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# Olive Schreiner globalising social inquiry: A feminist analytics of globalisation

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## Abstract

Globalisation theory sees the processes of change it is concerned with as distinctively new, with a feminist analytics part of the newness of the current period too, focusing on some specific gender dynamics involved. However, the work of the feminist writer and social theorist Olive Schreiner (1855–1920) challenges, indeed overturns, such assumptions. Similar structural economic and political circumstances to those now called globalisation were the focus of Schreiner’s theorising, with her work demonstrating that ‘it’s been done before’ in the case of a feminist analytics of global social change. Also, Schreiner’s feminist interrogation of global change refused any confinement to gender (although it encompassed it), because for her gender was always already interconnected with class, ‘race’ and an array of wider structural forces and changes. Schreiner’s unfolding analysis of imperialism and the expansionist project in the period 1888 to 1913, and of war, peace and social movements in the period 1914 to 1920, are discussed, in particular by presenting new material from Schreiner’s extant letters and exploring the significant ways these add to the analysis in her published work. Over 5000 Schreiner letters are extant, are being researched by the Olive Schreiner Letters Project ([www.oliveschreinerletters.ed.ac.uk](http://www.oliveschreinerletters.ed.ac.uk)), and provide an unparalleled resource for exploring the emergent analysis of a key feminist theorist.

Influentially, Saskia Sassen (1998) has proposed that this current phase of global economy and society is characterised by discontinuities with earlier periods in relation to the gender dynamics of the contemporary de-territorial organisation of economic activity and political power. In so doing, she has also pinpointed what a feminist analytics of globalisation might be, with her particular concern what she terms the ‘unbundling’ of territoriality in relation to the global city and the ‘unbundling’ of sovereignty away from the nation-state, and the impact of such on gender relations, suggesting that,

The purpose is to understand whether there is gendering in these strategic dynamics and transformations, and if so, what a feminist analytics would be . . . Global cities [are] sites for the incorporation of large numbers of women and immigrants in activities which service the strategic sectors

1 . . . the transformation of sovereignty and the openings this has created for  
2 women (and other hitherto largely invisible actors) to become visible par-  
3 ticipants in international relations . . . (Sassen, 1998: 85, 86).  
4

5 In later work, Sassen (2006) certainly acknowledges the importance of  
6 ‘historical conjectures’ and ‘distilling’ broad sets of factors from historiogra-  
7 phy, and notes that there are in-between times and places where the binaries  
8 do not hold.<sup>1</sup> However, it is not so much developments in Sassen’s and other  
9 theorists’ of globalisation thinking we are interested in here, and more that a  
10 continuity across earlier and later work is that an analytics, a feminist analytics  
11 specifically, is seen to be part of the newness of the current period by globali-  
12 sation theorists. However, the example of the feminist writer and social  
13 theorist Olive Schreiner (1855–1920), whose thinking we go on to discuss,  
14 challenges and indeed overturns this assumption. Similar structural economic  
15 and political circumstances to those now called globalisation were the focus of  
16 Schreiner’s theorising, with the corpus of her work demonstrating that ‘it’s  
17 been done before’ in the case of a feminist analytics of global social change.  
18 Additionally, Schreiner’s feminist interrogation of global change refused any  
19 confinement to gender (although it encompassed it), because for her gender  
20 was always already interconnected with class, ‘race’ and an array of wider  
21 structural forces and changes.

22 Olive Schreiner was a South African socialist and feminist writer, the pro-  
23 totype ‘New Woman’ and a high profile political commentator and social  
24 theorist.<sup>2</sup> The social theory she produced between the late 1880s and 1913  
25 was concerned with capitalism in its imperialist phase and focused around the ways  
26 in which local/global were being reconfigured in the changing relationship  
27 between colony and imperial metropolis; the savagery of capitalism’s imperi-  
28 alist incarnation in extending its reach; the remaking of the city as an inter-  
29 national site of financial, communication, labour and other flows; and the  
30 imperial presence as a supra-power across different widely-separated colonial  
31 territories. Schreiner analysed such matters so as to deploy what would now be  
32 termed an intersectional approach. In her terminology, in the context of ‘local’  
33 capitalism in its imperialist phase the woman question, the labour question  
34 and the native question were indissolubly interconnected and had to be inves-  
35 tigated and analysed as such. The focus of Schreiner’s later social theory,  
36 developed between 1914 and 1920, changed with circumstances and the times.  
37 It was closely concerned with war, aggression, militarism and pacifism, includ-  
38 ing diplomacy and warfare as a kind of chess-game by the supra-powers that  
39 ignored suffering at local levels; the re-making of the relationship between  
40 men (literally) and the state, around legal compulsion, through conscription, to  
41 fight ‘for King and country’; the need for strong international social move-  
42 ments to counter the retrograde nature of local and supra-states; the rise of  
43 total war and the failure of international organisations to prevent it; and  
44 modernity and its wars bringing a radical break with the past. However, as with  
45 the earlier period, Schreiner’s analysis here too was a ‘joined up’ one which

1 perceived the interconnections and theorised their emergence and future  
2 ramifications.

3 Schreiner's theoretical ideas over both periods were developed in a cross-  
4 genre way and appear as readily in her novels and allegories as in her political  
5 essays and theoretical treatises. Consequently hers was not a conventional  
6 academic voice even when writing most theoretically (Stanley, 2002; Stanley  
7 and Dampier, 2008). Also, although we have separated them in order to point  
8 up developments, her ideas across both periods overlap and there are strong  
9 continuities in her thinking. Schreiner published considerably more than  
10 commentators focusing on her specifically literary writings recognise. The  
11 development of her ideas is present in an especially illuminating way in her  
12 letter-writing, which provides, not so much insight into her social theory  
13 written elsewhere, as a grounded and emergent social theorising in its own  
14 right but which to date has not been explored in such terms.

15 The Olive Schreiner Letters Project<sup>3</sup> is researching, analysing and will  
16 publish the complete Schreiner letters, exploring in depth her theoretical ideas  
17 in them.<sup>4</sup> There are over 5000 of these in around eighteen archives and some  
18 eighty or so significant collections across three continents.<sup>5</sup> Our analysis of  
19 Schreiner's letters will explore the major concerns of her theorising,<sup>6</sup> the  
20 'letterness' of Schreiner's correspondences and what an examination of chang-  
21 ing writing practices in this large body of letters can contribute to a theoretical  
22 understanding of epistolarity as an index of social change over the period from  
23 the 1850s to the 1920s. In this paper, we focus on what Schreiner's letters can  
24 contribute to understanding her analysis of the global and the changes it was  
25 heralding during her life-time, and the light thereby thrown on the character of  
26 the feminist social theory Schreiner produced, which was an encompassing  
27 theory of social life as a whole, a 'joined up' feminist analytics.

