

This Speaking Leaf: Vera Connolly's *Good Housekeeping* Crusade for the Indian Cause

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I was so deeply impressed by your articles . . . that I am planning to include (them) in a course on the American People which I am teaching at the Sunset Hill School for Girls . . . the meager reports from Congress which I have seen from time to time in papers and magazines are most unsatisfactory . . . I intend to have our class write to our Senators and Congressmen this winter urging them to forward the course.”

—Letter from Rowena C. Drake to Vera L. Connolly,
August 14, 1929

“I am writing you this speaking leaf to tell you that I have read your articles in *Good Housekeeping* magazine about the Red people. . . . I am glad when I read your story for I know that it will reach the eyes of many white people.”

—Letter from Whame Whyama to Vera L. Connolly,
January 2, 1930

In June of 1928, *Good Housekeeping* magazine hired popular writer Vera Leona Connolly to investigate and report on certain “Indian matters” that were drawing some limited attention in the nation’s capital. After conducting a six-month inquiry, Connolly prepared a three-part series documenting horrific levels of starvation, wide-spread abuse in government-run boarding schools, profound poverty affecting many tribal communities, and a federal Indian Bureau engaged in fraud and severe neglect—issues largely ignored by the contemporary press. Connolly’s work stirred her *Good Housekeeping* readers to action. Many

wrote letters, petitioned governmental representatives, and advocated publically for political reform. Their cries of outrage forced the resignation of one key official and created a groundswell of public support for further Senate investigations which led swiftly to legislative changes and increased federal appropriations of more than three million dollars.

In addition to spurring a remarkable level of civic interest and public action, Connolly's text moved far beyond the typical *Good Housekeeping* readership, provoking comments from new readers. Her written work circulated throughout diverse social spaces, opening new avenues of political activism for *Good Housekeeping* subscribers but also providing a meaningful discursive space for other marginalized voices. Connolly's writing in *Good Housekeeping* magazine—her “speaking leaf”—gave voice to articulations generally silenced within dominant society and ultimately led to many more speaking leaves, many new textual utterances designed to foster public dialogue, as well as political action.

This article explores how *Good Housekeeping*, a publication designed for “housewives” thought to be focused primarily on the domestic arts of cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing, came to actively embrace and promote more public forms of civic action. I argue that this female-oriented magazine published in the late 1920s provided an essential and transgressive textual space for civic engagement. I first recover Vera's Connolly's work on the “Indian Cause”¹ from 1928 and 1929 for *Good Housekeeping* magazine and then identify and analyze some of the socio-cultural contexts shaping and influencing this specific rhetorical event. I conclude by examining what this discursive legacy might represent in terms of its rhetorical possibilities and its rhetorical limitations. As we expand our understanding of women's creative and often radical means for participating in public rhetoric beyond the speaker's platform, as we remap rhetoric from previously marginalized viewpoints, I seek to redefine rhetorical efficacy in more expansive and more complex ways by recovering and closely examining the important roles that Vera Connolly

¹ This paper generally presents the terms “Indian,” “Indians,” and “Indian Cause” in quotes in order to reflect an understanding that these discursive constructions, though widely used in American society (particularly during the early twentieth century), do little to signify meaningful notions of identity, subjectivity, ethnicity, or community. For an extended discussion, see Deloria and later sections of this same article.

and *Good Housekeeping* magazine played during the early twentieth century to promote civic awareness and political activism.

Research Methods and Analysis

The methods of research and analysis within this work draw primarily upon Vicki Tolar Collins' concept of material rhetoric, as described in her *College English* article, “The Speaker Respoken.” As Collins notes, questions regarding who is speaking and who is silenced are core issues within the study of rhetoric from a feminist perspective. To avoid problems of anachronism, appropriation, and decontextualization often associated with the recovery of overlooked or silenced voices within historical texts, Collins urges scholars to approach these texts rhetorically, engaging in an examination of what she terms “material rhetoric.”² Collins defines this process as a multi-layered form of close reading that focuses not only on the rhetorical aims and functions of a core text, but also takes up broader considerations of the ways that a text can shift and change through situated, material processes of production, distribution, and reception. As Collins explains:

In order to understand and critique the function of women's rhetoric in the cultural formation of women's lives, feminist historians of rhetoric need to read closely not only the disembodied content of rhetoric written by and for women, but also the embodied texts, the material elements of their production and distribution, with particular attention to how publishing decisions and practices affect ethos as it functions in women's texts and women's reading. (546)

Material rhetoric begins by looking closely at the rhetorical functions in relationships among authors, text(s), publishing authorities, discourse communities, and readers, then moves to a consideration of rhetorical

² While I acknowledge the scholarly concerns raised by Catherine Chaput and Danielle Mitchell regarding the application of a materialist methodology within Collins' own work, I find the notion of material rhetoric as articulated by Collins to be a useful heuristic for my analysis here. In my application of this concept, I adopt Collins' view that the term “material rhetoric” can be used without invoking larger theoretical considerations of materialism, relying instead upon this term to examine more closely how ideologies regarding women (and other marginalized voices) are embedded and enacted through certain material practices associated with the editing and publishing of women's texts. See Chaput and Mitchell 530-33; “(Collins) Burton Responds” 534-36.

accretion, which Collins defines as a process where “additional texts become layered over and around the original text” (547-48). This later aspect of material rhetoric—examining textual accretion—can further illuminate ways that initial articulations, particularly utterances from women and other marginalized voices, “become respoken” or reappropriated and refigured within dominant discursive formations.

Material rhetoric offers both a concrete method for recovering significant texts and a methodology for interrogating these texts, once recovered. Applying material rhetoric as a methodology allows scholars to more thoroughly address the unstable nature of textuality; it provides a means for addressing the shifting forms of discursivity a text assumes, embeds, or discards as it moves through the various phrases of its own embodied materiality—from production, through distribution, to reception. More particularly, material rhetoric provides opportunities for feminist scholars to examine closely the layers of the control—forms of cultural silencing or cultural reshaping—that might influence the inception of a core text and its subsequent circulation within society. As a heuristic, material rhetoric provides a useful means for scholars to assess the ways that writers, production authorities, market forces of distribution, and ultimately, readers, intended or actual, can resist, refigure, or reappropriate texts over time.

