Matriduxy?: Tracing Colonial Adumbration in Australian Womanhood via a Psychoanalytical Reading of Christina Stead's *The Man Who Loved Children*

Theresa Holtby

Abstract: This paper surveys the ways in which women have been regarded, represented and treated in colonial and post-colonial Australia. In particular, the concept of matriduxy—the alleged dominance of women in Australian families—is explored, in part via a discussion of Christina Stead's *The Man Who Loved Children.* Possible connections between matriduxy and colonial conditions are identified, specifically in the context of the imperialist ideals of masochistic fantasy.

Keywords: matriduxy, misogyny, gender politics, masochistic fantasy, colonialism, Christina Stead

The unique socio-economic conditions of the first several decades of the colony of New South Wales have had fascinating and, apparently, ongoing consequences for the shaping of gender in Australian society. This discussion is confined to what is known or hypothesized of the social conditions affecting white women, since the effects of the invasion and occupation of Australia were (and are) very different for indigenous women, and lie outside the cynosure of this essay. This essay examines the concept of matriduxy—the alleged dominance of women in Australian families—and considers whether the attitudes of and toward convict and other pioneering women have contributed to the formation of modern matriduxy. It then surveys some of the attitudes of white men toward white women in the colonial era, and touches on the biases that may have (mis)informed them. It explores the claim of relational theorist, John Kucich, that masochism was a pervasive cultural force in the deployment of British imperialism, and searches for the outlines of masochism and matriduxy in Christina Stead's classic modernist novel of family life, *The Man Who Loved Children*. Finally, it reframes the alleged phenomenon of matriduxy within the broader Australian historical context.

Matriduxy

As stated above, matriduxy names the alleged dominance of Australian women in domestic matters. The term was coined in 1965 by American psychologist Dan Adler, to name a phenomenon he claimed was revealed by his research comparing Australian family dynamics with those of American and Mexican families in the 1960s. Adler claims that although Australia appears to be a patriarchal society, his findings contradict this appearance: "In Australia, since family leadership by the mother is clearly not a function of inheritance, legal structure or formal social organization, it would be misleading to refer to it as matriarchal. One might, instead, coin the term matriduxy to denote her powerful leadership functions" (153). Adler further claims that in some cultures:

> there is a difference between the true dominant family member and the one
> projected as a stereotype or national image ... by overstating the independence of

the Australian father, he is erroneously perceived as superordinate to his wife. In fact, however, the wife's leadership role in Australia, compared with other western cultures, is so prominent that it requires identification as the special social phenomenon which we call matriduxy. (155)

One of the latin roots Adler employed, *dux*, means "leader." However, Adler actually only showed that the mothers in his study had more responsibilities than mothers elsewhere, not greater authority. In her *Damned Whores and God's Police: the Colonization of Women in Australia,* Anne Summers describes Adler's claim as "much-quoted" (452), yet in the academic context, Adler's claim has been widely ignored, perhaps because, on at least one level, it was a misunderstanding. Summers asserts that Adler's concept of matriduxy "confuses activity with power," and fails to take into account factors such as economic dependence (452). That is, Australian women might be given more responsibility than other women, but this does not necessarily imply that they have more power than others.

Adler's concept of matriduxy was given mixed support by a Sydney Anglican Diocese submission to the Royal Commission on Human Relationships, which found that maternal domestic dominance exists in Australian families "not because of the male's greater respect for his partner but because of his own laziness and unwillingness to accept responsibility. The female isn't given pride of place in the relationship, *it's just that if she doesn't do it no one else will...*" (qtd. in Dixson 49, original emphasis). The Commission's finding confirms the existence of the phenomenon identified by Adler, but offers an explanation Adler did not: that is, that matriduxy is a product of the domestic irresponsibility of Australian males. The relationship between matriduxy and male irresponsibility will be explored below, but it will be helpful first to examine attitudes toward women in Australia since colonisation.

Conditions for women in Australia have long been paradoxical. Manning Clark describes Australian society as "notorious for the excesses of male domination," yet records that Australia was the second country in the world to give women the vote, and the first in which women attained the right to be elected to a national parliament (415). Social critic Donald Horne, while conceding that "men get the best of the bargain" in relations between the sexes, in that they have more options open to them than women have, states that "Australian women often rule the roost" (82). It might be argued that this is not contradictory: rather, that the extreme masculinity of Australian colonial society restricted women exclusively to the "roost"—the domestic sphere. In "Inside the Deserted Hut," for example, Sue Rowley delineates the genesis in the late 19th century of the dominance of the Australian domestic sphere by women, and emphasizes the centrality of spatial differentiation in the construction of gender difference (90). It is possible that Adler identified the phenomenon later discussed by Rowley. However, the term Adler coined for this phenomenon, "matriduxy," is misleading, in that it fails to convey the extremely circumscribed scope of the matron's rule within the home.