28  
29 *1888 to 1913: Analysing imperialism and the expansionist project*

30  
31 Across various publications dating from her return from Europe to South  
32 Africa in late 1888 up to 1913, and by means of her typical cross-genre use of  
33 different writing forms, Schreiner developed an analysis of what was happen-  
34 ing to South African society with its distinctive mix of peoples, the discoveries  
35 of diamonds and gold and, in the wake of this, the eruption of 'the modern' into  
36 its still largely pastoral economy (eg Schreiner, 1923a). She did so as 'a  
37 returned South African', someone with a distinctive viewpoint, producing a  
38 grounded analysis which used this particular viewpoint to contemplate the  
39 imperial metropole from a supposed periphery that was its 'local' core. In  
40 doing so, Schreiner produced what would now be termed a 'glocal' analysis, for  
41 her analytical concerns combined global and local and developed responsively  
42 around her increasing understanding of the changes occurring to the prevail-  
43 ing largely pastoral way of life for whites as well as black peoples in southern  
44 Africa as 'the modern' impacted upon it.

1        Such changes included: rapid industrialisation around the discoveries of  
2 diamonds and gold and the ingress of large numbers of miners, financiers and  
3 others; the eruption of a ‘local’ international finance centre in Johannesburg;  
4 imperial expansionism and the horrors of what this could mean ‘on the  
5 ground’ in massacres in Matabeleland and Mashonaland;<sup>7</sup> the expropriation of  
6 land and resources and the related creation of black peoples as merely ‘hands’  
7 within capitalist forms of production through the establishment of ‘com-  
8 pounds’ and migrant labour; the role of finance capital, monopolists, rings and  
9 cartels and making money for its own sake; the deliberate provocation of  
10 ‘local’ wars by the manoeuvrings of finance capital; and the need for political  
11 associations and social movements to support progressive change (Schreiner,  
12 1896; 1897; 1899). These all feature in Schreiner’s letters, which provide a  
13 sometimes startlingly prescient analysis of the changes then occurring and  
14 pinpointing of those then still to happen. Exploring her letters adds substan-  
15 tially to the analysis in her published work<sup>8</sup> since ideas expressed in the letters  
16 often predate their surfacing in formal publication. There are also ideas and  
17 analytical concerns in the letters that never saw publication, largely because of  
18 debilitating health matters that decreased Schreiner’s energies and prevented  
19 various publication plans from reaching fruition.<sup>9</sup>

20        Following Schreiner’s late 1888 return to South Africa, her letters became  
21 concerned with her developing thinking about the machinations of Cecil  
22 Rhodes within the framework of capitalist and imperialist expansion in  
23 southern Africa, the ruthlessness of this expansion, Johannesburg as a dis-  
24 tinctively new kind of world city, and the changing interface of the local and  
25 the global.<sup>10</sup> Schreiner saw Rhodes as instrumental in creating a system of  
26 imperial finance capital with powerful ‘clout’ on the ground in political life,  
27 impacting significantly on the economy of southern Africa and shaping imper-  
28 ialist expansion there. Rhodes played a very distinctive part in the imperial  
29 project and for Schreiner he represented a system which combined imperial  
30 expansion, finance capitalism, political power, cartels and monopolies, bribery  
31 and ‘squaring’:<sup>11</sup>

32  
33        . . . if the whole country with all its mineral wealth, mines, tramways, and  
34 farms, passes into a few hands ^of capitalists,^ freedom in the next genera-  
35 tion will be a dream of the past in South Africa . . . If only Dutchmen  
36 Englishmen and Natives would all see where the common danger lies and  
37 combine against the common enemy, which is not a person; but a system. If  
38 Rhodes were to die tomorrow, we should be free of the most energetic of  
39 the capitalists, but capitalism would be with us still! (OS to Betty Molteno,  
40 1 March 1898, UCT; all Project transcriptions in this article are ‘to the letter’  
41 and contain any underlinings, insertions, deletions and mistakes in the  
42 originals).<sup>12</sup>

43  
44        Schreiner’s emergent analysis was not about Rhodes as an individual, no  
45 matter how powerful or ruthless, but rather ‘the ‘system’, with her letters

1 emphasising that something about South Africa had fed and grown this,  
2 in-built structures which permitted or encouraged it. In particular, Schreiner  
3 identified the absence of an active civil society and of a liberal as well as radical  
4 tradition as responsible. In addition, the ‘Rhodes system’ worked through  
5 force as well as other means and, as Schreiner’s letters reiterate, it would strike  
6 back through intermediaries at any who opposed its interests. On this, she  
7 emphasised that,

8  
9 We fight Rhodes because he means so much of oppression, injustice, and  
10 moral degradation to South Africa; - but if he passed away tomorrow there  
11 still remains the terrible fact that something in our society has formed the  
12 matrix which has fed, nourished, and built up such a man! (OS to John X.  
13 Merriman, 3 April 1897, NLSA).

14  
15 And while the Jameson Raid<sup>13</sup> broke the Rhodes system’s main power-base,  
16 the skilful and ruthless scheming at its core meant it might always resurge,  
17 using any means it could, with the provocation of an imperialist war being  
18 what Schreiner saw as its ‘last card’ for regaining power and increasing  
19 profit.

20 Schreiner’s letters are prescient on a related count too. Even before the  
21 South African War started, her letters emphasise that defeat would not crush  
22 the Boer Republics because of how they would fight, but the conduct of the  
23 war *would* destroy British influence in South Africa longer-term. Her letters  
24 deal with what would happen in South Africa after the end of the war, cor-  
25 rectly prophesying that, while the aftermath would bring Union of the four  
26 settler states, this would be retrograde politically on all counts but especially  
27 race ones:

28  
29 I see the Transvaal and Free State are determined that when federation  
30 comes we shall take the Franchise away from the Colonial natives who have  
31 it now. I think with terror of this Federation which will mean the most  
32 terrible native war and the most merciless South Africa has even know. (OS  
33 to Alice Greene, 8 November 1907, UCT).<sup>14</sup>

34  
35 Moreover, Schreiner’s letters from early on take a clear-eyed view of the  
36 structural embeddedness of racism in relation to the Boer Republics, for  
37 instance commenting that, ‘I love the Boer – let us deal justly, generously by  
38 him as by the native: but let us not give one inch to his cardinal vice’. (OS to  
39 John X. Merriman, 25 May 1896, NLSA).

40 By the later 1890s Schreiner’s letters recognise Johannesburg as a quintes-  
41 sentially modern and global city. One of the distinctive features she focused on  
42 was that Johannesburg had resulted from a sudden condensed eruption of the  
43 modern, because gold on the Rand and the money and other markets that  
44 rapidly grew up around it:

1 Here's this great fiendish, hell of a city sprung up in ten years in our sweet  
2 pure rare African velt. A city which for glitter and gold, and wickedness –  
3 carriages, and palaces, and brothels, and gambling halls, beats creation . . .  
4 (OS to Edward Carpenter, 13 November 1898, Sheffield).  
5

6 . . . I am slowly being confirmed in my opinion that Johannesburg is Hell.  
7 Every man living for himself, every man fighting for gold, gold, gold, and  
8 trampling down everything that stands in his way. (OS to Alice Greene, 25  
9 January 1899, UCT).  
10

11 Schreiner's letters portray Johannesburg, not just as a global city with a  
12 highly mixed cosmopolitan population, but a rag-bag one of outsiders from all  
13 over the world with no local allegiances and organised around profit, gam-  
14 bling, exchanges and flows, and in pursuit of money-making for its own sake:  
15