Applying material rhetoric as a research method means to address key questions of production, distribution, and reception, looking simultaneously for ongoing evidence of rhetorical accretion. To interrogate a text’s initial production, one asks: What are the embodied qualities of this initial text? What or who authorized the material shift from earlier forms of articulation to published text? In what community was the writer writing? In what historical and political situation? For what audiences? For what rhetorical purpose? To interrogate distribution, one examines questions of cost, general availability, and affordability. Concluding levels of interrogation take up material considerations of reception: Who is reading this text; what are their responses? Whose needs are met by this text as it moves through society? What larger conversations influence its circulation? (Collins 551). This deeply contextualized analysis allows scholars to trace the ways that a text becomes layered with multiple rhetorical aims, functions, and effects. Material rhetoric provides a means for tracking, with greater

intentionality, the rhetorical influence of disparate voices—how speakers are respoken—over time.

Notions of material rhetoric, which provide a means for examining both textual materiality and the polyvalent discursive formations created within or through textual space, provide an appropriate lens for reclaiming and reviewing Vera Connolly’s early twentieth-century work in *Good Housekeeping* magazine. Connolly crafted her three-part series from a myriad of voices, deriving her primary text from congressional testimonies, interview transcripts, and witness statements. From its inception, Connolly’s text engaged in a process of “respeaking” in the most fundamental sense. Our challenge is to not only recover these layered textual voices, but to also trace their rhetorical aims, their discursive effects, and their dynamic interrelationships in and through Connolly’s text as it moved across time and space, from production and distribution to reception and recirculation. The following discussion will first take up considerations of production and distribution within female-oriented trade magazines, one of the widely available textual forums of the period for women. The discussion will then move to a specific review of Vera Connolly’s articles published in *Good Housekeeping*, and finally attempt to analyze textual reception and recirculation—the significant ways that Connolly’s text came to be “respoken.”

Production and Distribution within Available Discursive Forums: Trade Magazines for American Women, 1890-1930

The post-civil war years—with the rise of mail-order marketing and advertising revenue, the sale of fashion sheets for dress patterns, and burgeoning newspaper clipping services—led to a profusion of publications issued solely for consumption by American women. By 1890, six new journals designed specifically for female readers³ could be found

³ Within this paper, I adopt the views of Susan Jarratt, Celeste Condit, and many other feminist scholars who encourage historical researchers to think in terms of social constructions of gender, rather than social constructions of “female,” “woman,” or “women.” Notions of gender are contingent, fluid, and performative—rhetors adopt or select from an assortment of stylistic features coded as masculine or feminine in order to adapt ethos and discourse to specific rhetorical situations. While I use terms such as “woman,” “women,” or “female” throughout this discussion, I employ these terms as

in millions of homes across the country. These “Big Six” included *Ladies Home Journal*, *McCall’s*, *Delineator*, *Pictorial Review*, *Woman’s Home Companion*, and, of course, *Good Housekeeping*. According to historian and trade magazine scholar Mary Ellen Zuckerman, advances in printing technology and new methods of mass production and distribution, including rural free delivery, allowed these publishers to print and sell millions of magazines on an annual basis (“Old Homes” 719). Upper- and middle-class female readers formed the largest part of this magazine market. As Zuckerman notes, “It is unlikely that the budgets of most working women allowed them to purchase luxuries like magazines; when they read these journals, it was through passed-along copies (721,748).

Over time, the Big Six journals increased in size, the quality of their print improved greatly, and their contents became more diversified; they offered one of the major ways for women to stay informed about social, political, and cultural issues, particularly before the widespread use of radio and television. These magazines worked to entertain women, to provide household information, and to offer guidance, education, or insights on life beyond the home. By 1920, the financial stability secured by the Big Six afforded each of these magazines more editorial freedom and more journalistic experimentation than other existing trade publications (Zuckerman, “Old Homes” 727-28). Abundant advertising dollars made it possible to invest in high quality feature articles, fiction pieces by well-known authors, and engaging forms of illustration. Feature articles between 1920 and 1930 spanned a wide range of topics, offering views on national politics, suffrage, social reform, venereal disease, women’s presence in the workplace, and higher education.

While many of the Big Six magazines provided ample space for wide-ranging discussions of civic life, it remained rare for any of this magazine space to be devoted to specific calls for civic engagement or overt political activism. Between 1928 and 1929 in particular, the prevailing “cult of domesticity,” which had initially developed during the nineteenth century, continued to influence significant aspects of many American women’s lives. Popular literature, magazine articles, and a burgeoning movie industry generally encouraged women to believe that their

shorthand for a much larger kind of inquiry intended to examine the gendered nature of discursive acts.

economic security and their social status, to a large extent, depended on a successful, traditional marriage.

In addition, despite women’s newly won right to vote and the visibility of many females as public figures, an unease about women’s civic roles remained. Much of the American public still adhered to a belief in “separate spheres”—women’s roles and men’s roles should not overlap; women should concern themselves with home, children, and religion while men took care of business and politics.⁴ Although working-class women and men of all classes had always worked outside the home, middle-class women continued to be associated with, and pushed into, the domestic sphere. Women had achieved enfranchisement but many encountered resistance when they attempted to participate more actively in civic life. Indeed, the “separate spheres” ideology remained readily apparent in many pages of the Big Six.

Of equal note, the Big Six, including *Good Housekeeping*, depended heavily upon advertising support; their primary function continued to be the ability to induce readers to consume products from an ever increasing market of “essential” household goods. As Glenda Matthews notes, the advertising industry came of age in the 1920s:

Not only did the volume of advertizing rise during the period but also copywriters pioneered new styles of layout, used photographs more extensively, and developed non-rational styles of appeal to the consumer. ‘I want advertising copy to arouse me,’ the associate editor of *Advertising and Selling* had written in 1919, ‘to create in me a desire to possess the thing that’s advertised, even though I don’t need it.’ During the next ten years the industry became increasingly sophisticated about this goal. (179-80)

Within the pages of women’s magazines, both in articles and in advertisements, editors engaged in a concerted effort to break down women’s resistance to new products by advising them continually to purchase, purchase, purchase—new frozen foods, new appliances, new household products, even new beauty aids (Matthews 172-96). Scientific “experts” hired by the magazines to test products or write feature articles worked to make consumption seem credible, if not essential; the *Good*

⁴ For this history, see DuBois and Duménil; Matthews; Mintz and Kellogg.

elaborate irrigation system at a cost of over a million dollars. When built, this destroyed the Indians' old canal system, which had adequately met their needs, and THE WHOLE HUGE COST OF THE NEW SYSTEM WAS SADDLED AS A DEBT ON THESE INDIANS AS A TRIBE. Later it became a lien against their individual allotments of land. Today these Indians have to get permission each time they want water from these ditches, and the maintenance charges are constantly accumulating against their land. The Indians' land will thus be consumed in time, and they will become homeless.