Adler claims that the alleged phenomenon of matriduxy contradicts the widely-held perception of Australian society as heavily misogynistic (153-5)—a perception given recent international publicity by then-Prime Minister Julia Gillard's "misogyny speech" in 2012. However, it may be that matriduxy is in fact just another face of misogyny. In *The Real Matilda: Women and Identity in Australia 1788-1975*, Miriam Dixson suggests that matriduxy exists only because family life is given lower priority than "pub, football, workplace and mates" in Australia than in "cousin communities" such as America, perhaps because here "concubinage, consensual arrangements and 'pairings' … were widespread

during 'formative' decades" (49). On this view matriduxy is simply the outworking of male devaluation of the domestic sphere. What other cultural influences may have shaped the development of "matriduxy"? Is there any evidence of a connection between the attitudes of men toward women in the first decades of the occupation, and this seeming paradox, matriduxy?

Being a Woman in Australia
As mentioned, Dixson argues that the degrading conditions to which women were subjected when transported to Australia were the origins of Australian society's continuing misogyny, positing that colonial attitudes toward women have resulted in a devaluing of family life in Australia, which renders the domestic space below the notice of men (49). Concerning the earliest colonial women, Robert Hughes states that "there was rarely a comment on colonial society, scarcely a passage of evidence to the various Select Committees on Transportation, hardly a tract or a diary or a letter home, that missed the chance to describe the degeneracy, incorrigibility and worthlessness of women convicts in Australia" (244). Summers argues that Australian women have been oppressed by their wholesale categorisation into one or other of the two stereotypes: damned whores (completely bad) and God's Police (completely good). However, she claims that this categorical binary was preceded by a period from 1788 to the 1840s wherein "almost *all* women were categorized as whores" and that this stereotype was applied to free emigrants as well as convicts (267, original emphasis).

Michael Sturma reports that historians "almost invariably present [convict women] as the most degenerate element in early white Australian communities. The portrait of a typical female convict depicts an incorrigible prostitute, an unmarriageable reprobate, and a corruptive force" (3). Summers implicitly accepts that many women in the colony were prostitutes, arguing that it "was deemed necessary by both the local and the British authorities to have a supply of whores to keep the men, both convict and free, quiescent. The Whore stereotype was devised as a calculated sexist means of social control and then … characterized as being the fault of the women who were damned by it" (286). Hughes responds to Summers' accusation: "The British Government did not send women to Australia to keep men 'quiescent' in any political sense; the lash could do that" (245). Despite his rejection of Summers' hypothesis that the whore stereotype was deliberately created to humiliate and degrade women in Australia (a view he believes serves a feminist bias), Hughes states that "there is no doubt that the whore-stereotype, accepted by the upper layers of a rigid little colonial society, wielded immense power" and remained "though gradually fading, as part of the design of Australian sexual politics for a century after transportation was abolished" (245, 248). As the nascent community at Sydney matured and transitioned from being a penal colony to a small bourgeois colonial Victorian society, the "damned whores" stereotype was gradually superseded. Colonial women, many of them "bush mums," came to be represented as "guardians of public morality" (Damousi 39). However, Hughes sees the stereotyping of Australian women as whores to have been active in this society until at least the 1960s.[1]

Interestingly, Sturma contends that the stereotyping of women convicts as whores was neither accurate, nor a conscious policy of the authorities (3). He posits that historians' biases regarding convict women were not so much biases as naïve or unthinking repetitions of the exaggerated reports of the 1837-38 Select Committee on Transportation, in which the women transported were described as "'with scarcely an exception, drunken and abandoned

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1 The last convict ship, *Hougoumont*, arrived in Western Australia in 1868 (Hughes 143).

prostitutes'" (qtd. in Sturma 3). Sturma explains that "it was in the interest of the committee to make conditions in Australia appear as bad as possible" to support its recommendation that transportation be abolished (5). Sturma demonstrates that the whore stereotype "emerged instead from the discrepancy between working-class behaviour on the one hand, and middle-upper-class expectations on the other" (4). That is, working-class mores allowed for cohabitation without marriage, whereas upper class observers named women who cohabited with men, prostitutes. This is not to say that no early Australian women were prostitutes: Joy Damousi explains that many were forced into prostitution or theft to pay for housing, because they were not provided with accommodation by the Government (35). In a similarly pessimistic vein, Hughes believes that women prisoners were ground down by a sense of helplessness, that English sexism was amplified in the penal colony, and that women "were treated as a doubly colonized class throughout the life of the penal system" (253, 258, 261). As mentioned above, Summers shows that the oppression of women in the colony was not confined to convict women (267). This is confirmed by Jan Gothard's *Blue China: Single Female Migration to Australia,* which records the experiences of some of the 90,000 working-class women who came to Australia as assisted migrants in the second half of the 19th century. Gothard's title comes from a statement made by a promoter of Canadian emigration, according to whom women were "like blue china, very valuable when sound, but very worthless when damaged or broken" (17). Gothard exposes the ways in which free migrant women were expected to submit to various forms of manipulation, oppression and control, in both their work situations and their personal lives, in return for the assisted passages they had received. Protection from sexual "damage" was used to excuse or justify the various forms of control exerted over them. In view of the later achievements for women's rights in Australia, such as suffrage, a question suggests itself: Is it possible that those with nothing to lose, such as women convicted of crimes or believed guilty of sin—the "damaged"—take more risks than their safer counterparts elsewhere, and discover in themselves unsuspected capacities?