16 Johannesburg has collected the off-scourings of the earth; all the sharp  
17 clever scoundrels on one hand, and and the poor helpless good-for-nothings  
18 on the other. (OS to Betty Molteno, 28 September 1899, UCT).  
19

20 Another feature of Johannesburg's hyper-modernity which her letters pick out  
21 concerns its uniqueness when located in its geographical context, as an entirely  
22 new juxtaposition of the modern and the pastoral:  
23

24 You see Johannesburg has sprung up so quickly that that [sic] the country  
25 about is quiet untouched. You will see a grand new modern house and just  
26 out side the back door the ant heaps and rocks and flowers of the 'velt' . . .  
27 (OS to Betty Molteno, 27 October 1898, UCT).  
28

29 Connected with the rapid creation of hyper-new Johannesburg as an inter-  
30 national city of migrations, transfers and flows, Schreiner's epistolary concerns  
31 increasingly identify the local form of capitalism in Southern Africa as  
32 rampant and unchecked. The invention of Johannesburg and the hyper-new  
33 was taking place in a context in which there was no strong local state, no  
34 vibrant local civil society, and no organised labour movement to oppose hier-  
35 archies of power because class had been 'manufactured' to map onto race with  
36 the absolute abjection of black people within the 'glocal' economy that was  
37 resulting:  
38

39 Edward, you don't know how bad things are in this land . . . wealth as the  
40 only possible end and aim in life, is more recognized here than, I think, in  
41 any country in the world . . . It's funny to be in a land which is all philistines!  
42 . . . There are other individuals, but no other class. There are money making  
43 whites, and down-trodden blacks, and nothing between. And things will  
44 have to be so much worse here before they can be better . . . (OS to Edward  
45 Carpenter, 23 November 1892, Sheffield).

1 Schreiner's developing analysis also focused on changes to the borders  
2 between the local and the global in her letters in the wake of the December  
3 1895/January 1896 Jameson Raid on the Transvaal, initiated by Rhodes and  
4 British Foreign Secretary Chamberlain, and followed by British High Com-  
5 missioner Milner's provocation of war with the Transvaal and Free State in  
6 October 1899. Her letters throw interesting light on how this changed her  
7 developing thinking about the relationship between the local, as represented  
8 by the Boer Republics, and the global power of Britain working both through  
9 Rhodes' Chartered Company and Milner's pursuit of war to produce a unified  
10 British colonial state,

11  
12 When I hear people talk of the absolute necessity of an exterminating war  
13 with the Basutos and dark races generally because they are so rapidly  
14 becoming socialized and skilled workmen, and if not crushed now will never  
15 be crushed, I am always reminded of a visit a friend of mine paid to Milner  
16 before the Boer war, when he stuck his hands on the arms of his chair, and  
17 said, 'It is now or never! They will become too strong for us if we wait! (OS  
18 to John X. Merriman, Sunday 1912, NLSA).

19  
20 As an international public intellectual, Schreiner was aware she could appeal  
21 to metropolitan and global audiences beyond the imperial supra-power and so  
22 act as an informed voice of protest in the international mass media. A US  
23 reporter, for instance, wrote to businessman and politician Percy Molteno that  
24 'In discussing the Transvaal question I have been astonished to find what  
25 influence Olive Schreiner seems to have, especially among cultivated Ameri-  
26 cans . . .' (Montagu White to Percy Molteno, 26 February 1900, UCT Misc).  
27 Schreiner also wrote about such matters to Jan Smuts, a political adversary on  
28 'race' matters who she also liked, stating:

29  
30 I am writing an article on the situation which I hope ~~will~~ may open the eyes  
31 of the English public to the true condition of affairs a little.<sup>15</sup> I will be able  
32 to say in it all I would have said to Milner if I had met him personally . . . If  
33 it is too long for the ^news^ papers here, I shall have to print it in pamphlet  
34 form, but I hope it will appear in the paper on Monday.' (OS to Jan Smuts,  
35 19 May 1899, Pretoria)

36  
37 As Montagu's comment implies, Schreiner's 'hope' expressed to Smuts is  
38 sober rather than vainglorious, given the high volume of international sales all  
39 her publications including this one achieved.

40 Schreiner's letters also show she was increasingly aware that local groups  
41 and associations representing the vested interests of imperialists and specula-  
42 tors were producing a propaganda version of circumstances which on the  
43 ground were very different from, for example, what propaganda from the  
44 South African League (initially a front established by Rhodes and associates)  
45 was promulgating:



1 . . . the mass of Johannesburgers are increasingly against war. There are  
2 many English men here who five years ago would have fought the Transvaal  
3 Government who would now like to shoot the Leaguers for making trouble.  
4 Even in the last six months the tone here has changed very much . . . We  
5 cannot win the capitalists to our side; we can win the mass [of] the thinking  
6 English people in England and Johannesburg. (OS to Jan Smuts, ?June  
7 1899, Pretoria).  
8

9 The backcloth was the systematic purchase of newspapers across South Africa  
10 by Rhodes and associates so as to control their editorial content and political  
11 slant. For Schreiner, the counter-move had to be support for and the growth of  
12 intermediary associations which would be both genuinely local but also part of  
13 an international movement. In 1899 and 1900, this concerned the peace con-  
14 gress movement, which she hoped could become a bulwark against war-  
15 mongering by making local civil society more organised and effective:  
16

17 . . . I would like to know your opinion of a plan I have for forming an  
18 ‘Uitlander’s<sup>16</sup> Peace Association’ in Johannesburg in opposition to the  
19 League. The mass of Johannesburg do not want to fight: and it is only  
20 necessary to organize this public feeling in some way to make it effective.  
21 (OS to Jan Smuts, 7 June 1899, Pretoria)  
22

23 Schreiner strongly supported the 1899 peace movement because it was anti-  
24 imperialist as well as anti-war. Later her letters recognised that its activities  
25 and networks underpinned the post-war growth of women’s franchise cam-  
26 paigns, but they are also fully aware that for many of the women involved their  
27 feminism was linked with a highly racialised form of white nationalism, some-  
28 thing which eventually split the women’s suffrage organisations.

29 In her published work, Schreiner’s analysis of changes and developments  
30 encompassed: her intersectional analysis of ‘race’ among South African  
31 peoples; the parasitism of whites in feeding off the labour of black people, who  
32 were reduced in economic terms to ‘hands’ in the new capitalist forms of  
33 production around the then-mushrooming diamonds and gold industries; the  
34 entrenched systemic nature of the ‘Rhodes system’ with its effects outreaching  
35 as well as outliving Rhodes himself; and that by 1899 the imperial blunder of  
36 provoking war had put in motion the establishment of a future local state  
37 unified around racial and other retrograde values. Her letters add to this her  
38 keen sense of: the emergent and ‘could be otherwise’ character of such devel-  
39 opments; the imperialist savagery behind many of them, in events which took  
40 place ‘off centre’ both to the imperial metropole and to the ‘local’ political  
41 centres in southern Africa and so were largely invisible to metropolitan  
42 publics; local attempts to form civil and political associations that might  
43 counter such things; links between white radicals and a growing black intel-  
44 lectual and political elite; and in particular Schreiner’s prescient awareness,  
45 almost as soon as such developments appeared on the horizon, of the possible  
46 long-term ramifications.

