

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE NEW WOMAN
IN THE 1890s WOMAN'S PRESS

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Leicester

by

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2013

Abstract

Mendes, Clare, University of Leicester, 2013. Representations of the New Woman in the 1890s Woman's Press.

My thesis uncovers innovative ways of re-reading the New Woman. By purposefully moving away from novelistic representations, I have reinvigorated the saturated area of New Woman studies, capturing instances of her elusive nature in the 1890s woman's press. I reveal the unique coincidence between subject matter and publishing practice in my investigation of five 1890s women's magazines: *Shafts* (1892-1899), *Woman's Signal* (1894-1899), *Young Woman* (1892-1915), *Woman* (1890-1912) and *Lady's Realm* (1896-1914). I split the magazines into liberally feminist – *Shafts* and the *Signal* – and conservatively progressive – *Young Woman*, *Woman* and *Lady's Realm*. The first three chapters produce case-studies of individual magazines. The final chapter explores *Woman* and the *Lady's Realm* in tandem. Throughout my study I adopt four loose categories of exploration: editorial approaches; women's relationships with themselves; women's relationships with other women and men; literary identification. I use a combination of close analysis and broad overview to assess the categories, looking at essays, interviews, editorials, correspondence, advertisements, and advice columns. I observe the dialogue that fiction and poetry produced with these texts. My research reveals that the New Woman was a fragile and responsive entity who was used by the editors and readers of the magazines to project more desirable images of themselves, countering the virulent reception of the New Woman in the popular press. Whilst the New Woman offered an emancipatory utopia in the liberal feminist magazines, she was rejected, mocked and sometimes hesitantly promoted by the conservatively progressive publications. Her presence in these magazines served commercial and exploratory means. Most importantly, the New Woman provided an essential means of self-actualization. She offered comfort to female readers, even if this comfort lay in mocking her. Ultimately, this project adds an important new chapter to understandings of the New Woman, promoting her as a figure of self-identification for late-Victorian womanhood.

Acknowledgements

My biggest thanks go to my supervisor, Professor Gail Marshall who has guided me through this process with eternal patience, intellectual rigour and that extra push that I so needed at the very end (including the late night email exchanges). This thesis certainly would not have come together without her invaluable counsel. I would also like to thank Professor Joanne Shattock who oversaw the early stages of my research and who provided thorough editing of several chapters. Her encouragement and down-to-earth attitude made my re-entry into academia both comfortable and exciting. Dr Lucy Evans also provided some very constructive insights into my work during the thesis committee meetings, helping me to regain control of my often overwhelming task.

I am indebted to the English Department at the University of Leicester for all of their support over the last three years. Research grants provided from the department helped to fund my constant trips to the Colindale Library, wherein I amassed the vast majority of my material. The University also provided a supportive postgraduate department which helped to make the solitary undertaking of a PhD less daunting. I am particularly grateful to my research colleagues from the School of English: Nazia Parveen's sage words of wisdom spurred me on through the last few difficult weeks whilst late night telephone conversations and constant cups of tea in the library café with Sonia Suman calmed me down during stressful patches.

For their constant emotional (and financial!) support, as well as their encouragement of my many years in Higher Education, I am ever thankful to my wonderful parents. For meeting me during the last six months of my PhD, buying me a bookcase and a desk to accommodate my student needs, and sticking by me when others would have fled screaming in the opposite direction, I would lastly like to thank my boyfriend Robin Meynell

Abbreviations

<i>LR.</i>	<i>Lady's Realm</i>
<i>S.</i>	<i>Shafts</i>
<i>W.</i>	<i>Woman</i>
<i>WH.</i>	<i>Woman's Herald</i>
<i>WPP.</i>	<i>Women's Penny Paper</i>
<i>WS.</i>	<i>Woman's Signal</i>
<i>YW.</i>	<i>Young Woman</i>

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Representations of the New Woman in the 1890s

Woman's Press: An Introduction

In November 1892, the *Young Woman* noted: 'There is no scarcity of women's journals'.¹ Women's magazines emerged at volume in the 1890s to meet the changing social and political landscape, and significantly to vocalise the mysterious New Woman. Her campaigning discourse raged through short-lived feminist magazines, whilst more domestic publications simultaneously supported and rejected her. First and foremost a media construction, the New Woman rose to popularity through the exchange between New Woman author Sarah Grand and anti-feminist Ouida in *The North American Review*.² Popular press publications along with novels of warning, such as Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did* (1895) problematized the journey to New Womanhood: Herminia Barton's unconventional sexual relationship followed by her tragic demise conveyed hysteria and irrationality and curtailed female freedom. The suffragist Millicent Garrett Fawcett wrote that Allen:

has never given any help by tongue or pen to any practical effort to improve the legal or social status of women. He is not a friend but an enemy, and it is as an enemy that he claims to link together the claim of women to citizenship and social and industrial independence, with attacks upon marriage and the family.³

¹ W.J. Dawson, *YW*. (10.1892),p.31-3,p.31.

² Sarah Grand, 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question', *North American Review* (03.1894),pp.270-6; Ouida, 'The New Woman', *North American Review* (05.1894),pp.610-19. Grand saw the New Woman as a liberal, advanced breed whilst Ouida labelled her 'unmitigated' and 'self important'.

³ Millicent Garrett Fawcett, '[Review of] *The Woman Who Did*', *Contemporary Review* 67 (1895),pp.625-31,p.630.

The woman's press itself aimed to improve the legal and social status of women, avoiding the 'attacks upon marriage and the family' of which Garrett Fawcett wrote. This was particularly visible in the feminist press which provided a platform for the reader's voice. My study explores two significant subjects: the New Woman recontextualized through a number of discordant voices, and the woman's press as a shifting, complex concept. Ranging from one penny weeklies to sixpence monthlies, women's magazines juxtaposed textual discourses – serious accounts of women's safety in the workplace with advertisements for domestic items – and underscored the New Woman's dialogism. I investigate these textual discourses using a broad range of publications, from liberally feminist, to conservatively progressive. Through individual case studies of *Shafts*, *Woman's Signal*, and *Young Woman*, and a joint examination of *Woman* and *Lady's Realm*, I reveal the impact of little known material on scholarly understandings of the New Woman, analysing essays, interviews, editorials, correspondence, advertisements, and advice columns. I also observe the dialogue that fiction produced with these texts. The short stories and poems in these magazines have generally been overlooked, perhaps considered unworthy of close study. Yet they provide vital clues about the magazines' readership and complicate the surrounding material to produce paradoxical readings of the New Woman.

Undoubtedly, 'New' was a contentious term by the mid-1890s. 'New' also became a central exploratory device in debates surrounding women. Writers were finding ways to mitigate the fearful proposition of the New Woman in the mainstream press, wherein she regularly mutated from a representative of political activism to a mannish creature. A central tactic included questioning her very existence. In November 1894 M. Eastwood

wrote in *The Humanitarian*: the New Woman ‘is rather a creation of the hyperbolically emancipated woman’s riotous imagination’.⁴ Eastwood was scathing about the outspoken advanced woman, believing that New Woman fiction had ‘little relevance to the average woman’. Her denial of the New Woman lay in novelistic portrayals; a year and a half later, in the same magazine Emily Morgan-Dockrell rejected the existence of the ‘caricatured’ New Woman in the periodical press.⁵ Whilst both women were loath to accept the riotous emancipated female as ideal, in the time between their articles the periodical press increasingly became the place for the New Woman’s representation, or misrepresentation, over and above the novel. This mythologised individual remained distinct from the lovable, domestic individual desired by Morgan-Dockrell; the ‘unwomanly, unlovable, unlovely, untidy, undomesticated, revolting, shrieking, man-hating shrew’ of the mainstream press became the image against which the woman’s press worked.

Questionings of the New Woman’s mythological qualities paralleled questionings about her newness. Appearing between these articles in *Blackwood Magazine*’s June 1895 issue, author Mrs Oliphant claimed that the New Woman ‘was started some thirty years ago – or is it more? – as the Girl of the Period’.⁶ Oliphant’s synthesis of the New Woman with Eliza Lynn Linton’s 1868 anti-feminist article evoked disparaging commentary about the modern woman’s selfishness and immorality.⁷ Nonetheless, Oliphant’s comment combined with an increasing awareness of journalistic exaggeration suggested that the woman’s movement was gaining momentum. Whilst *Punch* announced in December 1895: ‘THE END OF THE

⁴ ‘The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact’, *Humanitarian* 5.5 (11.1894), pp.375-79.

⁵ ‘Is the New Woman a Myth?’, *Humanitarian* 8.5 (05.1896), pp. 339-50.

⁶ ‘The Looker-On’, *Blackwood’s Magazine* 157 (06.1895), p.904.

⁷ Eliza Lynn Linton, ‘The Girl of the Period’, *Saturday Review* (14.03.1868), pp.339-40.

NEW WOMAN—The crash has come at last’,⁸ she continued to materialise, re-evaluated by publications such as the *Humanitarian*. Furthermore, the woman’s press used the mainstream press’s dwindling output on the subject as an opportunity to reclaim the figure who was theirs to start with.

As Michelle Elizabeth Tusan shrewdly observes, on 17 August 1893 *The Woman’s Herald* referred to ‘New Woman’ for the first time, using its authoritative upper case ‘N’ and ‘W’ in ‘The Social Standing of the New Woman’,⁹ which celebrated female breakthrough:

Without warning woman suddenly appears on the scene of man’s activities, as a sort of new creation, and demands a share in the struggles, the responsibilities and the honours of the world, in which, until now, she has been a cipher.¹⁰

The New Woman as ‘a sort of new creation’ was significant for feminist magazines which regularly constructed and renewed her existence against stereotyped visions. Three years after this article, Arabella Kenealy echoed the *Herald*’s language in the *Humanitarian*, asserting that the New Woman was ‘broadening her horizon, [...] learning to be a human unit rather than a social cipher’.¹¹ In the *Herald* the New Woman had merely awakened to her ‘cipher’ status; by Kenealy’s article she had awakened to her human status. Yet, as this thesis will show, Kenealy’s position as an anti-feminist illustrates that potential support of

⁸ *Punch* (21.12.1895),p.297.

⁹ Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, ‘Inventing the New Woman: Print Culture and Identity Politics During the Fin-de-Siècle’, *Victorian Periodicals Review* 31.2 (1998),pp.169-83,p.170 .

¹⁰ *WH.* (17.08.1893),p.410

¹¹ Arabella Kenealy, ‘The Dignity of Love’, *Humanitarian* 8 (01-06.1896),pp.435–439.

the New Woman was often ideologically constructed and contradicted. This was the case in women's magazines as it was in the popular press.

Critical Perspectives

The 1890s has increasingly become a site for renewed research interest in women's studies, inspired in 1977 by Elaine Showalter's book, *A Literature of their Own*,¹² in which Showalter called for a revision of the canon. Her definition of a female tradition changed approaches to reading Victorian women's literature. In the same year as Showalter's study, Lloyd Fernando published "*New Women*" in *the Late Victorian Novel*. His focus was on the canonical authors George Eliot, Meredith, Moore, Gissing and Hardy. The following year Gail Cunningham published *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel* (1978) which also explored Gissing, Hardy and Meredith but additionally included Mona Caird, Dowie and Grand as being influences on these well-known writers.¹³ Where Showalter dismissed such writers as being too intent upon their cause, an accusation not too dissimilar from that made by nineteenth-century reviewers, Cunningham helped to revive their fiction.

By the end of the eighties, the New Woman had become a familiar literary figure and her connection to first wave feminism was being judiciously portrayed. Barbara Caine and Lucy Bland respectively claimed that rather than representing a lull in feminist politics, the nineties demonstrated a significant increase in woman's demands for a right over their own

¹² Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (London: Virago Press, 1984).