One Instance of Injustice

Mrs. Stella M. Atwood, whom the Indians lovingly call "Mother" in gratitude for all she has done for them through twelve years of concentrated effort, told me, in California last summer, of the following occurrence:

"One day the Navajos wired me to come. Come on the next train! They needed help. Vast tracts of land belonging to them had been leased to a white cattle man without their consent, and the Indians' cattle were to be put off at once. When I got there I found that the captain at Fort Wingate had leased eleven thousand acres of the Navajo grazing land to this white cattleman for a dollar a year! This part of the reservation had been taken over by the War Department during the War. It was still a military reservation, the officer claimed. "He had no right to take such a step, in any case, without competitive bids! A court-martial was possible. I kept the wires to Washington hot. The white cattleman had himself made deputy sheriff and was planning to put the Indians' cattle off in twenty-four hours. The Indians' distress was terrible! This land had been the grazing ground of the Navajos for generations. There was no place for them to go. Some of them were old Scouts, or pensioners from the Government. "They came streaming down Sunday morning to confer with me; and we were just ready to open council meeting, when an Indian came galloping across the plain, waving a telegram. It was from the War Department. A reprieve! "Suspend all operations until investigation." It was the result of my wires, as Chairman of the Indian Welfare Division of the Federated Women's Clubs. The white cattleman swung up on his horse and rode away. He was never heard from again.

On another occasion, in 1924, just after the Indians had been made citizens, Mrs. Atwood was summoned in desperate haste to the Crow Reservation in Montana. The Indians informed her, in their wise, that the county authorities had come in without their approval and arranged to corral all the horses on the reservation, and kill them and skin them, and sell the hides for sixty-five cents apiece to pay the Indians' taxes. "I happened to know," said Mrs. Atwood, "that neither a trust fund, nor anything bought with trust money, is taxable; and I also knew that the burden of proof would lie with the county. So I wired to the Indians to get an attorney, promising I would come at once. "When I got to the Crow Reservation I was met by an Indian who was then Republican nominee for sheriff of Big Horn County. With him was Robert Yellowtail—a brilliant, educated Indian who had just been defeated, by a very few votes, in the primaries for Congress. These were highly intelligent men, educated men, able to fill public office. They took me up to their attorney. He said he had not a doubt in the world but that an injunction would be granted. The legal action was pressed, and the Indians' horses were saved. "The Indians there told me of the awful tyranny and oppression under which they were living. They described how they had tried to get a petition to Washington, asking the removal of the Superintendent. The petition had, of course, to go through his hands. So during a political meeting on the Agency grounds the Indians called the Superintendent out and presented the petition to him in the

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Figure 1: A page from the March, 1929 issue of Good Housekeeping magazine; Connolly's article appears in the middle column.

Housekeeping "Seal of Approval" for many household products, for example, became a popular magazine feature.

Inconsistencies between paid advertisements and feature articles from esteemed "experts" could often be found within the pages of the Big Six, confounding readers and perhaps diminishing the impact of non-commercial messages appearing within this same forum. A feature article on diet and nutrition, for example, might appear on the same page with an advertisement for tempting, high calorie food (Zuckerman, "Old Homes" 755-56). In fact, large ads for mundane household goods and routine beauty products dwarf, and possibly trivialize, nearly every page of the space afforded to Connolly's articles written for *Good Housekeeping* in 1929 (See Figure 1). At a minimum, Connolly's text and the civic concerns she strived to highlight had to compete with omnipresent commercial messages continually refocusing her readers' attention on less socially just concerns.

Producing a Particular Text: Vera Connolly's *Good Housekeeping* Crusade for the "Indian Cause"

Widely known for her sound reporting, Vera Connolly (See Figure 2) published work in popular American magazines from the 1920s through the 1950s. Although Connolly served for brief periods of time as an editor or staff writer on several national publications, for most of her professional career she worked as a free-lance writer, often struggling financially to make ends meet. Connolly liked to be known as a "stirrer-upper" or a "crusader," and her investigative skills, despite her lack of steady employment, were highly valued throughout the industry. Writing in 1920, Oscar Graeve, an editor at the *Delineator*,



Figure 2: Vera Leona Connolly, circa 1920.

noted: “Whenever we have an idea for an article where tact, good judgment, and the ability to dig up facts are required, I always try to get Miss Connolly to do it for us. She is the soundest of investigators!”

Connolly’s most provocative articles appeared almost exclusively in women’s journals which may account for her relative obscurity today. Connolly completed many of her influential essays between 1925 and 1950, writing generally for the Big Six (Zuckerman, “Progressive Journalist,” 80-81). More interested in social reform than many of her professional contemporaries, Connolly worked to expose a wide range of social ills, including problems encountered by young runaways, the abusive treatment of juveniles within adult penal systems, the widespread need for prison reform, and labor abuses within the textile industry.

Appearing within mainly female-oriented textual mediums both limited and shaped Connolly’s work. She wrote less about corrupt politicians and businesses than other journalists, and more about children, education, family, and social improvement, subjects commonly thought to be of particular interest to women.⁵ Setting herself apart from the muckraking style of many turn-of-the-century writers who preceded her, Connolly often provided a list of practical steps for her readers to take in order to alleviate the social problems she identified.

The most celebrated writing of Connolly’s career can be found in the three-part series of articles appearing in the February, March, and May, 1929 issues of *Good Housekeeping* magazine. With limited financial support from *Good Housekeeping*, Connolly spent six months—the latter half of 1928—preparing her investigative article. She spent this time traveling and gathering information—observing, listening, and

⁵Mary Ellen Zuckerman argues that Connolly’s nonfiction writing reflects a form of optimism about “the changes possible from educating the populace” and a belief held by many social feminists that emphasized “women’s special role” as “natural reformers” (“Progressive Journalist” 81-82). While discursive evidence clearly exists within Connolly’s texts to support these assertions, in my view, Zuckerman fails to account fully for the complex interplay of social and cultural forces shaping Connolly’s investigative work. In order to get published at all, Connolly may have needed to write within dominant, limiting discourses of femininity and domesticity, while simultaneously calling for other kinds of social reform. See also Matthews, who argues that prevailing discourses of femininity and domesticity, while limiting, also provided a means for women to access more public arenas as a perceived need for “home values” within society more generally came to legitimize women’s civic involvement in particular kinds of social reform.

corresponding with members of the Senate Investigating Committee on Indian Affairs and American Indian Defense Association member John Collier, a well-known Progressive. Collier crusaded publically for national reform throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and ultimately served as the Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1933 through 1945.