1 A gender analysis is present in Schreiner's work, both published and the  
2 unpublished theorising in her letters, as a continuous thread. It is not so much  
3 that one dimension of her theorising is 'about gender' and another part is  
4 'about the rest of social life', but that these are indissolubly bound into each  
5 other in her feminist analytics. Two connected examples concerning the 'black  
6 peril' and the imposition of pass laws amply show the 'joined up' character of  
7 Schreiner's feminist analytics. The so-called 'black peril' was a fabricated  
8 moral panic, whipped up by the proto-nationalist movement following the  
9 Union of South Africa in 1910, and it involved some key figures from women's  
10 organisations including the suffrage movement. Its demonization of black men  
11 as all potential rapists of white women was rebutted by research carried out by  
12 the General Missionary Council, in which Schreiner participated. As she  
13 emphasised to its Secretary, its effect was to 'vanish' the fact that it was actually  
14 black women who were most at risk:  
15

16 The subject of the so called Black-Peril is one that interests me deeply. My  
17 feeling of course is that peril which has long over shadowed this country, is  
18 one which exists for all dark skinned women at the hands of white men. (OS  
19 to James Henderson, 26 December 1911, Cory)  
20

21 Pass laws too were part of the raft of retrograde activity from increasingly  
22 well-organised Boer/Afrikaner nationalist organisations occurring in the wake  
23 of Union of the settler states of South Africa in 1910, having been put into  
24 effect in the Transvaal and Free State as soon as responsible government was  
25 regained in 1906–7 and then extended after Union. In 1908 to 1910, Schreiner  
26 had actively opposed Union because she saw it as a mechanism for overturn-  
27 ing more liberal racial policies in the Cape. Certainly retrograde legislation  
28 followed, culminating in the Land Act of 1913 which severely restricted black  
29 people's rights to occupy land and later underpinned the provisions of what  
30 became apartheid. Schreiner's letters indicate her awareness not only that pass  
31 laws particularly affected women as traders and urban workers, but were part  
32 of an increasingly gender-bifurcated set of policies and employment practices  
33 that would have long-term repercussions on women's position in the intercon-  
34 nected labour markets that composed the South African economy:  
35

36 A class or a sex or race refused in a so-called democratic state under 20th  
37 century conditions the right to take its share in in [sic] the government of  
38 the state will ultimately be driven [sic] the lamentable use of force, and  
39 answer repression with resistance which must shake society to its founda-  
40 tions . . . (OS to John X. Merriman, 20 July 1913, NLSA).  
41

42 In emphasising the integrated, 'joined up' nature of Schreiner's feminist  
43 analysis and her refusal to see the 'woman question' as something separate, it  
44 is also important to note that although she was closely involved in the women's  
45 suffrage movement in South Africa early on, she later withdrew from the

1 Women's Enfranchisement League and suffrage activities in 1911 when it  
2 became clear that many white women were campaigning for the vote on the  
3 same terms as white men, rather than for universal and thus non-racial suf-  
4 frage: '... It was not a personal matter that made me leave the society ... the  
5 women of the Cape Colony' all women of the Cape Colony ... These were the  
6 terms on which I joined' (nd, Women's Enfranchisement League leaflet com-  
7 ments, NLSA).

8 For Schreiner, these retrograde policies signified the structural re-  
9 positioning of black women within South Africa's domestic and other labour  
10 markets, making them more vulnerable to sexual, economic and political  
11 exploitation and subjugation. Her letters analyse such things around 'local'  
12 occurrences and also as irrevocably interconnected with other retrograde  
13 changes occurring around nationalism, Union, the demonization of black men,  
14 severe limitations on black land holdings, and the shaping of compliant labour  
15 markets. As this indicates, it is not possible, or at least not without vitiating its  
16 power and compass, to separate off Schreiner's epistolary analysis of gender  
17 dynamics from her analysis of 'race' and racism, of nationalism, of the political  
18 structures of Union, and development of a locally-specific Fordist capitalist  
19 mode of production centring on mining and extraction.

20  
21 *1914–1920: Analysing war, peace, international organisations and*  
22 *social movements*  
23

24 We now discuss Schreiner's analysis of war, peace and international organisa-  
25 tions and movements between 1914 and 1920. In various publications, particu-  
26 larly in articles about peace, war and conscientious objection, public letters on  
27 conscientious objection, her unfinished manuscript 'The Dawn of Civilization'  
28 and her wartime allegories (Schreiner, 1915–1918, 1923b), Schreiner's thinking  
29 over this time developed away from her earlier radical social constructionism  
30 regarding militarism and violence, which argued that if men had equal respon-  
31 sibilities for social care then this would end male militarism and aggression.  
32 Her later writings engage with the fact that 'modern' war combined what  
33 seemed a sudden eruption of people's desire for violence and blood-letting,  
34 with state-level machinations, and with national identities being re-made  
35 around reconfiguring the relationship of men (literally, ie males) to the state  
36 and militarism through compulsory military service and legal sanctions against  
37 those who resisted. For her, the nature of warfare had fundamentally changed  
38 and become mechanised, anonymised and a crucial part of peace-time eco-  
39 nomic life, and was consequently fundamentally changing the character of  
40 social life too. She also came to think that the origins of militarism lay within  
41 human ontology, proposing that women and men are equally predisposed to  
42 aggression and militarism although how this is enacted takes different gen-  
43 dered social forms (Schreiner, 1916a; 1916b; 1916c).

44 Schreiner's letters give a particular edge to how her ideas are understood,  
45 because they show the development of this changing analysis of the causes and

1 consequences of war and the wider ramifications thereof. They deal with the  
2 rise of universal and total war, her prophesy that the international peace-  
3 keeping organisations being proposed in 1914 would fail and result in a more  
4 terrible and even more total war, her analysis of the emergence of an ‘after’ in  
5 which economies would remain dependent on warmongering, and her view  
6 that radical social movements would be the only means of effectively opposing  
7 such retrograde developments. The specifics once again show just how ‘joined  
8 up’ her social theory was.

9 Schreiner’s epistolary account of the role of diplomacy and of government-  
10 tality more generally positions these as central to the new developments in  
11 warfare occurring. On this, writing to her brother Will, a former Prime Minister  
12 of the Cape and from 1915 to 1919 the South African High Commissioner to  
13 Britain, she commented that:

14  
15 I am not a lover of war; but give me the soldier every time. Diplomacy as  
16 carried on in the past and present is Hell three over. It is a game of chess  
17 played between rulers, in which the peoples and their good and happiness  
18 are pawns (OS to Will Schreiner, Thursday ?3 December 1916, UCT).  
19

20 Other Schreiner letters also pinpoint diplomacy and its game-like character as  
21 directly culpable for bringing about the Great War, seeing the war as deliber-  
22 ately provoked by the German High Command for its own reasons, but  
23 thereafter also suiting the diplomatic, political and military elites of other  
24 nations too. They also emphasise the long-term cyclical nature of militarism  
25 and its alliances, with today’s enemies likely to become tomorrow’s allies and  
26 vice versa:  
27

28 It is strange how the scene remains the same . . . only the details change  
29 from generation to generation. Yester-day it was German English and  
30 Belgians against France; today Germans against English French and Bel-  
31 gians; perhaps in ten or fifteen years it will be . . . Western peoples against  
32 Russia . . . A curious nightmare life when you study it historically! (OS to  
33 Will Schreiner, 29 July 1916, UCT).  
34

35 The result of ‘studying it historically’ herself was Schreiner’s increasing  
36 conviction that war would be universal and total from then on. Even before  
37 war was declared in 1914, she identified what was happening as new and  
38 distinctive, a universal war impacting in indirect as well as direct ways across  
39 the world:  
40

41 By the time this reaches you will know whether our worst fears have been  
42 realized and the universal war has come. War is to me so exactly like Hell.  
43 You don’t need to picture anything else. It always means loss to everyone;  
44 to those who win and to those who lose . . . (OS to Alice Greene 4 August  
45 1914, UCT).