Certainly, it would seem from Summers' analysis that women had little to lose. According to Summers, the universal binary depiction of women as all-good angels or all-evil demons has been twisted in Australia to make even the "angels" bad, in the sense that the pervasive distrust of authority in Australian society means that when women attain positions of authority, even if only within the home, they become doubly despised—first as women, second as figures of authority (248-9). Summers records that the "God's police" stereotype of women was promoted by the humanitarian worker for female immigrant welfare, Caroline Chisolm, who wrote that "good and virtuous women" were a necessary part of the "nucleus for the formation of a good and great people" (qtd. in Summers 11). Hughes also implies that women were expected to be influencers for the perceived good of the society: "Eve the Whore would keep Adam the Rogue from turning homosexual" (245). Patricia Grimshaw argues that the "idea that women could make men good was new" (89). According to Grimshaw, this idea was advocated by campaigners against the misuse of alcohol, and popularized by Chisolm's declaration "that good women were the agents of morality and civilization" (89, 94). However, as already mentioned, Summers argues that the Australian attitude of anti-authoritarianism renders the innovative "God's police" stereotype just as oppressive as the "damned whores" stereotype (248-9).

Just how effective were these stereotypes in oppressing women? Hughes recognizes that not all convict women were rendered helpless by colonial prejudice, but states that individuals "needed unusual strength of character not to be crushed by its assumptions" (253, 258). Damousi, however, argues that the attention of historians such as Portia Robinson, Babette

Smith, Monica Perrott and Annette Salt "to individual material success also narrows the range of issues we can explore … for it detracts from the power relations that shaped gendered identities in colonial society" (44). Damousi's argument highlights the danger of losing sight of the oppressed majority when focussing on the few women who managed to succeed materially, thus triumphing over the negative perceptions of the male-dominated society.

While the historians discussed so far have focussed primarily on negative attitudes toward women, some more recent feminist historians have viewed the lives of women in the colony more positively. Elizabeth Rushen, in *Colonial Duchesses*, argues that free immigrant women who married convict men still under bond "were able to take an enhanced role in the marriage partnership" (140). Rushen draws a parallel between the situation of women in New South Wales and that of Irish immigrants to America, quoting American historian Hasia Dinar: "'Irish men generally experienced a decline in status and power within their families as a result of migration, pushing women—wives and mothers—into authoritative roles far greater than they had experienced'" (140). In her history of early Sydney, Grace Karskens contends that women in colonial Sydney (convict and free) had greater legal protection than their contemporaries in England (329). As well as counter-balancing the overwhelmingly negative earlier histories of colonial women, Karsken's outlining of women's publically-upheld legal rights contradicts Sue Rowley's claim that women had power only "inside the hut." Karskens explains that the scarcity of women in Sydney and the concomitant high demand for them as wives and as workers enabled women to secure better conditions for themselves than they had had in their countries of origin. Karskens notes that the option of receiving government rations, whilst generally perceived to be demeaning, at least gave women an alternative to dependence on men (329). And Rushen states: "There was ample potential for the usual and accepted balance of power within the marriage to be overturned and for the women to become partners with their husbands in building a colonial life" (141). While this might seem understandable in relationships between free women and convict men, Karskens claims that egalitarian partnerships were already the norm among plebeian men and women: "Couples lived more as partners, albeit in different spheres. It was normal for both men and women to work, to keep 'separate chests' and have different circles of friends" (329). Karskens also shows that women frequently took their husbands to court for: domestic violence; stealing their property; or failing to maintain their children—and they often won (329). Karskens concludes: "Thus women in Sydney enjoyed legal rights unknown to their married sisters in England, who were, in the eyes of the law, one person with their husband" (329). However, these various curtailings of traditional male authority came at a price:

> Men of all ranks seem to have been resentful of this reversal of the 'natural' gender order of female dependence and subservience. Perhaps this resentment partly explains why they, to a man, wrote condemnatory descriptions of convict women and their colonial situation. (Karskens 329)

Concerning male resentment of women, Damousi argues that it is the "perception that convict women had the potential to dislocate the social order that makes them the repository of sexual anxiety for these commentators" (48). Of the first generation of Europeans in the colony, Damousi writes that travelling "to a remote and distant colony completely dislocated and reordered the world they had known," where convict women "destabilized masculine control" and "challenged and provoked the power of the authorities through a range of overt, subversive acts" (39, 58). Reverend Samuel Marsden described the behaviour of female convicts as "incompatible with the character and wish of the British nation" (qtd. in Damousi

54). Damousi perceives an "inextricable link between empire and sexuality" (40). Is there, then, a link between the forces shaping womanhood in Australia, and the ideology of British Imperialism?