¹³ Gail Cunningham, *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1978).

bodies: it was not a 'blank in the history of English feminism' or 'a dead period' but rather 'a watershed'.¹⁴ Examining *New Woman, New Novels* in 1990 Ann Ardis helped to further bring to light more obscure novels such as Caird's *The Wing of Azrael* (1889). She argued that New Woman fiction takes part in an intertextual debate, an aspect that the writers were aware of and refused to disregard. By using topics such as female homosexuality and erotic maternity, Ardis redrew common understandings of a repressed Victorian female sexuality and suggested that New Women were 'expos[ing] the contradiction of romantic love as they question[ed] the plausibilities of the marriage plot'.¹⁵ In her study published in the same year, Showalter also highlighted *Sexual Anarchy* and the transgression of sexual boundaries, using Gissing's description of the fin de siècle for her title.¹⁶ However, Showalter's work exposed the male bias more stringently through her focus on Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Whilst Ardis claimed that the demise of the three volume novel provided an opportunity for female authors, Showalter's outlook was bleaker, suggesting that this demise marked a move away from feminine topics. Although I am exploring the influence that publishing practices had upon women's writing, I am not arguing for or against the impact of this shift. Rather, I am using the periodical medium to demonstrate that this supposedly 'transitory' medium produced lasting effects upon female readers. Like Cunningham and Ardis, I am redrawing the canon of literature available to the late-nineteenth-century reader. However, I am including non-fiction, suggesting that it fed into the reader's concepts of marriage and female sexuality.

¹⁴ Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.239; Lucy Bland, 'The Married Woman, the 'New Woman' and the Feminist: Sexual Politics of the 1890s' in Jane Randall, ed., *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp.143-164.

¹⁵ Ann L. Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p.318.

¹⁶ Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (London: Bloomsbury, 1992).

In studying the *Rebellious Structures* of women's writing in 1987, Gerd Bjørhovde claimed that the currency of the Woman Question in popular culture was often exploited to attract readers: Annie Edwards' obscure novel *A Girton Girl* (1887) did not actually depict a tale of female education as one would expect but was instead a conventional love story.¹⁷ Yet the Girton Girl of popular culture made this novel's title appealing. In Chapter 3, I will consider the way the New Woman was similarly deployed by the *Young Woman*. The idea that the New Woman was an exploitable commodity also feeds into my study of the *Woman's Signal* in Chapter 2, wherein I explore the way in which feminist magazines used the New Woman cachet to promote female health and market products that often seemed to be in conflict with their progressive message. This countered the legitimacy of the New Woman as a symbol of feminist advancement, inviting questions concerning her existence. These questions formed New Woman scholarship into the twenty first century. Talia Schaffer's focus on the New Woman as "Nothing But Foolscape and Ink", included in Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis' 2001 essay collection is particularly useful for my own work. Schaffer claimed that many of the women identified in modern scholarship as New Women rejected the figure as a form of identification.¹⁸ This idea has informed my study of female magazine readers, marking them out as potentially hesitant consumers. Yet, the contrasting philosophies between the magazines I am studying do not allow for the simplification of the reader's outright rejection of the New Woman. The malleable nature of the New Woman suggests that ambivalence from readers was a more likely reaction than rejection.

¹⁷ Gerd Bjørhovde, *Rebellious Structures: Women Writers and the Crisis of the Novel 1880-1900* (Norwegian University Press, 1987), p.4.

¹⁸ Talia Schaffer, "Nothing but Foolscape and Ink": Inventing the New Woman' in Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, eds., *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact: Fin-de-Siècle Feminisms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), p.39.

Just as the New Woman's existence was questioned at the time of her inception, so too is it questioned throughout critical commentary. Whilst Schaffer suggested she was 'nothing but foolscap and ink', Barbara Caine wrote in 1993 that the New Woman was a 'fictional and journalistic creation', connected to, but separate from, the political campaigning of the women's movement.¹⁹ A similar claim was made in Rita Kranidis' 1995 exploration of the New Woman's *Subversive Discourse*. Kranidis suggested that feminists combined the New Woman with the traditional Victorian woman in order to reconstruct the female literary heroine; the New Woman then became 'more a literary and political attempt than an actualised, accomplished fact or an established type'.²⁰ These views reflected the parallel views presented in the *Humanitarian*. Where Caine viewed the New Woman as a creation of the mainstream, popular imagination, Kranidis saw her as the outcome of the feminist imagination. Both imply that the New Woman served on a symbolic level, one which writers used to refigure their notions of womanhood. I am interested in the division between these ideas; I believe that the New Woman was created by feminists and manipulated by her detractors. Tusan argued in 1998 that the New Woman originated in the feminist press in order to articulate a utopian vision of the future, which was drastically altered in its migration to the mainstream press.²¹ I am studying divergences between the New Woman of liberal feminist magazines and the conservatively progressive. The division between the two is not too dissimilar to that between the feminist and mainstream presses. However, the more targeted readerships of these magazines called for a modified

¹⁹ Caine, p.256.

²⁰ Kranidis, Rita S., *Subversive Discourse: the Cultural Production of Late Victorian Feminist Novels* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p.xiv.

²¹ Tusan, 'Inventing the New Woman', pp.169-83.

version of New Womanhood that was similar to but different from popular press representations.

Whilst the majority of the academics I have mentioned thus far focused largely on the New Woman novel, they did also allude to the periodical press. Exploring the *The Improper Feminine* in 1992, Lyn Pykett recognised that the New Woman was ‘one of the most widely and loudly discussed subjects’ in the 1890s periodical press.²² ‘Many of the New Woman novelists were also prominent contributors to the debates on “woman” in the newspaper and periodical press, and the New Woman fiction was sometimes reviewed alongside sociological and other polemical works’.²³ Pykett’s work became important for establishing New Woman writing as existing outside of a vacuum. Gail Cunningham also suggested that ‘the wide and often hysterical press coverage had created an impression of large-scale revolt’.²⁴ In her comprehensive 1997 study of the New Woman,²⁵ Sally Ledger placed Ardis’ claim, - that the New Woman’s critics made her novel the centre of controversy rather than her messages of feminism - against David Rubenstein’s claim that ‘never before had literature and fiction contributed so much to the feminist movement as it did at the *fin de siècle*’.²⁶ Ledger suggested that in ridiculing her, the periodical press produced a ‘discursive space’ for ‘feminist textual productions’. This is central to my thesis; however, by looking at magazines for women I am exploring this discursive space, not as an accidental manifestation of patriarchal criticism, but as a deliberate creation,

²² Pykett, Lyn, *The "Improper" Feminine: the Women's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.137.

²³ Ibid, p.7.

²⁴ Ibid, p.16

²⁵ Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and feminism at the fin de siècle* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1997).

²⁶ David Rubenstein, *Before the Suffragettes: Women's Emancipation in the 1890s* (Brighton: Harvester, 1986), p.24.

designed to allow interaction between readers and editors. The most obvious way that this was manifested was within correspondence sections of magazines such as *Shafts* and the *Signal*. Readers were transformed into writers, fuelled by topics such as ‘Women in Congregationalism’, ‘Women Factory Inspectors’, and ‘Women Officers in the Salvation Army’.²⁷ In *Woman* there was also input from readers in the form of prize competitions, posing questions related to matters of the day, such as ‘What is Unwomanly?’²⁸ The contrast in tone and attitude between the correspondences and prize competitions is particularly intriguing when regarding female solidarity. Matthew Beaumont highlighted that many New Women writers imagined social collectives in their writing, forging ‘a bridge between a state of present isolation and one of future socialization’.²⁹ This idea was also central to their periodical writing which I argue created a stronger social collective than novelistic portrayals. However, in the domestic press this collective was strikingly different.

In 1990 Patricia Marks surveyed the New Woman in the mainstream American and British press, charting contemporary reactions to the threat of regenerated womanhood.³⁰ Marks’ study demonstrated the amorphous nature of the New Woman, suggesting the range of material necessary to begin to articulate her; this has influenced my own work. However, as well as moving my focus to a specifically female press, I am also providing a clearer picture of the editorial impetus behind the presentation of the New Woman in these magazines, an aspect that is not heavily explored in Marks’ work. By 2000, the importance

²⁷ These letters all appeared in July 26, 1894 issue of the *Woman’s Signal*, pp.60-1.

²⁸ *Woman* (8.11.1893)

²⁹ Beaumont, Matthew, “‘A Little Political World of My Own’: The new Oman, The New Life, And New Amazonia’, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 35 (2007), pp.215-232, p.216.

³⁰ Patricia Marks, *Bicycles, Bangs, and Bloomers: The New Woman in the Popular Press* (Lexington: University of Kent Press, 1990).

of non-literary texts to discussions of the New Woman and the fin de siècle at large was being strongly evoked. Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst's 2000 anthology of the fin de siècle was an important contribution to this.³¹ Their section on the New Woman included key periodical articles which articulated the debate: Caird's 'Marriage'; Ella Hepworth Dixon's 'Why Women are Ceasing to Marry'; and Grand's 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question'. Undoubtedly, this drew on earlier work by Anne Heilmann who was largely responsible for the increasing accessibility of periodical articles concerning the New Woman. *The Late-Victorian Marriage Question: A Collection of Key New Woman Texts* (5 vols., 1998) included a volume on 'The New Woman and Female Independence' which drew together, amongst others, the writing of New Woman authors Grand, Ella Hepworth Dixon, anti-feminists Eliza Lynn Linton and Ouida, and traditionalists Arabella Kenealy and Marie Corelli.³²

As Heilmann's work demonstrates, the focus of periodical studies of the New Woman was primarily upon mainstream press representations: *The Nineteenth Century*'s 'Revolt of the Daughters' article by Blanche Crackanthorpe; *The North American Review*'s staging of the infamous quarrel between Grand and Ouida; and *Punch*'s consistent ridicule of advanced womanhood. Magazines for women were largely overlooked in favour of the more popular mainstream titles perhaps due to the difficulties in accessing more obscure Victorian periodicals. However, through the 1990s, occurring alongside the development of Victorian media studies was a more gradual interest in the New Woman and her characterisation

³¹ Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst eds., *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History c. 1880-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

³² Heilmann, Ann, ed., *The Late-Victorian Marriage Question: A Collection of Key New Woman Texts*, Vol. 2, 'The New Woman and Female Independence' (London: Routledge, Thoemmes Press, 1998).

within periodicals for women. Previously, the main offering about women's magazines was Cynthia White's historical overview of *Women's Magazines* in 1970.³³ By the end of the 1980s, critics began to recognise the need to redress the focus on magazines. In 1897 David Doughan and Denise Sanchez provided a helpful guide to women's magazines as significant organs to gauge 'the development of political and social movements, their shifts of attitude and emphasis, and their changing preoccupations and styles'.³⁴ In the same year, Doughan wrote that 'periodicals by, for and about women are nearly invisible'.³⁵ Philippa Levine echoed Doughan three years later, claiming that 'The considerable use to which feminists put this ascendant medium of communication has been largely ignored'.³⁶ Levine positioned the feminist press as one which emerged in order to challenge male-run publications, providing a separate literary space for women.

Since the studies of Doughan and Levine, the work on periodicals for women has flourished. Recently Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor's 2009 *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism (DNCJ)* has suggested that women's periodicals provided 'a forum in which women were able to enter public print – sometimes anonymously or disguised but often in their own person'.³⁷ In *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (2003) Hilary Fraser, Stephanie Green and Judith Johnston reveal the development of a feminist press from 1860. Their general thesis, that magazines were 'sites of intensified representations of gender and

³³ Cynthia L. White, *Women's Magazines 1693-1968* (London: Michael Joseph, 1970).

³⁴ Doughan and Sanchez, *Feminist Periodicals 1855-1984: an annotated critical bibliography of British, Irish, Commonwealth and international titles*, (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1987), p.xi

³⁵ David T. J. Doughan, 'Periodicals By, For, and About Women in Britain', *Women's Studies International Forum* 10.3 (1987), p.261.

³⁶ Philippa Levine, "'The Humanising Influences of Five O'Clock Tea': Victorian Feminist Periodicals", *Victorian Studies* 33 (1990), p.293.