1 Schreiner also saw war's totalising aspects as affecting all aspects of life  
2 because it encouraged domination in interpersonal as well as international  
3 political life, writing that:  
4

5 I feel it is the beginning of a half a century of the most awful wars the world  
6 has seen . . . While the desire to dominate, and rule and possess empire is in  
7 the hearts of men there will always be war . . . (OS to Edward Carpenter,  
8 ?13 October 1914, Sheffield).  
9

10 Regarding international peace-keeping organisations, almost as soon as war  
11 started and quite unlike most of those she was close to in feminist and pacifist  
12 groups, Schreiner rejected seeing the League of Nations then being promoted  
13 as a solution to cyclical warfare:  
14

15 . . . If ever that League to enforce peace comes into existence, it will form  
16 the most awful instrument of oppression, and lead to the most cataclysmic  
17 wars which earth has ever known. (OS to Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence,  
18 December 1914, UCT).  
19

20 Her view was that this would exacerbate the problems, by being a mechanism  
21 paralleling and reinforcing existing divisions of power at an international  
22 level. Before international peace organisations could work effectively,  
23 Schreiner proposed, the supra-powers had to be divested of control and the  
24 demise brought about of the autocracies of Austro-Hungary, Russia, Germany  
25 and Britain.

26 As the war unfolded, Schreiner's attention focused on what a universal  
27 war was doing to the fabric of everyday life by encouraging an omnipresent  
28 militarism:  
29

30 I suppose it's because I've lived through a great war, and seen that the evils  
31 that result from it and follow it are infinitely greater than the war itself. The  
32 militarism, the spirit of hate and inhumanity which affects all people who  
33 have lived through a war, are much worse than the fighting and dying. (OS  
34 to Edward Carpenter, ?January 1915, NELM).  
35

36 As has been often said, the South African War was 'the last of the colonial and  
37 the first of the modern wars' (Cuthbertson and Jeeves, 1999: 3), setting the  
38 scene for total war in two key ways: it introduced new killing technologies that  
39 anticipated later twentieth-century warfare (smokeless bullets, trenches, heavy  
40 artillery), enabling mass killing on a vast new scale; and it involved civilians in  
41 a new way by dislocating large numbers from their homes and disrupting their  
42 livelihoods, and in this way impacting on their lives in a manner and magnitude  
43 that prefigured the nature of twentieth-century warfare. Clearly Schreiner  
44 drew on this in her post-1913 theorising.<sup>17</sup> Also by 1915, when the above letter  
45 to Carpenter was written, Schreiner had directly experienced some of the

1 everyday totalising aspects of militarism. Her originally German name  
2 resulted in her being asked to leave hotels and boarding houses and sometimes  
3 'cut' by people she was introduced to, for instance. Also, her involvement in  
4 anti-war activities and support for conscientious objectors resisting the 1916-  
5 introduced compulsory military call-up led to frequent difficult incidents:

6  
7 Yesterday I went to a meeting of the Womans International Federation  
8 . . . a lady beautifully dressed . . . appeared at an open door . . . As I passed  
9 she said, 'That way to the 'traitor meeting' . . . the Peace meeting, and  
10 all peace meetings are meetings of traitors!' . . . (OS to Alice Greene,  
11 November 1917, UCT).

12  
13 As this mention of federations and meetings indicates, Schreiner continued  
14 emphasising international social movements as the means to bring about  
15 progressive social change, although hers was no starry-eyed approach and she  
16 fully recognised that some parts of these could act in retrograde ways  
17 (Schreiner, 1911).

18 From the mid 1890s Schreiner's letters track her activities in promoting the  
19 growth and effectiveness of 'local' political associations in South Africa; from  
20 the 1900s on, she is equally engaged with the need for international women's  
21 and labour movements, emphasising their potential to bring about social  
22 change specifically in relation to the autocracies. Her letters from 1914 on  
23 emphasise at the level of social movements, not governmentality, her strong  
24 support for an internationalism built from the ground up as the only counter  
25 to warmongering autocracies, and during the period of the war she was an  
26 important presence in women's peace organisations:

27  
28 I am sending you a copy of woman peace programme I have gone on the  
29 committee of the English branch. Do you know any women who would care  
30 to join it? (OS to Hermann Kallenbach, 16 March 1915, NLSA).

31  
32 I was going to Holland on Saturday to attend the Womans International  
33 conference at the Hague but the government has refused to let us go (OS to  
34 Alice Greene, 20 April 1915, UCT).

35  
36 Jane Addams and Dr Jacobs and some other women who were at the Hague  
37 are here . . . I am going to her meeting at Kingsway Hall tonight to be on  
38 the platform. This is a large public meeting . . . I am working at my thing on  
39 war(OS to Betty Molteno, 30 April 1915, UCT).

40  
41 Schreiner was involved in the foundation and activities of women's inter-  
42 national organisations and in supporting pacifist organisations such as the No  
43 Conscription Fellowship. And as her 'working at my thing on war' comment<sup>18</sup>  
44 indicates, by early 1915 she was re-conceiving her earlier ideas about gender,  
45 aggression and social behaviour. She had also turned an analytic gaze upon  
46 what she termed 'the "after the war" . . .', a period she correctly thought

1 would be characterised by strong reactionary movement of the autocratic  
2 supra-powers, rather than by peace as ordinarily understood:

3  
4 I wonder what you think of this reconstruction of the government. I am  
5 afraid it will lead to tremendously increased evils at the end of the war - and  
6 it's the 'after the war' I dread most for all the nations . . . (OS to Will  
7 Schreiner, ?1915, UCT).

8  
9 Schreiner's analysis was firmly that what had been constructed by the wartime  
10 supra-powers was a military apparatus that was closely intertwined with  
11 economy and polity which would not easily be dismantled, such that 'I think  
12 there is a great reactionary movement coming on everywhere for a time.' (OS  
13 to Betty Molteno, Saturday ?June-August 1918, UCT). This was because, her  
14 letters emphasise, the Great War had put in motion a dynamic that would be  
15 played out over a fifty year period, during which the supra-powers would  
16 continue jockeying for control. Eventually, she proposed, there would be  
17 another universal war, but one more total and of far greater devastation:

18  
19 I may be quite wrong, but . . . For the next 50 years, I believe there will be  
20 bloodshed and a merciless drive on the part of the powerful to crush the  
21 weak . . . I opposed this war because of the evil I foresaw it would produce  
22 for generations to come . . . (OS to Betty Molteno, Tuesday 1915, UCT).