Imperialist Ideology—Enter Masochism, Left Field
Literary scholar and relational theorist, John Kucich, argues that masochistic fantasy "played a vital role in the shaping and reshaping of social identity at the imperial periphery [and that] ... elements of masochistic fantasy resonated powerfully with both imperial and class discourses in late nineteenth-century Britain" (2). Carol Siegel claims that the term masochism has "no universally agreed-upon meaning" (2). Sigmund Freud's definition is influential: he defines masochism as "pleasure in pain," yet states: "of course, it is not the pain itself which is enjoyed, but the accompanying sexual excitation;" he proclaims that masochism is part of an active/passive binary: sadomasochism, and that "masochism is actually sadism turned round upon the subject's own ego" (*SE* 19: 161-2; *SE* 7: 159; *SE* 14: 129). According to Freud, masochism originates in an unresolved Oedipal complex: a male child's desire for sexual union with his mother, and the subsequent rivalry with, and even the yen to kill so as to replace, his father. In order to achieve "normal" heterosexual maturity, the child must successfully navigate this complex; he does this out of fear of retributive castration by the father (Freud, *SE* 19: 176). The failure to resolve the Oedipal complex results in psychosexual complications during adulthood, the most common being masochism (*SE* 19: 176).

The Freudian masochist becomes erotically attached to his father; to try to atone for this unspeakable desire, he unconsciously attracts punishment; he sees suffering as a sign of the father's love for him, and therefore something to be desired (*SE* 17: 113). However, Gilles Deleuze refutes Freud's assumption that a homoerotic desire for the father-figure is the main determinant in a masochist's fantasy (59). Instead, Deleuze's masochistic subject seeks expiation through brutal treatment from a powerful mother-figure for "his resemblance to the father and the father's likeness in him: the formula of masochism is the humiliated father" (60). As I have pointed out elsewhere, where Freud sees an unhappy man who shuns responsibility to try to escape his guilt, Deleuze sees a man who chooses to play an idealistic weakling as an elaborate cover for controlling others—most notably, his female partner (Holtby 8). Therefore, Deleuze's model affords more insight than Freud's into the dynamics of the masochist's relationship with the dominatrix: the cold and cruel mother figure chosen by the masochist, to punish him.

The framing of masochism as a cultural force rather than the sexual practice of individuals is dimly prefigured in both Freud's and Deleuze's accounts of masochism. Kucich describes masochistic fantasy as a "common and very powerful form of affective organization," with the trope of the "British Imperialist as victim" and of the literary fostering of "a fundamentally masochistic ethos of British masculinity, in which the ability to absorb pain stoically—or even ecstatically—was greatly prized" (2, 8, 9). Drawing on Ann Stoler's work, Kucich refers to the process of "the constant making and remaking of bourgeois identity at those colonial sites where it was most destabilized" (59). A wide variety of relational approaches to masochism exist, but all agree that "masochism should be understood within a narcissistic problematics, not a sexual one, and second, that omnipotent fantasy is the primary narcissistic compensation that masochism provides" (Kucich 22). Kucich asserts that "the relational perspective on masochistic fantasy offers powerful new instruments for cultural analysis" (28). Although his comments concern the Victorian era (1837-1901), Kucich's argument seems equally relevant to the colonial era in Australia (1788-1901), as the

ideologies he delineates did not spring up overnight, and must have had precursors and foreshadowings in earlier times. This supposition is supported by Kucich's assertion that if "masochistic fantasy served as an important means for organising what Cancadine calls the 'complex social hierarchy' of British colonial experience, it did so because it was firmly embedded in British imperial and social history" (4). Kucich regards masochism as "a fixed psychological language (rather than a fixed set of behaviours or a personality profile)" and therefore speaks of it as a fantasy structure (2). The understanding of masochism as a fantasy structure implies the intertwining of individual and social experience (Kucich 3). Kucich's focus is on the figurations of masochism employed in the class politics of imperialism at its peripheries, but his insights seem equally apposite to gender politics at the far flung edges of the Empire.