³⁷ Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor, eds. *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism* (Gent: Academia Press, 2009), p.683.

sexual identity’,³⁸ and that the flexibility of Victorian gender can be aptly expressed through periodicals, has influenced my decision to use magazines in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the New Woman. Their approach of combining close analysis with more broad overviews has also motivated my own methodological approach. However, much of their study remains in the mid-Victorian period, on magazines such as the *English Woman’s Journal*. The focus on the mid-Victorian period emphasizes the influence of John Stuart Mill’s campaigns on behalf of women. Yet the real surge in women’s magazines occurred during the 1890s. Although Fraser et al briefly analyse the *Woman’s Signal*, their suggestion that it ‘offers an interesting contrast with’ the *Young Woman* is left at just a suggestion as they do not go on explicitly to compare the two, referring fleetingly instead to ‘liberal pro-reform magazines’ such as *Shafts*. Whilst the final chapter explored fin de siècle journals, this was with reference to the aesthetes, exploring in more detail works such as the *Yellow Book*.

By focusing on five magazines across my own thesis, rather than 120 included by Fraser, Green and Johnston, I aim to provide a clearer, more detailed link between the New Woman and her influence over the development of individual magazines, such as is presented by Margaret Beetham, whose work has fundamentally shaped my own research. Her collaborative study on women’s magazines with Ros Ballaster, Elizabeth Frazer and Sandra Hebron, ranged from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century, and revealed that the New Woman certainly had some input in the ‘bulk of new magazines for women’

³⁸ Hilary Fraser, Stephanie Green, and Judith Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.xi.

appearing at the end of the nineteenth century.³⁹ Beetham drew further parallels between the New Woman and women's magazines in her 2006 article 'Periodicals and the new media', noting that the latter were 'heterogeneous'.⁴⁰ In her meticulous 1996 study *A Magazine of Her Own?* Beetham explored the idea that the late-nineteenth-century new press made women its central readership.⁴¹ I hope to progress Beetham's studies of domestic magazines, which have focused on the impact of the new press; I am shifting the focus to their impact upon fin de siècle feminism. Beetham pointed out that magazines are rarely studied as texts in their own right.⁴² Her case studies of magazines such as *Woman*, has led to my own exploration of magazines as literary works in which both fictional and non-fictional interpretations of New Womanhood converged. By devoting individual study to each magazine I will be better able to recognise both the methods they used to negotiate the New Woman and the differences between the magazines. Each chapter will isolate key themes that have arisen in my readings of the individual magazines. In this way, categories of exploration develop organically from an investigation of the magazine, highlighting the major preoccupations of each publication, instead of relying on standard themes that one associates with New Woman scholarship.

Following Beetham's lead, Tusan's prize-winning essay 'Inventing the New Woman: Print Culture and Identity Politics During the Fin-de-Siècle' (1998) has also been central to my research. Tusan highlighted the *Herald* as the first magazine in which the New Woman

³⁹ Ros Ballaster, Elizabeth Frazer and Sandra Hebron, *Women's Worlds: Ideology, Femininity and the Woman's Magazine* (Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press, 1991), p.85.

⁴⁰ Margaret Beetham, 'Periodicals and the New Media: Women and Imagined Communities', *Women's Studies International Forum* 29 (2006), pp. 231–40, p.234

⁴¹ Margaret Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?: Domesticity and desire in the woman's magazine, 1800-1914*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), p.118.

⁴² *Ibid*, p.5.

appeared. Her study of titles such as *Shafts* and the *Woman's Signal* has given me invaluable grounding on the ethos of these publications. Such work was commenced by Kate Flint in her detailed investigation into female reading practises. *The Woman Reader* brought attention to *Shafts*, which had been little explored in contemporary criticism. She suggested that its literary criticism demonstrated the fact that 'women may have different priorities from men in their methods of reading and in the aspects of texts which they stress'.⁴³ Since Flint and Tusan, Elke Schuch and Matthew Beaumont have each written extended essays on *Shafts*.⁴⁴ *Woman's Signal*, considered the most important feminist paper, has received more attention; it has been largely worked on by Rosemary T. VanArsdel but there is more to be done on the magazine's content, with much of VanArsdel's research focusing on the editor, Florence Fenwick Miller.⁴⁵

In her essay on Henrietta Stannard's periodical *Golden Gates*, Molly Youngkin suggested that the objective of feminist journals was campaigning for women's equality, both politically and socially.⁴⁶ Youngkin developed this point for her study of the late-Victorian feminist press and its influence on the novel. Her work identified an aesthetic for feminist realism by using reviews of New Woman novels printed in the feminist magazines *Shafts* and the *Woman's Herald*. She suggested that the goals of *Shafts* and the *Woman's Signal* were 'to articulate [women's] conditions through *spoken word*, and use *concrete action* to

⁴³ Flint, Kate, *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.152.

⁴⁴ Elke Schuch, "'Shafts of thought': New Wifetypes in Victorian Feminist Periodicals in the 1890s", *Nineteenth-Century Feminisms* 4 (2001), pp.119–35; Matthew Beaumont, 'Influential Force: *Shafts* and the Diffusion of Knowledge at the *Fin de Siècle*', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 3 (2006), p.7 <www.19.bbk.ac.uk> [Accessed 8.03.2010]

⁴⁵ Rosemary T. Van Arsdel, *Florence Fenwick Miller: Victorian feminist, journalist, and educator* (Hants: Ashgate, 2001).

⁴⁶ Youngkin, Molly, "'Independent in Thought and Expression, Kindly and Tolerant in Tone": Henrietta Stannard, *Golden Gates*, and Gender Controversies in Fin-de-Siècle Periodicals', *Victorian Periodicals Review* 38.3 (2005), pp.307-24, p.307.

change their condition'.⁴⁷ Youngkin's focus on the mobilisation of thought and action as central factors within the woman's movement is a cornerstone for my study of *Shafts*. Both *Shafts* and *Signal* promoted individualism and collectivism amongst their readers in their campaigns for political and social equality. However, the literary aspect of these magazines is only a partial aspect of my thesis as I believe it to be a partial aspect of a full understanding of the New Woman who, whilst clearly composed by fiction was very much involved in discussions of the living of day-to-day life. Mark Llewellyn criticized Youngkin for her focus on the novel as a medium of publication for women; he argued that 'women's more experimental developments in this period were often with the short story' and that Youngkin could have looked more into ways that 'women used the periodical form not only for reviews but as a means to access print and articulate both fictional and non-fictional'.⁴⁸ This is the approach I am taking within my research, recognising the variety of mediums available concerning the New Woman.

In the same year as Youngkin's study of *Shafts* and the *Signal*, Emma Liggins' study of the bachelor girl produced a comparative analysis of *Woman* and *Young Woman*, focusing on the female bachelor. Liggins suggested that these magazines emerged for readers 'more interested in work and education than household management and family life'.⁴⁹ She classified the magazines as mildly feminist publications, with the *Young Woman* producing a more encouraging voice on the subject of the single woman. However, Liggins' study

⁴⁷ Molly Youngkin, *Feminist Realism at the Fin de Siècle: The Influence of the Late-Victorian Woman's Press on the Development of the Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2007), p.7.

⁴⁸ Mark Llewellyn, review of Molly Youngkin, *Feminist Realism at the Fin de Siècle: The Influence of the Late-Victorian Woman's Press on the Development of the Novel*, Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net (2008) <<http://www.erudit.org/revue/ravon/2008/v/n50/018157ar.html>> [accessed 6.03.2010]

⁴⁹ Emma Liggins, "'The Life of a Bachelor Girl in the Big City': Selling the Single Lifestyle to Readers of *Woman* and the *Young Woman* in the 1890s", *VPR* 40.3 (2007), pp.216-34, p.216.

does not take into account the potential ages of the magazines' readers; while she places them against feminist publications, critiquing their contradictory nature, she does not explore the underlying didacticism that I explore in the *Young Woman*. The *Lady's Realm* has received attention from Kathryn Ledbetter; however, with the focus on poetry there is little mention of the New Woman.⁵⁰

The work of Levine, Beetham, Tusan and Youngkin has certainly drawn an intriguing picture of the woman's press. Yet, the New Woman's impact in magazines published specifically for women has still not been sufficiently explored. Whilst these studies acknowledge the importance of the liberal feminist press upon the progress of women, they do not take into account the influence that conservatively progressive magazines also had on the movement. This relationship is undoubtedly fraught, yet the longevity of conservatively progressive magazines is an unavoidable reflection of their popularity amongst larger sectors of the female middle classes. More recent studies, such as Maria DiCenzo's, advocate the importance of distinguishing between a woman's press and a feminist press. DiCenzo suggests that most of the material for women had previously focused on the home and other 'feminine' topics such as fashion; they ignored subjects such as politics.⁵¹ At the 2007 British Women Writer's Conference, New Woman scholars were also encouraged by Sally Mitchell to look beyond fiction to 'identify, recover, and consider the political and social writing by those women, examining it not only for

⁵⁰ Ledbetter, Kathryn, *British Victorian Women's Periodicals: Beauty, Civilization, and Poetry* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009).

⁵¹ Maria DiCenzo, 'Pressing the Public: Nineteenth-Century Feminist Periodicals and "the Press"', *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies* 6.2 (2010) [<http://www.ncgsjournal.com/issue62/issue62.htm>, accessed 27.08.2010].

information and opinions but also as texts: rhetoric, tactics, effects, philosophy'.⁵² This had led to my focus upon women's magazines not simply as relics of the middle-class woman's reading material but as important tools for a greater understanding of the New Woman with whom she was trying to come to terms.

Theoretical Issues

A major issue of this research has been with terminology and the difficulty of translating terms referring to women and feminism from the Victorian period to the present day. Contemporary discussions of the New Woman have not only characterised the New Woman as a manifestation of late-Victorian feminism, they have also used 'feminist' and 'New Woman' interchangeably. The assumption that the New Woman was synonymous with feminism is both over-simplistic and problematic, and one needs to remain mindful of using contemporary feminism to judge the late-Victorian woman's movement. Laurence Lerner suggests that the New Woman of the 1890s was 'distinguishably different from the organised feminists'.⁵³ The difficulty in linking the New Woman directly to the feminist movement exists in the conflict between and even within ideologies. For example, the feminist Garrett Fawcett viewed the associations of marriage rejection and free sexual union with the suffrage movement as ridiculous; neither did she agree with writers such as George Egerton and Caird who saw marriage as equal to slavery. Youngkin suggests that 'radical feminism' would certainly not be equal to radical feminism as we presently know

⁵² Sally Mitchell, 'New Women's Work: Personal, Political, Public', part of 'The New Woman's Work: Past, Present, and Future' *Nineteenth Century Gender Studies* 3.2 (2007) [<http://www.ncgsjournal.com/issue32/roundtable.htm>, accessed 8.10.2012].

⁵³ Laurence Lerner, *Love and Marriage: Literature and its Social Context* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), p.170.

it, but rather a predecessor to the term in the twentieth century.⁵⁴ ‘Feminism’ is a contentious term for the Victorian period; although it is noted in the OED to be in use in the *Athenaeum* in April 1895, the appearance of the word in ‘feminist’ discourses of the period were rare, with terms such as ‘advanced’ and ‘modern’ arising more commonly.⁵⁵ There is no easy translation and terms such as ‘liberal feminism’ which Youngkin uses, and which I also appropriate, are approximate. As such I will be using ‘feminist’ sparingly in my own discussions of the New Woman.

Further complicating their positions as ‘feminists’, many New Women novelists disassociated themselves from the phenomenon. Ella Hepworth Dixon for instance was bemused about her own categorisation: ‘I was called a number of names by several estimable elderly persons writing for Conservative newspapers... I was called a New Woman – or some such quaint appellation’.⁵⁶ Grand and Egerton were more categorical in their denial of this ‘quaint appellation’. Complicating matters further, Caine points out that there was a ‘diversity of opinion about sexual questions [...] amongst feminists and feminist sympathizers in the 1890s’.⁵⁷ Egerton repudiated connections made between herself and her fellow New Women writers, Grand and Caird, particularly with regards to their “‘equality” theory’: ‘there is no inequality. We are different animals that is all’.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Youngkin, *Feminist Realism*.

⁵⁵ This is an issue that I return to in Chapter 4 which, through a simultaneous study of *Woman* and the *Lady’s Realm*, provides an indication of the misleading connotations of words such as ‘Lady’.

⁵⁶ ‘My Faith and My Work’, *W.* (23.09.1896), p.8.

⁵⁷ Caine, p.256.

