The Shackles of Women’s Servitude

A comparative analysis of He-Yin Zhen and Emma Goldman’s views on women’s oppression and emancipation at the turn of the 20th century

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Abstract

Russian-American Emma Goldman and Chinese He-Yin Zhen came from different parts of the world, and thus weren’t active within the same knowledge systems and cultures. However, they were both anarchists fighting for the liberation of women, and both were strongly criticising the contemporary women’s suffrage movements. Few comparisons have been made between early Chinese feminism and early American feminism, and I have found no studies that connect He-Yin Zhen and Goldman. This bachelor’s thesis is a comparative study of these two proto-feminists who were active around the turn of the 20th century, and aim to provide a better understanding of them and their differences and commonalities. As material for my comparison I have chosen essays on women’s emancipation from both writers (He-Yin Zhen in English translation) and I approach the materials by using a qualitative content analysis. I found that both Goldman and He-Yin Zhen particularly stress oppression in form of marriage, prostitution and labour, and these three concepts thus become central in my investigation. Theoretically, the thesis is constructed around Shogimen and Baring’s thoughts on context and the change in ideas as they become part of new contexts. Through my investigation and analysis, I do identify differences between Goldman and He-Yin Zhen’s theories, but I also conclude that their ideas in regards to women’s emancipation, prostitution, marriage and labour, are actually very similar despite that their argumentations are based within different contexts.

Key words: He-Yin Zhen; He Zhen; Emma Goldman; the Birth of Chinese Feminism; early feminism; anarcho-feminism; women’s suffrage criticism; livelihood; shengji; context
Rysk-amerikanska Emma Goldman och kinesiska He-Yin Zhen kom från två olika delar av världen och var aktiva inom olika kunskapstraditioner och kulturer. Ändå var de båda anarkister som kämpade för kvinnlig frigörelse, och båda var de kritiska till de samtida rörelserna som stred för kvinnors politiska rättigheter. Det finns få studier som jämför tidig amerikansk feminism med tidig kinesisk feminism, och jag har inte kommit över någon studie som kopplar ihop Goldman och He-Yin Zhen. Denna kandidatuppsats ämnar att jämföra dessa två tidiga feminister, aktiva i övergången från 1800-talet till 1900-talet. De material som jag valt till grund för min jämförelse är essäer som Goldman och He-Yin Zhen skrivit gällande kvinnors frigörelse (He-Yin Zhen i engelsk översättning) och jag tar mig an materialet genom användandet av en kvalitativ innehållsanalys. Jag fann att båda teoretikerna lade stor vikt vid förtryck i form av äktenskap, prostitution och arbetskraft, varvid dessa tre koncept också får speciellt fokus i min undersökning. Uppsatsens teoretiska ramverk är byggt kring Shogimens och Barings teorier om kontext och förändringar i idéer allt eftersom idéerna blir del av en ny kontext. I min undersökning och analys hittar jag mycket rikligt skillnader mellan Goldman och He-Yin Zhen. Dock så kommer jag huvudsakligen fram till att deras slutsatser när det gäller kvinnlig frigörelse, äktenskap, prostitution och arbetskraft, är oerhört lika, trots att de två är aktiva inom olika kontexter.
Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION ......................................................... 3

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT, AIM, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS ............................................. 4
1.2 HE-YIN ZHEN, EMMA GOLDMAN AND THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY FEMINISMS ...................... 6
1.3 PRIMARY MATERIAL ....................................................................................................... 7
   1.3.1 HE-YIN ZHEN ........................................................................................................... 8
   1.3.2 EMMA GOLDMAN ...................................................................................................... 8
   1.3.3 MATERIAL DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND REFERENCES .................................... 9

2 THEORY AND METHOD ....................................................... 11

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ......................................................................................... 11
   2.1.1 CONTEXT AND IDEAS ON THE MOVE .................................................................. 12
   2.1.2 GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ....................................................................................... 13
2.2 COMPARATIVE QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS .................................................................. 15
   2.2.1 REFLEXIVITY .......................................................................................................... 16

3 RESEARCH SURVEY ......................................................................................... 18

3.1 RESEARCH ON HE-YIN ZHEN ....................................................................................... 19
3.2 RESEARCH ON EMMA GOLDMAN .................................................................................... 21

4 COMPARATIVE STUDY .................................................................................. 23

4.1 WOMEN’S EMANCIPATION ............................................................................................ 23
   4.1.1 THE QUESTIONING OF WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE .......................................................... 23
   4.1.2 OPPRESSION AND OPPRESSION OF WOMEN ......................................................... 24
   4.1.3 TRUE WOMEN’S EMANCIPATION ......................................................................... 27
4.2 LABOUR .......................................................................................................................... 28
4.3 PROSTITUTION ................................................................................................................. 29
4.4 MARRIAGE ...................................................................................................................... 31
4.5 CONCLUSIONS .................................................................................................................. 33

5 ANALYSIS & CONCLUDING THOUGHTS .......................................................... 36

5.1 ANALYSIS ....................................................................................................................... 36
5.2 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ............................................................................................. 38
   5.2.1 FURTHER RESEARCH ............................................................................................. 40

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................................................... 42
“Her development, her freedom, her independence, must come from and through herself. First, by arresting herself as a personality and not as a sex commodity. Second, by refusing the right to anyone over her body; by refusing to bear children, unless she wants them; by refusing to be a servant to God, the State, society, the husband, the family, etc., by making her life simpler, but deeper and richer. That is, by trying to learn the meaning and substance of life in all its complexities, by freeing herself from the fear of public opinion and public condemnation. Only that, and not the ballot, will set women free, will make her a force hitherto unknown in the world, a force for real love, for peace, for harmony; a force of divine fire, of life-giving; a creator of free men and women.”

*Emma Goldman, 1910*

“To liberate women means letting women enjoy equal rights and sharing the fruits of all freedoms. If we decided to follow the model of the current European and American systems, we would get our freedom in name but not in substance and also would have equal rights in name only. A sham equality deprived of true freedom is not equality at all.”

“The cause of women’s rights must be won through women’s own efforts. It must not be granted by men. If we allow women’s rightful role to be imposed by men, we are renouncing our freedom; and if we allow ourselves to look up to men and ingratiate ourselves to them, whatever rights we obtain in this way are handed to us from above. As we continued to be instrumentalized and remain men’s appendages, we would be liberated in name only, and our rights could never really be our own.”

**He-Yin Zhen, 1907**
Chinese He-Yin Zhen\(^1\) (1884- ca. 1920\(^2\)) and Russian-born, but American-active, Emma Goldman (1869-1940) are two proto-feminists and anarchists during the turn of the 20\(^{th}\) century. The historical and political contexts of China and the US are of course different. The 19\(^{th}\) century US developed into a democracy (for white men), went through civil war and rapid and massive industrialisation. In China the 19\(^{th}\) century is often referred to as the century of national humiliation due to the aggressive imperialism that China was facing from western powers and Japan, which led to several wars. China was under its last dynastic rule, the Qing dynasty, but towards the end of the 19\(^{th}\) century the republican movement began to grow alongside the discontent with the existing rule, and would come to over throw the several thousands of years of dynasties in 1912.

However, there are also some noticeable similarities between the two countries. The 19\(^{th}\) century, and perhaps particularly the turn of the 20\(^{th}\) century, was marked by liberation movements – from anti-slavery and anti-racism, women’s liberation and workers’ rights in the US, to nationalism, anti-imperialism, republicanism and women’s liberation in China. It was an industrialising world, a new global system was taking form and ideas were voluntary and involuntary spread across nation borders.

At the time, women’s suffrage was one of the major feminist causes in both the US, Europe and China. The women’s liberation movement in China was to a large extent influenced by western literature and thought, but it was mostly a one-way influence with few ideas going the other way (i.e. from China to the west).\(^3\) Like all ideas that are adapted to a new context, what were seen as western ideas got mixed with Chinese traditions and Chinese traditional though, and consequently transformed. In order to deepen our understanding of transnational

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2 The year and the cause of her death is unclear.

3 This is not to say that there were not mutual influence and inspiration between China and other countries, e.g. Japan.
and global feminist theory, it is important to acknowledge and further investigate and compare both similar and dissimilar sets of ideas as they are adapted into different contexts.

What caught my attention in the writings of both Emma Goldman and He-Yin Zhen, was their criticism of the suffrage movement. Instead of buying into this popular idea of women’s liberation, He-Yin Zhen and Goldman had a different understanding of what true women’s liberation was. In their opinion, true emancipation was not achieved through increased political involvement and rights but through individual liberation and social and moral transformation. In both cases, they held the belief that oppression was particularly visible in personal relationships and in the exchange of money for the right to control another individual. This they both believed was manifested in marriage, labour, prostitution, and in He-Yin Zhen’s case also in concubinage and bond-servitude. These three themes are therefore what I have chosen to focus on when investigating their theories on women’s liberation. I have picked texts on these topics from both thinkers, and will compare their ideas and reasoning.

The following sections of chapter one will give a brief introduction to each thinker’s context, explain more thoroughly my research questions, aim, and problem statement, and introduce the material that I have chosen. Chapter two presents my theoretical framework and my methodological choices. I give a brief overview on previous research done on both He-Yin Zhen and Goldman in chapter three, while chapter four contains my own comparison between the two. The results will be discussed in chapter five, where my theoretical framework will also be applied.

1.1 Problem Statement, Aim, and Research Questions

Feminism is perhaps better understood as feminisms. There is variation in feminist thought today, and likewise was there variation in what we today call feminism at the turn of the 20th century. With this in mind, I have chosen Goldman and He-Yin Zhen, two proto-feminists that do not adhere to the main stream women’s rights thought of their time known as women’s suffrage. They both criticise this movement, and have similar ideas of what true emancipation really looks like. But the knowledge and culture that these two thinkers come from are unalike, something one can expect also shows in their writings. By comparing the two and finding both similarities and differences between them, I wish to gain a better understanding of their respective theories as well as the role their different context played in the differences and
similarities between them. Few comparisons have been made between early American feminism and early Chinese feminism, even less (if any) on non-suffrage advocates, and as far as I know, no comparisons or connections have so far been made between Goldman and He-Yin Zhen.