Kucich sidesteps Freudian and Deleuzean psychoanalytic controversies concerning the source of masochism, claiming that "masochistic fantasy is a symbolic medium rather than a fixed psychosocial entity" (251). He chooses, rather, to focus on masochistic *behaviours*: "A relational metaphorics can thus broaden the cultural analysis of masochism; but its assumptions about the origins and functions of masochism must necessarily remain provisional" (Kucich 21). Kucich further claims that a relational understanding of masochism does not make every instance of the voluntary acceptance of pain necessarily masochistic: "Only the conjunction of voluntarily chosen pain, suffering, or humiliation with omnipotent delusion—a conjunction that may bear an intermittent or partial relationship to specific physical or mental practices—signals the presence of masochistic fantasy" (26). Kucich identifies a "masochistic logic" in the culturally pervasive thought of eighteenth and nineteenth century evangelicals: "by associating pain with atonement, they upheld the notion that private, voluntary suffering promised salvation and vice versa" (49). He points out that the "evangelical tone that pervaded much of British culture from the late eighteenth century through the first half of the nineteenth influenced many who did not consciously share these principles" (48). Kucich's relational definition of masochism involves "the production of omnipotent fantasy by means of pain-seeking behavior," pointing out that masochistic fantasy "does not require a sadistic antagonist, more often than not, it takes nonsexual forms" (30, 28). In fact, Kucich states that contemporary clinicians have found that "sexual practices are among the rarest forms of what they would describe as masochistic behaviour" (21). In other words, the presence of social (and therefore public) masochistic behaviours does not necessarily imply a parallel private occurrence of masochistic sexual behaviours. Interestingly, by moving away from Freud's allegations regarding the Oedipal origins of masochism, relational theory reveals "a long tradition of masochistic representation, flourishing with unusual persistence in the British novel, which has been entirely obscured by post-Victorian culture's identification of masochism with oedipal sexuality" (Kucich 21).

It may seem counterintuitive to introduce a discussion of masochistic elements in literature to this discussion of social conditions for white women in Australia, but Kucich reminds us that "novels were instrumental in shaping late-century attitudes toward imperialism, a cultural fact that has long been recognized," and argues that for "purely historical reasons, then, the ideological impact of fiction on the course of British imperialism and nationhood deserves careful study" (15). Unlike Kucich, this article does not offer an example of "the ideological impact of fiction," but an expression of masochistic ideology *in fiction*, in order to discern possible connections of imperialist masochism with the concept of matriduxy. In the same way that T. I. Moore's *Social Patterns in Australian Literature* identifies aspects of Australian society reflected in literature, this paper examines an Australian novel for traces of the masochistic ideals Kucich claims to have been culturally pervasive in the colonies of the

British Empire. Though not fully subscribing to either Freud's or Deleuze's theories of masochism, my discussion highlights certain striking parallels between the role of the dominatrix in Deleuze's theory of masochism, and the alleged phenomenon of matriduxy, and will employ both Freud's and Deleuze's theories in this attempt to identify examples of masochism and matriduxy, portrayed in fiction.

The Oracle that is Stead's Novel: Matriduxy as Australian Domestic Ideology
The Man Who Loved Children (hereafter *TMWLC),* first published in 1940, contains the portraits of self-defeating Sam Pollit, and his wife, Henny, an (arguably) powerful Australian woman. The physical setting of the novel was transposed under pressure from Stead's American publisher from Sydney, Australia, to Washington, D.C. (Rowley, *Christina Stead* 270). Nevertheless the novel reflects Australian cultural norms, since it fictively recreates Stead's experience in her Australian family, merely superficially adjusting them to fit their relocation. In a letter to Richard Kopley, Stead writes: "Though placed in Baltimore and Washington, the original story grew in Sydney, Australia, a subtropical city (where 'Sam' was a government official)" (*Selected* 255).

The father of the family is Sam Pollit. Sam's complex personality, and his ambiguous role in his acrimonious marriage with Henny, form the foci of this analysis. *TMWLC* is a complex treatment of life in an Australian family in the first half of the 20th century. As Marilou McLaughlin comments:

> In 1940, long before Kate Millet used the term, this remarkable novel examined with exceptional artistry and insight the sexual-political struggle between men and women. The battle between Henny and Sam Pollit is an ideological one, and the issues are of power, exploitation, freedom, and slavery—elemental political issues confronted in the elemental social structure of the family. (30)

As well as affording a glimpse into the complexities of Sam's masochistic fantasy, the novel's "sexual-political struggle" makes it a particularly interesting text for the exploration of the historically-situated concept of matriduxy. The setting of Stead's novel precedes the 1965 appearance of the term matriduxy by over forty years, yet the novel's depiction of the contradictory place of an Australian woman in the domestic sphere anticipates this concept. Stead's realist novel depicts a domestic situation that arguably corresponds to Adler's matriduxy, and supports Dixson's claim that this phenomenon has its roots in the colonial era. Like the mothers Adler describes, Henny is a powerful woman. She is "beautifully, wholeheartedly vile: she asked no quarter and gave none to the foul world" (10). She "belonged to this house and it to her. Though she was a prisoner in it, she possessed it … Cells are covered with the rhymes of the condemned, so was this house with Henny's life sentence, invisible but thick as woven fabric" (7, 8). Henny's influence permeates the family home, and in some sense she even "possesses" it, yet she is not its mistress. Rather, she is "house-jailed and child-chained;" trapped and enslaved to a man whose masochistic irresponsibility makes her life hellish (34). The novel reflects an aspect of the lives of many Australian women: they may appear powerful within the home, but this is because their men do not equitably share domestic responsibilities, since they regard the domestic as inferior—the domain of women.

