested there was much emotion but little logic to the position of conservatives. She wrote that "this tearful talk about home and children is never heard when the married woman holds an honorary position"[11] as long as she remained unpaid. She pointed out that in many national reform and charitable organizations, "all, or nearly all, paid offices are held by men while the actual work of carrying-on is performed, and even financed by[,] women."[12] Drawing from her own experience, Murphy provided the example of the clergyman's wife who was expected to do all sorts of work outside the home--without pay. Murphy was clearly aware of the double standard held for middle-class and working-class women, and how

arbitrary ideas of "womanhood" could be.

Murphy also used the issue of married women being barred from teaching to express her dismay at the disappointing results of activist women's decades of campaigning for equality. While ruing that it should be Manitoba--the first province to grant women's suffrage--restricting women's employment, she expressed more frustration at the complacency of women who did not defend their hard-won rights. She pointed out that women could have defeated candidates for school trustee who opposed married women working, but that women voters were "indifferent" to the issue.[13] She suggested that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) poll candidates on their position on the matter, and publicize the results.[14] Murphy recognized the strength of the backlash women had to contend with. She wrote,

> Unless the ousting of married women from gainful occupations is vigorously resisted, women will find themselves back in the position of the pre-franchise days, or even 1850 . . . she is being denied the right to earn, to say nothing of her right to self-expression and freedom for self-development.[15]

Murphy seemed baffled and even angered by women's complacency, which she blamed more than the reactionary forces trying to remove women's rights. She repeatedly emphasized how women *allowed* themselves to be discriminated against; if a woman "permits herself to be shoved again indoors, the responsibility lies wholly upon herself."[16]

Murphy was critical of the inequalities existing in marriage, and correlated this with women's lack of economic independence. Presenting women's right to work as a moral imperative, Murphy said that if married women's freedom to earn was taken away, they would become "kept females."[17] This was one of her most radical conceptualizations

of the inequalities inherent in the model of the "proper" family with one male breadwinner. Murphy's defence of the institution of marriage was thus transformed from a defence of the status quo into an egalitarian feminism.[18] While Murphy believed in morality, she redefined it through her feminism. Unlike conservatives, who ignored the failings of the "traditional" marriage, Murphy noted that husbands were not a sure means of support. They could desert their wives or treat them poorly; the law only forced husbands to provide "necessities." She recognized that many married women had dependent relatives requiring their support.[19] Women of all classes faced these same problems.

Murphy pragmatically used almost every argument available to prove that married women should indeed work, only the minority of which can be described as conservative or maternal. In one instance, she said that women have always taught children in the home, and were therefore suited to the teaching profession. She went so far as to claim that married women who had children were *especially* qualified to teach children in the schools.[20] Indeed, it was common for defenders of women's presence in the workforce to insist on the "supposedly 'feminine' nature of [an] employment."[21] Murphy's other maternal argument came in response to the assertion that young women teachers were inferior as they were apt to abandon their jobs to raise families. Murphy replied that women might indeed do so, as women's "parent impulse" was stronger than men's.[22] While part of her challenge against sexism, this was essentially a conservative argument as she reassured readers that women in the paid workforce would continue to be "proper women." As Murphy was never burdened with the most onerous work of motherhood

because of her ability to purchase other women's labour, she held motherhood in high esteem as an option for other women.

In her attempts to persuade the public, Murphy also presented a few moralistic and eugenic-minded arguments. She suggested that by making marriage a grounds for firing women, immorality might be encouraged; women might prefer to live 'in sin' rather than give up their jobs.[23] Thus Murphy revealed her middle-class conventionality when it came to women's sexuality: sex belonged only in marriage. Also, she said that "from the social point of view it [barring married women from working] is also vicious in that it prevents or discourages wedlock among the intelligent and capable women who . . . are likely to make the best mothers."[24] Her developing eugenic views encouraged a ranking of women, detrimental to cross-class and cross-cultural liberation. In her attempts to appeal to all sides, she weakened the liberatory potential of her arguments. These conservative arguments were compatible with her view that pursuing marriage and motherhood was desirable. To Murphy, the ideal life course was the one that she herself had followed: marriage, motherhood, and then a career, facilitated by a supportive husband. Her conservative arguments exhibit a hint of her developing eugenics views,[25] which were given full expression in a series of articles published in the early 1930s, to be discussed in chapter 5.

While in the 1920s most women's groups supported women working outside the home, in the 1930s many women reformers--particularly the influential NCWC--turned around and attacked married women workers.[26] (The Canadian Women's Press Club, the professional association to which Murphy belonged, continued its strong support of

women's right to work and consequently dropped its alliance with the NCWC.)[27] In the face of the Depression, those arguing in defence of women workers tended to retreat to arguments emphasizing their need to work, not their right to do so.[28] Murphy did not retreat in the least. The continued onslaught against married women workers caused her to rally to their defence; indeed, their defence was her own. While the women of the NCWC were made more conservative by the economic crisis, Murphy became more radical, as did many of the moderate reform farmers[29] and workers[30] of the West. Murphy's vested interest in women's employment rights caused her to be more aligned with leftist women, who usually worked, than with liberal reform women who more often worked on a volunteer basis.

Murphy's foremost argument in the '30s was still based on self-fulfilment, an argument which declined in popularity in the face of the pragmatic mood of the Depression.[31] Certainly, paid work had been crucial to Murphy's own political expression and development, and she persevered in defending women's employment rights on these grounds. Expressing the issue from a rare first-person perspective, she wrote,

> Who are you, Sir or Madam, that tells me because I have taken myself a husband that I must stunt my soul ? . . . Keep me from working, would you? Why, Man Alive, it was for this I came into the world. This is my inalienable right. Who are you that bids me sell my soul and body for a maintenance?[32]

Murphy obviously found her work one of her life's most fulfilling pursuits, and was willing to fight for other women's right to work. It can be argued that to take the position that women worked for self-fulfilment was a middle-class perspective, in that women

who worked as servants or on factory assembly lines were unlikely to be very fulfilled by their work. However, working-class women could find important comradery, solidarity, and independence in the workplace, intangible benefits not encompassed by either the rights or need arguments. These benefits seem philosophically closer to the self-fulfilment argument; it has been shown that young working-class women preferred the draws of paid, non-domestic labour to toiling unpaid in their parents' homes.[33] In any case, Murphy did not argue solely on the basis of work as self-fulfilment.

In the Depression, Murphy was forced to respond to myriad charges against working women and wives in particular. To those who argued that in tough economic times jobs should be reserved for husbands to support their wives, Murphy responded that by a logical extension, every man's finances should be checked before he was hired to ensure he needed the job.[34] Murphy argued that women could not be blamed for the Depression. She stated that women workers were central to the economy, both as members of the workforce and through the purchasing power of their income.[35] Further, she wrote,

> The employment of married women has nothing to do with the general state of unemployment, which has its origins in matters national, international, industrial, economic, seasonal; in matters of inflation and deflation, of production and underproduction, of militaristic extravagance and of a thousand kinds of theft.[36]

Murphy seemed here to be responding to broad charges against married women of aggravating Depression unemployment, and even suggests that the capitalist system itself might be at fault.