Goldman herself has been studied widely – but focus tends to be on her as a person, not her ideas. He-Yin Zhen has not received a lot of attention in China, and even less abroad. The interest in her did increase with the turn of the 21st Century, but in the west her ideas are still relatively unexplored – probably partially because there are few translations of her work.\(^4\)

The aim of this essay is thus to compare Goldman and He-Yin Zhen’s theories on women’s emancipation. I found both of them to highlight oppression through marriage, prostitution and labour, and I will thus also discuss and compare these three concepts in more detail. By analysing and comparing each thinker’s view on women’s emancipation and the three concepts just mentioned, I hope to identify commonalities and differences that will contribute to a deeper understanding of each writer and further a better understanding of the multitude of feminisms at the turn of the 20\(^{th}\) century.

My research questions are as follows:

- Contrasted to the contemporary main stream understanding of feminism, what are the key points in Emma Goldman and He-Yin Zhen’s take on women’s emancipation – including prostitution, marriage and labour?

- What are the major differences and similarities between the authors, and can this be linked to the fact that they were active within different context?

\(^4\) Liu, Karl & Ko were first out with the English translations in 2013.
1.2 He-Yin Zhen, Emma Goldman and the turn of the 20th century feminisms

He-Yin Zhen is an early Chinese feminist, with a particularly active writing period during 1907-1908.5 At this time He-Yin Zhen and her husband, Liu Shipei, were publishing the anarcho-feminist magazine *Natural Justice*, while living in exile in Tokyo.6 The couple returned to China after the revolution 1912, but the circumstances of He-Yin Zhen’s later life and death remain unclear.

Emma Goldman was born and brought up in Russia (and partly Germany) but moved to the State of New York in 1885. She became active in the anarchist movement only a few years after the move, and is to many first and fore mostly known as an anarchist activist. She was deported from the US in 1919, but kept being active in the anarchist and feminist movements in Europe (including a few years in Russia).

The period in which they were active, late 19th century and early 20th century, meant turbulent times for both the US and for China. The industrialising United States that Goldman got to know, was marked by racism, political unrest, strikes and riots, something Goldman got to experience herself first-hand.7 The feminist movement in the US thus went hand in hand with other liberation movements such as the anti-slavery movement and the struggles for the rights of and improvement of conditions for workers, and in Goldman’s case feminism went particularly well with anarchism.8 China, at the time, was marked by war and western imperial forces and influence, it was forced to adapt to a new global system of nation states, and was in the midst of internal political unrest. This resulted in struggles for liberation, expressed in e.g. nationalism, resistance of oppressed classes, and feminism.9 With the heavy western imperial influence, new ideas of gender categories were introduced, and female persons began be categorized together under one word (*funü*, similar to the English word woman).10

5 Liu, Karl & Ko, p. 8.
6 Ibid., p. 5.
Easily related to other political struggles at the time, it is not surprising that women’s suffrage was one of the major feminist movements at the time, both in the US and in China. But along these ideas of women’s suffrage were also voices who challenged the notion of suffrage as a true liberator for women. Examples of that are Emma Goldman and He-Yin Zhen. They both challenged this idea not because they believed women were not equal to it, but because they believed that the system in itself was wrong. They believed that the suffragettes were striving for something which would not result in a true liberation of women, only a new kind of global system of oppression. Goldman and He-Yin Zhen’s focus were instead on liberation that came from and within women themselves, and not handed down by someone who already accessed power over others.

In this introduction I would also like to take the opportunity to highlight the fact that the Chinese context includes categories for women that the American context doesn’t. Among the upper classes in China, concubines and bond-servants where common. Concubines were lower ranking than wives, but lived in the home with the family, had similar duties to a wife, and their male offspring could be recognized as actual sons. They would however never be able to compete with the wife, and the wife always had a higher status and recognition. The maid or bond-servant is in turn similar to the concubine. The bond-servants and maids were lower in rank than both wives and concubines, but apart from their duties as servants, they were also sexually available to the men in the household. The practices of holding concubines and bond-servants (more or less) ended during 1910s and onwards.

1.3 Primary Material

This section introduces the material that I have chosen to study from each writer. To begin with I present the essays written by He-Yin Zhen, then the essays by Emma Goldman, and finally I discuss the materials and their limitations.

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11 Bouchier describes the early feminism in the US as divided into two major groups. As a group that made a clear gender differentiation, believing women to be morally superior to men and thus be able to straighten up society, or as the suffragettes who were more eager and militant than the first. Bouchier, pp. 14-15

1.3.1 He-Yin Zhen

He-Yin Zhen was active as a writer only for a few years (1907-1908). The English translations that are available of her work, are found in the book *The Birth of Chinese Feminism – Essential Texts in Transnational Theory*, edited by Lydia H. Liu, Rebecca E. Karl and Dorothy Ko in 2013. Since these are the only translations into English, it has hence set the frames of what material is available for me to read. The translated works were all first published in 1907 in He-Yin and her husband’s periodical Tianyi (Natural Justice).

The essays I have chosen are: “On the Question of Women's Liberation”\(^{13}\); “On the Question of Women's Labor”\(^{14}\); “Economic Revolution and Women's Revolution”\(^{15}\); “On the Revenge of women (part 1&2)”\(^{16}\); and “The Feminist Manifesto”\(^{17}\).

1.3.2 Emma Goldman

Goldman was active for a much longer period than He-Yin, and thus produced a lot more. She was not first and foremost a writer, but a speaker, and a speaker to the masses of workers. But during her many active years she did produce many short and concise essays on a wide variety of topics. I use only what Goldman produced during her so called “American Years” (1890 until her deportation in 1919), which also range around the time of He-Yin Zhen.

All the materials I have chosen have been reprinted in either Candace’s (ed.) *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years*,\(^ {18}\) a three volume collection of


articles, pamphlets and letters by, for and about Goldman, or in Shulman’s (ed.) Emma Goldman Reader, Red Emma Speaks. Goldman’s essays are usually shorter and thematically restricted, and to get a similar selection to He-Yin Zhen, I have thus chosen a few more essays from Goldman.


1.3.3 Material Discussion, Limitations and References

First out, I want to recognize that Liu, Karl & Ko have made their own choices of which texts they have included in The Birth of Chinese Feminism, which is the only resource providing He-Yin Zhen in English translation. They have a clear feminist approach, which naturally is

reflected in their choice of which texts to include in their collection. It then makes sense for me to also keep a feminist approach in my investigation, and in my reading of Goldman.

He-Yin Zhen’s essay *On the Question of Women's Labor* is sometimes said to be written by He-Yin Zhen’s husband, but Liu, Karl & Ko feel confident in accrediting it to He-Yin, and I have decided to follow in their footsteps.²⁹ There is one of the translated essays of He-Yin Zhen that I have chosen not to include, which is the essay *On Feminist Antimilitarism*,³⁰ which doesn’t really touch upon many of the themes I have chosen to investigate.

When it comes to Goldman, there is *a lot* of materials available. By reading what others have to say about her and her theories, I have been able to identify some key texts, while others I have found by going through the large collections of e.g. Candace and Shulman (see above). This is however not a guarantee that there aren’t still other materials by Goldman that could be complementary to those that I have chosen.

When I make referrals to the essays in my investigation, I have chosen to include the title of the essays in each footnote (e.g. Goldman, “Woman Suffrage”) rather than to refer to each text by the year (E.g. Godman, 1910a). This will make it clearer for the reader which text I am referring to, since there are many texts from both writers.

When it comes to referring back to the authors, I have chosen to often refer to Emma Goldman as just Goldman, while for He-Yin Zhen I use her full name, finding it culturally more appropriate.

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²⁹ Liu, Karl & Ko, p. 43 for their discussion on this.
2 Theory and Method

The foundation of this essay is the comparative analysis of He-Yin Zhen’s and Goldman’s views on women’s emancipation. What I want to highlight in my essay is the differences and similarities that exist in their thought, acknowledging that He-Yin Zhen and Goldman were based in different contexts and knowledge systems. This chapter deals with theoretical and methodological choices, and is divided into two sections. One presents the larger theoretical framework, and the other the methodology, i.e. qualitative content analysis.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

My theoretical framework is carved out from ideas on transnational theory and transnational intellectual history, where context is one of the key concepts, and the movement of ideas a reoccurring theme. I will use Takashi Shogimen’s article "Dialogue, Eurocentrism, and Comparative Political Theory: A View From Cross-Cultural Intellectual History”31, and Edward Baring’s article “Ideas on the Move: Context in Transnational Intellectual History”32 as a source for definitions and discussions around context and the movement of ideas. In both Baring and Shogimen’s case, I’ve found most use in the part of their articles that lead onto their coming analyses rather than the investigations in themselves. The idea of context becomes the key to my analysis and to understand differences and transformation of ideas. Apart from context in itself, I will also look deeper into a specific aspect of it, which is global awareness.

2.1.1 Context and Ideas on the Move

There is a common and strong association between context and geographical location. Shogimen’s analysis of dialogues and comparisons between Japanese and Western politics is one example of this. In his analysis, the nation, or location, seem to be inseparable from the context, and speaking of nation or geographical location seems to be his way of addressing context. The connection between context and location is not wrong per se, but a little simplified and unspecific. Baring recognizes this common association and questions it.  