⁵⁸ Letter from George Egerton to Ernst Foerster, London (1.07.1900) cited in Ann Heilmann, ed., *The Late-Victorian Marriage Question: A Collection of Key New Woman Texts*, Vol. 5, ‘Literary Degenerates’ (London: Routledge, Thoemmes Press, 1998), pp.1-3.

As well as anachronistic terminology, I am also mindful about the tempting divide between the binaries ‘feminist’ and ‘anti-feminist’, ‘conservative’ and ‘radical’, that Valerie Sanders, Lucy Delap, and Julia Bush have highlighted.⁵⁹ Delap writes: ‘It has been assumed that the divide between “progressive” and “reactionary” maps onto the feminist/anti-feminist division.’ The late-Victorian woman movement was beset with contradiction; disagreement with a particular notion did not make the individual a feminist or anti-feminist. As Carol Dyhouse argues, ‘History alters political circumstances’ and so called ‘conservative’ positions would have been more feminist for a nineteenth-century readership.⁶⁰ Dyhouse uses the education plea as an example, suggesting that for women at the end of the nineteenth century it was often waged ‘on highly conservative grounds’, with Emily Shirreff arguing that a girl’s education was necessary as when married they could help to elevate man’s instincts.⁶¹ Ledger and Luckhurst claim that ‘self-nominated New Women could themselves be advocates of conservative causes’.⁶² Although she was not a ‘self-nominated’ New Woman, Grand had a complex approach towards the phenomenon as Ardis has observed, careful to distance herself from the controversial matter of her novels in press interviews; instead, she focused on mainstream feminist concerns, such as education for women and purity within marriage.⁶³

⁵⁹ Valerie Sanders, *Eve’s Renegades: Victorian Anti-Feminist Women Novelists* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996); Lucy Delap, ‘Feminist and Anti-Feminist Encounters in Edwardian Britain,’ *Historical Research* 78.201 (2005), pp.377-99; Julia Bush, *Women against the Vote: Female Anti-Suffragism in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁶⁰ Carol Dyhouse in *Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp.142-3

⁶¹ *Ibid.* pp.139-40

⁶² Ledger and Luckhurst, ‘Introduction: Reading the ‘Fin de Siècle’, pp.xiii-xxiii, p.xvii.

⁶³ Ann Ardis, ‘Organizing Women: New Women Writers, New Women Readers, and Suffrage Feminism’, *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, Nicola Diane Thompson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.196.

Schaffer has pinpointed a major flaw with categorisation.⁶⁴ She argued that New Woman was a category into which many late-Victorian females fit, because of their independent, autonomous lifestyles, including Ouida who is commonly considered to be a misogynist. Schaffer thus suggested that ‘political’ New Woman was a more suitable label. I will be using my own label of ‘campaigning’ New Woman to embody the individual who emerged from the feminist utopias of *Shafts* and the *Signal*. I will consider issues surrounding the woman question ‘as representing a spectrum, rather than as monolithic and polarized positions’.⁶⁵ It is important to appreciate the nuanced and contradictory ways in which the New Woman was negotiated within periodicals, which were themselves filled with ever changing perspectives. Studies of the 1890s woman’s press have split magazines into those that were distinctly feminist and those that were not. Despite my own proclivity towards a similar categorisation, this is too simplistic; there was usually a variety of views in one magazine whilst others advanced in their stance on the woman’s movement as the decade drew to a close. There was fluidity within all of the magazines in terms of editorial content and the development of topics broached. Yet Lerner also writes that late-Victorian feminism was essentially concerned with ‘the hard, measurable aspects of woman’s positions’ rather than the ‘intangibles’ that it deals with at present.⁶⁶ These ‘hard, measurable aspects’ have become part of my categorisation process, with topics such as marriage and employment arising frequently throughout the chapters.

⁶⁴ Talia Schaffer *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2000).

⁶⁵ Delap, pp.381,384.

⁶⁶ Lerner, p.165.

Another central theoretical aspect of my work is the New Woman's relationship to 'femininity'. In her essay, 'Feminist, Female and Feminine',⁶⁷ Toril Moi characterises 'feminist/feminism' as a political label which shows support for the woman's movement. 'Female' is the natural, inherent aspect of womanhood, whilst 'feminist' is formed through nurture: ideas of equality are shaped through the way one is brought up. 'Femininity' is a cultural construct, defined through a patriarchal society, which invites the question: 'How do we define femininity?' Deborah Gorham claims that 'Femininity is a psychological concept, in that it implies a distinctive model for female personality'.⁶⁸ Since the end of the eighteenth century women were trained to think of themselves, as Showalter claims, 'in prepositions',⁶⁹ linking men to all aspects of their lives. This produced a relational definition of woman in which she became a contrast to man rather than a person in her own right. Women who sought equality became less feminine. Yet as Heilmann and Sanders highlight, femininity and feminism are not mutually exclusive terms.⁷⁰ The consideration of these terms was made manifest at the end of the nineteenth century through the two prominent images of womanhood: the doll-woman and the intellectual, mannish woman.

The 1889 production of Ibsen's *A Doll House* created a stir amongst women, in its questioning of assumptions underpinning femininity. A major debate arose in the 1890s, focusing on the 'womanly woman', wherein the connotations of 'womanly' were

⁶⁷ Toril Moi, 'Feminist, Female, Feminine' in Catherin Belsey and Jane Moore, eds., *The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), pp.104-116.

⁶⁸ Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (London and Canberra: Croom Helm, 1982), p.5.

⁶⁹ Elaine Showalter, 'Review Essay: Literary Criticism', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1.2 (1975), pp.435-60, p.452.

⁷⁰ Ann Heilmann and Valerie Sanders, 'The rebel, the lady and the 'anti': Femininity, anti-feminism, and the Victorian woman writer', *Women's Studies International Forum* 29 (2006), p.290.

interrogated and reconstructed. In *The Heavenly Twins* (1893), Grand used ‘womanly’ repeatedly when depicting her old-fashioned female protagonists, describing the old-fashioned ‘womanly women,’ as ones ‘who thought it their duty to submit to everything and make the best of everything, including injustice, and any other vice it pleased their lords to practise’.⁷¹ Grand hinted at the retrograde nature of the ‘womanly’ woman. An article by Dole in *Shafts* claimed that George Meredith did not ‘admire the type generally known as “the womanly woman,” who occupies herself merely in picking up the dropped stitches of other people, or in lubricating the wheels of her domestic machinery’.⁷² Yet, Nat Arling, a supporter of the New Woman, rejected this antiquated imagery and instead reconstructed the womanly woman,⁷³ claiming in ‘What is the Role of the “New Woman”?’ that she possessed courage, self-respect, humility, modesty, independence and truth; the feminist was the *true* ‘womanly woman’. The consideration of the words surrounding femaleness and womanhood was another contentious, ambiguous issue which divided and united the woman’s movement. Even between magazines with similar ideological stances such as *Shafts* and the *Signal* there was disparity between the reclamation of femininity: the *Signal* redefined the domestic sphere whilst *Shafts* searched for a new space.

What is most striking about the New Woman is the way in which ‘new’ not only revitalised and brought into disrepute the fairer sex, but also translated a universal term such as ‘woman’ into a middle-class term. Gail Cunningham has highlighted that the New Woman as an ‘[i]ntelligent, individualistic and principled’ individual was ‘essentially middle-class’ with working-class women leading lives completely ‘remote from the cosy domesticity and

⁷¹ Sarah Grand *The Heavenly Twins* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992; 1893),p.591.

⁷² ‘Mr George Meredith on Women’s Status’, *S.* (3.11.1892),p.8.

⁷³ *Westminster Review* 150 (1898),pp.576-87,p.582.

shining feminine ideal against which the New Woman was reacting'.⁷⁴ Similarly, Elizabeth Langland defined the New Woman as 'a middle-class phenomenon that built its rationalizations along rigid class lines'.⁷⁵ Ardis argued in 2007 that class was an issue missing from discussions of the New Woman.⁷⁶ Clearly, Ardis' desire further to explore issues of class comes from the fact that whilst academics acknowledge the middle-class roots of feminism, they have not yet used this issue as a basis for study. Whilst I do not use it as a major topic of exploration, the assumed middle-class status of the New Woman informs much of my reading and it is important to state from the outset that these magazines were not targeting the lower-classes. They assumed a reader with some disposable income and leisure time, although the amount of both varied between publications.

Fraser, Green and Johnston suggest that, taken as a whole, the woman's press seemed 'to transcend class boundaries by referring to experiences common to all women'.⁷⁷ This common experience forms the basis of my categories of exploration. I will use the term New Woman to refer to females, as Schaffer puts it, living 'in London and work[ing] in the new white-collar professions',⁷⁸ women who found themselves in a politically and socially shifting environment and who had an active part in the movement. In this sense I will be opening up an investigation into the reading material of women living ordinary lives,

⁷⁴ Cunningham, p.11.

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Langland, *Nobody's Angels: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Ideology in Victorian Culture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p.210.

⁷⁶ 'Landscape for a New Woman' with Teresa Mangum and Sally Mitchell in 'The New Woman's Work: Past, Present, and Future', *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies* 3.2 (2007) [<http://www.ncgsjournal.com/issue32/roundtable.htm>]

⁷⁷ Ibid, p.177.

⁷⁸ Schaffer, p.45.

‘hidden from history’, to borrow Carol Dyhouse’s phrase.⁷⁹ The personal and probing tone of New Journalism perhaps provides greater clues than previous modes of journalism from which the reader was very much excluded, serving as an observer rather than a participant. This polyphonic approach creates a diverse, rich New Woman discourse.

Methodological Approaches

Shafts and the *Signal* both formed a seminal part of the woman’s movement, raising ‘unmentionable’ topics such as contraception and coverture, and providing a space in their correspondence sections for debate of these topics. Grouping these vehicles of feminism with three less radical publications, *Young Woman*, *Woman*, and *Lady’s Realm*, I will reveal patterns and disparities between the ways the magazines conceived of the New Woman. *Shafts* and the *Signal* can be categorised under ‘liberal feminism’, which Molly Youngkin defines as following ‘the equality doctrine, the belief that the best route to emancipation for women is the achievement of equal political and legal rights’.⁸⁰ The remaining three magazines were conservatively progress, including articles relating to female progress but tempering these with a desire to reconfigure Coventry Patmore’s ‘Angel in the House’. *Woman* and the *Lady’s Realm* fulfilled a conservative ‘difference-based feminism’, which celebrated women’s biological difference, constituting a validation of separate spheres.⁸¹ The *Young Woman* falls between liberal and conservative feminism, demonstrating greater liberalism than *Lady’s Realm* and *Woman* whilst protecting its young readership. With this in mind, I have ordered my chapters in terms of the magazines’

⁷⁹ Dyhouse, p.31.

⁸⁰ Youngkin, pp.8-9

⁸¹ Ibid, p.9.

radicalism, commencing with *Shafts* and ending with the parallel study of *Woman and Lady's Realm*.

Each chapter is structured using four loosely themed concepts: editorial approaches; women's relationships with themselves; women's relationships with each other and men; literary identifications. Within these loose categories, a variety of themes will be explored. Editorial approaches covers issues such as the magazine's appearance and its journalistic techniques which coloured the methods it used to discuss the New Woman. Women's relationships with each other and men, and their relationship with themselves are crossover sections, in which I consider topics such as female sexuality, health, solidarity, work, maternity and marriage. However, there are instances when it is appropriate to explore one theme separately, such as the presentation of marriage in the *Young Woman*, which dominates so much of its content. More generally, topics such as maternity fed into discussions of work and discussions of work became contemplations of leisure time. The literary New Woman explores the way each magazine used fiction, poetry, and reviews to relate to or reject their conception of New Womanhood. These categories assume different subtitles in each chapter and, just like the magazines themselves, defy a rigorous structure in terms of the topics in each. Whilst many of the articles I will refer to directly used the New Woman in the title or the body of the text, more did not. I have focused on content that embodied ideas surrounding the New Woman such as the call for employment and questions on marriage. In this way, I am exploring the New Woman as a concept that was both implicit and potent. Just as editors used the appearance of the New Woman to re-evaluate conceptions of gender and femininity, I will be considering the wider presentation of womanhood.