Murphy's feminism was enriched by a consideration of the historical division of

labour between the sexes. She believed that when industry was formerly home-based, there was greater equality--at least economic--between men and women. She wrote:

> About eighty-five per centum of married women were actual workers and continued steadily in industry until that remarkably momentous day when the males of the household found they could make profit by taking the industries from the home and into the factory . . . .Yes, that was the day upon which the machine age had its birth.[37]

While the industrial revolution was generally regarded as a grand modernizing period in history, Murphy viewed it as a power grab by men at the expense of women. Thus part of women's modern oppression was conceived of as being launched in a historical moment, and therefore not immutable. This conceptualization also provided the historical basis for women's right to work in industry, as women had previously owned this work. Left-wing feminist MP Agnes MacPhail forwarded an almost identical argument--that of industrialization as robbing women of their former home employments--when in 1933 she defended women's right to work in the Depression economy.[38]

While it is often argued that the feminism of the day was limited by the classism of middle-class women, feminism also had the potential to broaden reformers' horizons if principles of gender oppression and liberation were applied to other categories of oppression. Although overt concern for the particular situations of working-class women remained secondary to Murphy's interest in those of middle-class women, her analysis came to include a definite place for working-class women--a significant development over her earlier thought. While Murphy appreciated the advances made to women's status in the workforce in the previous decades, she wrote,

There are difficulties to be overcome, however, and one of these is that so

> many of our women workers have been pushed into the sweated trades such as the making of toys, artificial flowers and things like that. Time and proper organization among the Union of women workers will indubitably right this difficulty.[39]

The general economic hardships of the Depression served to open Murphy's eyes to the plight of women factory workers. To those who argued that women should be sent back "to the home" Murphy responded that "multitudes of these women have no homes other than a bed-closet in an apartment house, and some have not even this."[40] This was a point that applied most particularly to working-class women. It was her feminism that led her into a more thoughtful economic analysis of society, as it was her realization of women's exploitation in industry that led her to support unions. In earlier decades, Murphy had shown an intense opposition to unions of any sort.[41] Sounding almost socialist in her belief in the importance of control over the means of production--though she still did not support socialists--Murphy wrote that "woman was always in industry until father took the tools from the home to the factory."[42]

Along with championing married women's right to work, Murphy concerned herself with the status of the wife within marriage and with re-imagining the institution of marriage itself. Murphy pondered the social and economic significance of being a housewife, with specific reference to the middle-class situation. For instance, Murphy recognized that the benefits of class status were ephemeral for wives who did not work. She wrote,

> [A woman] has come to think that if a man marries her with the expectation that she shall entertain his friends . . . and that she shall display his diamonds and costly furs, then she is entitled to recompense. She has learned that she is advertising his business just as much as an advertising firm--even more so--

> with the difference that she is unpaid labor. She has no share in her husband's estate . . . . Married women are beginning to realize that their position, however enviable it may seem, is in reality only a temporary one--that it has no solid basis in a financial way.[43]

Murphy saw that these wives were little more than models for their husbands' wealth, easily stripped of these possessions if they were abandoned. Murphy evidently realized that a woman's class position was determined in relation to a man's. While her example drew on the experience of the middle-class wife, women of all classes were ranked according to their husbands, and their livings were equally precarious without the support of a male wage. In the future, Murphy envisioned, "Her labor, whether it be in the office, the kitchen, in the rearing of children, or in the management of the home, will have its monetary value."[44]

Murphy imagined a totally equal role for women within marriage, and thus, as Strong-Boag says, "called into question the appropriateness of women's subordinate position within the patriarchal family itself."[45] Murphy went so far as to suggest in one instance that fathers should also do household work and care for children.[46] This was truly marriage re-imagined, in that age. Murphy envisioned the issue of the servitude of the wife as crossing international boundaries. She wrote,

> The present day discontent of married women in their economic status in the home, is not confined to any one group of women, nor to any country. This is world-wide and is finding expression, not only with the women of Europe and America, but among the women of Oriental nations. The entering of woman into the industrial activities; her education and her opportunities of remunerative labor, have emphasized the fact that the economic value of the work in the home has no legal recognition.[47]

She here successfully integrated the problems, needs and goals of all women under her

feminist banner; housework was an historical and international burden faced by women across class (even the richest women had to manage their households), and faced by women whether or not they worked outside the home. Through this issue, Murphy in this instance attributed activist agency to third-world women, which was exceptional amongst reformer feminists of the day.

While Murphy realistically recognized the economic problems women faced without a husband, she only utilized this fact as an argument in support of keeping marriages together. Like other leading figures in the early 20th century, Murphy feared the seemingly imminent disintegration of the institution of marriage.[48] Murphy's belief in the necessity of women's economic independence within marriage served a dual function: it was an important element of her feminism, as illustrated above, but it was also advanced as a means to mend the troubled institution of marriage. She warned husbands that if women did not have an independent income, their resulting discontent could cause them to leave home--which Murphy saw as undesirable. As women had difficulty earning a living wage, Murphy warned that women who left their husbands could end up as prostitutes.[49] It was the bolder woman who stuck it out and fought restrictive legislation and attitudes, she believed. She failed to consider the suffering some women endured in marriage and insisted on the principle that couples remain together. Her opposition to divorce was a conservative ideal, based on traditional Christian concepts of the sanctity of the lifelong union between man and woman. Even in her later years, she could not bring herself to approve of divorce; she believed unfaithfulness was the only possibly acceptable reason.[50] Marriage, she asserted, was the bedrock of society;[51] if there

was a problem (as 1920s commentators believed there was) it was with the character of the people getting married. "Misfits in life cannot be successful in wedlock but the fault is their own," she wrote.[52]

While embracing some aspects of the traditional Christian ideal of marriage, Murphy did not support women's subordination within it; she was adamantly opposed to the tradition of women swearing "to obey" husbands in the marriage ceremony. She disdained the "time-honored principle that, till death does them part, the wife must ever remain in obedience to her husband, be he rake, gambler, tyrant, drunkard, madman, or all in one."[53] Murphy argued that abolishing the obedience vow was a reasonable demand, pointing out that activists in England had achieved the removal of this vow in some denominations. However, the general acceptance of this trend was far from assured. She criticized the Canadian churches which still utilized this outdated convention, arguing that in the "Quaker, Roman Catholic, Hebrew, and dissenting Churches no obligation so crudely primitive is placed upon the bride."[54] Her criticisms of the contractual inequalities of marriage, as enshrined within the obedience vow, were scathing. She wrote,

> No honest woman is willing to make so grotesque and humiliating a vow [as to "obey"] . . . this is a vow that does violence to her self respect and religious instinct. Obedience implies a difference in rank, whereas the marriage of modern times is based upon absolute equality.[55]

While Murphy had a strongly woman-centred vision of marriage, in the end she would rarely be critical of all men as a group. As if to comfort men faced with losing patriarchal control, she wrote: "Husbands do not promise to obey their wives, but the average man

does [obey]." [56] Murphy thus implied that wives would also continue to obey husbands' wishes without a formal vow. Expanding with a rather callous-sounding Darwinian addition--in light of women's generally subordinate status--she continued, "Some persons naturally rule; others naturally obey. In the end, the fittest survives."[57]

Murphy's support of marriage involved a strong opposition to "companionate" marriage. Companionate marriage was described by its supporters as a legal marriage with easy divorce for childless couples, and the legalisation of birth control for married people.[58] There has been very little historical study done on companionate marriage, and the numbers of people practising it are difficult to ascertain as this information was not recorded by the census. The debate about companionate marriage flared up in the early 1920s after an American judge, Ben Lindsey, advocated it in print. He continued to publish articles and books on companionate marriage throughout the decade. In 1929, Lindsey wrote that although everyone had heard of his ideas, no one had actually read his book; instead, he felt the public simply debated the misrepresentations contained in articles written by reporters who also had not read his material.[59] Like the reporters Lindsey complained of, Murphy described companionate marriage as "trial marriage," entailing no legal ceremony and being temporary from the outset. Murphy shared the older generation's general intense moral opposition to tampering with marriage to allow more sexual freedom. She also differentiated companionate marriage from "free unions" which, she said, had always existed, but made no pretence to the status of marriage--and therefore did not threaten it.[60]

Part of Murphy's opposition to companionate marriage was distinctly moralistic

in tone. For Murphy, the bonds of true wedlock had a "spiritual eminence."[61] She felt that "companionate marriage constitute[d] an agreement between a flirt and a philanderer."[62] Murphy viewed the youth of the roaring '20s as decadent upholders of "malignant irreligion."[63] Enforcing the standards of an earlier generation, Murphy passed moral judgement on the man or woman who engaged in extra-marital sex. She felt that the supremacy of the state-sanctioned marriage, which she viewed as the pillar of society, would be undermined. She viewed flexible and informal heterosexual relationships as a threat to her middle-class standards of morality and sexuality. Despite the anti-Catholic background she came from, she went so far as to praise the Roman Catholic church's pronouncements keeping marriages together, and suggested that Protestant churches do the same.[64] She believed that only social revolutionaries defended companionate marriage;[65] and she was not a revolutionary.