23  
24 Schreiner's letters also analyse modernity as finally brought about by the  
25 Great War, changing polity, economy, military apparatus and civil society. It  
26 was its 'bursting' impact, building on the 'cracking' brought about by capital-  
27 ism, urbanisation and so on, which for her constituted the decisive break with  
28 the past, so that the incoming tide of resultant changes had to be responded to  
29 and ultimately could not be prevented:

30  
31 Don't you begin to see this is the 20th Century!! That the 19th is gone  
32 forever. It will have to go even in South Africa! The old world is cracking;  
33 or rather, it cracked long ago, and now its bursting. (OS to Jan Smuts, 19  
34 November 1918, Pretoria).

35  
36 This is the 20th century; the past is past never to return, even in South  
37 Africa. The day of princes, and Bosses, of is gone forever: one must meet  
38 the incoming tide and rise on it, or be swept away ^forever.^ (OS to Jan  
39 Smuts, 28 October 1920, Pretoria).

40  
41 As Schreiner's letters amply show, while some important specifics of her  
42 theorising changed over this period, at the same time there is the strong  
43 continuity that its gender concerns remain inseparable from other elements of  
44 her social theory. Her letters, of the moment and immediately responsive, show  
45 the genesis of her changing thinking in unfolding circumstances including

1 where such developments would take polity, economy and civil society in the  
2 future. Longer-term, the ‘fifty years later’ which Schreiner’s letters often  
3 invoke, militarism and war economy, coupled with structural problems caused  
4 by international peace-keeping organisation, would bring about even more  
5 total warfare. But longer-term still, the ‘far future’ of a better world the letters  
6 also invoke, she proposes can be made real through international social move-  
7 ments, through increasing numbers of people making choices and organising  
8 and acting together to bring about such outcomes. Overall, her letters convey  
9 a complicated mixture of grave pessimism and hopeful optimism about the  
10 direction in which the world was moving.

11 A gender analysis is crucial to the emergent analysis in Schreiner’s letters,  
12 intertwined with seemingly non-gendered concerns such as the character of  
13 war economies, the likely failure of international organisations and the post-  
14 war development of new forms of autocracy among the great powers. She  
15 remained analytically interested in the situatedness of women within such  
16 things, with her letters commenting that women and men are equally ‘primi-  
17 tive’ in their aggressiveness, and that women were as war-mongering or more  
18 so than men because, as non-combatants, they were comparatively protected  
19 from its realities. Her letters also recognise that the pacifist women’s organi-  
20 sations were by no means alone, with Schreiner herself actively involved in a  
21 number of mixed groups, but that women were more able to work interna-  
22 tionally than mixed groups for obvious reasons connected with the war and  
23 conscription. However, as with her letters from the 1880s to 1913, what she  
24 theorises post-1913 about women always takes cognizance of the wider  
25 context of social life, economy, polity, war, the forces of change.

26 Schreiner’s feminist analytics from 1914 to 1920 continued to position  
27 gender as part of the intersectional analysis at its core. Relatedly, in spite of  
28 ill-health and lack of mobility, as soon as she returned to South Africa in  
29 October 1920, she commented on the new pass laws, African women’s orga-  
30 nised opposition to these and mass jailings, and gave financial to support to  
31 the organisations representing them. As ever, Olive Schreiner’s joined up  
32 theorising saw the connections here, between the impact of the pass laws on  
33 local women, retrograde legislation in South Africa more generally,  
34 the ‘white-ing’ of its trades unions, and the acceleration of its distinctive  
35 local form of capitalism which resulted from its involvement in the Great  
36 War:

37  
38 ‘Oh Betty why did I come out? I have made many mistakes in my life - but  
39 this is the greatest of all there is so much one ought to do now, and I can’t  
40 do it. I would like to go out about among the natives and really try to enter  
41 into touch with them . . . This union of the Unionist with Smuts and the  
42 South African Party bodes no good for South Africa . . . I have not met one  
43 human being who feels at all on the native question as I do. I could not join  
44 the Nationalist because of their narrow racialism.’ (OS to Betty Molteno, 5  
45 November 1920, UCT)



### Schreiner globalising social inquiry

Globalization theory encompasses two broad and basically conflicting positions: globalisation is a radical departure from the past composed by a massively accelerated set of economic, political and social changes and flows and it dates from around the end of World War II; and globalisation is the current name for changes and developments with long historical antecedents and these are an extrapolation of capitalism and imperialism in today's circumstances.<sup>19</sup> We align ourselves with this second strand of theorising but with an important proviso. The tacit view within even this second approach is that theorising the processes of global change, and theorising them in a particular way as a 'global social inquiry', is new. We cannot agree. Olive Schreiner's social theory provides an incontrovertible example of a global social inquiry produced a hundred years previously. We now want to provide a more detailed exposition, starting with what are seen as the quintessential features of present-day globalisation.

Table 1 employs Jan Aart Scholte's (2005) helpful four-fold framework of hypercapitalism, polycentrism, hybridization and reflexivity to shape what are often discussed as rather disconnected lists of characteristics. Using these, one column shows what are generally seen as the defining attributes of globalization by present-day globalisation theory, while the other shows the focuses of Schreiner's feminist analytics. Showing these concerns, of social theorists *now*, and of Schreiner's feminist analytics *then*, points up just how much her analytical interests overlap with the features now attributed to contemporary globalization. The point being made here is a simple but consequential one: 'it's been done before' in terms of a joined up theorising of the processes of global social change. The attributes focused on by Schreiner are those which now preoccupy today's theorists: financial flows, global cities, the diminished national state, and the changing dynamics of gender within these, among them.

Importantly, Schreiner saw the changes she analysed across both periods of her theoretical work as being the products of capitalism, imperialism, autocracy, warfare and the competing supra-states. Rather than using the blander de-politicized terminology of globalisation, hers was an ethically as much as politically committed form of analysis, directed towards challenging and changing, as well as analysing, the ongoing social dynamic she was concerned with analysing. The point for her was to change the world, based on a joined up analysis and theorisation of developments within it.

### Conclusion

So what kind of an analytic voice was Schreiner's, both in her work overall and in her letters specifically? Also, how should the 'global research imagination' underpinning Schreiner's epistolary theorising be understood in ontological, epistemological, methodological and aesthetic terms? Globalization is widely

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**Table 1 ••**

Scholte's Conceptual Framework	Globalization Theory	Schreiner's Feminist Analytics
Hypercapitalism	Expanded markets Global markets Shift to tertiary sector International finance capital Accumulation for own sake Global finance organisations	Expanded markets, esp gold & diamonds Imperial global markets Expansion primary sector Expansion international finance capital Accumulation for own sake Global finance organisations
Polycentrism	Shift/decline in the national state Decline local civil society Privatised governance Rise of supra-state	Rise/decline/renewal of local states Weak local civil society Privatised governance – eg Chartered Co Supra-state 1 = Britain, 2 = Union of SA
Hybridization	National identities undermined Micro-nations Supra-identities Non-territorial identities Contestation & internal movements	National identities weak Micro-nations – 4 states, Boers, black ethnicities Supra imperial metropolitan identity Feminist, pacifist, labour, ethnic/race Contestation & internal movements
Reflexivity	Reflexive <u>late modernity</u> v. alternative foundations	Reflexive <u>modernity</u> & making new foundations

recognised as having existing and potential future impacts on research activities and the research imagination, including: the emergence of a 'global social inquiry' characterised by challenges to disciplinary formations; the provincialization of formerly dominant European and US constructions of research, social science and knowledge; the rise of non-territorial networks of researchers; research agendas with non-disciplinary topics and themes; and 'national' forms of social science increasingly being challenged by 'cosmopolitan' social theory.