He proposes an understanding of context in form of archives, which could be explained as the set of knowledge that is available to the author (and the reader). According to his definition, context is thus not strictly tied to a geographical location since one author can have knowledge available from many diverse sources and authors from different locations could have access to the same or similar knowledge and experiences. This is not to say that context and location aren’t often linked to each other, considering that the education, traditions, language and knowledge available do very much depend on where one is located. Thus, while a difference in location most likely also is a difference in context, context includes more than just the geographical location, such as an author’s previous knowledge, experience, culture and so forth.

Baring further moves on to discuss transnational theory and transnational intellectual history by opposing the classical viewpoint of transnational history as primarily importing and exporting ideas, with little attention payed to context apart from geographical location. Instead, Baring argues for recognition of the interpretive communities that receive the ideas, i.e. the new context which an idea is adapted into. He calls this interpretation and adaptation from the context of origin to the context of reception as “the motor of intellectual change”. Thus, according to him, this broader understanding of concept plays a huge role in the discussions and analyses of writings, since it is from here new ideas spring.

Although Shogimen is not going into details of the meaning and understanding of context, he also stresses the importance of the interpretation aspect of the receptive community through examples of how culture and intellectual thought never fail to transform when they travel across borders and communities.

Baring and Shogimen thus both agree that ideas won’t stay the same as they travel across contexts and nations. Hence, the common approach of clarifying that two ideas are very similar,
and that one is originating from the other, is not enough. This kind retrospective outlook, searching for what thought or idea inspired the other, focuses on what part of an older idea can be found in newer ones, rather than looking more thoroughly into the newer idea to see how it has changed, been adapted and developed.

Criticism of this retrospective approach is also clearly expressed in Shogimen and his analysis of comparative studies who claim to be non-Eurocentric. Shogimen argues that many recent studies that brand themselves as non-Eurocentric, are actually just as Eurocentric since they often don’t take into consideration the possibility of differences in ideas. Traditionally, if an idea originated in the west, it was the western standard that applied, and differences were not paid particular attention to. These newer studies that brand themselves as non-Eurocentric, responded by searching for ideas that originated in non-western contexts, ideas and beliefs that derive from “culturally internal, indigenous sources” (in his examples, to search for what is “truly” and “purely” Japanese). Thus, left unexplored is the transformation of an idea as it left its context of origin and adapted to another one (in Shogimen’s case western ideas that has transformed and changed when they reached Japan).37

Connecting this to the topic of my thesis, we can thus conclude that it is not enough to state that Goldman and He-Yin Zhen have similar ideas and that they reacted similarly to a mainly western movement. It might be true, but would be a superficial analysis. Since their contexts, their knowledge base and experience differed, so must their interpretation to the women’s emancipation movement that they reacted to. And so should there be differences in the outcomes, i.e. the works they produced.

With this connection of “differences in context equals differences in ideas” that I have found in both Baring and Shogimen, I hope to be able to recognize some significant dissimilarities between He-Yin Zhen’s and Goldman’s approaches to women’s emancipation, marriage, labour and prostitution, although the writers come across as very similar at first glance, despite their distinctive contexts.

2.1.2 Global Perspectives

Baring explains that we can never fully know the context of an author that we are reading. One way to go about reconstructing the context of an author is to see what knowledge and literature

37 Ibid., p. 326, 343-345.
that was available to the writer at the time, and to what and whom they were responding. Further, most authors do naturally present their readers with a context – they refer to other literary works and events, give examples of both intellectual, social and cultural nature (and more) and respond to other train of thoughts that they have picked up on in their community.

The most comprehensive way of approaching a text is, of course, to do a combination of these two. However, within the time-frame and the scope of my comparison, I am not able to fit in the first one. In other words, I will not to any greater extent study the contemporaries of Goldman and He-Yin Zhen, read up on all the references they make, or thoroughly go through the historical events that might have influenced them. This is briefly dealt with in the introductory chapter, and to some degree also in the “Research Survey” in Chapter 3, but will not be further investigated.

Instead, when I refer to the context of either Goldman or He-Yin Zhen, it is the context that they themselves present to me as a reader.38 Something that I noted in regards to difference between the context of Goldman and that of He-Yin Zhen, is the presence of the world in their theories. Or in other worlds, a global perspective.

He-Yin Zhen was active within China and the Chinese community. The mainstream women’s rights movement in China at the time was mirroring the west, something that influenced the Chinese language and its concepts. But, on the basis of Baring and Shogimen, one cannot assume that ideas and concepts were simply transported, they were also transformed. Thus, He-Yin Zhen reacted both to the older Chinese traditions and teachings, to the interpretations of western women’s emancipation by Chinese scholars, as well as directly to western literature and events. Goldman places her theories within a western context, while He-Yin Zhen reacted both to her Chinese society as well as to the influence of the west. Although the author is not physically moving, by reading intellectual texts and by gaining knowledge from outside their community, they are expanding their context. Thus, He-Yin Zhen’s context, in Baring’s sense of the word, was broader or more global than Goldman’s, since it had influences from a traditional Chinese context as well as several western ones.

The variety of influences that can be found in He-Yin Zhen’s writings are emphasised by Liu, Karl & Ko in their introduction to the Birth of Chinese Feminism. Both in the knowledge that was available, such as translations, and also in the many examples from e.g. China, Japan, European countries and the US that are found in He-Yin Zhen’s writings.39 In other words, they

38 For thoughts on the differences between the context I understand, and what the authors actually present, see the methodology section 2.2 “Comparative Qualitative Content Analysis”.
39 Liu, Karl & Ko, pp. 2-4, 35-42.
do suggest quite a different context for He-Yin Zhen than that of Goldman, who was mostly reacting to American events and politics, and intellectual movements from Europe.

In my analysis I will address the global perspectives, or lack thereof, in both authors’ writings, hoping that it will contribute to a clarification of context, and in turn also differences between the two writers.

2.2 Comparative Qualitative Content Analysis

In this thesis I will conduct a comparative analysis on texts from He-Yin Zhen and Emma Goldman. The comparison is based on their views on women’s emancipation, with a particular focus on marriage, labour and prostitution, three concepts that seem to play major roles in both of their works. The content I have chosen for the analysis are several essays from both He-Yin Zhen and Goldman, written on topics all related to women’s emancipation. By doing the comparison I am not trying to quantify anything (e.g. how many times a certain concept is mentioned), although I might sometimes highlight that one concept is more frequent with one writer than the other. The type of content analysis is thus a not a quantitative one, but a qualitative one. I have found Drisko & Maschi’s book *Content Analysis* from 2015 to give a very thorough introduction to qualitative content analysis, and it is with the help of this book that I have carved out my own approach to my primary material.40

Content analysis was born as a quantitative research method, and the qualitative versions are relatively new in the field.41 Drisko & Maschi describes the qualitative research methods as describing content found in texts, summarizing key themes found in texts, examining the process of form of the delivery of content, or seeking to develop a conceptualization of the content.42 The process of applying this type of methodology is not something that can be strictly applied to the investigative part of my thesis only. By choosing my primary material, as well as identifying common themes and concepts, I had already begun my content analysis. It is however not until chapter 4, “Comparative Study”, that I apply my methodology more strictly and look at the texts in more detail.

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41 Ibid., p. 81.
42 Ibid., p. 85.
Drisko & Maschi also refer to Krippendorf’s view on the different purposes of content analysis, out of which one is "exploratory/descriptive, in which knowledge of content and contexts is described or more clearly defined". Drisko & Maschi further argue that what one needs to do first is to become familiar with the data (in my case, the essays by Goldman and He-Yin Zhen). One needs to get to know the context, the content, omissions, identify connections, key meanings etc. This process is not necessarily part of the investigation in itself, but more of a foundation for the analysis. In my case, Chapter 1, “Introduction”, and Chapter 3, “Research Survey” clarify context and content. While I was reading and getting familiar with the texts, it was impossible not to notice similarities between the authors, and also connections between concepts within the essays of respective author – hence my focus on women’s emancipation, labour, prostitution and marriage. By doing a qualitative content analysis and looking at the texts and the meaning the writers tried to convey, I hope to bring a deeper understanding to each of these four aspects and the feminist theories of Goldman and He-Yin Zhen.

2.2.1 Reflexivity

Drisko and Maschi highlight what they call reflexivity – the identification of “personal biases or viewpoints and larger social issues that might affect one’s conceptual, methodological, and analytic decisions”. In regards to my own thesis, I want to highlight three personal biases and viewpoints that might have affected the way I approached the material from each writer: my feminist perspective, the difference in context between me and the authors, and the aspect of language and translation.

Firstly, I want to point out that I am approaching the material of both Goldman and He-Yin Zhen from a feminist perspective. Both of them are outspokenly anarchists, and e.g. Marsha Hewitt stresses this fact in her reading of Goldman, and argues that feminism and anarchism is interconnected and inseparable. Peter Zarrow also has a particular focus on anarchism in his

43 Ibid., p. 90.
44 Ibid., p. 102.
45 As mentioned in section 2.1.2 "Global Perspectives", context is also laid out by the authors to a certain extent, which I will discuss further in my analysis.
46 Drisko & Maschi, p. 117.
analysis of He-Yin Zhen.\textsuperscript{48} Apart from Hewitt and Zarrow, most materials I have found on Goldman and He-Yin Zhen, have a pure feminist focus. In addition, I also came across both He-Yin Zhen and Goldman by reading and searching for feminist writings, and it is therefore safe to say that the feminist perspective to some extent will shape my interpretations. As a reader you will also notice that I refer to them as feminists, which feels suitable since the themes that I focus on – women’s emancipation, marriage, prostitution and labour – are strongly connected to so called women’s questions.