Murphy also opposed companionate marriage on women-centred and feminist grounds. She recognized that women were the disadvantaged member of the partnership and would be left without legal protections if abandoned. The kind of common-law marriage Murphy envisioned had no legal burdens upon the man upon separation, either to provide the woman with property or child support payments. As she knew from experience in her courtroom, it was hard enough to get a deserting legal husband to support his children. Lindsey was represented in the media as opposing women's economic independence within marriage, so it is not surprising that Murphy would be antagonistic to his ideas.[66] Veronica Strong-Boag has remarked that the feminist elements of Murphy's opposition to companionate marriage had similarities to "the

critique of the so-called sexual revolution of the 1960s and beyond."[67]

There was an element of maternal protectionism to Murphy's feminism, directed as it was to younger women. She made women sound like passive victims of men's sexual urges. She implied only men supported companionate marriage, as it had "no actual application to the life of the young girl who is to be thrown loose on the ocean of life with nothing upon which she can stand."[68] Like Progressive reformers she viewed young women as naive and in need of moral guidance.[69] Murphy also believed that pimps could use companionate marriage as a front, as they would not have to produce papers to prove a legitimate relationship with a woman.[70] Murphy hinted that laws forbidding the recognition of companionate marriage might be in order. Her insistence on government enforcement of middle-class sexual morality--endorsing sex only within marriage--was also compatible with Progressive views on modest sexuality.[71] When this article appeared in 1928, Murphy did not support birth control, and seemed to conflate contraception with abortion when she sounded the alarm that contraception put a woman's life in danger.[72]

Murphy defended marriage in an ideal, feminist-inspired state, not in its "traditional" version. Her vision of marriage entailed a strong defence of the right of married women to paid employment both for financial independence and self-actualization. Like other feminists in the 1920s, she utilized a pragmatic mix of arguments to support her cause. By the 1930s, when most reformer feminists had backed down in the face of the Depression to a simple need-based argument, Murphy continued to emphasize women's inherent right to work, and the self-fulfilment paid work offered.

1. Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, p. 44.

2.For instance: "Racist strategies were not confined to situations in which topics such as immigration were directly at issue: they were integral to the movement as a whole." From Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism," p. 3. Penner argued that Murphy only intended to equalize men and women of the same class, not remove any class differences. In "Emily Murphy and the Attempt to Alter the Status of Canadian Women, 1910-31," p. ii.

3. Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, p. 44.

4.Margaret Hobbs, "Equality and Difference: Feminism and the Defence of Women Workers during the Great Depression," in *Canadian Women: A Reader*, edited by Wendy Mitchinson et al. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996), p. 213.

5.This was a significant trend. Lois Scharf has identified 18 states in America that issued contracts in the 1930s indicating that women teachers would be fired upon marriage. In *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism, and the Great Depression* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), p. 76.

6.Joy Parr has done an excellent job of portraying the arbitrary and changeable nature of the gendering of work by a comparison of two manufacturing towns, one with a primarily female labour source, the other male. *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

7.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," *Western Home Monthly*, Sept. 1925, p. 25.

8.Emily Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 25.

9.In the 1930s, Gutteridge was involved in the Socialist Party of Canada and then the CCF. From Susan Wade, "Helena Gutteridge: Votes for Women and Trade Unions" in *In Her Own Right*, p. 198.

10.Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, p. 45.

11.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 49.

12.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 25.

13.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 25.

14.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 25.

15.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 25.

16.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 25.

17.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 25.

18.James Snell has argued that the defence of marriage, by conservatives and reformers alike, was a defence of the status quo. See "'A White Life for Two': The Defence of Marriage and Sexual Morality in Canada, 1890-1914," in *Canadian Family History: Selected Readings*, edited by Bettina Bradbury (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1992).

19.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 49.

20.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 25.

21.Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, p. 49.

22.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 25.

23.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 49.

24.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 50.

25.Apparently, by 1926 Murphy was supporting sterilization laws in public, though not in print. By this date, support for sterilization laws was well established in Alberta, with the UFWA, the Edmonton Local Council of Women, some Alberta Women's Institute locals, WCTU, Women's Section of the Dominion Labour Party (Calgary), out in favour. From Ruth Marin MacDonald, "A Policy of Privilege: The Alberta Sexual Sterilization Program 1928-1972"(M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1996), chap. 2.

26. Hobbs, "Equality and Difference," p. 217.

27.Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History*, 2nd ed., p. 308.

28.Hobbs, p. 213.

29.Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (1987; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 378.

30. Gillian Creese, "The Politics of Dependence: Women, Work and Unemployment in the Vancouver Labour Market Before World War II," in *British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women*, edited by Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1992), p. 379.

31.Hobbs, p. 217.

32.Murphy, "Matrimony and the Matter of Money,"*Western Home Monthly*, April 1932, p. 12.

33.Strange, "Introduction," *Toronto's Girl Problem.*

34.Murphy, "Married Women and School Teachers," p. 50.

35.Murphy, "Matrimony and the Matter of Money," p. 58.

36.Murphy, "Matrimony and the Matter of Money," p. 12.

37.Emily Murphy, "Matrimony and the Matter of Money," p. 12.

38.Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, p. 46.

39.Murphy, "Matrimony and the Matter of Money," p. 58.

40.Murphy, "Matrimony and the Matter of Money," p. 58.

41.For instance, in 1914 she had written that "even the farmers" went over to the union "enemy." Murphy, *Seeds of Pine*, p. 170.

42.Murphy, "Matrimony and the Matter of Money," p. 12.

43.Murphy, "Matrimony and the Matter of Money," p. 12.

44.Murphy, "Matrimony and the Matter of Money," p. 12.

45.Strong-Boag, "'Ever a Crusader'," p. 311.

46.Murphy, "Matrimony and the Matter of Money," p. 54.

47.Murphy, "Why Do Wives Leave Home?" *Canadian Home Journal*, Dec. 1926, p. 8. Murphy did not always express this conception of agency among third-world women. In "Matrimony and the Matter of Money" she summarized the sentiments of the British writer Mrs. Pethick Lawrence as calling for Western

women "to hold the pass for the women of the yet unawakened countries of Asia, Africa, and the backward parts of Europe" in advances in paid labour participation (p. 13).

48.Snell, p. 381.

49.Murphy, "Why Do Wives Leave Home?" p. 8.

50.Murphy, "What is Wrong With Marriage?" *Western Home Monthly*, July 1928, p. 7.

51.Emily Murphy, "Companionate Marriage: From the Point of View of Mother and Child," *Chatelaine*, May 1928, p. 4. Reformers in particular commonly believed that marriage was the "moral fabric" of Canadian society. Snell, p. 385.

52.Murphy, "What is Wrong With Marriage?" p. 7.

53.Emily Murphy, "Obedience in Marriage," *Western Home Monthly*, Sept. 1927, p. 38.

54.Murphy, "Obedience in Marriage," p. 38.

55.Murphy, "Obedience in Marriage," p. 38.

56.Murphy, "Obedience in Marriage," p. 38.

57.Murphy, "Obedience in Marriage," p. 38.

58.Murphy acknowledged that this definition was proposed by the supporters of companionate marriage, but she set it aside because she considered it to be trickery designed to make companionate marriage sound harmless. She proceeded to discuss companionate marriage as not entailing "a license, a ring, a clergyman . . . or even vows and benedictions." In "Companionate Marriage," p. 4.

59.Ben Lindsey, *The Companionate Marriage* (1927; reprint, Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Publishing, 1929), pp. vi, ix.

60.Murphy, "Companionate Marriage," p. 3.

61.Murphy, "Companionate Marriage," p. 4.

62.Murphy, "Companionate Marriage," p. 4.

63.Murphy, "Companionate Marriage," p. 56.

64.Murphy, "Companionate Marriage," p. 56.