Although the sections are thematic rather than chronological, I have generally used chronology within each section as far as possible in order to trace the development of each magazine's ethos over the decade. Chronology has been a useful way to assess the legitimacy of Heilmann's claim that the New Woman was not 'passé' in the century's final years, the way scholars such as Tusan have suggested; rather 1897 onwards represented the site for a second peak of the movement.⁸² By exploring these magazines up to 1899 I am able to observe the ethos of individual publications post 1895. Whilst the mainstream press seemed ready to light her funeral pyre, liberal feminist and conservatively progressive publications continued to engage in discussions in which she was either at the periphery or assuming a starring role.

A key aspect to be aware of throughout this thesis is the short space of time in which the New Woman flashed into the public consciousness before waning. The date span for my study ranges from September 1892 to December 1899. The reason I use this seven year period is because most of the overtly New Woman sympathetic magazines, such as *Shafts*, and, to an extent, the *Young Woman* began in 1892, in September and October respectively. The *Women's Penny Paper* had become the *Woman's Herald* the year before. It was a time that represented the brink of the New Woman movement. Though not quite named, the New Woman was emergent in the periodical press from the onset of the 90s, formed by the sudden influx of feminist magazines that appeared. I evaluate how individual publications evolved: whether through appearance – *Shafts* changed its cover illustration after two

⁸² Ann Heilmann, *New Woman Fiction: Women Writing First-Wave Feminism* (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 2000), p.23

months – or editor – the *Signal* had a colourful history of editors and titles. Individual analyses of particularly striking articles are seen as a whole, creating a broader picture of what women were reading in this period. These analyses mingle with an overview of the way different articles interacted in one issue, producing a more comprehensive picture of the magazines. The collective force of these magazines is integral to this thesis.

Together these magazines presented a range of perspectives on the New Woman. Rather than serving as an overview of every magazine printed for women in the 1890s, the magazines in this thesis have been carefully selected as complementary yet contradictory works that give some indication of the vast array of material that was available. The intertextual nature of these magazines also makes them ideal to consider together. Writing on the *Herald* in an issue of *Shafts*, Sibthorp reported that ‘The Press has, in one instance, remarked that SHAFTS is “on the lines of the *Woman’s Herald*, but with a broader scope”’.⁸³ She claimed that although Miss Müller had ceased to edit the *Herald*, her work was not dead: ‘To her able, untiring efforts all of us owe thanks [...] she left the women’s cause more helpful, the world of women generally better than she found them.’ This is an early instance of the *Herald*’s impact on the rest of the woman’s press. It is also emblematic of the fact that liberal feminist magazines failed to maintain the longevity of the conservative progressive publications.

Woman also referred regularly to other publications. However, rather than promoting its competitors, *Woman* wrote writing scathingly on the *Herald* in 1893: ‘advanced

⁸³ ‘What the Editor Means’, *S.* (19.11.1892),p.40.

womanhood has had to admit that it cannot edit a paper'.⁸⁴ Written by the then co-editor of *Woman*, Arnold Bennett, the commentary not only criticised the *Herald's* mission-led ethos, it also suggested that women alone could not succeed in journalism, announcing that Mr Stead and Stout were coming to the magazine's rescue. Bennett also undermined the magazine when it became the *Signal*. Suggesting that it was 'aggressively independent', he mocked the concept of 'advanced womanhood'. Bennett was open in his criticism of the female journalist and her lack of 'instinct', reflected in his publication *Journalism for Women: a Practical Guide* (1898), which criticised the female journalist, proclaiming her to be undisciplined, ill-trained, and bad at grammar, providing only excuses for their failure.⁸⁵ Bennett's focus on and perception of journalistic ethos has inspired my own exploration of the editorial methodology used by the liberal feminist magazines, considering the way in which their presentations of the New Woman affected their desire for female advancement. The contrast between the female-edited liberal feminist publications and male-edited conservatively progressive magazines is important for gauging representations of the New Woman.

The editorial ethos of each publication is central to my study. The first three chapters will consider the New Women who produced the magazines: Sibthorp, the editor of *Shafts*, Fenwick Miller, the editor of the *Signal* from October 1895, and Erminda Rentoul Esler, the 'agony aunt' of the *Young Woman*. All three were interested in the woman's movement; all three also encouraged their readers in finding their own voices and articulating their

⁸⁴ Marjorie, 'D'You Know?', *W*. (8.02.1893), p.7.

⁸⁵ Lyn Pykett, 'Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman: representations of the female artist in the New Woman fiction of the 1890s' in *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, Nicola Thompson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.135-50, p.139

rights. The dichotomy between being New Women and trying to understand the New Woman manifested itself amongst the female journalists of these magazines, although in varying degrees. These degrees will be uncovered in the exploration of their editorial approaches. By considering the magazine's editor I will be exploring journalistic tactics. The impassioned rhetoric of Sibthorp, contrasted with the writing of Fenwick Miller who intended to be, 'visible only in the work of the paper [...] not by talking about [my] work'.⁸⁶ Certainly, as female editors in Victorian England, Sibthorp and Fenwick Miller can be seen as pioneers. Previously publishing practices and circulating libraries worked on a hegemonic infrastructure. Women were forced to comply until they themselves took control and became editors and publishers.⁸⁷ Editors such as Sibthorp were aware of the significance of the press in gaining public interest and support for certain issues. *Woman's* male editors complicated matters, addressing readers in a collective manner and including themselves as women. It is important to be aware of their impact upon the material of the magazines. Whilst the *Young Woman* was edited by Frederick A. Atkins, readers exchanged correspondence with Esler. This was made clear to readers unlike in *Woman* in which the male editor adopted a feminine voice. This journalistic deceit complicated presentations of the New Woman, who was accused of adopting masculine mannerisms by a male writer, himself adopting a feminine voice. Yet, one must wonder if this personalised approach, though deceitful, was more effective than the *Lady's Realm*, which entirely neglected an individualised voice, content with a more old-fashioned form of journalism. These competing editorial approaches produce the most distinctive aspect of my study;

⁸⁶ 'The New Editor', *WS*. (3.10.1895), p.209.

⁸⁷ Showalter, 'Review Essay: Literary Criticism', p.439.

editors spoke directly to the readers, serving as a guides, companions and friends, with the New Woman linking the two.

I observe the dialogue created between contributors and editors, examining a virtual community in which women played active roles and formed relationships with one another. *Shafts*, for instance, produced opinion-forming women following Sibthorp's lead. Female solidarity is an important consideration for my thesis. With Sharon Marcus claiming that that the Victorians 'made relationships between women central to femininity, marriage, and family life',⁸⁸ the New Woman's deconstruction of these staple elements posed a challenge to traditional female friendships. Tess Cosslett argues that whilst one would expect New Women writers to give female solidarity a greater focus, 'there is a disappointing disjunction between overt protestations about the value of female solidarity, and a narrative which implies quite opposite meanings'.⁸⁹ In building an independent New Women, authors had a tendency to create a heroic individual, rather than someone who was part of a collective movement. Whilst the New Woman concept had the potential to splinter female relationships, her calls for autonomy in the periodical press were complicated by a simultaneous desire to unite women. Collective identity and action was at the heart of the campaigning New Woman. This was felt through the correspondence section which I explore within the first three chapters. The contributions of readers became increasingly necessary to build a community that enabled editors of liberal feminist magazines in particular to assert their messages of suffrage and equality. Although women had long been

⁸⁸ Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), p.1.

⁸⁹ Tess Cosslett, *Woman to Woman: Female Friendship in Victorian Fiction* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1988), p.138

prevented from speaking out, they would not now be prevented from writing. As Egerton wrote, ‘woman has been the greatest sinner against woman by centuries of silence’.⁹⁰ By persuading women to write and ‘speak out’, feminist magazines were correcting this. Firstly though, readers needed to understand their situations more fully in order to articulate them. In this sense, the correspondence sections provided not only a space for female interaction but also for the testing of ideas.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1, ‘*Shafts* of light on the New Woman’ focuses on the rhetorical prowess of *Shafts*’ editor Sibthorp who used periodical writing as a personal crusade. I question claims that *Shafts* did not follow the New Journalism formula, arguing that Sibthorp’s desire to raise the standard of the nineteenth-century female was a central aspect of New Journalism as used by W.T. Stead in the *Review of Reviews*. I use the concept of thought and political action to assess the way that readers of *Shafts* became writers by answering Sibthorp’s calls for action and articulating their woman’s experience. I also consider the extended use of mystical and spiritual metaphors to explore the way the magazine used poetry to enhance the collective nature of theosophy and its relation to feminism. The final section moves the focus to women’s bodies, using the New Woman topics of maternity and marriage to assess *Shafts*’ literary contribution to understandings of female sexuality.

Chapter 2, ‘Signalling the New Woman’ seeks to evaluate the New Woman in a liberal-feminist environment tempered by a focus on traditional domesticity. A pervading element

⁹⁰ George Egerton, “The Regeneration of Two”, *Discords in Keynotes & Discords* (London: Virago Press, 1983), p.242.

is the magazine's shift in content as it was passed from the president of the British Woman's Temperance Association, Lady Henry Somerset, to professional journalist Fenwick Miller. Under Fenwick Miller the female body was not only a site for reclamation from male domination but a commercialised centre. Galia Ofek writes: 'Many New Woman texts depart from and even satirize the culture of consumption and beautification, often deploying material consumerism (...) as a metaphor for the ideological consumption of conventional conceptualizations of femininity'.⁹¹ The *Signal* worked against this satirisation in its commodification of the body. Fenwick Miller's New Woman was concerned with health and fashion as well as suffrage and education.

Chapter 3, "Merely a figurative Aunt Sally": the New Woman in *Young Woman*' focuses on the transition between girl and woman and way the magazine constructed womanhood for its dual audience using devices such as role models, fiction, and the marriage debate. I explore the rhetoric of the magazine's agony aunt Mrs Esler whose dialogue with the other contributors produced contradictory standpoints, simultaneously moralising and progressive, and offered instances of the heteroglossic New Woman. With Esler directing one reader towards the *Woman's Signal* as an alternative source of 'matter on the Woman Question', Liggins has suggested that the *Young Woman* recognised 'its own limitations in coverage of the New Woman'.⁹² I question this claim, suggesting that rather than seeing its coverage of the New Woman as limited, the *Young Woman*'s ambivalence and evasiveness formed a more tactical approach in which the magazine's presentation of womanhood through the mother/daughter bond was imbued with didacticism and indoctrination.

⁹¹ Galia Ofek, 'Cinderella and Her Sisters in New Woman Writing and Ella Hepworth Dixon's Fiction', *Women's Writing* 19:1, 23-40 (2012), pp.23-40, pp.36-7.

⁹² Liggins, p.222.

Chapter 4, ““Forward But Not Too Fast”: *Woman* and *Lady’s Realm*’ focuses on ways these magazines dealt with the figure of the New Woman across significant periods in their print run. It explores class crossovers alongside the magazines’ contrasting appearances and content. This parallel examination reveals the class-bound and politically inscribed complexities of referring to females. By using ‘lady’ rather than woman, the *Lady’s Realm* escaped negative associations with the New Woman. *Woman* lived up to its ‘reputation for being advanced’ in comparison.⁹³ , This chapter assesses *Woman* from the last months of 1892 to the end of 1895 and the *Lady’s Realm* from 1896 to 1899, using a continuity approach rather than one of comparison. The mid-1890s represented a lively and diverse period of time. This chapter shows the ways in which the more conservative magazines avoided direct association with the New Woman after the trials of Oscar Wilde.

⁹³ Margaret Beetham and Kay Boardman, eds. *Victorian Women’s Magazines* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001),p.87.