I have commented elsewhere that the contradictions inherent in Stead's characterisation of Sam, and the text's "raw presentation of the dynamics of familial power" make it an excellent

example of the masochistic impulse and the terrible effects these carry for both the perpetrator and his dominatrix (Holtby 2). Another reason for choosing to consider *TMWLC* in this context is its similitude to reality, reflected in Stead's conviction, voiced in a letter to her step-mother, Thistle Harris, that:

> the characters in *TMWLC* are very, very real: recreated, but real … I am opposed to inventing in life. Life is so strange and we know it so little, that nothing is needed in that direction, we need only study … [An] intelligent ferocity ... is my aim … [*TMWLC*] is terribly lifelike. (qtd. in *Selected* 236-7)

Jonathan Franzen describes the Pollit family as "too human to fit into a syllabus," and perceives that Stead's portrayal of Sam is brilliant in its depiction of his misogyny and tyranny, yet simultaneously brilliant in "illuminating the weakness and fear and need at the heart of the patriarch, and making us pity him even as we hate him" (1). Whilst Sam does not conform completely to Freud's Oedipal model of masochism, nor to Deleuze's model, he does, however, exhibit several masochistic behaviours and attitudes. Simultaneously, Henny's coldness and cruelty seem uncannily fitting for her role as the Deleuzean dominatrix.

Joseph Boone reads Sam as a narcissistic sadist (518), but this does not preclude reading Sam as a masochist, since Freud taught the co-existence of sadism and masochism (*SE* 7: 159). However, Franzen's perception of Sam's more vulnerable aspects highlights the shortcomings of understanding Sam simply as a narcissistic sadist. Sam's self-defeating behaviour, for example in refusing to explain his innocence of the accusations of malfeasance at work even though the refusal will cost him his job (317), speaks more obviously of masochism than of sadism. This episode displays another aspect of the Freudian masochist: irresponsibility. According to Freud, the passivity of masochism produces irresponsibility; the masochist attempts to escape his feelings of guilt by avoiding taking action, the logic being that if he does not act, he cannot be guilty. Irresponsibility is a trademark of the moral masochist (*SE* 17: 114). As well as being irresponsible, Sam is fascinated by Fate; Freud hypothesizes a connection between irresponsibility and Fate, in the unconscious guilt of the moral masochist (Holtby 4). Sam's refusal to explain himself at work deprives the family of their means of support, yet Sam wishes he could increase his suffering by going to gaol for his ideals (317). Sam offloads the responsibilities of his position as patriarch, but will not share the concomitant privileges with Henny (Holtby 6). Like the evangelically-influenced masochistic fantasies of voluntary suffering leading to salvation that Kucich describes, Sam believes that his "truth crushed to earth will rise again" (Stead 514). Just as the Freudian masochist interprets any instance of suffering as a sign of the oedipal father's love for him, Sam interprets Henny's attack upon him with a knife as a sign of her love for him (145). In fact, this scene hints at its connection with the symbolic realm of the psychosexual when the narrator says that "this was a conflict on another plane" (144). Corresponding to the masochistic fantasy of omnipotence that Kucich identifies, Sam's dream of an ideal world of peace, love and understanding (49) is accurately discerned as a dream of omnipotence (but only for Sam) by his daughter, Louie, who precociously suggests that he call his "system" "Monomania" (50). Louie's view of Sam's desire for power points to the sort of masochistic fantasy of omnipotence Kucich finds pervasive in characters portrayed by the Victorian authors he analyzes.

Deleuze barely comments on the consequences of the masochistic arrangement for the dominatrix. Perhaps these are, in effect, occluded from Deleuze's view by his focus on the masochist himself. Siegel argues that Deleuze's theory implies that a woman "is only a mask

through which [the male masochist] speaks" (51). Louie angrily exclaims to Sam that "everything has to be what you say" (523). She is frustrated by Sam's ventriloquism, typical of the puppet-master dimension of masochism Siegel conveys. Siegel writes that whilst Deleuze's analysis of masochism relies heavily on Freud's "comfortingly familiar" terms and ideas, his most original claim is that "masochism can best be understood as an indirect means to power over others" (110-111). That is, masochism facilitates (or even equates to) manipulation.