65.Murphy, "Companionate Marriage," p. 4.

66.See "Are Marriage Vows Sacred?" *MacLean's*, April 15, 1923.

67.Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, p. 109 (footnote 60).

68.Murphy, "Companionate Marriage," p. 3.

69.Odem, p. 95.

70.Murphy, "Companionate Marriage," p. 4.

71.See Odem, chapter 4.

72.Murphy, "Companionate Marriage," p. 4. (In 1932, she explain her position as in favour of birth control, but opposed to abortion, and that she formerly, wrongly, equated the two. In Murphy, "Birth Control: Its Meaning," *Vancouver Sun Sunday Magazine*, Aug. 27, 1932, p. 5.)

CHAPTER 4

Interconnections Between Eugenics, Birth Control, Pacifism, and Feminism

In a series of articles published in the *Vancouver Sun* in 1932, Emily Murphy explicitly linked the themes of eugenics, birth control and pacifism. These in turn meshed with her feminist reform ideals. This chapter will outline the background of these philosophies and how Murphy's perspective compares with them. In many regards her ideas, particularly her pacifism, were outside the status quo. However, she believed in the commonly-held presumption that the human race was degenerating. Along with the rest of mainstream society, she participated in the debate as to why this was so, and what should be done about it. As she also believed that women should have access to birth control, it became necessary to deflect blame for race degeneration from middle-class women, whose fertility limitation was pointed to as causing the "best stock" to die out. Murphy shifted the blame for degeneration onto an ambiguous group designated as "the feebleminded," or "the unfit." She went so far as to adopt the popular "solution" of the sterilization of the unfit. While she explicitly removed overt race discrimination from her eugenic ideas, she still supported a hierarchical ranking of humanity, which prevented the liberation of all women equally.

The eugenics movement was, until the later 1930s, populated by socialists and progressive social reformers as well as members of the far right.[1] The most basic tenet of the eugenics movement was a belief in the possibility of the scientific improvement of the human race. Some eugenicists were concerned with uplifting all humanity, others with

enhancing their particular race or class. The most extreme eugenic measure was death for the racially, physically, or politically "unfit," as utilized by the Nazi regime. In Britain, right wing eugenicists argued that preventative medicine and state aid to the poor interfered with natural selection and thus were harmful to the progression of "the race."[2] Some socialists supported eugenics in its general goal of improving "the race" and conditions for the poor, particularly through family limitation.[3] In the Canadian context, the theory held appeal to socialists through to the early 1930s. For instance, Tommy Douglas, one of the founders of the CCF, submitted a 1933 master's thesis titled "The Problems of the Subnormal Family."[4] Many social reformers were interested in eugenics, hoping to improve the genes of tomorrow through environmental means. Nellie McClung, one of Canada's pre-eminent suffragists (and a good friend of Murphy's), believed in eugenics and sterilization of the unfit,[5] as did many female reformers and feminists.[6] Sterilization--set in opposition to lifetime institutionalization of the unfit--was viewed as a liberal notion.

The scientific validity of theories about what constituted being "unfit" or "feeble-minded," and ideas of heredity and the speedy multiplication of the "unfit," was almost entirely unquestioned by geneticists and other scientists through to the early 1930s.[7] Before World War II, sympathetic scientists did not hesitate to endorse eugenic social policy, including sterilization.[8] People who argued against eugenics and sterilization of the unfit thus had to do so on the grounds of humanitarianism and individual human liberties, not science. Historian David Barker argues that contemporary scientists should have been able to discern flaws of logic and scientific method in eugenic studies like

those done by the influential American psychologist Dr. Henry Goddard, but they did not.[9] Rather, their admiration for Goddard and his theories of heredity at times "bordered on the reverential."[10] Goddard, research director at the Vineland Training School for the Feeble-Minded in New Jersey, used his inmates to prove the inevitability and commonality of inherited "defects," based on theories of dominant and recessive genes (although he was not a geneticist). If the authoritative style of his writings convinced the scientific community, no wonder his lay audience was also convinced. Goddard made the prospect of the speedy and overwhelming multiplication of the unfit over the fit take on the semblance of absolute truth. Murphy was influenced by his work; for instance, she cited Goddard's opinion that all feeble-minded people were potential criminals.[11] While the fear of increasing numbers of the feeble-minded in society appears somewhat understandable in light of the authoritative marshalling of such supposed proof, the support of measures like sterilization did not necessarily follow.

The base of support for birth control broadened during the early 20th century. In the opening years of the 20th century birth control advocacy was limited, and was often "associated in the public mind with sexual radicals on the far left or with reactionary Malthusians on the far right."[12] According to Anna Davin, moderate reformers adopted the rhetoric of racial improvement in their support of birth control so that "measures could be rendered acceptable which otherwise would have smacked of socialism."[13] Famous birth control advocate Margaret Sanger--whom Murphy cited as one authority[14]--had early socialist roots. Anarchist Emma Goldman introduced Sanger to the idea that women's reproductive control could be an important tool of working-class revolution,

providing the power to limit the number of laborers produced.[15] Although Sanger was in her younger years a supporter of the radical International Workers of the World, by the late 1920s she had become a prominent and respectable birth control advocate by emphasizing its benefits to the upper classes. By 1936, the United Church of Canada supported birth control.[16] The McLarens assert,

> Birth control only became respectable in the 1930s. The depression and the spectres of working-class unrest and racial degeneration that it conjured up goaded eugenically minded businessmen, club women, academics, and clergymen into supporting a campaign aimed at lowering the fertility of the working class.[17]

This aim did not predominate in Murphy's support of birth control, as shall be seen.

While the Canadian pacifist movement was quashed by the patriotic fervour of World War I, pacifism regained "some respectability" by the mid-1920s.[18] It became a major issue uniting women activists after the war.[19] Women's reform groups like the WCTU and the NCWC--as well as church and western farm groups--struck up peace committees during the 1920s. However, the persecution that faced peace activists in the U.S. should not be forgotten, as the mood there would have affected Canadian activists. For instance, the American War Department put the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)--a group with Canadian branches--under surveillance in the early 1920s.[20] As well as being a feminist concern, Murphy's pacifism can also be viewed as part of the wave of interest in the "international order" generated after World War I in social gospel circles and promoted by Canadian religious figures in the 1920s.[21] After the Depression hit, pacifist women such as those in the WILPF extended their analysis to include the necessity of economic and social justice in the creation of peace, and engaged

in more radical, direct action.[22] Many less committed activists left the organized peace movement, and concerned themselves with the pressing day-to-day economic problems of those hard years.[23] By 1933 many locals of the NCWC, for instance, had dropped their peace committees.[24]

Links between eugenics, birth control and pacifism had been made decades earlier by the British "sexologist" Havelock Ellis. Ellis' philosophical system clearly influenced Murphy, who cited him in her *Sun* articles and declared he was "the world's greatest authority on sex."[25] In *Essays in War-Time* (1916) Ellis utilized eugenics to argue against the necessity of war. Ellis contended that war would serve only to stamp out the best "breeding stock," those who had been fit enough to get into the army.[26] For Ellis, eugenics (encompassing birth control for all) was one part of a reform program including state-provided mother's education and pre-natal and post-partum care.[27] Ellis further elaborated his philosophy in a 1921 book, *On Life and Sex*. He discounted the common whore/madonna dichotomy of womanhood utilized in the Victorian era, and argued that women were not naturally "pure."[28] He insisted on "the erotic rights of women."[29] Where in 1916 Ellis had only supported the segregation of the unfit,[30] by 1921 he was cautiously supporting voluntary sterilization.[31] He said that race concerns needed to be dropped from eugenics, as many "would-be eugenists" made uncalled-for value judgments on other races.[32] He denied that race suicide occurred as a result of using birth control.[33]

Murphy published a series of weekly articles in the *Vancouver Sun* from August to October of 1932, explicitly linking the themes of birth control, eugenics, and pacifism. This series was the last significant work she published before her death the next year. It

represented a maturity in her printed works as in this series she consciously attempted to integrate many of her current reform interests. The arguments in Murphy's *Sun* articles, quite complicated in their meshing of ideas, were presented in the following order: she first promoted birth control, as a sort of quality control measure for humanity, and as representing women's right to planned motherhood; she then promoted the sterilization of the insane and "unfit;" and finally she promoted the necessity of peace, and advocated women controlling their fertility to this end. In this chapter two other articles in which Murphy opposed war, published in 1930 and 1931, will additionally be utilized to add depth to the analysis of her pacifist beliefs.