Thinking about Schreiner's work and approach in relation to contemporary specifications of the research imagination of global social inquiry, it is clear that her feminist analytics anticipated many things now associated with a global form of social inquiry, as sketched out in Table 2. Schreiner's analysis

Table 2 ••

Global Research Imagination	Global Social Inquiry	Schreiner's Feminist Analytics
Ontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-territorial space</li> <li>• A changed time/distance relation through the virtual</li> <li>• Change as the social fabric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing &amp; scalar territorial space</li> <li>• A changed time/distance relation through the material then the virtual – steam, cable, post, telegram, telephone</li> <li>• Change as the social fabric</li> <li>• Social movements &amp; networks resisting from below</li> </ul>
Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainties, including of knowledge</li> <li>• A different research 'voice' &amp; claims</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainties, including of knowledge, &amp; especially for those in the colonial/imperial 'margins'</li> <li>• Knowledge from below – movements &amp; networks remaking knowledge from 'the periphery'</li> <li>• Multiplicities of 'voice' &amp; local claims versus the supra-power</li> </ul>
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post/multi-disciplinarity</li> <li>• Mobilities &amp; flows</li> <li>• The life-world/global nexus important but barely researched</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre/multi-disciplinarity</li> <li>• Mobilities &amp; flows &amp; especially of finance capital &amp; global imperial expansionism</li> <li>• The life-world/global nexus the main focus</li> </ul>
Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergent identities &amp; practices</li> <li>• The situational, events</li> <li>• The unstable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergent identities &amp; practices – the 3 key 'Questions' of race, gender, labour</li> <li>• The situational, events – Doornkop, Jameson Raid, Mashonaland, South African War</li> <li>• The unstable – annexation, forced compliance, escalating mechanisation &amp; totalisation of warfare</li> </ul>

and the 'voice' it was expressed in, like that of the contemporary social scientists who shared ideas and approaches with her, challenged emergent disciplinary formations.<sup>20</sup> Her work promoted knowledge from the margins, the imperial periphery, and concerned the local and grounded; it was involved in non-territorial networks that transcended national and international boundaries; it developed analytical and publishing agendas which determinedly crossed disciplinary, academic and popular, boundaries; and it rejected any

1 elitist hierarchy of social theory over other analytical and political agendas,  
2 seeking instead allegiances across these divisions too.

3 Schreiner's feminist analysis is centrally concerned with contesting the  
4 activities, approach and values of the supra-powers (not just Britain, that is, but  
5 supra-power as such) and also with organising to challenge this from below  
6 and from the periphery. Its substantive research aspects are grounded in the  
7 situational and also in the unstable events produced by the workings of the  
8 expansionist activities of imperialism and finance capital. Her feminist analyt-  
9 ics is articulated in a very distinctive 'voice' which crosses genre-boundaries  
10 and makes a direct appeal about global matters happening locally linked, as  
11 she emphasises, to the local of the metropole by the workings of imperialist  
12 capitalism. Her feminist analytics and the global social inquiry it produced are  
13 firmly intersectional and holistic. There is no confining Olive Schreiner to  
14 gender, for the analytical compass of her work is social life 'joined up', requir-  
15 ing a concomitantly joined up social theory.

16 Schreiner's social theorising in her letters clearly takes up distinctive posi-  
17 tions in relation to ontological, epistemological, methodological and aesthetic  
18 dimensions of a feminist global social inquiry. Ontologically, her letters are, 'by  
19 nature', a response to the emergent changing character of time, space, place,  
20 for such was the pace and the impact of change at the time of writing that  
21 conventional publishing media inevitably lagged behind the situations and  
22 events that her letters engage with and conceptualise. Epistemologically,  
23 they are a means of trying to make sense of uncertainties, but also they  
24 remake prevailing conventional ideas about what can be known and by whom.  
25 Schreiner engages in a 'different voice', one expressed from the colonial  
26 periphery, articulating general ideas from its particular 'local' circumstances  
27 and doing so in the renegade form of 'mere letters'. She does this to theorise  
28 'global society' and advance claims about it which are in part about who has  
29 what knowledge, in greater part about ethics, power and the state in relation to  
30 the trans-territorial imperialist supra-powers. Methodologically, her published  
31 work as well as her letters were produced outside the confines of the academic  
32 disciplines. However, more radically, Schreiner always wrote in cross-genre  
33 ways, with her theory appearing in her novels and allegories as well as her  
34 letters, and her more personal writing appearing in her formal published  
35 theorising and *not* in her letters, which instead engage with externalities,  
36 materialities and events. Aesthetically, the quintessence of her letters is their  
37 engagement with the emergent and situational events, the inevitable instability  
38 of constant cumulative change, and the mobilities and flows which resulted.

39 Schreiner's letters have the strong 'bird in flight' characteristics that letters  
40 more generally have, giving them their emergent, 'for the moment' and 'could  
41 be otherwise' tone. They inscribe in a very immediate way the detail and edge  
42 of social and political changes as they were occurring and enfold these in the  
43 particular dynamics of her epistolary relationships with the people closest  
44 politically to her, and as she responsively engaged with the public, political,  
45 economic, military and other events of the 'moment'. In an important sense,

1 then, her letters *are* Olive Schreiner's feminist analytics, rather than just a  
2 side-line to it.

### 4 **Acknowledgements**

5  
6 Our thanks to Ann Heilmann, University of Hull, and also the anonymous readers for *Sociological*  
7 *Review* for helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper. The Olive Schreiner Letters  
8 Project is funded by the ESRC (RES-062-23-1286) and we gratefully acknowledge the ESRC's  
9 support.