Chapter One *Shafts* of light on the New Woman

The small amount of academic research conducted on *Shafts* regularly describes the magazine as ‘odd’ or ‘rather curious’.⁹⁴ A staunchly feminist publication, *Shafts*’ interest was not just emancipation; as well as covering contemporary feminist concerns such as rational dress, maternity and sex education, it also reflected the fin de siècle’s ‘new morality’, examining vegetarianism, socialism, anti-vivisection, and spirituality. This varied content has led to claims such as Showalter’s, who describes late nineteenth-century feminists as ‘fervent associationists’, ‘dissipating’ their energies in many causes’. She cites *Shafts* as being full of advertisements for meetings of societies such as ‘the Women’s Vegetarian Union, the Anti-Vivisection League, the Anti-Spitting Association’; however, she adds that whilst late nineteenth-century feminists had a clear idea of ‘what they were *against*’, they had only a vague notion of ‘what they were *for*’.⁹⁵ Yet, a closer study of the impassioned editorship of *Shafts*’ Margaret Shurmer Sibthorp renders Showalter’s statement unreasonable. Whilst Sibthorp was opposed to a number of issues, the one thing she was undoubtedly and fervently *for* was the New Woman: she was *for* women’s writing and women’s reading; she was *for* a religion that ceased to exclude women; and she was *for* the creation of a network of like-minded females who could share their experiences during a time when their voice was finally being heard.

Despite Sibthorp’s emphatic mission, *Shafts* suffered from a perpetual financial crisis, and was in print for only seven years. Lack of money meant that from March 1893 Sibthorp

⁹⁴ Doughan, p.267.

⁹⁵ Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, p.193.

was forced to publish *Shafts* monthly. Reader loyalty became essential for survival, exhibited in the June 1893 'Editor's Appeal': 'Shafts is still in urgent and immediate need of funds. Help even in the shape of small sums will save it. It must not die'.⁹⁶ These pleas went largely unanswered and in August 1893 Sibthorp publicized the movement of *Shafts*' offices from 'the pleasant airy rooms', 'to *one* room in the stair below'; she also cut a page from the magazine and asked that readers continued to be brave.⁹⁷ By 1898 *Shafts* became bi-monthly. From 1895 Sibthorp published the magazine at her home in Hampstead. Promising a new start in October 1899, *Shafts*, like the *New Woman*, disappeared into obscurity by 1900. Doughan and Sanchez maintain that there is no record of feminist papers making a fortune, experiencing rather a struggle to cover printing costs.⁹⁸ This chapter will consider the potential reasons for the magazine's lack of sustainability. I will frame *Shafts*' approach to the *New Woman* by considering its strong editorial impetus. In view of Sibthorp's devotion to the Woman's Cause, I will explore periodical writing as a personal crusade, through which an editor could direct and lead her readers. Beth Palmer refers to *Shafts* as 'a less practically minded progressive journal for women',⁹⁹ suggesting that the editor's personal mission rendered *Shafts*' liberal feminism impractical. I intend to demonstrate that *Shafts* did in fact have practical applications, both through its calls for action as well as its regular invitations for women to meet. In this vein I will also assess Sibthorp's journalistic techniques, such as the rhetorical repetition of the magazine's extended metaphor of light and truth. Rhetorical devices will also be explored in the magazine's encouragement of reading and its consequential reinforcement of women's

⁹⁶ *S.* (06.1893),p.71.

⁹⁷ *S.* (08.1893),p.106.

⁹⁸ Doughan and Sanchez,p.xiii.

⁹⁹ Beth Palmer, *Women's Authorship and Editorship in Victorian Culture: Sensational Strategies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011),p.175.

writing. The conversion of readers to writers demonstrated the interchangeable nature of these activities in relation to the New Woman. This will lead on to an examination of the spiritual and collective feminism that was shaped through religious rhetoric and the self-conscious creation of a community of women who shared a common bond, one cemented through women's clubs in which members discussed what it meant to be a New Woman. Finally, I will consider the relation of the sexual body to the campaigning body and how *Shafts* articulated its debates on maternity, marriage and employment using fictional and non-fictional methods.

‘What the Editor Means’

Born in Scotland in 1851, writer and journalist Margaret Shurmer Sibthorp became a metonym for *Shafts*. She principally used the magazine as an organ to raise knowledge of the female plight and to provide a forum for the exploration of ‘truth’. *Shafts* was an entirely apt name for this quirky little magazine. Referring to a ray or beam of light, the title served as an extended metaphor, embodying the overarching principle of New Womanhood in which a renewed perspective re-evaluated outdated traditions. Using enlightenment imagery, Sibthorp referred to the magazine as a guiding light through its primary epigraph: ‘Light comes to those who dare to think’. Light represented thought and thought had the potential to change not only women's positions, but the world. Yet many contemporary writers subscribed to the view that thought was a masculine virtue whilst sentiment was a feminine attribute; the American politician Boyd Winchester for instance ranked intellect last as a desirable feminine attribute: a ‘pure, earnest, loving heart’ was

most important, followed by graceful ‘form and features’.¹⁰⁰ An intelligent mind was ‘mentioned as subordinate’ to these features. Sibthorp reclaimed intellect for her female readers, writing in her first editorial: ‘Our object is to encourage thought’.¹⁰¹ She reinforced this in September 1893:

SHAFTS is being carried on ‘against fearful odds’ for the purpose of bringing hidden things to light [...] Through the diffusion of the knowledge of conditions of things [...] women and good men will learn with astonishment and sorrow how much they might have done had they *known*.¹⁰²

Sibthorp’s hyperbolic register conveyed urgency, underscoring the importance of *Shafts*’ perpetuation: educating its readers about their political and social rights was fundamental to the publication. Through its epigraphand throughout its published life, *Shafts*, in Matthew Beaumont’s words, seemed ‘positively to fetishize [...] knowledge as the instrument of political or social emancipation’.¹⁰³ This knowledge could then be applied to positive action as was suggested through New Woman literature: a letter from the novelist and short story writer Mary Hartley to an unknown recipient, most likely Mrs Massingberd, the president of the Pioneer Club, said of Grand’s *The Heavenly Twins* that it ‘will be followed by *action* definite and stringent on the part of all *thinking* woman. [...] It calls for

¹⁰⁰ Boyd Winchester (1902) cited in Marks, *Bicycles, Bangs and Bloomers*, p.7.

¹⁰¹ *S.* (3.11.1892), p.8.

¹⁰² *S.* (09.1893), p.125.

¹⁰³ Beaumont, ‘Influential Force’, p.3.

action on every line - & indicates the course to take'.¹⁰⁴ Thought was directly allied with action, the details of which were apparent in the novel. Linking thought and knowledge to female advancement bound *Shafts* to the New Woman novel through which the reader was, according to Flint, encouraged to take the activity of reading seriously and rationally, undistracted by sensationalism and focused on the political message.¹⁰⁵ Sibthorp was as passionate about educating readers through fiction as the New Women writers. Gillian Kersley argues that the demise of the New Woman occurred due to an increased openness about the problems confronted in their fiction, making didactic novels unnecessary.¹⁰⁶ However, *Shafts* demonstrated that the problems confronted in novels could only be fully resolved through a combined call for action, more easily achieved through the regular and far-reaching mode of the periodical.

Regular contributors to *Shafts* also underpinned its enlightenment ethos. In the inaugural issue, Edith Ward suggested that women who were unwell could be offered 'weekly reassurance' through *Shafts* whilst also sending out 'germs of helpful vigour to men and women engaged in active work'.¹⁰⁷ These 'germs' represented positive thoughts, travelling between women and bonding them in a common purpose. By linking these thoughts to 'active work', Ward established the magazine's practical applications from its outset. In the third issue, the author O. Esliel-Nelham declared: 'Knowledge is inspiring; let us pursue it, do not let us seek a little superficial information, but let us search after the knowledge that

¹⁰⁴ Letter from Mary Hartley to unnamed recipient, in Ann Heilmann and Stephanie Forward, eds., *Sex, Social Purity and Sarah Grand*, 'Volume 2: Selected Letters', ed. by Stephanie Forward (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p.28.

¹⁰⁵ Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader 1837-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp.295-6.

¹⁰⁶ Gillian Kersley, *Darling Madame: Sarah Grand and Devoted Friend* (London: Virago Press, 1983), pp.96-7.

¹⁰⁷ 'Shafts of Wisdom', *S.* (3.11.1892), p.2. Beaumont claims that Ward's regular and lead contributions in subsequent issues suggested she was personally and politically close to Sibthorp (p.9).

is thorough and keen, and penetrating'.¹⁰⁸ Both Ward and Eslie-Nelham produced a rallying tone to encourage 'our brave sisters'. This tone certainly resonated with readers, as a correspondent named John Higgins wrote the following week: 'The more strength there is in your "bow" and accuracy and keenness in your "shafts" the more heartily shall I for one wish success to your ventures'.¹⁰⁹ Yet whilst this comment reflected *Shafts'* calls for action, Higgins did not suggest his own physical involvement in these ventures; readers perhaps saw their role in the magazine's emancipatory efforts as merely sending out 'germs of helpful vigour' rather than acting in any practical way. The contradictory message that action was required yet only thought was necessary could sometimes read problematically in some of Sibthorp's more polemical editorials.¹¹⁰ It is notable that this particular contributor was male; perhaps *Shafts'* focus on women's issues left male readers somewhat isolated. Nevertheless, Higgins' comments suggested the support that was available from men and women for *Shafts'* mission.

Shafts' central metaphor not only emerged in its content but also on its front cover (Fig. 1). Sibthorp also used the image of a female archer to underline the magazine's mission, asking all women 'to help us in any and every way, so that the bow of our strength many not lose its power'.¹¹¹ The archer symbolised the readers and editor, collectively re-educating society with 'wisdom, justice and truth'. Beaumont has assessed the alteration of *Shafts'* cover illustration from 'classical to romantic', with the woman of the second cover undergoing a far more militant struggle to impose Wisdom, Justice and Truth on the

¹⁰⁸ 'Foolish Resignation', *S.* (19.11.1892), p.34.

¹⁰⁹ 'Sex No Disqualification', *S.* (26.11.1892), p.63.

¹¹⁰ The reasons behind this are revealed in the last section of this chapter, concerning women's health.

¹¹¹ 'What the Editor Means', *S.* (3.11.1892), p.8.

world.¹¹² By shifting from the neoclassicism of the first front cover, one which a late-nineteenth-century readership would have encountered within domestic publications, Sibthorp produced a bolder image of the campaigning New Woman. The original woman was nymph-like and delicate, whereas the second was sturdier and more striking, emphasized by a darker print. *Shafts'* new front cover also responded to reader perceptions. In December 1892, a lady wrote 'to call the editor's attention to the faults on the frontispiece'; Sibthorp explained that she was aware of these faults and 'that the Christmas number will contain the new design, which, we trust, will please all'. These faults were not detailed; it was perhaps a criticism of the lack of coherence between the woman of the original cover and the magazine's doctrine. By incorporating reader comments into the cover image, Sibthorp ensured that *Shafts'* stood out from more commercial publications through its physical appearance as well as through its progressive content.

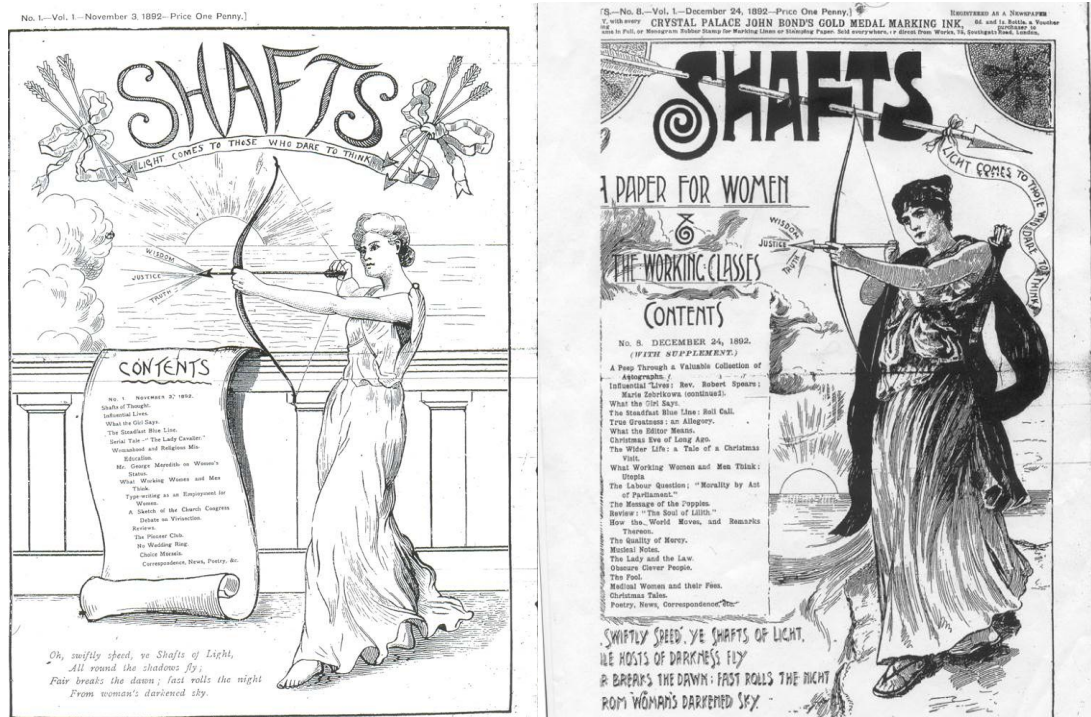


Figure 1 *Shafts'* front cover images for 3.11.1892 and 24.12.1892.