Murphy's discussion of the "unfit" can be alarming to the modern reader. Her language was often singularly inhumane. She would refer to this indiscriminate group of the insane, the mentally disabled, and those with tuberculosis, epilepsy and venereal disease as "the offal of humanity," or liken them to "diseased and distempered cattle."[34] She went so far as to suggest that allowing the unfit to be on the loose and having unlimited numbers of children constituted "a biological horror."[35] She sounded both heartless and tasteless in her attempts at humour. For instance, she wrote,

> Stupid fathers with poor brain fibre produce stupid sons. In this connection, someone has tersely remarked that while the child of a crippled father cannot inherit his wooden leg, it is almost certain to inherit his wooden head.[36]

Murphy was not alone in her cavalier attitude. Angus McLaren points out a similar style in the writings of Helen MacMurchy, whom he identifies as one of the pre-eminent eugenics proponents in Canada.[37]

Murphy initially defended birth control as a eugenic measure, at the same time

revealing her fears of the destruction of the "better classes." Murphy claimed that civilization was bound to degenerate if the promotion of birth control was suppressed. She wrote,

> This is why [birth control] remains a secret with the intelligentsia or A 1 class, and why poverty-stricken folk and what we call 'the underworld' or C 3 class are debarred from its benefits. This is why the congenitally diseased are becoming vastly more populous than what we designate as 'the upper crust' . . . [which] is likely to become a mere toothsome morsel for the hungry, the abnormal, the criminals and the posterity of insane paupers.[38]

Murphy evidently believed in a genetic meritocracy with "human thoroughbreds" at the peak,[39] an ambiguous concept delineated by her own biased culture and class standards. Her standards were not overtly racially based, although Murphy's idea of the better classes was implicitly Anglo-Saxon.

Murphy's support of birth control, when underwritten with eugenic concerns, had only a superficial egalitarian reasoning. She believed that birth control could save the entire human race, and should be universally available. She wrote,

> Birth control . . . must be looked upon as a sacred crusade for the mental, moral, physical and social well-being of all classes and all nations irrespective of their religion, social rank or the peculiar [particular] pigment of their skin.[40]

Although couched in terms of equality here, Murphy's call for universal birth control had an element of discrimination. Murphy was convinced that middle- and upper-class women were already using birth control. Therefore, to prevent the proliferation of the unfit--whom Murphy believed were more likely to come from the ranks of the poor and non-Anglo-Saxons--birth control had to be universally available.

Murphy's feminist and pacifist reasons for supporting birth control tended to be

more egalitarian in nature. Murphy returned to her earlier stance, denying the threat of race suicide or the "yellow peril" (though she did not publicly explain this switch from her position in *The Black Candle*). She wrote,

> In all the articles appearing on race suicide in its relation to the yellow peril, it is either plainly stated or unmistakably implied that the whole trouble is due to what the writers call our 'under-population.' In a word, they give us a hint--nay, a command--that all white women must engage in an intense and rapid contest of procreation with the yellow, tan and black women in order that we may supply more and more airmen, bombers, trench diggers and other of the human instruments of battle.[41]

Thus Murphy clearly differentiated herself from other eugenicists--including some Alberta feminists such as the president of the United Farm Women of Alberta--[42] who were most concerned with the white race. In this instance her feminist view of all women as reproducers with the power to withhold future soldiers caused her to reject racist calls to increase the numbers of the white race.

Murphy's use of the phrase "sacred crusade"[43] in the context of birth control activism is significant, being a central catch-phrase of the social gospel. This practice of linking a secular reform to religious rhetoric gave the reform movement, according to Richard Allen, "an authority it could not otherwise command."[44] The last few years of her life saw Murphy using the language of social gospel in her reform writings more than she ever had. Religious rhetoric served to buttress her arguments on all sides. She utilized a convention pointed out by Mariana Valverde, that of welding morality and science in reform rhetoric to provide added authority.[45] Thus, Murphy combined reform interests, religious morality and scientific "proof" to form a powerful triad. She felt that limiting the spread of the unfit would help lead to the reformers' hoped-for establishment

of "the Kingdom of God upon Earth."[46] Murphy wrote in this vein:

> This aggressive movement for practical eugenics [birth control] is in reality a crusade for betterment and uplift, not a crusade for bitterness, maledictions, and barrages of mud. The spirit to be observed is that of the great On-Goers; the motto, 'No one can stand against those who come singing.'[47]

Her sense of righteousness led her to believe that she was engaged in a constructive improvement of humanity.[48] Social gospel activism on the Prairies was very prominent throughout the 1920s, and it is probable that by the end of the decade Murphy had been influenced by social gospel language. Also, Murphy's friend and co-activist Nellie McClung exhibited this same increased use of religious language in the later 1920s; it has been suggested this was "an angry and frustrated response on McClung's part to her increasing political ineffectiveness."[49] Despite Murphy's success with the Person's Case in 1929, she began to express frustration with the ability of legislation alone to change society.[50]

While Murphy no longer touted her earlier conspiracy theories of plots for the downfall of the white race, she certainly did not drop all her old prejudices. Her eugenic ideas were infused with anti-Catholicism and a belief that the unfit were more likely to come from the ranks of the poor or foreigners. For instance, Murphy wrote, "Nearly one-fourth of [Canada's] mental patients are incarcerated in the Province of Quebec where birth control is under the ban of theologians."[51] Such an alarmist presentation was extremely irresponsible, given that Quebec contained over one-fourth of Canada's population[52]--which Murphy did not mention. In her *Sun* articles, Murphy made a number of other disparaging comments about the Catholic church. For instance, she

suggested that Catholic refusal to sanction birth control was because of a backward reliance on Old Testament pronouncements. She wrote,

> [Catholics] tell us that one of the Edenic provisions was a command to 'be fruitful and multiply'--a command, it is claimed, which was the result of a pronouncement upon our Mother Eve. It must be remembered, however, that this edict was given to an underpopulated world--a world in which there were only two people.[53]

Murphy suggested that such biblical pronouncements, "thousands of centuries" old, were no longer suitable to the modern world where quality is more important than quantity.[54]

In a few instances, Murphy made references to the supposed threat to the "manhood" of Canada due to poor heredity.[55] This was no doubt intended to appeal to the sensibilities of her readers, but this strategy supported existing gender stereotypes of men as independent, and women as dependent.[56] Murphy cautioned parents that they should instruct their youths to marry wisely or they could end up helping to reproduce the 'unfit.' She presented a dual picture of the results of parents failing to teach their healthy youths "that they owe something to the race."[57] She argued that good parents would not like to think "of their boy going into the world and not being able to look after himself,"[58] if through their imprudence or ill luck he turned out to be feebleminded. Murphy called on people's fears of men not being "manly" if eugenic precautions were not taken. As for the daughters of the nation, Murphy suggested that their being unfit placed them in sexual danger, and that their parents would not be able to protect them from it if they were institutionalized.[59] She did not refer to the tragedy of women losing their ability of independent maintenance--not a persuasive argument with the general public.