Archival evidence suggests that the politically astute Collier strongly encouraged Connolly, and her editor, William F. Bigelow, to consider addressing “Indian matters” within the pages of *Good Housekeeping* during the late spring and early summer of 1928. In a letter to Connolly dated June 17, Collier states:

We are starting Tuesday and will meet the Glavises either at Klamath Or. or (in) Northern California. I have written Mr. G reminding him to send word to *Good Housekeeping* editor . . . Everything points, more surely than at the time we talked, to the public interest in the Indian matters and the abundance of startling and unexploited material. Indeed, I hope G. Hkpg. may go forward and that we will have you in the SWest.⁶

By the summer of 1928, a number of reform groups had been working urgently, but often obscurely, for decades to secure improved conditions for many native communities.⁷ Collier had strong connections to many of these groups, particularly the American Indian Defense Association, which he founded in 1923. He also worked closely with Stella Atwood, a social reformer from California, who had been leading the national Indian Welfare Committee of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs since 1921—an organization at that time with more than two million members (Huebner 344). By 1926, many of these reform efforts had led the Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work to commission a government-sanctioned study of federal Indian policy. Published on February 21,

⁶Historian Kenneth R. Philp asserts that Collier believed the moment promised “every condition favorable to a large reorganization of Indian affairs.” Philp notes that “to insure this confidence Collier helped Vera Connolly write a series of three articles for *Good Housekeeping*” (93). Philp fails to provide any scholarly evidence for this assertion and does not describe what he believes Collier’s involvement entailed.

⁷For an extended discussion of these efforts, see Holm; Hertzberg; and Cox. The Indian Welfare Committee of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs had also been consistently agitating for “Indian Reform.” For this history, see Tyler and also Huebner.

1928, the results of this study, commonly known as the “Meriam Report,”⁸ documented extensive acts of fraud and misappropriation by government agents, highlighted wide-spread abuses in boarding schools for native children, and further confirmed that many provisions of the Dawes Act had been used illegally for years to deprive indigenous communities of land and essential resources.

Collier recognized the importance of the Meriam Report and would ultimately concur with many of its findings, but he did not believe that the study could lead to the extensive reforms that he desired. Along with Senator William King of Utah, and Representative James A. Frear of Wisconsin, Collier worked for most of 1927 to establish a separate, more rigorous form of legislative review. On February 2, 1928, swayed in part by the efforts of Collier and Frear, the Senate voted to establish a separate investigatory process, creating the Senate Investigating Subcommittee on Indian Affairs (Prucha 790-813; Philp 82-91). Hearings conducted by this subcommittee began in November, 1928 and did not formally conclude until August, 1943.

Collier’s June 1928 efforts to interest Connolly and Bigelow in these “Indian matters” stemmed in part from his concern that more national attention needed to be focused on the subcommittee’s investigation. In his view, the Meriam Report would not be enough. Given his extensive connections to Atwood and the GFWC, Collier would have been well aware of the potential interest and support that could be tapped through clubwomen of this period. However, he realized that Atwood’s influence within the GFWC was waning—indeed, she found herself deposed as chair of the national Indian Welfare Committee⁹ during the GWFC’s biannual convention in July of 1928. Thus, during the early months of

1928, Atwood and Collier searched for another female-oriented medium in an effort to continue to reach this larger national audience. According to subscription records from this period, *Good Housekeeping* could provide access to more than one million readers (Endres and Lueck 124). Moreover, Collier and Atwood both knew the importance of publicity. In an undated letter which appears to have been sent to Connolly in February or March of 1929, Stella Atwood remarks that Collier, “is the biggest publicity man in the United States and is the best informed in his subject.”

William Bigelow also talked to, and corresponded with, Collier and Louis R. Glavis, an attorney friend of Collier’s, who had recently been appointed to coordinate the Senate investigation. These contacts proved to be persuasive. Even though the subject of federal Indian policy promised to be a departure from the standard articles featured within *Good Housekeeping*, on July 11, 1928, Bigelow issued a letter of introduction for Connolly to use during her investigative travels: “To



Figure 3: Vera Connolly and William F. Bigelow, circa 1933.

Whom It May Concern, Miss Vera Connolly, the bearer of this note, is traveling as a representative of *Good Housekeeping*. Any courtesies that may be extended to her will be appreciated” (See Figure 3).

Connolly traveled to Washington State, Oregon, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Wisconsin, escorted by Collier, Glavis, or Frear for many parts of her trip, returning to New York City in late August or early September. During this early period of her investigation, Frear, Glavis, Collier, and Atwood all continued to provide key

⁸ Issued under the title, *The Problem of Indian Administration*, the Meriam Report had been completed under the auspices of the Institute of Governmental Research, an independent organization that later became a division of the Brookings Institution. See Prucha 808-12.

⁹ Letter from Stella Atwood to Vera Connolly dated August 13, 1928: “Here is a piece of news. I am deposed . . . This dear little President of the Federation, Mrs. John Sipple (sic) is so obsessed with the idea that women should be in the home that my aggressive work in Congress simply doesn’t appeal to her . . . However, I shall carry on the fight more actively than ever and use the Indian Defense Association as a medium. I have been a director in it all this time, but never have done much through that channel because of the Federation, of course. Now I am free to hurrah around just as much as I please.”

information to Connolly. They secured many background documents for her, and helped her to establish personal contacts so that she could make site visits, conduct personal interviews, and collect witness statements.

Connolly noted in a letter to Bigelow dated September 3, 1928:

Here is the article by Congressman Frear. After you have read it, I am sure there will not be left in your mind a shadow of a doubt as to the criminal treatment our Indians are receiving. Some of his facts I can personally vouch for . . . I have visited some of the very sections Congressman Frear mentions, and have obtained, from individuals as reliable as those quoted here, facts even more startling.

I have such an abundance of material—field notes, interviews with Indians and whites in six or seven states, Senate hearings in printed form, letters, affidavits (sic), newspaper clippings, medical reports, copies of Indian treaties with the U.S.—that I could write not three, but ten articles on this subject.

Later language within this same letter reveals just how much of a departure from regular textual content this article represented for *Good Housekeeping*, and the “stir” Connolly anticipated her work would create:

But . . . let me say once more, if you still have doubts, if you still think perhaps there is not the story, in the condition of the Indians, which you thought there might be, I need not write the articles for *Good Housekeeping*. You are under no obligation to go ahead. You sent me out there to see whether or not the story really was there. I assured you, from Albuquerque, from San Francisco, and on me (sic) return to New York that the story IS there. But still you seem uncertain. Probably any editor would. It’s dynamite.