¹¹² Beaumont, p. 15. Images taken from Beaumont, pp. 1 & 16.

Shafts' cover preceded lampooned images of the New Woman from publications such as *Punch*. Figure 2, from an 1895 issue of *Punch*, undermined the independent, spirited female promoted by *Shafts*. 'Jack' is reduced to seek out feminine company in the servants' hall; the women in his household have been partially transformed, donning ties and puffing cigarettes but retaining femininity in their flowing skirts and elegant repose. Whilst their appearance is feminine, as Jack suggests in his desire for 'female society', their behaviour masculinises them. This illustration particularly resonates with *Shafts* when considered from the point of view of the social purity feminist who preserved a very female appearance whilst adopting behaviours that *Punch* considered masculine. In this case their activities were greatly exaggerated.



Figure 2 'The New Woman', *Punch* 108 (8.06.1895),p.282.

When discussing *Shafts'* cover design Ward wrote that it was 'suggestive of active work on many lines for the good of humanity'. The ground beneath the figure of the revised front

cover conveyed this active womanhood: unsteady underfoot but striving on regardless. Ward also commented on the way the female figure hurled ‘shafts of light into the dark places of sin, injustice, and ignorance’, typifying ‘the position in which every human soul stands, whose thoughts are pure and true, and whose will is strong to follow the path of duty.’¹¹³ Whilst suggesting that *Shafts* served as a beacon through the maze of New Womanhood, Ward established the magazine’s subscription to the Social Purity Movement, using words such as ‘pure’ and ‘truth’ which surfaced frequently throughout *Shafts*. Originating in the 1860s, Social Purity Feminism sought to abolish immoral sexual practises such as prostitution. With *Shafts*’ interests in eugenics and birth control, it was a useful vessel for movements of this kind.¹¹⁴ Social purity was manifested by the femininely-clad archer of *Shafts*’ cover. Figures allied with the movement such as Grand reclaimed ‘femininity’ for the advanced woman, rejecting the trouser-clad, cigarette-puffing individual so often used to characterise the New Woman. Grand said of women’s dress: ‘Want of taste in dress on the part of many women, who advocate what are called advanced views, has thrown back the women’s cause fifty years’.¹¹⁵ Whilst Social Purity Feminists desired an equal footing with men, this did not come at the cost of their appearance. Tracy J.R. Collins has disregarded *Shafts*’ alliance with this movement, arguing that whilst its cover intended to emphasize action by using an image of a woman shooting ‘shafts’ from a bow, this message is somewhat overturned by the fact that she is

¹¹³ *S.* (3.11.1892),p.2.

¹¹⁴ Ward was known for her firm stand on social purity as well as her involvement in the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act Joy Dixon, *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England* (John Hopkins University Press, 2001),pp.134-5.

¹¹⁵ Sarah Tooley, ‘The Woman’s Question: An Interview with Madame Sarah Grand’, *Humanitarian* 8 (1896),p.166.

dressed ‘in a most conventionally feminine costume’.¹¹⁶ Yet ‘a most conventionally feminine costume’ was at the heart of the campaigning social purist who, unlike *Punch*’s suggestion, did not desire to emulate masculine behaviour.

Save for its cover *Shafts* contained very few illustrations. As Beetham and Boardman point out about feminist journals, ‘sparing use of illustrative material made for a sombre layout that complemented the earnest nature of the contents’.¹¹⁷ However, this perhaps over complicates matters. *Shafts*’ lack of illustrations could also have been an issue of funding. The cost of printing a magazine with illustrations is considerably higher than one without. The domestic journals were able to sell at the same price as *Shafts* yet still include illustrations through the income they received from extensive advertising. *Shafts* included only a sparse amount of advertisements which were not central to the publication as they were in domestic journals. Regular advertisements are not consistent with a political agenda. Whilst the domestic magazine *Woman’s Life* placed advertisements for baby food alongside articles about childcare, to place such advertisements in conjunction with articles suggesting the rejection of motherhood, for instance, would contradict the article’s significance, distracting from the new, often complicated ideas that Sibthorp imparted. As well as promoting its morality doctrine by endorsing fruit, vegetables, farm products, and face powders that used vegetables as their base,¹¹⁸ *Shafts*’ advertising pages generally provided lecture and club information, book recommendations, regulations about where to send magazine copy, and publicity for the dressmaker Madame Harvey who was advertised

¹¹⁶ Tracy J.R. Collins, ‘Athletic Fashion, Punch, and the Creation of the New Woman’, *VPR* 43.3 (2010), pp.309-35, p.314.

¹¹⁷ Beetham and Boardman, p.61.

¹¹⁸ Elke Schuch, “‘Shafts of thought’: New Wifetypes in Victorian Feminist Periodicals in the 1890s”, *Nineteenth-Century Feminisms* 4 (2001), pp.118-34, p.223.

across several issues. Although the first three examples reflected major subjects of the magazine, the last example reinforced the social purist's preoccupation with maintaining a 'feminine' appearance. Indeed, although critics claim that the New Woman was perceived, to be 'one who spurned fashion',¹¹⁹ the advertisements of *Shafts* contradict this. Whilst this preoccupation was reflected by advertising a dressmaker, the well-being of the body remained of greater importance than fashion with references to rational and hygienic corsets reminding readers that in being fashionable one should still make responsible choices.

Along with its cover image and advertisements, *Shafts*' internal layout was also subject to change. Initially composed of two columns of print on each page, in March 1893, when Sibthorp's struggles with her finances forced her to produce the magazine monthly, it incorporated three columns, most likely to encompass more content. Furthermore, advertisements were moved from the back to the front, perhaps to make them more prominent and increase revenue. Notably, its epigraph transformed from 'Light comes to those who dare to think' to 'A Paper for Women and the Working Classes', making its presence amongst other publications less abstract and more directed. By including the working classes Sibthorp reached out to another group in society as maligned as women whilst also attempting to be more commercially viable, broadening her audience to include men more explicitly. This epigraph underwent further change, developing from 'A Paper for Women and the Working Classes' to 'A Magazine for Women and Workers'. The meanings of 'Paper' and 'Magazine' are significant: the first is a publication issued at close

¹¹⁹ Paul L. Fortunato, 'Wildean Philosophy with a Needle and Thread: Consumer Fashion at the Origins of Modernist Aesthetics', *College Literature* 34.3 (2007), pp.37-51, p.40.

intervals, whilst the second is produced periodically. Sibthorp marked the shift in output by this alteration in description. Designating *Shafts* as a magazine was more apt: a magazine is one that ‘typically contains essays, stories, poems, [...] by many writers [...] frequently specializing in a particular subject or area’.¹²⁰ Despite its layout reflecting a traditional newspaper, incorporating columns of print and few illustrations, Sibthorp maintained that ‘*Shafts* is not a newspaper’.¹²¹ Her reasoning was that it was not a purveyor of gossip. With its conversion to a monthly publication, the content also became more structured; the editorial featured on the first page, unambiguously declaring Sibthorp as editor, her name appearing at the centre top. Previously, Sibthorp’s editorial featured at the half way point of the magazine, eight pages in. This movement reasserted her control as well as her desire to connect more intimately with readers. By the end of 1896, *Shafts*’ layout underwent further change with Sibthorp acknowledging that it may not have represented a magazine format previously, but in the coming year *Shafts* ‘will appear in magazine form’.¹²² By 1897, the magazine had one column for each page and was more aesthetically pleasing, showing that even supposedly non-commercial magazines such as *Shafts* could not escape the lure of New Journalism.

Matthew Beaumont suggests that *Shafts*’ short-lived existence was due to its firm rejection of the New Journalism formula.¹²³ Its dense text and lengthy articles were certainly a contrast from the short bursts of text seen in New Journalistic publications such as *Tit Bits*. Sibthorp avoided the domestic femininity attached to New Journalism, emphasizing that

¹²⁰ ‘Magazine’, *Dictionary.com* [<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/magazine>, accessed 20.08.2010]

¹²¹ *S.* (05.1895), p.17.

¹²² *S.* (12.1896), p.153.

¹²³ Beaumont, p.6.

Shafts was ‘not a dealer in gossip of any kind, has no fashion plate, gives out no patterns of dressmaking, etc., makes no pretence of being an “entertaining monthly,” or of filling its columns with smart whisperings, questionable jokes, or meaningless tales’.¹²⁴ She chose instead to reinvent the female sphere. Considering Beaumont’s claim then, *Shafts* may have failed to gain larger circulation figures because of its rejection of the ‘safe’ domesticity of the average woman’s magazine. Its dense textual presentation may have also made it less accessible for those less confident female readers. Clearly, Sibthorp was wary of compromising the serious political content of *Shafts* – printing a competition alongside an impassioned article on female emancipation does not produce a coherent message. Yet, closer study of *Shafts* indicates that Sibthorp did not reject the New Journalism formula altogether. For a start, she keenly promoted awareness of the new journalistic movements, listing amongst the ‘Spring Session’, ‘Lectures, Debates, Discussions’ of the January and February 1895 issue a debate on ‘The New Journalism’, opened by Miss March Phillips. This was an acknowledgment of New Journalism as a useful and interesting topic for debate. More significant was Sibthorp’s editorial voice and her inclination towards the personal; *Shafts* was ‘the outgoing of [her] vital breath [...] the manifestation of [her] deep desire to serve the cause of women’.¹²⁵ Consistent address of the reader was central to New Journalism: Beetham highlights that New Journalism stressed ‘human interest’, representing ‘itself as the reader’s friend’.¹²⁶ Sibthorp regularly referred to readers as ‘kind helpers’ or ‘generous friend[s]’,¹²⁷ using her ‘What the Editor Means’ column to converse directly with them. Beetham adds that New Journalism cultivated ‘an intimate rather than

¹²⁴ *S.* (05.1895), p.17.

¹²⁵ ‘From the Editor’, *S.* (08.1893).

¹²⁶ Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?*, p.124.

¹²⁷ *S.* (12.1893), p.169.

authoritative tone'.¹²⁸ Sibthorp realised the influence given to her and chose a supportive voice over the omniscient tone of earlier journalism.

Sibthorp's journalism echoed that of William Thomas Stead; unlike his major critic Matthew Arnold, who described New Journalism as 'featherbrained',¹²⁹ radical nonconformist Stead viewed his journalism as one which 'remove[d] the injustices which exist beneath the fair foundations of...wealth and commerce in Britain'.¹³⁰ His involvement in raising the age of consent was testament to the effects that journalism had on drawing public attention to issues requiring reform. Stead founded the *Review of Reviews* in 1890, not long before Sibthorp started *Shafts*. He used it to promote social work, such as adoption through 'The Baby Exchange'.¹³¹ The *Review* signalled Stead's belief that the new press could voice the desires of the British electorate and use public opinion to influence government policies, with the editor championing the outcast and providing guidance.¹³² Sibthorp also believed in the editor's power of guidance, exhorting the press as 'a wonderfully educative power; it might be still more so; it must be still more so if we are to have any great advance of general intelligence'.¹³³ *Shafts* dispelled potentially 'featherbrained' material, presenting instead a clear doctrine to serve the cause of women which developed as the paper progressed. In January 1893 a notice announced that 'A "legal column" will for the future be devoted to answering brief questions upon "Women's

¹²⁸ Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?*, p.124.