Secondly I want to address the difference in the actual context of the author and the context I have as a reader.\textsuperscript{49} The authors and I are not part of the same context, and neither have we had access to the same archive. An author influences the context in which their text is read by letting the reader know what assumptions are being brought into play, by presenting the reader with a written context and by affirming and overturning conventions or by appealing to or challenging assumptions.\textsuperscript{50} This is what I am relying on for my analysis. But regardless of what I as a reader understand of the context and archive after finishing the text, there might still be words and phrases that point to sets of arguments or conventions that I, as a reader, do not pick up on or fully understand. The texts I am approaching in this essay are historical, and thus this increases the risk of misunderstandings. However, while this is something to bear in mind, it does not mean one should give up reading and analysing historical texts, as much of the meaning is still conveyed.\textsuperscript{51}

Finally, it is important to recognize that I am reading He-Yin Zhen in translation, which means that I need to keep myself above the level of grammar and too heavy a stress on particular words and their use. The exception I make here is He-Yin Zhen’s concept of livelihood, which I dare to approach and use thanks to the thorough analysis by Liu, Karl & Ko.\textsuperscript{52} It is thus not a result from my own investigation. Apart from livelihood, my focus is on the argumentations, their reasoning and how the different concepts are interwoven in each writer’s theory.

\textsuperscript{48} See Zarrow, Peter, "He Zhen and Anarcho-Feminism in China", \textit{The Journal of Asian Studies}, Vol. 47, No.4, 1988, pp. 796-813.
\textsuperscript{49} See Baring, p. 568-569, for a discussion on this.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., p. 573.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 586.
\textsuperscript{52} See p. 20.
This chapter presents previous research related to He-Yin Zhen and Emma Goldman. In regards to He-Yin Zhen, there is very little published about her in English,\(^{53}\) which thus sets my limitation. The book *The Birth of Chinese Feminism* edited by Liu, Karl & Ko does not only provided translations of He-Yin Zhen into English – in the first two chapters of the book the editors give their view on He-Yin Zhen’s feminism, put her in a global perspective, and emphasize the relevance and originality in her thought.\(^ {54}\) Liu, Karl & Ko thus make for the most thorough interpretation and presentation of He-Yin in English that I have found. In some cases, also reviews and responses to Liu, Karl & Ko have been interesting to read.

A few years before *The Birth of Chinese Feminism* was published, Karl wrote an essay which also focused on He-Yin Zhen and early Chinese feminism,\(^ {55}\) where her major points are on women’s labour and (global) systems of oppression. She also addresses the connection between anarchism and feminism more clearly here than was done in the book. Zarrow’s 1988 article on He-Yin Zhen highlights the anarchism in He-Yin Zhen’s feminism, and I have found Zarrow useful as a reference point, while he is not very in depth on He-Yin Zhen’s feminism.\(^ {56}\)

When it comes to Goldman, there is much more material available, and so I have limited my reading to texts addressing Goldman from at least partly a feminist perspective, and also addressing her as a theorist (leaving out biographies and writings on her as purely an activist). This narrowed down the scope significantly. I found the Weiss & Kensinger collection of feminist interpretations of Goldman to fit well with my aim, particularly the texts by Shulman, Hewitt and Marso.\(^ {57}\)

What follows are introductions to the previous research of relevance to my study, focusing on some of the key themes that have been picked up on, such as sexuality, global perspectives and capitalism/industrialisation. In He-Yin Zhen’s case I also discuss the two concepts *nannü* and *liveliood*. Livelihood is already introduced in chapter two, in the section on my theoretical framework, and I will return to it also in my analysis.

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\(^ {53}\) A quick search on Chinese databases does not result in that many results either.

\(^ {54}\) See ”Introduction: Toward a Transnational Feminist Theory” in Liu, Karl & Ko, pp. 1-26; and ”The Historical Context: Feminist Worlds at the Turn of the Twentieth Century”, in Liu, Karl & Ko, pp. 27-48.

\(^ {55}\) Karl.

\(^ {56}\) Zarrow, pp. 796-813.

3.1 Research on He-Yin Zhen

When it comes to research made on He-Yin Zhen, the main themes I’ve been able to identify are her global perspective and universalism, Karl’s focus on He-Yin Zhen’s view on labour, and the concepts “livelihood” and “nannü” which are often emphasised.

In the introduction to their book, Liu, Karl & Ko stress how He-Yin Zhen has a global outlook where she incorporated feminist struggles from around the world, such as Japan, the US and Europe. Part of her global perspective is to be found in He-Yin Zhen’s criticism of capitalism and liberalism, where the examples from abroad are used as arguments against it.\(^{58}\) In her own article about early Chinese feminism, Karl also highlights how He-Yin Zhen was critical of this new global capitalist system that was taking form. He-Yin Zhen saw nothing new in this system, except from the global scale of it. Karl emphasises the waged labour that this new system brought, and how this in He-Yin Zhen’s eyes was a universal standardization of (female) bodily commodification.\(^ {59}\) Thus, the uniqueness in her theories, Karl argues, is that she did not see the solution in that which her contemporaries argued for. Abolishing the Chinese systems of bond-servitude, concubinage and prostitution, would not help set women free, if the new (western) system was put in its place.\(^ {60}\)

Something that strikes me as very interesting is how, despite the references to He-Yin Zhen’s global perspective, Liu, Karl & Ko and Karl herself, only make references to other Chinese contemporary feminists. It is understandable that they want to place her in her own context first, but it also means there are no comparisons to any other another contemporary outside of He-Yin Zhen’s Chinese community. Further, when they discuss He-Yin Zhen’s global perspective, the examples they use are mostly capitalism and the new industrial systems. Thus, it will be interesting to look into other aspects of He-Yin Zhen’s theories, to see if this perspective is present also in them.

Except from He-Yin Zhen’s global perspective, Karl focuses particularly on He-Yin Zhen’s view on labour. In the discussion on this topic, commodification is the key element – i.e. the fact that the (female) body becomes an object of trade. Here, Karl goes over to the problem of livelihood, which in He-Yin Zhen’s theories is where the systems of oppression has their roots. Although Karl does write quite extensively on the topic of capitalism and labour,

\(^{58}\) Liu, Karl & Ko, p. 8.
\(^{59}\) Karl, p. 252.
\(^{60}\) The scale of He-Yin Zhen’s theories is also recognized by John, see John, Mary E., p. 192.
the other themes I am interested in (prostitution and marriage) are not mentioned or put in relation to labour.

The problem of livelihood (in Chinese *shengji*) is one of the major concepts highlighted in all the English materials I found on He-Yin Zhen. Liu, Karl & Ko have decided to translate it to “livelihood”, or “the problem of livelihood”, which is also what has been generally picked up by other readers. In the earlier article by Zarrow, *shengji* is translated as “to depend on someone to eat”, which might be even more descriptive than the more concise livelihood. As mentioned previously, livelihood refers to a complex system of dependency between rich and poor. Karl explains that it is not restricted to economic dependency, but dependency for livelihood - the poor depending on the wealthy to eat. Gao Biye argues that livelihood is a major factor that leads to women’s subordination, and relates it to prostitution, concubinage, bond servitude and hired domestic servants and factory workers. This goes along the lines of my investigation, but Gao does not mention marriage in this context, something I think is relevant regarding the way He-Yin Zhen herself relates marriage to e.g. prostitution.

Another key concept that make out the very basis of He-Yin Zhen’s understanding of society is *nannü*. Here, translatability becomes an issue. *Nannü*, or 男女 in Chinese, is a combination of the character for male/man (nan, 男) and that for female/woman (nü, 女). Liu, Karl & Ko, however, argue that as used by He-Yin Zhen *nannü* must be seen as a single conceptual mechanism, not as a combination of two. It incorporates the dualism of the sexes, and the actual historical differentiation and separation in itself. The relationship between men and women is a kind of mutual dependency, where they function in a sort of unequal unity where both are dependant, neither is free, but one is superior to the other. For He-Yin Zhen, *nannü* thus becomes both the object of analysis and also an analytical category in itself.

Since sexuality plays an important role for Goldman, I was particularly looking for interpretations also of He-Yin Zhen’s view on this. I did not find much, except that her view on sexuality is briefly picked up on by Mary E. John in her review of *The Birth of Chinese Feminism*. However, it really is brief, describing He-Yin Zhen’s view on sexual desire as

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61 Liu, Karl & Ko, p. 22-23.
62 Zarrow, e.g. p. 801.
65 In translation of *nannü* in He-Yin Zhen’s work, Liu, Karl & Ko have sometimes used man/woman, sometimes used the character of man/woman and sometimes kept it untranslated.
66 Liu, Karl & Ko, p. 11, 20.
something natural which cannot be suppressed. In comparison with Goldman I am not sure I agree with John, and will go a little deeper into this in my investigation.

3.2 Research on Emma Goldman

Shulman’s compilation *Red Emma Speaks* is one of the most cited works out there. In comparison to e.g. Candace’s (ed.) *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years*, Shulman has picked only a few key texts, which she argues are the basic pillars of Goldman’s theories. The book is divided into four parts, out of which one is called “social institutions”, under which both topics on women questions and the situation of workers are categorized. Thus feminism alone does not make its own category. Shulman, however, dictates a complete introductory chapter to this topic, called *Emma Goldman’s Feminism: A Reappraisal*.

Shulman approaches Goldman’s feminism by putting it in the historical and personal context of Goldman – she wants to understand what Goldman’s motives and principles were. In retrospect, some might say it is difficult to tell whether a historical person was or wasn’t a feminist – at the time there was no movement with such a name. Shulman, however, is clearly stating Goldman to be a feminist, and on top of that “the most radical feminist of her era”. She describes Goldman as a radical with much depth and many layers, especially recognizing her beliefs on sex and marriage/family. This is one of Shulman three key aspects of Goldman’s feminism. Firstly, that Goldman is a sexual radical who believes women’s oppression is deeply rooted in sexuality and the family structure. Secondly, Shulman highlights the broad perspective Goldman had on oppression, seeing women oppressed as women, on top of the

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oppression they faced as citizens, workers or being poor. That is, a clear distinction between political and economic oppression versus woman’s oppression, but that are still entwined. Thirdly, Shulman points out Goldman’s view on sexual and reproductive matters. This differs from Goldman’s view on sexuality and marriage, but is in a sense included in it. Goldman focuses on the woman’s right to choose whether or not to get pregnant, and is an early promoter of birth-control.