Writing back on September 6, 1928, Bigelow assured Connolly that *Good Housekeeping* would move forward: “All I am concerned about is that we shall tell the truth, the whole truth—unless it would make unfit reading—and nothing but the truth. So let’s get to it.”

Connolly’s three-part series appeared in the February, March, and May 1929 issues of *Good Housekeeping*. Connolly explains to her readers that the series arose as “rumors . . . caused the Editor of GOOD HOUSEKEEPING to send me West to the Indian themselves to ascertain certain facts” (“The Cry” 226). The first article notes that the series will set

out to document “A Story of Injustice and Cruelty as Terrible as it is True” (30-31). As Connolly states:

The writer of this article found that the information she was obtaining was of three sorts—personal wrongs, maladministration of property, and suggestions as to a solution of the Indian problem. She has therefore prepared three articles, one devoted to each of these phases . . . This first article will deal with the personal wrongs. (230)

Consequently, Connolly’s second article entitled, “We Still Get Robbed” which appeared in *Good Housekeeping*’s March, 1929 issue focused specifically on land and property fraud. Her third piece entitled “The End of the Road,” published in May, 1929, urged readers to take specific public action to remedy the grave injustices Connolly presented. Each



Figures 4 and 5: Illustrations by Herbert M. Stoop on the opening pages of Vera Connolly’s second article entitled “We Still Get Robbed” appearing in the March, 1929 issue of *Good Housekeeping* magazine.

article opened with somber illustrations by the renowned Herbert M. Stoops (See Figures 4 and 5) and ran at least six pages in length, but did not appear as a referenced “feature” on any of the published covers for the three *Good Housekeeping* issues in question.

Connolly begins her first essay with quotes from men she interviewed in Taos, New Mexico. This opening serves to personalize a sweeping national problem and further heighten her reader’s engagement with the

detailed policy discussion to follow. These initial interview statements describe horrifying conditions for tribal communities throughout the West and Midwest: poverty, starvation, tuberculosis, lack of health care, and a lack of adequate housing. Connolly supplements these narratives with concrete (though often unattributed) statistics, noting for example that “The Indian death rate increased 62 percent from 1921 through 1925” and “21 percent of all Indians, or more than 60,000, have trachoma” (“The Cry” 231). Connolly also focuses in this first article on the dire conditions existing at many of the boarding schools established for Native American children, describing these sites as “prison-like” with rotting, vermin-infested food supplies, inhumane labor practices, and disciplinary procedures which included chaining children to their beds, placing them in rat-infested basement “dungeons,” repeated whippings, and forcing young children to wear a ball and chain as punishment for running away (235-36).

Connolly draws from the Meriam Report and documents originating from the ongoing Senate Investigation to frame and authenticate information for all three articles, but she does not mention the Meriam report by name in her first or second article, vaguely labeling it instead as the “Institute Report.” To introduce her initial discussion of off-reservation boarding schools, for example, Connolly notes that her interviews with members of the Taos Council led to her reflect back on more “official” sources of information: “I recalled then some of the statements in the official reports that I had seen—that Indian boarding schools are overcrowded, unsanitary, and filled with two diseases—tuberculosis and . . . trachoma” (“The Cry” 228). This neat sleight of hand authenticates both the interview testimony she is passing along to her readers—because it confirms existing “official” documents—and the testimonials themselves, as they are seen to confirm and authenticate existing, government-sanctioned reports. Connolly continues with these framing and authenticating techniques throughout her first article, but deepens this maneuver in at least one instance by creating a kind of internal dialogue that she invites her readers to share:

Partly as a result of her own fleeting observations, but chiefly through her interviews and study of authentic reports, among them the one submitted a year ago by the Institute for Government Research after a fifteen months’ investigation made

at the request of the Secretary of the Interior—the writer found abundant verification of all that had been claimed in the Taos Council regarding the boarding schools. And she also discovered that this wrong being done the Indian people is one of many! (“The Cry” 228)

Throughout this section, Connolly speaks in the third person (“she,” “the writer”), effectively creating more distance between herself, as author, and the information presented. This textual maneuver creates a sense of objectivity and formality for Connolly’s audience, inviting readers to confirm certain conditions on the ground for themselves. This distancing, a clever rhetorical move, allows “fleeting observations” to be perceived more readily as established facts by the readers.

The third and final article in Connolly’s series opens with an explicit reference to the study commissioned by Secretary Work in June of 1926, and subsequently undertaken by the Institute for Government Research. Led by Lewis Meriam and his esteemed staff of investigators who worked as “scientific specialists,” the Institute produced an 872-page book entitled “The Problem of Indian Administration (“End of the Road” 44). As Connolly explains:

This book is the most restrained, yet the most heartbreaking analysis ever made of the health, education, and human needs for the Indian. Obtain a copy of it. Read it. Learn—with a sense of shock and dismay—what conditions the Institute’s scientific investigators found on Indian reservations and in Indian boarding schools. (44)

In this final article, Connolly quotes directly, and at length, from sections of the Meriam Report, continually urging her readers to review this tome more closely: “Let me urge again earnestly—obtain it and read it! It is one of the authoritative sources from which these articles are drawn” (“End of the Road” 44-45, 153).

Overt references to the Meriam Report in Connolly’s final article are probably due to an intervening controversy which delayed the initial April publication of Connolly’s article until the May, 1929 issue. *Good Housekeeping* decided to withhold Connolly’s third article from the April issue after the Indian Bureau publicly charged that Connolly’s first article had been “full of misrepresentations” (45). *Good Housekeeping* editor William Bigelow offered Commissioner Charles H. Burke the

chance to dispute Connolly's findings, but Burke could not effectively do so, and publication resumed. According to magazine historian Mary Ellen Zuckerman, Commissioner Burke "reacted angrily to the (first two) articles in part because he feared their effect, with good reason: these articles reached a wide audience."¹⁰ By May of 1929, given the very public nature of the discussion Connolly had raised within the pages of *Good Housekeeping*, Connolly could more easily reference the government documents shaping and informing her work. Invoking the Meriam Report by name in her two previous articles may have politicized the discussion in ways that Connolly had hoped to avoid. Connolly wanted to raise awareness for the general public, but not agitate powerful constituencies opposing Indian Bureau reforms.¹¹ When Burke publically denounced Connolly's work, any effort to avoid this kind of scrutiny became irrelevant and the Meriam Report could be mentioned by its common name.¹²

¹⁰ Zuckerman, "Progressive Journalist" at 84, 88 citing to Nelson Mason, clerk of the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs who wrote to Connolly on October 31, 1930: "Everywhere we go we meet people who know of the injustices to the Indians and which can generally be traced back to the *Good Housekeeping* articles." Writing to Connolly on November 11, 1929, John Collier also states: "the affect (sic) of your GH series has been wide and permanent."