For Murphy, the responsibility of motherhood and socially constructed qualities of

female-ness were closely connected to women's responsibility to end war. In 1930, Murphy posed in print the question, "Do Women Oppose War?", which she worked out in the form of a debate between various characters. "The Colonel" charged that women had supported World War I and were not very active in peace work after the war either. Murphy--speaking as one character in the dialogue--responded:

> In the throttling of war nothing would ever count but weight of power, and if there had been an equal number of German women in parliament, supported by a unanimous electorate of German women, things would have been different. Then they could have said to *Der Kaiser*, 'Wilhelm, this is our concern not yours. Speaking accurately, we women are the producers of the primal munitions of war--that is to say the soldiers themselves. Will you be good enough to retire and play golf for a while.'[60]

Murphy seemed to believe that women should have a particular concern for war as mothers, but she did not call upon an immutable mother-nature. Indeed, women's strong support of World War I made it very difficult to view women as inherently pacifist.[61] However, both moderate and leftist women peace activists continued to appeal to women's "special" qualities.[62] Murphy continued to believe these qualities were primarily socially constructed; for instance, she believed that the biological fact of motherhood did not automatically produce such supposedly female qualities as "piety."[63]

Murphy felt that women's *experience* as mothers gave them more sympathy for the preservation of life through peace. She wrote, "The principle of militarism is that the destruction of life, upon some occasions, is of more importance than its preservation. Women, on the contrary, stand--*or should stand*--for the preservation of life on all occasions"[64] [emphasis added]. Although Murphy did not believe women were inevitably peaceful, she identified militarism with male-dominated government. There was a

definite anti-male, anti-patriarchy tone to Murphy's pacifism. She wrote that "no matter how much women might challenge the male potency of our civilization--their morals and their economics as these pertained to war--they did not [previously] succeed in getting far."[65]

In this same article Murphy buttressed her anti-war arguments by reiterating the sentiments of American women peace activists. Murphy echoed their questioning of why wars existed "among men" throughout history. Was war a natural state of affairs,

> "Or is there a more sinister cause? Is it the hope of profit by war-supply interests? . . . Or is it an economic demand?" Do Americans secretly expect military protection for cases of emergency in other lands where they have invested in gold, copper, silver, iron, oil or nitrates?[66]

Murphy was obviously impressed by American women's efforts and supported their economic analysis of the causes of war. Murphy feared that militarism was escalating dangerously, and she expressed alarm at the world build-up of armaments. She proposed that "absolute disarmament" was the only way to ensure world peace and that, as the most powerful nations, the U.S. and Britain should lead the way.[67] However, her radical peace proposal was tempered somewhat by her inclusion of "the Colonel's" opinion that one should only advocate peace in peace-time, and patriotically support one's country once war is declared.[68] Murphy's character in the article did not argue this point. By thus making her article palatable to the more general population she lessened the potential impact of her pacifism.

Murphy opposed war both as a women's rights activist and as a Christian. In 1931 Murphy wrote an article suggesting that unless Christian churches adopted a pacifistic

stance they were destined for oblivion. She appealed to the history of Christian pacifism that she felt was exhibited by the early church, and called for a return to this position.[69] She criticized the modern Church for its support of war. While in 1930 the Church of England declared its opposition to war, Murphy pointed out the fact that no practical measures whatsoever were resolved to ensure the church stayed out of future wars.[70] Many other religious Canadian women shared her concerns: 103,000 United Church women signed a disarmament petition in 1932.[71] Murphy questioned how the clergy would be educated to pacifist views, and "protected against the slogans, half-truths, and ready-made opinions of propagandists who manipulate the public mind."[72] She questioned the practice of hanging "war-flags" in churches and praying for military success.[73] And she asked, "Would the Church protect the conscientious objector against the State?"[74] As a means of winning over the religious reader she suggested that pacifism represented an opportunity for the Church to attain "spiritual eminence . . . and mundane power,"[75] and to infuse the "love and good-will" of Christianity into secular government.[76]

Murphy closely linked birth control with women's power to prevent war. Murphy placed the blame for the repression of birth control information on those elements of "the church, the state, and the militarists" who would fuel the war machine.[77] Through birth control Murphy believed that women had the power "to effectively stay the ravages of war, plague and famine," and that God in fact called on women to do so.[78] She felt that birth control gave women the possibility of changing the militaristic system of government practised by the men in power. As a feminist, Murphy was faced with the challenge of countering the influential statements of, for instance, the eugenically-minded

American president Theodore Roosevelt. He proclaimed, "The woman who flinches from childbirth stands on a par with the soldier who drops his rifle and runs in battle."[79] He made it clear that babies were wanted for future wars. In Canada, too, reproduction was linked to racial and imperial duties.[80] From a pacifist perspective, Murphy argued that unlimited babies should *not* be produced, as they would indeed be the instruments of later wars. She wrote,

> Who among us could have believed that those physicians . . . were to discover . . . the secret of birth-control, and to actually disclose it to mothers so that they need not rock the cradles at all unless prepurposed or disposed; that they need no longer create a surplusage of babies for cannon fodder. . . . For the future, and for the first time in the world's history, women have this matter in their own hands.[81]

This type of pacifist argument for birth control has been ascribed to both socialist feminists,[82] and to the radical women of the WILPF.[83]

While in many ways Murphy's analysis of and objections to war were quite complex, she relied heavily on the principle of over-population as being directly linked to war and economic problems. Her logic could became rather twisted. For instance, she listed the birth rates of various European nations, and how this precisely related to their participation in World War I. She adopted the opinion of Margaret Sanger, whom Murphy quoted as determining that "the countries with the lowest birth rate survived the ordeal."[84] She believed, at least in part, that "nations make war on other nations to make room for their swarming populations or to sell munitions."[85] She believed that overpopulation was the greatest cause of war and poverty, and thus if all women had access to birth control, war and hunger could be abolished.

Murphy's belief in over-population as responsible for poverty and war had some resemblance to old Malthusian ideas--she mentioned Malthus in passing[86]--but there were very significant departures. In his *Essay on Population* (1798), T. R. Malthus attributed all misery and poverty to over-population. Early Malthusians believed that poverty and war were natural checks on over-population, and that social reform was interfering with the proper workings of nature. Poverty was seen as an individual, not societal, failing. By the late 19th century, utilitarian Malthusians believed in the moral and social necessity of contraception, but that legalizing contraception was still the only reform necessary to alleviate poverty.[87] Murphy is most directly linked to Malthusianism in her obsession with the root problem of over-population. However, as a social reformer she felt that contraception combined with a full arsenal of reforms was required to alleviate society's ills. War was thus rendered an unnecessary check on excess population and the poverty caused by it.

For Murphy, the support of birth control was a crucial element to a pacifist feminism. While she primarily advocated for birth control on eugenic and pacifist grounds, she also argued for it on the basis of its liberating potential for women. She felt that the use of birth control was quite revolutionary in giving women control over their bodies and child-bearing. "Yes, birth-control was a momentous discovery; the greatest of all the ages, and the one that will have the most far-reaching effect, in that it gives women the mastery over all the processes of life."[88] It appears it was quite unusual, even amongst feminists, to make such an unequivocal statement. The McLarens state, "The desire to protect women from the power of men and to promote their emancipation was rarely

articulated, prior to the 1960s, as a political program in Canada in defence of birth control or abortion."[89] Thus she moved beyond the typical feminist reformer promotion of birth control, which has been characterized as stressing "their concern for the improved health and well-being of women and children."[90]

Murphy showed some sympathy for the plight of the poor and the economic burden of a large family. She wrote that the poor had a right to resent the lower fertility of the rich, and their subsequent higher standard of living.[91] She believed in the power of birth control to ease the situation of the working classes, enhanced by her realization of the poverty brought on by the Depression. Murphy sarcastically pointed out the selfish interests of industrialists and capitalists, whom she vigorously opposed. "Nowadays, there are certain woe-begone factions . . . [who] can only add to their wealth and prestige by an increase in the birth rate,"[92] she wrote. Murphy came to a fairly radical, anti-state analysis of the Depression. She wrote, "We find the Church, the State and the Militarists trying to speed up the cradle-rockers and succeeding so well that, today, at least ten million of the cradle graduates [in North America?] are workless, hungry and desperate."[93] Murphy determined that unemployment was not the fault of the workers, but of the system. Indeed, the government did have use for the unemployed millions less than a decade later. This reserve labour force, with little maintenance cost for the government during the lean Depression years, served as munitions workers and cannon fodder in World War II.