Lori Jo Marso writes mostly about Goldman’s view on marriage, love, sexuality, and the feminine, and she does so through connecting Goldman’s theories to her life. In regards to marriage, Marso highlights Goldman’s idea that women enter marriage fully aware of the restrictions that are included in the union, but because they lack alternatives they don’t really have much choice. Marso also finds Goldman’s distinction between marriage and love noteworthy, that love has little to do with marriage, and that marriage simply is an unequal social institution. Marso sees Goldman’s solution to this in her expressions of free love and sexual expression.

Although it’s in an almost unison voice amongst scholars about Goldman’s view on sexual liberty, Hewitt makes an interesting observation. In her reading of Goldman, she argues that although Goldman often seems to promote sexual freedom, she does to an extent also see liberation in monogamous sexual relationships, where women are not seen as sexual commodity.

Shulman further stresses Goldman’s including and interconnected view of society, arguing that Goldman sees all forms of oppression as one whole, pieces that can be looked at separately, but can never be separated. Hewitt also puts emphasis on this aspect of Goldman, arguing that there is no liberation without the liberation of everyone. She sees this as the combination of anarchism and feminism in Goldman’s theories. Hewitt is one of the few who really stresses the link and inseparableness of feminism and anarchism, arguing that neither will be will be effective without the other, as visible in the thoughts of Goldman.

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74 Ibid., p. 8.
76 Ibid., p. 74-75, 77, 86.
77 Hewitt, p. 316.
78 Shulman, p. 17.
79 Hewitt, p. 312.
4 Comparative Study

This comparative analysis between He-Yin Zhen and Emma Goldman’s theories is divided into five sections. Section one compares and analyses their views on women’s emancipation, including their criticism of the suffrage movement. Section two deals with women’s labour, it’s nature, labour as oppression, as well as the economic aspect of it (waged labour). In section three I move over to their views on prostitution, its origin, causes and nature. Fourthly, I compare and analyse their criticism of marriage, focusing on the state of marriage, marriage as oppression against women, and marriage as an economic institution. Finally I will give a summary of the results, and compare the two thinkers to each other.

4.1 Women’s Emancipation

In comparison to marriage, labour and prostitution, Goldman’s and He-Yin Zhen’s writings on women’s emancipation is quite extensive. To make the comparison easier to follow, this section is divided up into the subsections “The Questioning of Women’s Suffrage”, “Oppression and Oppression of Women” and “True Women’s Emancipation”.

4.1.1 The Questioning of Women’s Suffrage

As mentioned in the beginning of this essay, the women’s suffrage movement was the major women’s rights/women’s emancipation movement at the time in both China and in the US. While their contemporaries welcomed suffrage as a liberator for women, He-Yin Zhen and Goldman are instead highly critical of it. He-Yin Zhen calls it a worldwide trend that will never help the majority of women, and Goldman refers to it as “a modern fetish and an evil”.

Both Goldman and He-Yin Zhen view the government as a primary oppressive force in society. Fighting mainly for political rights, as they see suffragettes doing, is thus not
constructive in their eyes. Suffrage could only result in a minority of women becoming part of an already corrupt system, and through this gain power over the people, and especially the poor workers. The women in this system would themselves just become oppressors of other women and men, not contribute to their liberation. Goldman explains that she is not against the suffrage movement because she doesn’t believe that women are not equal to it, but because the political system in itself is rotten, and that fundamentality will not change even if women are granted e.g. the vote. Goldman further strengthens her argument by mentioning countries and states where women can vote, but still live in terrible conditions, and so equal suffrage barely has any effect on the economic conditions of women.83 She recognizes that suffrage presents a greater freedom to choose e.g. occupation, but still women often end up exchanging the lack of freedom in the home for the lack of freedom in a factory, and are thus not really liberated at all.84

According to He-Yin Zhen, the achieved political rights that women’s suffragettes fight for would only result in a few upper-class women gaining independence, political and economic power. These women would take the same seats as the oppressors, and the unequal system would remain. Thus, it would only achieve a superficial and restricted liberation, not a true one.85 This is partly based on what she perceived as the failure of suffrage in the west, and He-Yin Zhen could also not see how this so called “new” system was actually new in any other way than in name and in scale. She believed that in reality it would work in the same oppressive way as the ancient Chinese social systems had. He-Yin Zhen thus applied these western feminist theories to, and criticised them from, a Chinese perspective. This she did with referrals to both Chinese ancient history and the modern Chinese industrial society that was beginning to form in her time.86

4.1.2 Oppression and Oppression of Women

Both He-Yin Zhen and Goldman are firm on the fact that neither women nor men are free. This is foundational in their beliefs, thus, when they talk about liberation and emancipation, they do

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Goldman looks at oppression more generally, regardless of gender. She argues that the government, religion and property are the major oppressors. See Goldman, “Anarchism: What if Really Stands For”, p. 276.
86 Ibid., p. 57.
not always exclusively refer to women. For Goldman, the government, religion and property are the major oppressors affecting all members of society. Women are worse off than men, since they are oppressed also for simply being women. He-Yin Zhen gives examples of how it is the rich who have political control, and thus poor men and poor women are both oppressed by the wealthy and powerful. Apart from the belief that both genders are oppressed politically and economically, He-Yin Zhen also refers to gender roles in themselves as restrictive and oppressive for both men and women. As an example, she mentions the heavy duties of men to be the supporters of their families.

Although oppression and inequalities are forced upon all individuals to a certain extent, the situation for women is more severe. In China, men might have a duty to provide, but at least they can move and socialize freely, and men are also privileged economically, politically and legally. The ideal woman is instead cloistered in the home, with very few rights and customs in her favour. Goldman recognizes women’s particular situation through her often economic dependency and inability to support herself, the man’s privilege to love freely while the woman is seen as a sex commodity and a child-bearer, stuck in the prison-like home due to expectations, morals and responsibilities.

He-Yin Zhen believes that one major contributor to the gendered power structures that she can see, is the traditional Chinese teachings. She leaves quotes and examples of how gender inequality and oppression is taught through e.g. the Confucian Classics. Apart from these classical teachings, He-Yin Zhen also regularly returns to the inequalities in roles and responsibilities for men and women, which to an extent also are the results of classical teachings. These inequalities are also manifested in e.g. the Chinese writing system. Examples she gives of this, is of the use of the radical for woman, 女 (nü). It can be found in the character 婦 (fu), which is another word for “woman”. The character 婦 describes a woman holding a broom.

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90 Ibid, p. 55.
91 See e.g. He-Yin Zhen, “On the Question of Women’s Liberation”, pp. 56-57.
93 For the role of Confucian and other classical teachings, see He-Yin Zhen, “On the Revenge of Women: Part 1”, p. 122-146.
94 In the Chinese writing system, the majority of characters are built upon a combination of radicals (which alone may or may not be their own characters with their own meaning). Some of them gives a hint of the character’s meaning, and some will give a hint about the pronunciation.
which He-Yin Zhen explains manifests both a woman’s role and her subordination. Another example she gives is the character for slave, 奴 (nu), which also contains the radical for woman, and thus manifests the woman’s inferior position, equal to that of a slave.\(^\text{95}\)

According to He-Yin Zhen, inequalities can also be found and manifested in e.g. funeral and mourning rites, where the paternal line is constantly prioritized, and where women have to mourn men for a longer period than men mourn women.\(^\text{96}\) He-Yin Zhen also sees marriage as one of the major oppressors, which I explain further in section 4.4.

Goldman, like He-Yin Zhen, places blame on traditional thought, arguing that religion and its teachings and morals play a major role in oppression of women. She condemns the existing sex taboo and the idea that a woman is not worthy of marriage if she has already explored her sexuality – something she believes originates in religious morale.\(^\text{97}\) She calls religion “the domination of the human mind”, and believes that it both humiliates and degrades the soul of the people, by making them believe that they are nothing, and that God is everything.\(^\text{98}\)

One noticeable differences when it comes to Goldman and He-Yin Zhen’s view on women’s oppression, is their opinions on sex and free love. This is an absolute key question for Goldman, who believes that women’s liberation cannot be achieved without free love and free motherhood. She opposes the norm that a respectable girl should not know about sexual matters, and writes very passionately about the restricting morals that undermine women’s sexual experience, almost glorifying non-married couples and children out of wedlock.\(^\text{99}\) For Goldman, the right to be loved and to love is the most vital right, and restrictions on this is thus one of the worst forms of oppression.\(^\text{100}\)

He-Yin Zhen does not emphasise sexuality in the same way as does Goldman. She focuses on the institution of marriage, what she believes to be an unequal economic institution. She does however strongly believe in marriage – equal marriage for the sake of love. She does not look for free love and freed sexuality in the same way as Goldman does, but instead aspires for marriages to become completely monogamous. If an equal marriage is achieved where the

\(^{100}\) Goldman, “The Tragedy of Women’s Emancipation”, p. 185.
woman can enjoy the same freedoms as the man, and if the woman can marry her lover, she will not feel the need to look for anyone else but will stay monogamous.\footnote{See He-Yin Zhen, “On the Question of Women’s Liberation”, p. 56. Interestingly enough she does not talk about men’s sexual desire, only their sexual behaviour in the sense that they have concubines and visit prostitutes.}