¹¹ Connolly notes in her September 3, 1929 letter to Bigelow, "Let me tip you off to this: do not expect the oil men and their families, the lumber kings and their employees, the whites who are fattening on the grazing or farm lands of the Indians, Indian Bureau employees and their hangers-on, or any of the poor-white fringe found in and about every Reservation, to sympathize with these articles . . . I expect them to leap on me."

¹² A brief statement found on the opening page of Connolly's third and final article notes: AS WE advised you last month, Miss Connolly's third Indian article was withheld from the April issue to give the Indian Bureau a chance to prove that the first article was, as it charged, 'full of misrepresentations.' Had Miss Connolly been discredited, the present article would not have been published, and we should have apologized to our readers and to the Indian Bureau. But in not one essential particular could Miss Connolly's statements be disproved. Conditions on some reservations are not as Miss Connolly stated, but the changes have been made since the investigation was made last summer. As a matter of fact, Miss Connolly has understated, rather than overstated the condition of the Indians. Not on all reservations, to be sure—there seem to be many bright spots in the Indian country—but on so many of them that the indictment stands as drawn. And so we are publishing here the third, and last, article in Miss Connolly's series. Read it." ("End of the Road" 44-45)

The public controversy with Commissioner Burke also provided Connolly with an opportunity to issue even more strident calls for comprehensive education, public discussion, and political action. Connolly pushed full steam ahead, urging her readers to "to read . . . and to study deeply" (153,158) in order "to learn the conditions today" by following contemporaneous Senate proceedings, noting:

And now, in 1929, at the hearings being held in Washington, D.C. before Senators investigating the Indian problem, conditions as bad and much worse are being described by sworn witnesses, as existing on numerous reservations and in numerous Indian boarding schools *today!*" ("End of the Road" 154)

Connolly includes statements from several leading government officials who each encourage Connolly's readers to blame the Indian Bureau, not Congress for these worsening conditions, and Connolly further exhorts her readers to adopt "Mr. Collier's plan" for this is "the program which most of those who love the Indian race seem, today, to approve" (164-65).¹³ Her final article concludes with a section on "What You Can Do To Help" which suggests that women "write to your Senators and Congressmen, and to President Hoover . . . and form within your churches and clubs, permanent Indian welfare groups, resolved to fight on through the years if necessary" (170). In effect, Connolly provides a blueprint for social action: study deeply and become informed in order to participate meaningfully in ongoing civic discussions designed to effect political change.

Archival reviews to date indicate that editors at *Good Housekeeping*, particularly Bigelow, did little to shape or control Connolly's writing—or her ethos—for this series. File drafts do not contain marginalia or any written directives from editors or reviewers; there is limited rhetorical accretion at this stage of production which evidences textual changes not specifically directed or selected by Connolly herself. Nonetheless, a typed note from Bigelow to Connolly dated January 22, 1929 states,

Your last article is very interesting—a bit better than the second one and almost as good as the first. I do not however, like your ending. It seems to me that something might be done to end on a

¹³ Notably, Connolly fails to address what leading indigenous activists, like Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, or many members of the tribal communities she interviewed, had to say about Collier's plan.

better note. That story of the old Indian makes one shudder, and that may keep readers from taking the active part we hope they will take.

The final published version of Connolly's third article concludes, as noted earlier, with the short, action-oriented section recommended by Bigelow.

This limited comment from Bigelow indicates that Connolly's editors supported a very public role for women around the issue of federal "Indian" policy. Given that John Collier, Stella Atwood, James Frear, and probably Louis Glavis, all kept a close eye on the developing *Good Housekeeping* series, Bigelow in particular may have wanted to ensure some measurable response—evidenced through letters—from his *Good Housekeeping* readers for this deeply interested group of reformers. Whatever machinations occurred at the editorial level between Bigelow, Collier, and Collier's supporters, we do know that in one instance Bigelow asked Connolly to shift from a focus on pathos and emotion to very concrete forms of political action. Although this was a discursive space Connolly had already created for herself as an accomplished writer and reporter, she claimed it far more forcefully within this particular *Good Housekeeping* series, and she claimed it for her readers, as well.

Connolly's standard writing practices, specifically her reliance upon engaging, intimately-focused emotional appeals, extensive statistical information, direct forms of address, and a frequent use of clear imperatives all worked to enhance and support the action-oriented ethos found within this core text.¹⁴ Connolly also relied heavily upon exclamation marks and italicized emphasis for key phrases. While these two textual practices could be found more commonly in journalistic work of the period, as linguistic devices they may have nonetheless lent a credible air of urgency to the federal policy concerns Connolly strove to highlight in this instance.

¹⁴ Given that this article focuses specifically on textual production, distribution, reception and accretion, this discussion does not conduct a thorough, rhetorical reading of each article found within Connolly's *Good Housekeeping* series. The need for this type of scholarly review in future evaluations of Connolly's work remains.

Textual Reception and Recirculation—the Speaker Respoken

Connolly's persuasive, hard-hitting articles triggered a tremendous public response. Senator W.B. Pine of Oklahoma asked for her first article to be read into the Congressional Record on January 29, 1929, just hours after its release. In a letter to John Collier dated January 30, 1929, Connolly states that editor, William Bigelow, "has never published anything which has brought in such a quantity of letters and the article has only been on the newsstands for five days." On May 1, 1929, immediately upon the release of Connolly's third article, Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana sought to have Connolly's final essay read into the Congressional Record. In addition to provoking the resignation of Commissioner Burke on March 4, 1929, this public support seems to have facilitated a large appropriation of more than 3.1 million dollars by the Hoover Administration in 1930 designated to improve conditions for pupils attending native boarding schools (Black 388-90; Prucha 813, 921-25).