Murphy explicitly linked eugenics, birth control, pacifism and feminism in the articles published at the end of her life. In the process, when she tried to turn the

powerful "scientific" doctrine of eugenics to the advantage of women, her feminism was then limited by eugenic ideas which emphasized hierarchies of biological worth within humanity. The rights of a potentially large segment of the population--whosoever might be deemed unfit from the perspective of a primarily Anglo-Saxon middle- and upper-class group--were summarily dismissed. As long as the "feebleminded" and their hyper-fertility could be blamed for humanity's deteriorating condition, "fit" women could free themselves from compulsory motherhood and embrace birth control. As Murphy believed in the dominant idea of societal degeneration, she shifted the blame onto the mentally and physically unfit and advocated the draconian solution of sterilization. Her eugenic views were not based on fears of the white race being wiped out; rather, she feared that the educated classes in what she perceived as a genetic meritocracy would be devoured by the ever-increasing masses of the unfit. Her version of eugenics also had a symbiotic relationship with pacifism. The unchecked production of babies was unnecessary--in fact counter-productive--if one did not believe in war, as a larger population would simply be used to swell the army's ranks. Birth control could serve both to limit the numbers of the unfit and to eliminate war.

1.Michael Freeden, "Eugenics and Progressive Thought: A Study in Ideological Affinity," *Historical Journal*, vol. 22 no. 3 (1979), p. 668.

2.Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," *History Workshop* 5 (spring 1978), p. 19.
The term "the race" was used to refer sometimes to the human race, sometimes the white or "Anglo-Saxon race," or the particular race the speaker felt herself or himself to belong to.

3.Davin, p. 18.

4.McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, pp. 8-9.

5.McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, p. 80.

6. Ruth MacDonald determined that in Alberta--unlike the rest of Canada where medical experts predominated--"maternal feminists" dominated the sterilization campaign. In "A Policy of Privilege," p. 43.

7.Barker, "The Biology of Stupidity," p. 373.

8.Barker, p. 367.

9.Barker, p. 359.

10.Barker, p. 353.

11.Emily Murphy, "Should the Unfit Wed?" (part 2) *Vancouver Sun Sunday Magazine*, Sept. 17, 1932, p. 2.

12. McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, p. 2.

13.Davin, p. 16.

14.Murphy, "Birth Control: Its Meaning," p. 5; Murphy, "The Cradle-Rockers and War: Does the Hand that Rocks the Cradle Rule the World?" *Vancouver Sun Sunday Magazine*, Sept. 24, 1932, p. 5.

15.Ellen Chesler, *Woman of Valor: Margaret Sanger and the Birth Control Movement in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 86.

16.McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, p. 120.

17.McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, p. 13.

18.Barbara Roberts, "Women's Peace Activism in Canada," *Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics*, edited by Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 286.

19.Thomas P. Socknat, "For Peace and Freedom: Canadian Feminists and the Interwar Peace Campaign," *Up and Doing: Canadian Women and Peace*, edited by Janice Williamson and Deborah Gorham (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1989), p. 69.

20.Joan M. Jensen, "All Pink Sisters: The War Department and the Feminist Movement in the 1920s," *Decades of Discontent: The Women's Movement, 1920-1940*, edited by Lois Scharf and Joan Jensen (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983), p. 210.

21.Thomas P. Socknat, *Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 94.

22.Thomas Socknat, "For Peace and Freedom," pp. 78-79.

23. Barbara Roberts, "Women's Peace Activism in Canada," p. 291.

24. Barbara Roberts,"Women's Peace Activism in Canada," p. 291.

25. Murphy, "The Cradle-Rockers and the War," p. 5.

26.Havelock Ellis, *Essays in War-Time*, (London: Constable and Company, 1916), p. 33.

27.Ellis, *Essays in War-Time*, p. 210.

28.Ellis, *On Life and Sex* (1921; reprint, New York: Signet, 1957), p. 38.

29.Ellis, *On Life and Sex*, p. 45.

30.Ellis, *Essays in War-Time*, p. 99.

31.Ellis, *On Life and Sex*, p. 220. In a 1916 reform article in a Manitoba newspaper, it was suggested that sterilization "has been proposed. But general sentiment is so strong against such a measure that its adoption is not practicable." From "Proper Treatment for Our Mental Defectives," *Manitoba Free Press*, Nov. 15, 1916, p. 11. In a 1920 article, Murphy still only supported the segregation of the unfit: "A Straight Talk on Courts," p. 57.

32.Ellis, *On Life and Sex*, pp. 222-3.

33.Ellis, *On Life and Sex*, p. 108.

34.Emily Murphy, "Should the Unfit Wed?" (part 1) *Vancouver Sun Sunday Magazine*, Sept. 10, 1932, p. 4.

35.Murphy, "Should the Unfit Wed?" (part 1), p. 4.

36.Murphy, "Sterilization of the Insane," p. 3.

37.McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, p. 11. (Unlike Murphy, Helen MacMurchy was opposed to birth control, especially for the upper classes. McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, pp. 44-45.)

38.Murphy, "Should the Unfit Wed?" (part 2), p. 2.

39.Murphy, "Sterilization of the Insane," p. 3.

40.Murphy, "Should the Unfit Wed?" (part 2), p. 2.

41.Murphy, "Over-Population and Birth Control," *Vancouver Sun Sunday Magazine*, Oct. 1, 1932, p. 2.

42. Margaret Gunn, president of the United Farm Women of Alberta, explicitly called for the elimination of the "racially inferior," in a 1925 address. From Ruth MacDonald, "A Policy of Privilege," p. 57.

43.Murphy, "Should the Unfit Wed?" (part 2), p. 2.

44.Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-28* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 3.

45.Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*, p. 49.

46.Emily Murphy, "Sterilization of the Insane," p. 3.

47.Murphy, "Should the Unfit Wed?" (part 2), p. 2.

48.Valverde has pointed out this "constructive" aspect of reform in *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*, p. 63.

49.Randi R. Warne, *Literature as Pulpit: The Christian Social Activism of Nellie L. McClung* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1993), p. 60.

50. For instance, it has been demonstrated in this thesis that Murphy was disillusioned at women's apathy in the face of attempts to bar them from teaching positions, when women's recently-won right to vote gave them the power to prevent anti-woman candidates from being elected (see chap. 4). As well, by the late 1920s she was discouraged that despite the many laws that had been enacted, the drug problem had not disappeared or even noticeably decreased (see chap. 3).

51.Murphy, "Sterilization of the Insane," p. 3.

52.In 1931, Quebec contained 27.7 per cent of Canada's population. *Census of Canada, 1931*, vol. 2 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1933), p. 3.

53.Emily Murphy, "Birth Control: Its Meaning," p. 5. This argument is almost identical to that put forward by Havelock Ellis, *Essays in War-Time*, p. 236.

54.Murphy, "Birth Control: Its Meaning," p. 5.

55.Murphy, "Sterilization of the Insane," p. 3.

56.Similarly, Murphy failed to consider the import of the gender gap in those sterilized; according to one contemporary source, 121 women and only 35 men were sterilized in Alberta between 1928 and 1932. From Helen MacMurchy, *Sterilization? Birth Control? A Book for Family Welfare and Safety* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1934), p. 23.

57.Murphy, "Should the Unfit Wed?" (part 1), p. 4.

58.Murphy, "Should the Unfit Wed?" (part 1), p. 4.

59.Murphy, "Should the Unfit Wed?" (part 1), p. 4.

60.Emily Murphy, "Do Women Oppose War?" *Canadian Home Journal*, Nov. 1930, p. 7.

61. Barbara Roberts, p. 277.

62.Veronica Strong-Boag, "Peace-Making Women: Canada 1919-1939," in *Women and Peace: Theoretical, Historical and Practical Perspectives*, edited by Ruth Roach Pierson (London: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 182.

63."Should the Unfit Wed?" (Part 1), p. 4.

64.Murphy, "The Cradle-Rockers and War," p. 5.

65.Murphy, "The Cradle-Rockers and War," p. 5.

66.Murphy, "Do Women Oppose War?" p. 50.