4.1.3 True Women’s Emancipation

What Goldman and He-Yin Zhen promote as the alternative to the political suffrage movement, is a true liberation for women achieved by women – i.e. a liberation that comes from the oppressed (women and the people), not from the oppressors (men and the government).\footnote{They actually make clear that this includes men as well as women. See e.g. He-Yin Zhen, “On the Question of Women’s Liberation”, p. 65, and Goldman, “Marriage”, p. 273.} It is the women and the poor workers that need to liberate themselves, no one else can bring true emancipation. Hence, in Goldman and He-Yin Zhen’s opinion, this requires more than just suffrage. Both of them oppose the idea that gaining political power – i.e. joining one of the most oppressive forces, the government – would yield any real results for gender equality. Further, a woman is not just bound by political constraints – oppression is found on so many levels that only a fundamental transformation of society on all levels could bring about gender equality. Only such a fundamental transformation could fight the ethical and social conventions that are oppressive and restrictive, but at the same time not political per se.\footnote{Goldman refers to this as “internal” vs. “external” tyrants, see Goldman, “The Tragedy of Women’s Emancipation”, pp. 180, 183. He-Yin Zhen talks about liberation in substance vs. liberation in name, and liberation of the body vs. liberation of the mind. See He-Yin Zhen, “On the Question of Women’s Liberation”, p. 59.}

He-Yin Zhen writes that real rights cannot be “handed-down” from above. If men granted women rights, the rights would be in name only, and would never be actual rights of women. She also speculates that the reason some men advocate women’s rights and emancipation, do so with the hope that they will alleviate their own burdens, i.e. solely for selfish reasons.\footnote{He-Yin Zhen, “On the Question of Women’s Liberation”, pp. 63, 61.} Goldman writes that women’s rights need to come from within woman, saying that “true emancipation begins neither at the polls nor in courts. It begins in woman’s soul”.\footnote{Goldman, “The Tragedy of Women’s Emancipation”, p. 273.}

For He-Yin Zhen the economic aspect plays an important role in women’s emancipation. “If an economic revolution cannot be accomplished, then the common phrase heard today calling for a ‘revolution between men and women’ cannot be said to have touched the essence
of the problem.”, she writes in the essay “Economic Revolution and Women’s Revolution”.\textsuperscript{106} She opposes the capitalist system, where money is the power tool that allows one individual to control another (in particular men controlling women).\textsuperscript{107} She seems to be balancing between the relation between men and women and that between rich and poor – and drawing a clear line between these groups seems impossible, they are always interconnected. The women, or poor families with women, are more often without acceptable means to support themselves, and are left with the degrading options of prostitution, concubinage, bond-servitude and loveless marriages.

4.2Labour

For He-Yin Zhen the connection between labour and women’s oppression is central to her criticism of society. As previously mentioned, she believes that neither men nor women are free, and as an example she gives men’s responsibility to provide for the family. Industrialisation brought change to the Chinese society, such as a huge increase in female (factory) workers. According to He-Yin Zhen, this is yet another form of oppression placed upon women – they now to had to submit not only to their previous restrictions, but also to what previously had been oppression “reserved” for men.\textsuperscript{108} In fact, she argues that the traditional work that women were responsible for in the home, was voluntary labour. Women worked for themselves, they had a measure of control over their own work, and the money went to their own households, toward their own livelihood. The new factory work that entered Chinese society, gave result in form of money and power only to the (male) factory owners.\textsuperscript{109} He-Yin Zhen argues that in comparison to previous women’s work, factory work is involuntary, since the only reason the workers are there is because of poverty.\textsuperscript{110} This new form of labour is thus taking away what little freedom women had, leaving them to work for others in order to provide for themselves.

\textsuperscript{106}He-Yin Zhen, “Economic Revolution and Women’s Revolution”, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{107}Ibid. p. 93.
\textsuperscript{108}He-Yin Zhen, “On the Question of Women’s Labor”, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{109}Ibid., p. 77.
\textsuperscript{110}Ibid., p. 79.
Goldman does not share the same positive voluntary view on house work as He-Yin Zhen does.\textsuperscript{111} For Goldman, the home and the factory are both prisons for the woman, where she still has to work for her living. Goldman argues that although the conditions for wage workers are bad, the bars of the home are even more solid due to the moral codes that apply. Further, with an increase of female wage workers who continue to work also after marriage, the workload and imprisonment are doubled through women balancing both the obligations of the home and those of the workplace.\textsuperscript{112} In the case of labour and work, Goldman argues that regardless if they are manual workers, factory workers or intellectuals, they are slavishly dependant on someone else (i.e. their employer) and as a result all lack freedom.\textsuperscript{113} The labourers do not produce for their own gain and are not producing on free initiative or with interest.\textsuperscript{114} In Goldman’s eyes, labour is comparable to slavery and pure degradation.\textsuperscript{115}

For He-Yin Zhen, as mentioned, the reason labour is involuntary is because people see no other option than to do it in order to secure their livelihood, i.e. their survival. It is a historical system that has been confirming an imbalance between those that depend on others to eat, and those that others are dependent on. That this new industrial type of society can establish itself and grow is because there already was a problem of livelihood in the first place. Generally, women have been worst off (i.e. always dependent), which is also the case with female factory workers, who are now further oppressed in a system which presents itself to be liberating.

4.3 Prostitution

For He-Yin Zhen, prostitution, just like involuntary labour, originates in the problem of livelihood.\textsuperscript{116} Women who have no other choice to support and feed themselves and their families, are forced to sell themselves either as prostitutes or factory workers. The reality of a factory worker and that of a prostitute is not that different after all, since they both are involuntary work for someone else’s benefit. He-Yin Zhen argues that prostitution originates

\begin{footnotes}
\item[111] This might of course also stem from a difference in the type of housework they referred to, something they do not always specify themselves.
\item[113] Goldman, “Intellectual Proletarians”, p. 646.
\end{footnotes}
in rich families and from wealth, not in poor ones. It is the man who because of his wealth is forcing the woman to prostitute herself. 117 In other words – because the rich people are looking for the particular service the poor provide it, regardless if it is as a factory worker or as a prostitute.

Goldman sees “the widespread evil”118 of prostitution as having two main causes. Firstly, prostitution can come about as a result of economic circumstances and the inability to provide for oneself in other ways. Workers are not paid enough, and hence are forced to sell their bodies for money. 119 Secondly, and according to Goldman more importantly, the lack of sex education for women also leads to prostitution. Women are commonly seen as a sex commodity, but are never taught the meaning and importance of sex and don’t know how to care for themselves in that regard. As Goldman puts it, women don’t know “the function of the most important part of [their] life”. 120 Thus, the prostitute is the result not primarily of economic conditions, but of social and moral ones.121 The woman’s lack of knowledge and understanding in sexual matters finds an outlet through prostitution.

As mentioned, He-Yin Zhen believes that prostitution originates in the problem of livelihood. As society becomes more heavily industrialised, the problem of livelihood is worsened (e.g. due to low wages and no personal control over production or income). Consequently, also prostitution is on the increase, since it to some people is the only option left to guarantee their livelihood.122 Interestingly she groups together prostitution, concubinage, bond-servitude, domestic servants and factory workers. She acknowledges that there are certain differences between them, but that they are all a result of the problem of livelihood. The prostitute, the concubine, the servants and the factory worker are all subject to the control of others, and have lost their freedom.123 She explains almost in a form of ranking: “(…) those who escape being a concubine may not escape being prostitutes; those who escape being a prostitute may not escape being a factory girl or a servant. Even if one is a factory girl or a servant in name, prostitution is the hidden reality.”124

Goldman also makes the connection between labour and prostitution. She argues that intellectual proletarians often look down on prostitutes, but without realising that they are doing

120 Ibid, p. 186.
121 Ibid., p. 186, 189.
122 He-Yin Zhen, “On the Question of Women’s Labour”, p. 84, 89.
123 Ibid., p. 82, 88.
124 Ibid., p. 90.
the same thing – selling themselves for a living. Thus prostitution and labour do to an extent have the same structure, although many refuse to see it that way.\textsuperscript{125}

When it comes to prostitution, Goldman also sees the Church and it’s religion as a major contributor. Partly because the morals that stem from it, which was mentioned earlier in regards to sexuality. Goldman further blames the Church by using historical examples of how prostitution and the Church went hand in hand, how the Church has made profits from prostitution, and how e.g. a Pope started a brothel.\textsuperscript{126}

### 4.4 Marriage

Before moving on to marriage itself, I’d like to mention that both He-Yin Zhen and Goldman express disagreement with the existing gender duality. He-Yin believes that both men and women are human, and the separation between the two genders is a historical event and due to social customs and education. When true emancipation is reached, she argues, the two nouns “man” and “woman” will no longer be necessary.\textsuperscript{127} Goldman also doubts the idea of gender duality, calling the dualism of the sexes for “an absurd notion”.\textsuperscript{128} Marriage is thus a union between two socially created categories – categories that allow freedom only for one part. For two thinkers who wants a total transformation of society, and freedom for both men and women, it is not strange that this liberation also includes a transformation of the institution of marriage.

When reading the two authors, it was impossible not to notice the many times marriage was mentioned, the negative connotations marriage had to them, and what an important role the transformation of marriage played in their hopes for women’s liberation. In her “Feminist Manifesto”, He-Yin Zhen mentions seven goals which women should strive for, four of which are directly concerned with marriage.\textsuperscript{129} Goldman calls marriage “the crudest, most tyrannical

\begin{footnotes}
\item[127] He-Yin Zhen, Feminist manifesto, p. 184. It is worth mentioning that in her writings, she often uses the words “nanxing” and “nuxing”, which often is translated to men and women, but more accurately might be translated into “the character of man/woman”, see Liu, Karl & Ko, p. 14, thus further stressing that the separation of the genders is not natural differences but social ones.
\item[128] “Goldman, “The Tragedy of Women’s Emancipation”, p. 185.
\item[129] These four points are monogamous marriage, not take the husband’s family name after marriage, that married couples who don’t get along should be able to get a divorce and that first-time grooms should always be matched with first-time brides and vice versa. See He-Yin Zhen, Feminist Manifesto, pp. 182-183.
\end{footnotes}
of all institutions"\textsuperscript{130}, resulting in dependency, parasitism, and complete uselessness for the woman.\textsuperscript{131} As mentioned, both writers make the connection between labour and prostitution, and they also come to identify the same structure in marriage – women selling themselves for money.