The many letters that Connolly received in response to the *Good Housekeeping* series appear, materially, to come from several different socio-economic brackets, indicating that Connolly's text circulated far beyond the typical *Good Housekeeping* reader. While a number of letters are written on embossed or engraved linen stationery, an equal number appear on lined school paper or cheap brown wrapping paper. The letters originate from every region of the country, reflecting both rural and urban return addresses. On January 25, 1929 Marvie Bartlett of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin writes: "Thank you for opening my eyes to this disgraceful blot on our American honor." Addressing Connolly on February 3, Mrs. Georgia B. Hills of Atlanta, Georgia states, "I, as a mother, cannot resist writing you before I go to bed this night, and ask, if you do not know of some way we, who have done so much for the children of other nations, can heal this reeking sore on our own body?" "I am shocked beyond words," Helen Mason of Philadelphia notes, "—it is unthinkable that these conditions should exist in America." Nor did Connolly's articles appear to lose any shock value over time: "I have just read your March issue," says Nellie Trenholm of Ashland, Massachusetts, "and it is enough to make me boil over and wince."

Almost to a person, the letters written to Connolly express continued interest and a desire for sustained engagement with issues affecting native communities: “I would like to see some real action taken by our own Woman’s Club, the W.C.T. U. and the churches in our town,” writes Ruth Sturtevant of Amherst, Massachusetts on February 6, “I await with interest your two coming articles on the subject.” Margaret Bluthardt of Kenilworth, Illinois states on February 7: “I have a group of Campfire girls who have heard about this tragedy and want to do something for the Indian children in boarding schools. I do not know how much a small group of girls can do, but we can spark others’ interest, at least . . . I know we could enlist our whole town, small though it is.” Mrs. E.J. Reinhardt of Indianapolis, Indiana states in her letter of February 26, “I would not even know whom to write for a report of the Committe (sic) as you suggested in the beginning of your article. However I do not feel I could sit here and not do the little I might do . . . Hoping this letter does not sound too dumb to you and hoping to be of a little service.”

Arguably, Connolly’s articles worked to establish ongoing discursive formations at local and regional levels, facilitating conversations intended to be educational, civically-minded, and proactive. Writing on March 12 from Springfield, Massachusetts, Lesbia E. Dillie notes her intention to start a club of “city-wide women interested in the legislative side of the question” as these efforts “might be a worthwhile contribution to the cause.” Mrs. Harry Schwab of Indianapolis states that, after reading the first two articles by Connolly, her local Wednesday Afternoon Club, “decided to build programs for the next year around the American Indian problem (and are) hoping that our study of these abused people may bear some good fruit.” On May 6, after reading the final article of Connolly’s series, Mrs. E.F. Eberstadt of East Orange, New Jersey writes: “As Chairman of the Program Committee of the Women’s Association of the Munn Avenue Presbyterian Church . . . I welcome the opportunity to acquaint the members with existing conditions . . . with the hope of awakening their active interest . . . Could you make it possible to come to us with this message?”

Efforts by Stella Atwood and John Collier to reach beyond the national GFWC leadership in order to secure more broad-based support from GFWC’s general membership also succeeded. The *Good Housekeeping* series reached many GFWC members spread throughout vast regions of

the country. These regional GFWC members could embrace the “Indian Cause” at state and local levels, disregarding individual GFWC leaders on the national level who might otherwise oppose such efforts. Mrs. Helen Conley, for example, writes to Vera Connolly on February 6 from Albany, Georgia and states: “being a member of the Woman’s Club here I write to ask in what ways we could act, to help . . . The State President is a personal friend and I am sure would be willing to take any step necessary—writing to Washington or whatever step you would advise. I think each District President could be interested and in that way every Club in the State could act.” On March 11, Mrs. Stephen Faull from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania reports that her “Woman’s Club (is) willing and anxious to help better conditions.” Writing several months after the appearance of Connolly’s final article in May, Mrs. John F. Bickel, Jr. of the wealthy and influential Morgan Park Women’s Club in Chicago, notes on August 14, 1929: “We have space on our next year’s program for a thing of this kind—and we are writing to you to learn how we might obtain a speaker.”

Connolly’s articles appear to have circulated beyond reading spaces typically divided by gender as well. Walter Compton of Bonner Springs, Kansas writing to Connolly on March 4 states: “I am a Senior in the Bonner Springs High School . . . I hope to represent my school in an oratorical contest . . . For my oration I have chosen your subject, the treatment that the American Indian is today receiving . . . I am greatly interested in this subject and want to tell all of the people in my community of this great injustice.” Virginia Moe of Gary, Indiana notes on May 2:

My father is greatly interested in your articles on the Indian problem . . . I am writing for him to see if you could suggest a form of procedure that might be used in presenting the subject to the noon-day clubs and other organizations . . . In closing, I might add that I have been surprised to find that the Indian problems mentioned in the dailey (sic) papers . . . and *Good Housekeeping* have struck a deep response in the many young people with whom I have discussed it.

Four years later, when Connolly uses a brief opinion column to urge her *Good Housekeeping* readers to support to the National Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, drawing upon the foundation of informed

knowledge and political engagement that she had helped to foster in 1929: “The outcome of the battle will depend—to an enormous degree—on you!” (“End of a Long, Long, Trail” 51). While complex social problems remained, Connolly’s 1934 call for political action evidences that the avenues of activism she helped to establish in 1928 and 1929 could be sustained and re-activated over time.

When we review more closely the discursive choices made in 1928 and 1929 by Connolly as she worked within the medium of *Good Housekeeping* magazine, we can see that Connolly recognized and played specifically to dominant social expectations for women; she invoked notions of piety and virtue in order to call her readers to care about indigenous populations and to advocate on their behalf. Despite her carefully documented investigative work with men of power and influence, Connolly continually argues in her *Good Housekeeping* series that the “Indian” problem should be of particular concern to women who are naturally driven by virtue and compassion for others. Connolly states in her opening article, “Perhaps, when the facts are told, there will be a crusade of . . . American . . . mothers” (“The Cry” 234). In her second article, Connolly tells of assuring some Navajo men that “many great-hearted American men—and all women who heard anything about the Indian’s plight—did care!” (“Robbed” 35). She later notes in this same article, “One hopeful sign on this horizon is the awakening of public interest. Especially the growing indignation of American women!” (251). As noted earlier, William Bigelow, as acting editor, did little to rework aspects of Connolly’s text, but he may not have needed to—as a seasoned professional, Connolly would have understood the standard discourses of femininity and domesticity a writer generally needed to adopt in order to be published within that particular medium.