67.Murphy, "Do Women Oppose War?" p. 55.

68.Murphy, "Do Women Oppose War?" p. 55.

69.Murphy, "Is the Church Committing Suicide?" *Western Home Monthly*, Jan. 1931, p. 50.

70.Emily Murphy, "Is the Church Committing Suicide?" p. 4.

71. Barbara Roberts, p. 291.

72.Murphy, "Is the Church Committing Suicide?" p. 4.

73.Murphy, "Is the Church Committing Suicide?" p. 4.

74.Murphy, "Is the Church Committing Suicide?" p. 4.

75.Murphy, "Is the Church Committing Suicide?" p. 4.

76.Murphy, "Is the Church Committing Suicide?" p. 50.

77.Murphy, "The Cradle-Rockers and War," p. 5.

78.Murphy, "Over-Population and Birth Control," p. 2.

79.McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, p. 15.

80.Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free'," p. 4.

81.Murphy, "The Cradle-Rockers and War," p. 5.

82.McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, pp. 77-81.

83.Socknat, "For Peace and Freedom," p. 70.

84.Murphy, "The Cradle-Rockers and War," p. 5.

85.Murphy, "The Cradle-Rockers and War," p. 5.

86.Murphy, "The Cradle-Rockers and War," p. 5.

87.Angus McLaren, *Birth Control in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), chapter 2.

88.Murphy, "The Cradle-Rockers and War," p. 5.

89.McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, p. 141.

90.Beth Light and Ruth Roach Pierson, eds., *No Easy Road: Women in Canada 1920s to 1960s (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1990)*, p. 85.

91.Murphy, "Over-Population and Birth Control," p. 2.

92.Murphy, "Over-Population and Birth Control," p. 2.

93.Murphy, "The Cradle-Rockers and War," p. 5.

CONCLUSION

Despite all its flaws, the feminism of the early 20th century contained liberatory possibilities for all women. This liberation was impeded by the continuing belief of the leading feminists--primarily Anglo-Saxon and middle-class--in hierarchies of race, class and ability. This was consistent with the dominant discourse of the time. Occasionally Murphy held out her hand across class or race boundaries in her search for sisterhood; but more often her belief in the bonds uniting women, combined with her prejudices, led her to downplay the significance of race or class differences at the expense of women less privileged than herself. Some of her reform interests, particularly anti-drug and eugenic activism, reinforced privilege and pointed out difference, again at the expense of women of colour, poor women, and women labelled "unfit." Like other first-wave feminists, she tended to conflate her concerns as a white middle-class woman with those of all women, thus limiting feminism's appeal and, in the long run, its success.

Murphy has generally been characterized by historians as a typical or even exemplary maternal feminist within Canada's first-wave feminist movement. This study of Murphy's published political writings shows that she rarely conformed to historians' idea of a maternal feminist. It is possible that the definition of maternalism requires a more subtle treatment. The importance of the difference between believing that women were biologically constructed to be more nurturing and peaceful, and a more sociological concern with environmental impacts on gender behaviour, needs to be explored. Murphy's discussion of women as mothers and wives was motivated by her interest in

women's shared experience, not biology. Due to her belief in women's agency, Murphy was more often aligned with the Progressive movement than with maternal feminism. Maternal feminists have been characterized as viewing women as passive victims of male lust, exemplified in the widespread belief in the 'white slave trade,' or forced prostitution. On the other hand, Progressives allowed women both criminal and sexual agency. Progressives believed prostitution to be a woman's choice, if a desperate or immoral one requiring reformative guidance. As Progressives shaped 20th century legal reforms such as the women's court, it is not surprising that Murphy should have been influenced by their ideas.

While most feminists of her generation concerned themselves primarily with the moral dangers of alcohol and the white slave trade, Murphy called up the spectre of the drug trade--a recurrent theme in the press and legislatures of Canada for decades previously--as society's greatest threat. The publication of Murphy's drug exposé, *The Black Candle*, coincided with a peak of nativist sentiment in Canada. In the context of the obsession Murphy had with pinpointing Chinese involvement in the drug trade, charges of racism against her are justified. However, Murphy believed herself to be open-minded, as opposed to those she accused to spreading racial hatred. Her stance of self-proclaimed benevolent analysis was quite typical for a social reformer, and her assertions appear to have been accepted by other commentators. In *The Black Candle*, Murphy expressed fears of white race and class degeneration, and she was alarmed by the idea of white upper-class women mixing with lower-class men. Murphy continued to believe in women's agency, even when it involved the use of drugs and mixing with the

underworld. The fact that Murphy explicitly stated that Chinese men did not entrap white women shows that she was not as racist as some of her contemporaries. However, Murphy's widely-read analysis of the drug trade and its racial implications meant that, despite her protestations, her book reinforced ideas of racial inequality, and helped fuel racial prejudice.

By the later 1920s and the early 1930s, Murphy had developed an economic analysis of the basis of women's oppression, and she was a vocal defender of married women's right to work. She recognized that employment rights were critical to women's equality. Along with other feminists of the time, Murphy utilized a pragmatic mix of arguments, ranging from women's inherent right to work to economic need, to the self-fulfilment and independence offered by paid work. Murphy continued to emphasize the latter argument even in the 1930s, when increased opposition to women in the paid workforce caused this to be a more radical stance, more often advanced by leftist women than liberal reformers. Defending the right to work had potential benefit for all women, even if Murphy herself usually did not make the leap beyond the specific circumstances of the women she was most familiar with--Anglo-Saxon and middle-class. Along with her interest in married women's right to work, Murphy was interested in the institution of marriage itself. She defended marriage in an ideal state, as she envisioned women economically and legally equal within it.

In the 1932 series of articles in the *Vancouver Sun*, Murphy presented a complex interweaving of ideas on birth control, pacifism, and eugenics. Murphy came to defend birth control on three grounds: eugenic, pacifist, and feminist. Firstly, she viewed birth

control (combined with sterilization) as a kind of quality control for the human race--that immigrants and the poor needed to restrict their fertility along with the middle and upper classes to prevent the proliferation of the "unfit." Secondly, she felt that women had the power to end war by curbing reproduction. Lastly, she believed that birth control empowered women to control their bodies and become mothers only voluntarily. In the pacifism she advocated in the 1930s--calling for absolute disarmament--she presented an immense challenge to the presiding order of society. Murphy's eugenic views, although intended to aid in the positive reconstruction of society, tended to support the existing social order. While she specifically removed racial criteria from her definition of the unfit, she did not drop the prejudice that these "unfit" were most likely to come from the ranks of the poor and the non-Anglo-Saxon. As she still supported hierarchies of worth within humanity, the liberatory potential of her feminism was limited.

This thesis has attempted to examine the racism and classism in the ideas of the first-wave feminists, while moving beyond the work of historians such as Carol Lee Bacchi and Mariana Valverde. Bacchi's book was limited because it focussed too much on the classism of early feminists, and did not ascribe any radical potential to their search for suffrage. Valverde's work also presents an imbalanced analysis of first-wave feminism, as it focuses primarily on its racist elements. An in-depth analysis of the ideas of Emily Murphy shows the classism and racism within early feminist thought to be more complex than has been allowed. For instance, Murphy considered herself less racist than some of her contemporaries. This seems to be the case in regard to her insistence that Chinese men did not entrap white women, as was commonly believed. However, her

distaste for white women having relationships with Chinese men was clearly racist. On the other hand, Murphy's feminism helped her to understand some of the economic bases of gender oppression, and to buttress a radical pacifism. Her ideas have thus been put into the context of the times, as part of a continuum of political beliefs. This study combines the challenge of searching for feminism's radical potential that is presented in Strong-Boag's conception of third-wave feminist scholarship, with the careful analysis of the racist and classist elements of feminism practised by Valverde. In doing so, the analytical perspective of this study moves beyond the work of both historians. This thesis has shown not only the flaws, but also reveals some of the possibilities for liberation contained within first-wave feminism. A new picture of a first-wave feminist emerges, one that challenges previous conceptions.

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