Goldman has three major objections to marriage, one of which is the economic aspect. To her, marriage for a woman is prostitution to one man, every hour of every day for the rest of her life.\textsuperscript{132} Marriage is not for love, it purely an economic arrangement and an insurance pact, although more and more women are finding it necessary also to work for themselves.\textsuperscript{133} The problems with marriage, and why it does not receive enough criticism in society, is the existing moral codes. People do not acknowledge the similarities between prostitution and marriage, and do only socially condemn the former, while the latter ironically is a way for a woman to gain respect.\textsuperscript{134} They do not realise that also in marriage women sell themselves.

The woman does not only enter an economical arrangement through marriage, Goldman also sees how women through marriage are confined to the home, which in Goldman’s view is just another name for prison. Thus, Goldman’s second major objection to marriage concerns the fact that by entering a marriage, woman loses her freedom. She argues that marriage allows the man power over the woman and all of her life, and she is stuck in the home not only due to the man’s power over her, but also due to expectations, morals and responsibilities.\textsuperscript{135}

Through the loss of freedom, woman’s identity is also lost, when she has to give up all that she is to become someone’s wife.\textsuperscript{136} This is Goldman’s third objection. In other words, the fact that marriage is prostitution and that it robs woman of both her identity and her freedom, are the main reasons Goldman wants marriage to be abolished. Instead she hopes for a society of free love.\textsuperscript{137}

He-Yin Zhen also shares similar objections to the institution of marriage as those of Goldman. To He-Yin Zhen, Marriage is also clearly an economic union. She sees it as a relationship between rich and poor, where women have no choice but to marry in order to provide for themselves.\textsuperscript{138} Since marriage, and thus the relationship between man and woman, starts through this unequal economic relationship, the inequality persists throughout the

\textsuperscript{130} Goldman, Marriage, p. 269.
\textsuperscript{131} Goldman, Marriage & Love, p. 266; What I believe, p. 345.
\textsuperscript{132} Goldman, slave traffic, p. 186, Marriage, p. 272
\textsuperscript{133} Goldman, Marriage & Love, p. 269; What I believe, p. 345.
\textsuperscript{134} Goldman, Marriage, p. 272.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., p. 269; Marriage & Love, p. 270.
\textsuperscript{136} Goldman, Marriage, p. 271.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., p. 272-273; “Marriage & Love”, p. 272.
\textsuperscript{138} He-Yin Zhen, Economic Revolution, p. 102.
marriage, where the husband will always be superior to the wife.\textsuperscript{139} Since the wife is inferior to her husband, He-Yin Zhen argues that there is not really a big difference between her and the concubine, and that a married woman is also just selling her body to the man.\textsuperscript{140} Thus, she again strengthens the connection marriage-concubinage-prostitution.

He-Yin Zhen does mention women’s ties to the home, and how the man can move about freely (just like Goldman also says).\textsuperscript{141} She also mentions how the woman’s identity is lost,\textsuperscript{142} and how men are allowed to be with many women, but women are supposed to be faithful to one man for their entire life.\textsuperscript{143} But heaviest criticism comes from the origin of marriage in an economic union and the unequal status between husband and wife.\textsuperscript{144}

He-Yin Zhen believes that to escape the inequalities that stems from marriage, freedom and equality needs to be achieved for all, and marriage needs to be monogamous and based on love.\textsuperscript{145} Here their different views on marriage are visible. He-Yin Zhen strictly opposes the current Chinese system where men can be married but also have concubines and visit prostitutes, but the woman is expected to be absolutely faithful to the husband. He-Yin Zhen’s solution to this problem is absolute monogamy – and opposes other Chinese women who at the time suggested a solution where also women could have many husbands/lovers.\textsuperscript{146} These ideas that He-Yin Zhen opposes, are what Goldman is promoting, with her wishes for free love and sexuality.

\section*{4.5 Conclusions}

As seen above, Goldman and He-Yin Zhen have a very similar approach to women’s emancipation. Their criticisms of the suffrage movement are firm foundations in both of their theories, and something which is returned to frequently. For both authors, the women’s suffrage movement serves as an example of how oppression can continue even with the support of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item He-Yin Zhen, Econ. Rev. p. 102.
\item He-Yin Zhen, On the Revenge, P1, p. 140; Economic rev., p. 97.
\item He-Yin Zhen, On the Revenge, P1, p. 121.
\item The identity is lost e.g. through taking her husband’s family name. Feminist Manifesto, p. 182; On the Revenge, P1, p. 108-113.
\item He-Yin Zhen, Feminist Manifesto, p. 180. She really means the entire life, giving examples of how these morals have led to women committing suicide after their husbands passed away.
\item He-Yin Zhen, Manifesto, p. 180.
\item He-Yin Zhen, Economic revolution, p. 103, Manifesto, p. 182-184.
\item She calls them "traitors to womanhood". He-Yin Zhen, feminist manifesto, p. 184.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
women. Both He-Yin Zhen and Goldman uses examples of western countries where women have already achieved some degree of political rights, but still are oppressed in other ways. He-Yin Zhen further draws parallels between this political system and traditional Chinese social systems.

When it comes to oppression in general, both Goldman and He-Yin Zhen makes a point of declaring both men and women oppressed, although they make it clear that women are worse off, and subjugated to even more oppression simply for being women. In He-Yin Zhen’s case, traditional Chinese societies with its rituals, teachings and rites are seen as the origin of women’s oppression. For Goldman, religion and its morals are emphasised. To escape this oppression, political rights, as the suffragettes fight for, are not enough. Liberation must come from within women, the oppressed, not from someone else.

Labour, and industrialisation that brought it, is seen by both Goldman and He-Yin Zhen as another oppressive force that continues to create dependency for women upon men. Goldman sees it as a prison, just like to her the home is also a prison. He-Yin Zhen recognizes how this system is growing on a global scale, and force more and more women to do work that they do not really wish to do.

Prostitution is yet another form of labour, yet another oppressive structure where a woman has to sell herself to make a living. In He-Yin Zhen’s case this practice originates in economic unbalance between men and women. Labour and prostitution are thus very similar in her opinion, as goes for the very specific Chinese categories of bond-servitude and concubinage that also come as results of problems with livelihood. For Goldman the main cause of prostitution is the lack of sexual awareness, although she also believes that women’s economic situation plays a role. Her examples are taken from the American society that she is brought up in, and connected to one religions of the US.

Marriage includes more than just this dependency relationship that both He-Yin Zhen and Goldman recognizes in prostitution and labour. Because it is an intimate and long-lasting relationship between a woman and a man, it manifests the different status between the two in a very visible manner. This unequal status between the husband and the wife, in combination with the wife’s economic dependency on the husband, are the key points that He-Yin Zhen makes. The examples she uses to strengthen her arguments are mostly from Chinese society, although she does also make a point of the universality of inequality by giving examples of western countries where marriage is also a failure for women. He-Yin Zhen also recognizes the woman’s loss of freedom and of identity, which is the key points in Goldman’s analysis.
Goldman also combines these factors with the woman’s economic dependency, building on examples from an American society.

The relationship of dependency is thus a common thread among marriage, labour and prostitution in both He-Yin Zhen’s and Goldman’s writings. For both of them, this is related to an economic dependency, but reaches further than that – it is a dependency on someone else for a living. In He-Yin Zhen’s case, this is clearly defined as the problem of livelihood. The problem of livelihood is causing prostitution, labour and to an extend also marriage. Goldman similarly talks about dependency, where women come to depend on others for their living, e.g. their husbands or employers. This is visible in the relationship between husband and wife (i.e. in marriage), in that between the employer and the worker, and in that of the prostitute and the sex buyer. It is a relationship between those that are free and those who have no option but to sell themselves in some way to the other. The same dependency relationship is found in all three forms of oppression, in both authors’ writings. However, there is a noticeable difference between the two writers in regards to how well developed the idea of this dependency relationship is. He-Yin Zhen talks about the problem of livelihood continuously, and for her it is a well-functioning analytical tool that helps her describe relationships of dependency. Using this common name, thus clarifies that it is in fact the same structure that is to be found in all these oppressive constellations. The connections He-Yin Zhen makes between labour, prostitution and marriage (as well as concubinage and bond-servitude) are thus stronger and more very visible than in Goldman’s case. Goldman does not have the same well-defined concept for the dependency relationship, and making connections and identifying similarities is not as easy nor as visible as it is in He-Yin Zhen’s case.
5 Analysis & Concluding Thoughts

5.1 Analysis

Both Shogimen and Baring argue that different sets of context will result in different ideas, or development of ideas. Goldman and He-Yin Zhen are living in different parts of the world, and within different cultures, societies, languages and knowledge. At first glance their theories seemed very similar, but based on Shogimen and Baring, I would expect to find more differences as I looked deeper into their writings. However, even after my investigative comparison, there seem to be very striking similarities between the two, and less striking dissimilarities.

One example is their criticism of women’s suffrage, which is an important reference point for both of their view on women’s emancipation. When it comes to their criticism of suffrage, Goldman uses examples from Europe and the US to get her point across, rather than previous writings or culture and tradition. Similar, and sometimes the same, examples can be found in He-Yin Zhen, although she makes clear connections to the traditional Chinese social system. Thus, here, context seems to share similarities, but also differences. Bearing in mind also that the information that He-Yin Zhen had available was translated, and that her contemporaries were writing their interpretation of the suffrage movement, one could have expected an even greater difference between the two thinkers than what I found.

Both Shogimen and Baring agree on that different contexts equals different ideas, and ideas change as they travel. Now, in this case it is not so that e.g. Goldman’s ideas directly can be said to have travelled from her to He-Yin Zhen, or the other way around. But particularly in the case of their criticism of women’s suffrage, they are reacting to similar ideas, very similar movements, and sometimes even use the same examples. Although they are in different contexts, they seem to interpret these ideas on women’s suffrage in ways that are very much alike.