Intriguingly, Connolly’s articles also provided an opportunity for those individuals living within, or in close proximity to, many native communities to enter into a dialogue over issues and concerns that had long been suppressed or overlooked in dominant culture. Certainly, no words could adequately address the material conditions occurring on the ground as lived experience. As Andrew Thickstun of Reno, Nevada notes on January 29, 1929: “I was raised among the Sioux in South Dakota . . . there is only one thing wrong with your article—and that is no fault of yours—the English language is inadequate.” Despite this purported

semiotic gap, Connolly’s work clearly memorializes some degree of suffering, serving as a permanent, widely accessible record of injustice. Dave Buffalo Bear notes in a letter to Connolly which she received on May 14: “Your courageous work will, I know be extol by all the North American Indians, also will remain a memorial as long as there is one Creditable Indian left on Earth.” As Dr. V. Berry of Okmulgee, Oklahoma notes: “It is as bad as you say, and worse.”¹⁵

Many letters engage in a process of witnessing, corroborating abuse and further grieving past harms. E.A. Towner of Salem, Oregon, for example, notes on June 15, 1929:

When I was a student at the Chemawa Indian School I suffered a broken ear drum and several broken bones . . . at the hands of an employee who is still at the school . . . Thanking you again for your noble work in this matter and assuring you that my people are grateful to you and others who have a vision of a cleaner democracy.

Beyond providing a space for voice, for story, for assertions of resilience and survivance, Connolly’s articles provided an opportunity to resist local socio-political constructions and participate, with some degree of agency, in larger, often more official discursive communities. Many letters from this group of *Good Housekeeping* readers contain offers to assist with ongoing investigations. On February 2, James Russell of Towaoc, Colorado writes to confirm ill treatment children had received at the local Indian School as Connolly described, but he also states: “While I think my name should not appear in public in connection with this matter, I am quite willing that it should be given to any investigating committee.” Susie Peters of Fort Cobb, Oklahoma writes: “If you go farther in this good work and have not been to Kiowa Agency of Andarko, Okla. I will take great pleasure in writing you some facts for investigation, or I will help you personally.”

¹⁵ Dr. Berry explains

I have lived for 38 years in intimate contact with the Indians . . . It is as bad as you say and worse, a continual story of graft and cruelty . . . no aid, medical or otherwise from any sources. I saw Chippewa families living in holes dug in the hillsides, in absolute squalor, unspeakable filth, and in all stages (of) tuberculosis, and trachoma.



Figures 6, 7, and 8: Cover illustrations for the February, March, and May, 1929 issues of *Good Housekeeping*.

These letters—these speaking leaves—confirm that Connolly's series achieved some measure of success in meaningfully articulating indigenous concerns, but fail to answer questions related to limiting discourses of "the Indian," tropes of sentimentality generally found within the pages of *Good Housekeeping*, and forms of misrepresentation that inevitably occur when one speaks for another. While Connolly engaged in thorough research, paying close attention to what we might call "authentic" voices, her project is one of translation, remaining unstable at best. Connolly's work stirred her many of her readers to action, but her sometimes quaint, sanitized narrative and its appearance within a "sentimentalized" format (See Figures 6, 7, and 8) may have compromised more realistic, more sustainable visions for social and political reform, particularly with regard to issues of sovereignty and survivance so critical for native populations.¹⁶

Vera Connolly reached a much larger audience, and garnered more political support for indigenous concerns than any of her journalistic contemporaries, but the choice to employ the forum of *Good Housekeeping* may not have been invoked without long-term, and perhaps severe, rhetorical consequences. Colorful advertisements depicting prevailing racial stereotypes—bare-skinned natives trading thick animal pelts, for example—appear within the same *Good Housekeeping* issues carrying Connolly's articles on the "Indian Cause" (See Figure 9).

¹⁶ For further discussions of the term "Indian" as a social construction, see Deloria, Dilworth, and Dippie. For discussions of the links between sentimentality and assimilation or colonization, see Warrior and Carpenter.

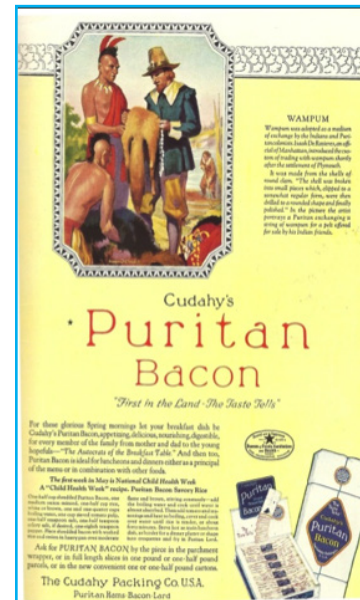


Figure 9: Advertisement in the May, 1929 *Good Housekeeping* issue for Puritan Bacon, with the magazine's "Seal of Approval."

Moreover, Connolly's own presentation style does little to deviate from prevailing insensitivities. Certainly, Connolly both transcended and remained constrained by the social and cultural forces of this period, but illustrations which accompany all three of her articles reinforce dominant notions of indigenous cultures as exotic, if not primitive, with men frequently appearing half-clothed or in loincloths (See Figures 4 and 5). While the inclusion of these images may have been beyond Connolly's editorial control, Connolly repeatedly refers to the individuals she meets outside of New York City as exotic others, noting they are "Like Arabs . . . swathed in cotton blankets" and as "bizarre as gipsies" [sic] ("The Cry" 30; "Robbed" 34). She generally presents indigenous cultures as helpless or in need of rescue ("Robbed" 255; "End of the Road" 169-70). Her failure to break with these longstanding misperceptions—particularly during a moment when her discursive abilities seem least constrained—may be the most ironic and the most disappointing aspect of her legacy for contemporary scholars to address.

Conclusion

This article attempts to look beyond the efforts of one individual rhetorical agent to a much larger range of discursive considerations, considerations of both process and product. While the article focuses most specifically on the journalistic work of Vera Connolly, its discussion addresses textual artifacts created from, and distributed to, a myriad of voices. This scholarly review confirms the richness of a methodology like material rhetoric for historical recovery and feminist inquiry, revealing through close reading and deeply contextualized forms of thick description some remarkable instances of textual autonomy and textual agency for voices that might have otherwise been silenced.

More scholarly work needs to be done to identify the rhetorical possibilities, and the rhetorical limitations, associated with the discursive spaces female-oriented trade magazines provided during the first half of the twentieth century. Despite the limitations we perceive here upon closer review, we can still celebrate the possibilities this rhetorical event so clearly evidences—moments of sustained inquiry, moments of close collaboration, moments of commitment and civic concern. In this regard, Vera Connolly's early twentieth-century work within *Good Housekeeping* and the diverse articulations her textual creation engendered should clearly resonate with many twenty-first century scholars and rhetors. Indeed, we still seek to recreate and sustain very similar kinds of civic discourse—to create our own speaking leaves, perhaps—but most certainly to promote those public conversations that can lead to more effective, more inclusive, more community-oriented forms of interest, engagement, and action.

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