As well as affording insight into the masochist's manipulative relationship with his most significant other, which Freud's theory does not, Deleuze's theory of masochism hypothesizes connections between masochism and society in its historical context. Ian Buchanan claims that Deleuze's "stunning insight ... is that … [masochism is] a highly evolved response to certain very specific conditions of the world-historical" (112). That is, Deleuze's understanding of masochism does not suffer from the ahistorical disembodiment afflicting Freud's, since, like Kucich, Deleuze sees masochism as the repercussion of historical forces. Because many of the distinguishing behaviours and characteristics of the masochist described by Deleuze are uncannily reproduced in Stead's portrayal of Sam, it seems reasonable to conjecture that male masochism is an historical cultural element, captured naturally in Stead's fictionalized depiction of life in her childhood family home. Instead of the utterly pathetic masochist Freud describes, Stead depicts a deluded idealist who is convinced that his innocence and the inevitable triumph of Truth will bring about his vindication or success (Holtby 9). There is evidence that decades before Deleuze described the masochist's deployment of weakness and idealism to manipulate others, Stead depicted just such a character (Holtby 8). Stead commented that *TMWLC* "was written as a true tragedy and a description of the role of governor of the family that present society gives to the male"—evidence that she conceived of Sam's self-defeating behaviour as largely the result of coeval social forces (qtd. in H. Stewart 1). It would therefore be useful to briefly survey some historical factors that could predispose Australian men to embracing masochistic ideals, since, as Stead claims: "Patriotism is strangely woven into our secret selves" (*Selected* 211).

Australian Patriarchy and Masochism

Suzanne Stewart claims that "from its very inception, the term 'masochism' represented both a fundamental developmental aspect of human sexuality and a diagnosis of a concrete historical configuration" (39). The Europeans who were transplanted (some voluntarily, some involuntarily) inevitably imported aspects of this European cultural malaise to Australia.[2] In the remoteness and geographical bizarreness of the ancient *Terra Australis Incognita,* the tendency toward masochism was exacerbated by the Europeans' extreme sense of exile from their physical homelands. Siegel writes that the position of the exile is perhaps the "quintessential modernist position ... removed from the past but not cut off from it: looking back, vacillating between longing and repulsion, alienated from but contemplating something that was or could have been home" (50). Male masochism "suggests such exile in that it simultaneously acknowledges and moves away from paternal power" (Siegel 50). If cultural conditions in Europe were conducive to the development of masochism, this must have been doubly the case for the European colony in Australia, where the notion of exile has been a potent element of social consciousness since the European invasion in 1778, for voluntary

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2 I refer to the various waves of European immigration to Australia that followed the abolition of transportation of convicts to the Australian colonies in 1868. Some immigrants chose to come, but others were forced to do so by wars, various forms of persecution, or economic hardship (Clark 141, 302, ff).

and involuntary exiles alike.

Siegel offers intriguing insights into the parallels between masochism and the psychology of the exile: "Like lands conquered by social rebels, the beloved woman becomes the ground on which man enacts his defiance of the parent-country" (38). This connection between exile and masochism has obvious application and cogent explanatory power for the hypothesized link between masochism and matriduxy in Australia. Men's sense of exile ricocheted on women: Damousi points out that the convict women in Australia "coalesced anxieties about disintegration and possibly abandonment, potent fears for those living so far from home" (57). Siegel shows that narratives of masochism "provide surprising revelations about how members of a dominant group can satisfy their submissive desires without undermining their power or identity" (24). It is plausible, therefore, that Australian women were historically positioned for matriduxy, living within a society of exiles, saturated with the values of masochism.

Heritage of Punishment
In discussing the differences in attitude toward authority displayed by the sadist and the masochist, Siegel suggests that "masochism deconstructs the binary opposition between pain and pleasure and consequently renders meaningless hierarchies that depend on punishment" (32). Siegel's claim seems to have especial (historicizing) relevance in the Australian context, since, as a former penal colony, the fragments of Western nations violently transplanted to this ancient continent surely have deeper connections with punishment than many extant states. Stead believed that the "very gloomy background which is expressed by Marcus Clarke in *For the Term of His Natural Life* ... forms the background ... to an Australian's thoughts" (*Selected* 220). If Stead is right, it seems reasonable to argue that the Australian psyche, with its singular heritage of punishment, is fertile soil for the cultural force of masochism which is argued by Kucich to have shaped the colonial societies of the British Empire.

Deleuze's finding that the masochistic subject seeks expiation for "his resemblance to the father and the father's likeness in him: the formula of masochism is the humiliated father" exposes another potential link between masochism and historical cultural forces in Australia (60). Fascinatingly, Steve Connor links masochism and shame: "Masochism is the laugh of shame: masochism is to shame as laughter is to the degradations of the comic" (222). Shame has been a trope in Australian society from colonial times, originating in the convict "stain" and arguably reincarnated in the twentieth century as the "cultural cringe." Historian Babette Smith draws a connection between fear of the convict "birth stain" and the "legacy of national self-hatred" (xvii) which is often popularly referred to as the cultural cringe. The convict stain, and shame over familial criminal heritage, associated with such infamous episodes as the Myall Creek Massacre (the 1938 killing of twenty-eight unarmed Aboriginal men, women and children, accused of causing a cattle stampede), can readily be understood as forces motivating men to seek the humiliation of the fathers who bequeathed them such shame.