147 This is not to say that these aspects do not influence their beliefs, but it is simply not a big part of the context that they convey to the reader.
The contexts in which they were active were perhaps most visible when they spoke of oppression against women. He-Yin Zhen uses traditional Chinese teachings of gender roles and responsibilities, rites, and the Chinese marriage system to exemplify how this inequality came about. In Goldman’s case, religion and the morals it promotes is the foundation for women’s oppression. In other words, when it comes to the very origin of the question of women’s emancipation, e.g. how oppression came about and is manifested, their local contexts seem very important to their reasoning. This is especially noteworthy in He-Yin Zhen’s case, who otherwise make many references to the West.

One result of oppression of women is prostitution. For He-Yin Zhen, many of the conclusions and arguments she makes are also in regards to concubinage, bond-servitude and domestic servants. The societal structures of China and the US were different in this aspect, which gave the two thinkers different experiences and context. Even though their context differed, this particular structure of prostitution was present in both, and He-Yin Zhen and Goldman reach similar conclusions, such as seeing the similarity between labour and prostitution. When discussing prostitution, both Goldman and He-Yin Zhen recognize that there is a worldwide system of it, but again they focus on what they themselves can see in their societies. Goldman, for instance, focuses much on the church and its morals (e.g. the sex taboo), while He-Yin Zhen gives examples prostitution, as well as concubinage, bond servitude and domestic servants, from a very distinct Chinese perspective.

When it comes to connections between concepts, such as that between labour and prostitution, the connections that He-Yin Zhen makes include the common origin in the problem of livelihood. Her connections are stronger and more defined, due to her use of livelihood. This might be a result of the “extra categories”, which made the steps between prostitution and labour smaller, since e.g. the connection between a domestic servant and a factory worker might seem closer than that of a prostitute and a factory worker.148 He-Yin Zhen links all of these concepts together by their shared origin in the problem of livelihood. The fact that she could recognize the same problem in so many structures might have helped her defining livelihood it into the analytical category that it is.

Marriage, identified as a major institution for upholding the oppression of women, is in Goldman’s case also discussed based on examples from within the US. He-Yin Zhen does again combine examples from Chinese society and history, with that of e.g. the US. However, most focus is on the Chinese examples, and the role of the examples from the west is basically to

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show that although some Chinese strive for a western ideal, neither in the west is marriage and women’s oppression inseparable. Goldman and He-Yin Zhen come from different perspectives, although some examples are similar, and in this case they don’t draw the same conclusions. They both criticise marriage as it is, in the societies they live, but see different solutions – for He-Yin Zhen it is a transformation of marriage into monogamous, equal marriages, and for Goldman marriage should be abolished.

5.2 Concluding Thoughts

The west did in several ways influence the context within which He-Yin Zhen was active. Shogimen’s argue that western political thought has influenced other nations and also their vocabulary, which is also true about China at the time.\textsuperscript{149} It is thus impossible to say how a thinker like He-Yin Zhen would have expressed herself, and what opinions she would have, had this western influence not existed. But as mentioned, both Shogimen and Baring argue that the importance is not where the idea came from, but rather that it transformed into something new. Thus, as I have done, the importance is to look at her ideas as she expresses them, whilst keeping an awareness of contextual difference. Context and location are not the same, nevertheless I find myself struggling to refer to contexts and not think of them as locations, i.e. saying “within the Chinese context”. Context and location are after all connected to some point. When Goldman and He-Yin Zhen give examples, these examples are connected to locations. Both when it comes to more political events, as well as when they refer to more cultural aspects, such as traditional Chinese teachings or Goldman’s many references to religion. In their writings, it is either references to the cultures within which they live or to nation-specific examples that they paint their contexts to their readers. Thus, to look to the global perspectives within each writer does in fact hint about the scope of their context.

Goldman moves within a western European-American scope, while He-Yin Zhen’s context has connection to Chinese, Japanese, as well as several western countries. He-Yin Zhen does thus seem to have a wider context than does Goldman. Because of the historical

\textsuperscript{149} Chapter 1 "Introduction".
circumstances and the massive western influence at the time, He-Yin Zhen simply had to relate to both her local Chinese culture and society, and to the western one. Not because she believed that there was much to learn from the west, but because her contemporaries thought so, and she had to prove that the western system and women’s movement was just as flawed as the Chinese one. However, concluding that their contexts are different and that He-Yin Zhen have a more global perspective than Goldman doesn’t say much about the importance of this global perspective in their theories.

When it comes to the ideas I chose to investigate – women’s emancipation, labour, prostitution and marriage – the global perspective does in fact not seem to play a major role. Instead, it is the local culture and the local examples that weigh heavily and that make up the foundation of their argumentation, also in the case of He-Yin Zhen. The exception is in regards to suffrage, where He-Yin Zhen is particularly using western examples (i.e. examples of locations where women’s suffrage has been achieved). In regards to women’s oppression – the reason women need liberation – which marriage, prostitution and labour are examples of, their argumentation is very much based within their own geographical locations.

The dependency of women on men, as expressed in He-Yin Zhen’s concept livelihood, might be as well defined as it is due to the Chinese social structures that existed with prostitution, concubinage, bond-servitude, and domestic servants, as it was not as well-defined in Goldman’s writings. Another difference that was visible and that also likely is connected to culture, teachings and morals, is their view on marriage. Or rather how the oppressive institution of marriage should be transformed, with He-Yin Zhen promoting free choice of spouse and complete monogamy, to Goldman who wants it abolished and instead promotes freer sexuality and free love. I want to add that while reading Goldman I did not identify the tendencies towards promoting monogamous relationships/marriages, which Hewitt mentions in her research. If her interpretation is true, perhaps the similarities between Goldman and He-Yin Zhen are even greater. Other differences that I found between them seem to matter less, since they mostly lead to very similar results. On the whole, my investigation rather points toward the universality in the forms of oppression against women, than toward contextually influenced differences in early feminist thought.

As previous research concludes, both Goldman and He-Yin Zhen are original thinkers. They were criticising a movement that wanted to achieve what in their eyes was only a superficial emancipation. Instead they identified non-political structures as oppression.

150 See ”Research Survey”, p. 22.
structures that were commonly not identified as such. As much as this thesis is a comparison between Goldman and He-Yin Zhen, I also see it as contributing to the expansion of the history of early feminist thought, with the focus on two original thinkers who are otherwise rarely part of it. Although they were both active a century ago, their theories can still resonate with feminist thought today and with the societal structures that have barely changed. The three forms of oppression that they identify in form of marriage, prostitution and labour, are still present all over the world. There are still low-waged factory workers working and living in terrible conditions; there are strong voices (including Human Rights organisations) that support decriminalisation of prostitution in those areas where it has in fact become illegal; marriage is still “a thing”, and in it women are still combining full time-jobs with their duties in the home as women, wives and mothers. Nowadays we can even watch TV-programs where individuals decide to let someone else choose their partner and arrange their marriage for them. Much have changed in a hundred years, and much is also the same.

5.2.1 Further Research

My investigation of Goldman and He-Yin Zhen is in no way a complete one, there are many more aspects one could look into. Here I will highlight some problematics of my investigation that I believe could inspire further and complementary research on both He-Yin Zhen and Emma Goldman.

In my analysis I relied on the context as presented by the authors in the writings, such as their global perspectives and description of their local cultures and social structures. I thus did not analyse their broader “outer” context, such as their cultures in general, intellectual circles, books available, historical events etc. These aspects were only briefly looked at in the introduction, the background section and research survey. As a result, I cannot fully present their context and its relevance for their theories. For a more comprehensive study, it would be worthwhile to take a deeper look into these aspects of context. That could gain both a deeper understanding of their contexts and theoretical differences.

Also, while reading He-Yin Zhen in translation, I couldn’t help but wonder what I would gain in understanding if I read her in original. This could both affect the way I understood her

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151 An interesting note is that Liu, Karl & Ko draw parallels between He-Yin Zhen and Judith Butler’s theories. See Liu, Karl & Ko, ”Introduction”, p. 21.
context and references, but also allow me to look at word choices in more detail. In this thesis, I dared to approach one concept in detail, which was He-Yin Zhen’s livelihood. It had already been studied by Liu, Karl & Ko as well as Karl on her own. Further, the Chinese version of it, *shengji*, was continuously translated into one English word, *livelihood*. Another concept that Liu, Karl & Ko highlighted was *nannü*, but this concept was translated into several different words in English, depending on the context – such as *man and woman, male and female*, or in some cases *gender*. In one case they even left it untranslated. Because of this ambiguity I did not look any deeper into this concept. Reading He-Yin Zhen in original and being able to identify how and when nannü is used, could have added another perspective in my investigation.

Both Goldman and He-Yin Zhen clearly expressed their disliking of the existing gender duality. For further research, it could be interesting to looking into how they write about women and men, and their ideas on gender duality. In such an investigation, He-Yin Zhen’s *nannü* would play an important role. Of course, again, it would be best to read He-Yin Zhen in original rather than translated.

I approached these two thinkers from a feminist perspective, hoping to gain more understanding of them from a feminist history point of view. As mentioned several times, they are also both anarchists. An investigation with more focus on the anarchist side of their writings, and its influence on their view on women’s emancipation would surely also be an interesting read. Then, the texts translated by Liu, Karl & Ko might not be enough, since the texts they chosen have a distinct feminist perspective.

Further, relating back to the issue of the change in ideas as they travel across contexts, there are not many studies written on the Chinese suffrage movement in comparison to a western suffrage movement. To make a detailed study and focusing on the ideas and the interpretation of them, would help us gain a better understanding of women’s suffrage in China, and give examples on how ideas change and become local as they are interpreted into a new context.
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Primary Material