### 11 **Notes**

- 12  
13 1 We are persuaded by the argument that Sassen's later 'grounding' is actually in 'the space of  
14 theory' rather than in actual spaces and places located in time (Sparke, 2005, 2009). However,  
15 here we are more interested in Sassen's take on feminist analytics and its time and place, which  
16 for us is not the possession of the US in the late twentieth century but to be found both earlier  
17 and elsewhere. We discuss Olive Schreiner's contribution to this, but we are not claiming  
18 Schreiner as a founder, more as an earlier exemplar which shows that the present-day assump-  
19 tion is faulty.
- 20 2 Schreiner scholarship was taken in a new and more productive direction by First and Scott's  
21 (1980) important biography, not for its problematic and now very dated psychoanalytic inter-  
22 pretation of Schreiner's character, but for its historical reinterpretation of Schreiner's signifi-  
23 cance as a key writer and social thinker. Our approach is in line with Schreiner's own views in  
24 focusing on 'the works' rather than the life; see here Berkman, 1989, McClintock, 1995,  
25 Burdett, 2001 and in particular Stanley, 2002. These are many derivative biographical accounts;  
26 however, the outstanding ones grounded in primary scholarship are First and Scott 1980 and  
27 Schoeman 1991, 1992.
- 28 3 The Olive Schreiner Letters Project is funded by the ESRC (RES-062-23-1286); we gratefully  
29 acknowledge the ESRC's support. The Project is researching the light thrown by Schreiner's  
30 5000+ extant letters on Schreiner's writing, her social theory, and also the major events her  
31 letters were concerned with (see here footnote 6).
- 32 4 There were approximately 25,000 letters at Schreiner's death, most of which were destroyed by  
33 her estranged husband, Cronwright-Schreiner, with the 5000+ now extant letters being ones  
34 never given to him. There are three existing edited collections of Schreiner's letters, each in  
35 different ways problematic. The collection by Cronwright-Schreiner (1924) features highly  
36 truncated, bowdlerised and otherwise inaccurate versions of some of the letters he subse-  
37 quently destroyed. Rive's (1987) collection includes letters from a wider range of correspon-  
38 dents, but are often more extended notation than accurate transcription, and are also marked  
39 by (frequently unacknowledged) omissions of often crucial parts of letters. Draznin's (1992)  
40 collection is exemplary for its time, but features only the atypical correspondence with Have-  
41 lock Ellis, and also its transcriptions are smoothed over for readers by omitting omissions,  
42 deletions and 'correcting' errors.
- 43 5 The Project ([www.oliveschreinerletters.ed.ac.uk](http://www.oliveschreinerletters.ed.ac.uk)) is analysing Schreiner's letters in a project-  
44 designed VRE (Virtual Research Environment). The VRE is a custom-designed set of  
45 aids supporting the project's particular analytic approach, providing tools which exceed  
46 the capabilities of CAQDAS (computer assisted qualitative data analysis software) software.  
47 The transcripts with a full supporting editorial apparatus will be published by HRI Online  
48 at the University of Sheffield ([www.hrionline.ac.uk/schreiner/schreiner.htm](http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/schreiner/schreiner.htm)) in January  
49 2012.

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53
- 6 These included colonialism under transition in the Cape from the 1850s on; feminism and socialism in 1880s London; prostitution and its analysis, understandings of 'race' and capital; the machinations of imperialism 'on the ground'; Rhodes as 'a system' and his Chartered Company's role in imperial expansion; the Jameson Raid; the South African War and women's relief organisations and the concentration camps of this war; changing international and South African perspectives on women's franchise campaigns; labour issues and Union rather than the federation of South Africa than Schreiner favoured; pacifism and war economies in the wake of the Great War; and political and economic changes in South Africa after 1914.
  - 7 These massacres resulted from the campaign by Rhodes's British South Africa Company to expand its Southern African mining interests by conquering what is present-day Zimbabwe, with this including brutal reprisals in response to Ndebele and Shona resistance.
  - 8 See Schreiner's 'South Africa' (1891), 'The Boer' (1892) and 'The Englishman' (1893), in later form in her (1923a) *Thoughts on South Africa*, and also *The Political Situation* (1896), *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland* (1897); *An English South African's View of the Situation* (1899); 'Woman' (1900), *Woman and Labour* (1911).
  - 9 This involved chronic asthma, and also a congenital family heart valve problem that led to the early deaths of many family members.
  - 10 Interestingly, the greatest change to Schreiner's thinking that occurred following her return to South Africa concerned 'race' and her shift to a radical analysis of racial hybridity 'in our very persons'. Tantalisingly, there is almost nothing about this in her letters. Perhaps she was too immersed formulating her re-thinking in her essays for it to surface in her letter-writing. See Stanley 2010, Stanley and Dampier 2010.
  - 11 A term Rhodes used; it involved giving people what they desired, then later asking for favours to be reciprocated.
  - 12 The chevron ^as thus^ indicates an insertion, deletions are ~~erossed through~~ as thus, and underlines are as thus. Schreiner did not always fully date her letters; therefore question marks in front of dates are those that have been provided by an unknown hand (the addressee, someone else in the family, an archivist), while dates without question marks are Schreiner's own.
  - 13 This was a failed attempt to forcibly annex the Transvaal, with the secret cognizance of both Rhodes and Chamberlain, with their involvement later whitewashed.
  - 14 The analysis eventuates in Schreiner 1909.
  - 15 *An English South African's View of the Situation* (Schreiner, 1899).
  - 16 'Uitlander' means an outsider or incomer.
  - 17 Schreiner was very informed about the 'dynamic of destruction' happening but which has, for reasons Kramer 2007 explores, now largely been lost sight of. 'Total war' has been defined as having total war aims of complete capitulation, using total warfare methods of unrestricted violation of international principles, involving total mobilisation of all material and economic resources, and exerting totalising organisational controls over both public and private life. Schreiner's emergent epistolary analysis recognises all of these aspects and prefigures what Kramer sees as a 'new schema' for thinking about total war.
  - 18 This is a reference to Schreiner's (1915–1918) uncompleted part-manuscript, 'The Dawn of Civilization'.
  - 19 We are drawing here on (Appadurai, 2001; Germain, 2000; Guidry *et al.*, 2000; Hay and Marsh, 2000; Lash and Urry, 1987, 1994; Massey and Jess, 1996; Munck, 2007; Perrons, 2004; Ray, 2007; Robertson, 1992; Sassen, 2001a, 2001b, 2006; Scholte, 2005; Waters, 2003). For work foregrounding the historical antecedents of globalisation in capitalism and imperialism, see Bush, 2006, Hardt and Negri, 2000; O'Rourke *et al.*, 1999; Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001; Ritzer, 2009; Sparke, 2005.
  - 20 The issues and themes Schreiner explored from the later 1880s to around 1913 also engaged some well-known social scientists, including her friends John Atkinson Hobson and Leonard Hobhouse. An interview with Schreiner is a centre-piece in Hobson's *The War in South Africa* (1900), with his analysis closely following hers regarding finance capital especially. Hobson was

1 a close friend and influence on Leonard Hobhouse, who later held the UK's first sociology  
2 chair. Hobhouse was influenced by Schreiner's work, particularly *Trooper Peter Halket* . . . and  
3 its indictment of what 'imperial expansion' actually meant. His *Guardian* pieces were critical  
4 of British provocation and conduct of the war, while his *Democracy and Reaction* (1904)  
5 analyses imperialism as antithetical to liberalism with both a large and a small 'l' and was an  
6 important contribution to theorising what in today's terms would be termed global govern-  
7 nance. Regarding her developing analysis between 1914 and 1920, her concerns were shared  
8 with well-known social scientists who she knew personally or whose work she was influenced  
9 by, as they were hers. Schreiner's broad ideas about 'race' and especially concerning educated  
10 Black intellectual elites and black social movements were influenced by W.E.B. Du Bois  
11 (1903), with his *The Souls of Black Folks* particularly touching a nerve for her. Schreiner's  
12 radical pacifism was shared with Jane Addams (2006 [1906], Davis 1976), with Schreiner's  
13 letters suggesting they had been in epistolary contact prior to meeting in London in 1915  
14 around the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom being established, through  
15 their joint friendship with Aletta Jacobs.

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