On close inspection, Deleuze's account of masochism aligns more neatly with Australian masculinity than Freud's does. Hughes observes that modern Australia originated in "a community of people, handpicked over decades for their 'criminal propensities' and for no other reason, whose offspring turned out to form one of the most law-abiding societies in the world" (xiii-xiv). Yet Australians are renowned for their larrikinism, or humorous disrespect for authority. Clark spells out the Australian tendency to mock figures of authority, claiming

that it is "Australian" to be "a tearer-down, a remover of masks, a stripper-away of all those elaborate forms and ceremonies with which men had protected themselves against each other down the ages" (357). This characterization uncannily resembles Deleuze's description of the maverick masochist, when he notes that the "element of contempt in the submission of the masochist has often been emphasized: his apparent obedience conceals a criticism and a provocation. He simply attacks the law on another flank" (88). The concept of masochism therefore provides a plausible reconciliation of the apparently contradictory Australian male impulses toward both obedience of and contempt for authority.

Conclusion

Suzanne Stewart shows that several of Freud's later writings "ultimately articulate a form of male subjectivity as masochistic," and "constitute a particular form of historical narrative, that is, a melancholic narrative of decline—the decline of [among others] self-sufficient masculinity" (117). Buchanan sees a similar societal (as opposed to individualist) element in Deleuze's treatment of masochism: a relevant difference between Freud and Deleuze, however, is that Freud appears to have sensed the connection between masochism and social forces without overtly pursuing it, whereas Deleuze makes this link explicit. S. Stewart's perception of Freud's insight into masochism as a symptom of wider social phenomena is intriguing in the context of the hypothesized connection between Australian male masochism and matriduxy: S. Stewart believes that Freud's masochism "pointed to a crisis in gender relations" (9). She agrees with him on this, adding that "masochism also became the site by and through which masculinity was not only redefined but again made hegemonic" by reorganizing "the relationship between culture, pleasure, and masculinity" (9). In other words, the disintegration of the paternal function became the new cultural matrix, the new means by which men were socialized and turned into cultural subjects (S. Stewart 9). S. Stewart herein highlights another important factor in the role masochism might play in producing matriduxy: Freud sees the masochist as relinquishing control of his destiny, but S. Stewart and Deleuze see that although he projects an appearance of relinquishment, he maintains control.

For Deleuze, the "ultimate paradox" of masochism is that power is conferred by "the male party" (93). This paradox is replicated in the case of Australian matriduxy: here, a man appears to voluntarily relinquish patriarchal authority at home. In reality, he retains the benefits of authority whilst burdening his partner with some of the responsibilities traditionally associated with his authority. As stated above, Adler "confuses activity with power" (Summers 452). In Stead's novel, Sam passively allows his job to be taken from him, and expects Henny to find a way to provide for the family, yet retains his authoritative position in the family. On this point, Deleuze's analysis of the masochist's condition is more helpful in establishing a link between matriduxy and masochism than Freud's, since it makes explicit the controlling role of the masochist in the masochistic relationship, despite the semblance of weakness projected by his ego. Neither Freud's nor Deleuze's theory of masochism perfectly fits Sam Pollit's character, but both afford insights into how masochism might produce matriduxy. Kucich's relational theory offers the possibility that masochistic fantasies are not necessarily oedipal in origin, but may be socially constructed (3). My argument in this article does not claim that all Australian men are masochists. Yet masochistic behaviours are evident in Stead's depiction of Sam, and there is a striking parallel between Deleuze's dominatrix and the matriducal Henny. Namely: both the dominatrix and Henny (the matridux) appear to dominate, but this is belied by the hidden power structures of their respective situations. The element of irresponsibility or disavowal fostered by masochistic fantasy supports Dixson's claim that Australian women are given

more responsibility, but not more power, than women elsewhere (49).

In conclusion, the female dominance Adler believed he perceived, and named matriduxy, was a mirrored reflection—that is, the image is the reverse of what he saw. Arguably, the irresponsibility of some masochistic Australian men victimizes the women with whom they are relationally involved, by manipulating them into taking an inordinate share of responsibility in domestic relationships. Adler's (mis)interpretation of female domestic dominance as a sign of female power is a natural mistake, since Siegel calls male masochism "the most exaggerated gesture" of male deference to women (49). However, despite the appearance of self-abnegation in the masochist, Siegel argues that upon analysis masochism "shows itself … to be complicitous with the patriarchal power it seems to subvert" (49). The concept of masochism therefore offers a way to reconcile the ostensibly incompatible readings of Australian society made by Adler (matriduxy) and Summers (misogyny). Stead's novel demonstrates that matriduxy is the result of a complex and subtle interplay between historically situated men and women. It is clear that the phenomenon of matriduxy (albeit a misnomer), and the web of gender politics in which the phenomenon inheres, both had their roots in the colonial era. The shaping of womanhood in post-colonial Australia must be interpreted within the context of the opprobrious stereotyping of women—convict and free— that permeated the colonial culture, and the masochistic ideals that helped produce that society.

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Theresa Holtby is a creative writing PhD candidate at Western Sydney University. She is currently working on a novel set in Sydney 1791-1855.
17386193@student.westernsydney.edu.au