¹²⁹ Matthew Arnold, 'Up to Easter', *Nineteenth Century* (05.1887), pp.638-39.

¹³⁰ Cited in J.O. Baylen, 'The "New Journalism" in Late Victorian Britain', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 18 (1972), p.368

¹³¹ Owen Mulpetre, *The W.T. Stead Resource Site* (2001-2009) [<http://www.attackingthediabol.co.uk/reviews/index.php>, accessed 15.07.2010]

¹³² Baylen, p.369.

¹³³ S. (28.01.1893), p.200.

Law”’,¹³⁴ revealing the magazine’s aim to stay abreast of issues at the forefront of the woman question. Mark Hampton claims that the conversion of the press from the mid-Victorian education ideal to the materialism of New Journalism could be best ascribed to ‘the “structure of feeling”’, making the press ‘a “representative” agency’.¹³⁵ Whilst the ‘structure of feeling’ was present in *Shafts*, the magazine also served to educate. Yet like her readers Sibthorp claimed to be ‘a seeker after truth, a learner, not a teacher’.¹³⁶ Her approach involved readers learning from debate, such as a course of lectures on ‘THE NEW WOMAN AND WHAT THE TERM IMPLIES’.¹³⁷ Taking place in December 1895, when the New Woman had become ubiquitous, Sibthorp invited her readers both philosophically and practically to reflect upon their status in society. In creating a more tangible content through the inclusion of lectures, Sibthorp made abstract ideas practical, fostering a readership of ‘women who did’.

In order to involve readers in the women’s cause Sibthorp produced a recognisable, comforting and, most importantly, trustworthy voice. She gained trust through employing a familiar structure, including regular features, such as ‘What the Girl Thinks’, ‘Influential Lives’, and the ‘Steadfast Blue Line’. ‘What the Girl Thinks’, published ‘many thoughts of many girls, and of women who can remember their thoughts as girls’. Each paragraph began: ‘The Girl says’ or ‘The Girl is’, providing a sense of agency and identity, whilst emphasising thought. ‘Influential Lives’, under which appeared ‘notices of men as well as women’, and the ‘Steadfast Blue Line’, composed of ‘short notices of whatever women in

¹³⁴ ‘Notice’, *S.* (21.01.1893), p.180.

¹³⁵ Mark, Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), p.75.

¹³⁶ *S.* (3.11.1892), p.8

¹³⁷ ‘Spring Session, 1895’, *S.* (01-02.1895), p.368.

any part of the world, or in any class of life, have done or are doing in the cause of progress',¹³⁸ conveyed the lives and achievements of prominent women. Focusing on those pursuing liberation reassured readers of progress. Similarly, 'How the World Moves' united women by conveying reports on their achievements throughout the world. Whilst these columns provided role models, one role model of particular interest in *Shafts* was Josephine Butler, the leader of the campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Act. With her connections to Stead, including Butler not only highlighted the power of the individual to change established order, it also left *Shafts* open to controversy. The suffrage campaign rejected Butler's work, seeing it as damaging to the feminist cause in its explicit acknowledgement of female sexuality.¹³⁹ Yet Butler's campaigns for the higher education of women as well as her heavy involvement in the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act from 1869 made her an important figure for *Shafts*' readers, with her work promoting social purity doctrines. Including Butler also signalled a commercial aspect that Sibthorp seemingly denied by constantly referencing her personal interest. Yet in order to sell copies, even magazines 'with a purpose' were required to cover provocative topics. Moreover, Sibthorp claimed that *Shafts* took 'no side save that of justice and freedom',¹⁴⁰ suggesting that even topics considered unsavoury by the suffrage campaign would not be excluded from the magazine. Sibthorp's promotion of figures such as Butler reflected her human interest: '*Shafts* addresses the public as human beings, not as of this or that sex, party, creed or class'.¹⁴¹ The magazine avoided generalised views and the grouping of certain people, instead recognising individuals who sought to improve woman's condition.

¹³⁸ *S.* (3.11.1892),p.5.

¹³⁹ underscoring the complicated nature of late-Victorian feminism,

¹⁴⁰ *S.* (3.11.1892),p.8.

¹⁴¹ *S.* (01.1897),p.1.

This emphasis on equality allied it once more to the New Woman, The magazine's freedom of expression invited readers to become an integral source for its content.

Reading, Writing and Literary Self-Identification

A June 1894 editorial announced:

Women as politicians, women as doctors, women as lawyers, women as wranglers, women as preachers, women as – anything and everything they may elect to be, is the picture presented to us by the days in which we live.¹⁴²

This rhetoric of emancipation was Sibthorp's central journalistic strategy, emphasizing the shared experience of women at this crucial point of change. Her rhetoric sought to alter perceptions of women's capabilities. By placing 'women' at the beginning of each noun phrase and using repetitive phrasing, she emphasized the evolution of women's work. The jobs she listed were previously male-only occupations. By leaving the list open she underscored that women can be 'anything and everything'. These endless possibilities provided her readers with the hope they needed 'to persevere in the path they have chosen',¹⁴³ as Ward wrote in the inaugural issue. In conveying current developments in women's lives, Sibthorp provided clues on how to live and demonstrated the ways women perceived their current situation and themselves. This style filtered through to her readers and was evident in their own writing as well as in *Shafts'* literary evaluations.

¹⁴² S. (06.1894),p.226.

¹⁴³ S. (3.11.1892),p.2.

Jon P. Klancher states that ‘Audiences are not simply aggregates of readers’:

They are complicated social and textual formations; they have interpretative tendencies and ideological contours. Studying them requires us to ask what kind of collective being they represent and how an individual reader becomes aware of belonging to a great social audience.¹⁴⁴

In order to gain insight into the ‘complicated social and textual formations’ that made up *Shafts*’ readership, it is useful to look at their correspondence, which often revealed their ‘interpretative tendencies and ideological contours’. Beetham stresses that late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century magazines ‘blurred the divide between the writer and reader’.¹⁴⁵ In fact, this blurring increased by the end of the century with *Shafts*’ readers shaping its contents as much as Sibthorp. She requested that they ‘help by writing letters to the paper, and short articles’;¹⁴⁶ this invitation for readers to become writers expanded knowledge and cultivated thoughtful women.

Sibthorp provided the opportunity for readers to write without censor: ‘the columns of *Shafts* are open to the free expression of opinion upon any subject, however diverse’.¹⁴⁷

One reader praised this mode of free expression:

¹⁴⁴ Jon P. Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p.6.

¹⁴⁵ Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?*, p.185.

¹⁴⁶ *S.* (08.1893), p.106.

¹⁴⁷ *S.* (26.11.1892), p.56.

we women ought to gratefully acknowledge your courtesy in freely publishing opinions on any question of the day. [...] Most papers stifle the cry of wronged womanhood. The Press is in the hands of men and husbands – who are either jealous of seeing their rule (social and political) over women jeopardised, or are utterly hopeless of dealing with women’s injustices under existing social prejudices.¹⁴⁸

In emphasizing the hegemonic male structure of the Press, the reader marked *Shafts* out as a publication not ruled by men and uncensored in its content. In stating that Sibthorp freely published ‘opinions on any question of the day’, the reader also implied that *Shafts* was shaped more by the reader than its editor. Yet Sibthorp clearly influenced readers, manifested in Sophie Lepper’s letter ‘Intuition’ from May 1894.¹⁴⁹ Lepper drew on *Shafts*’ extended metaphor, declaring that there was:

an awakening from apathy among women, whose doormat minds are being roused by the tremendous efforts made by our well-known women leaders, who by their inspired writings and exemplary living show us the infinite possibilities and immeasurable potencies which are within the reach of all.

There was clear cohesion between Lepper and Sibthorp’s beliefs: like Sibthorp, Lepper advocated writing as a tool to advance knowledge. Moreover, Lepper believed that women should live their lives by emulating strong females. This replicated Sibthorp’s ‘Roll Call’ in

¹⁴⁸ S. (12.1893),p.169.

¹⁴⁹ S. (05.1894),p.260.

January 1893 of ‘Women who work or have worked towards women’s freedom or freedom generally, whether still in this life or gone to another’.¹⁵⁰ Her remembrance rewarded their endeavours and urged others to follow their example. It was important that readers of *Shafts* were given aspirational models such as Butler to improve their condition, echoed in Sibthorp’s exhortations that women can be ‘anything and everything’. Reflecting Sibthorp further, Lepper emphasized the power of thought in political activism, claiming that in order for there to be progression, women needed first to care about their situation, to be awoken ‘from apathy’. Her stress on the importance of knowledge to the feminist cause indicated the strength of *Shafts*’ pervading metaphor. Ward’s article was also likely to have stirred Lepper, with Ward’s encouragement to believe in the ‘infinite possibilities and immeasurable potencies’ of which Lepper wrote. Essentially, readers such as Lepper shared Sibthorp’s editorial impetus to serve the cause of women.

That many readers of *Shafts* became writers, commenting on what they were consuming and in turn reading the writing of their contemporaries, was highly significant, as the printed word had become central to the politicised gender struggle of the New Woman. Heilmann affirms that, ‘[t]he close alliance between literature and social reform [...] was of central importance to the New Women writers’.¹⁵¹ New Woman writers were articulating their needs through a language that increasingly eschewed patriarchal control. The control of women through language was becoming more of an issue at the end of the nineteenth century, as Butler wrote: ‘The conspiracy of silence of the press has done us this

¹⁵⁰ *S.* (7.01.1893),p.149.

¹⁵¹ Ann Heilmann, *New Women Strategies: Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, Mona Caird* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004),p.1.

service...it has forced us to create a literature of our own'.¹⁵² This latter phrase originated in John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women*: 'If women lived in a different country from men, and had never read any of their writings, they would have had a literature of their own'.¹⁵³ However, rather than creating a new language for women, Sibthorp questioned existing linguistic bias, intending to change the androcentric nature of certain words. One of her editorial rules was avoidance of the masculine pronoun when 'expressing general thoughts and facts'.¹⁵⁴ She commented in an early editorial that several letters had been addressed "'to the Editress'": 'There is, properly speaking, no such word. Words expressing professions, &c., ought to have no sex'.¹⁵⁵ Whilst reflecting her liberal feminism, Sibthorp's desire to eliminate the gendered suffix looked towards a future in which women's involvement in activities such as magazine editing was considered commonplace enough not to require a separate description of their job role.

Sibthorp insinuated the deep-rooted prejudice of language, starting as early as a girl's first contact with written matter. 'An Appeal to Girls' Teachers' stressed sexist language in the classroom:

Do teachers not see that the idea that a girl is inferior to a boy is being fostered by such apparently trifling causes as the use of the masculine pronoun in the prefaces to books, 'The student...if *he* should not succeed', [...] by being told in French and

¹⁵² Josephine Butler, *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade* (London: H. Marshall and Son, 1896), p.402.

¹⁵³ John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classic Series, 2006;1869), p.79..

¹⁵⁴ Cited in Lesley A. Hall, 'Sibthorp, Margaret Shurmer (b. c.1851)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/57831>, accessed 8.03.2010]

¹⁵⁵ S. (19.11.1892), p.40.

other languages that, given a whole string of feminine nouns, one masculine noun alone is sufficient to alter the agreement of an adjective.¹⁵⁶

In order to avoid perpetuating masculine supremacy through language, Sibthorp warned teachers to avoid texts of this nature. Through *Shafts* she educated women appropriately from a young age, providing advice on reading material, not only for her readers but for the children of her readers. To cement her appeal to teacher, four weeks later, Sibthorp quoted the secretary of the National Home Reading Union, Miss M.C. Monday: ‘Between the ages of 13 and 19, character is determined, and life issues are fixed. Therefore it is of vital importance that at this period, feeling and thought should be moulded by the true delights and noble inspirations which are to be found in good books’.¹⁵⁷

According to Flint, interest in girls’ reading habits stemmed from ‘part of a far broader attempt in the latter decades of the Victorian period to classify and determine the practices of the female reader’.¹⁵⁸ However, in *Shafts* this interest was less about classifying and more about reshaping. The issue of supervision of children’s reading was also a matter close to the reader’s heart with a related debate having longevity in *Shaft*’s correspondence section from January 1893. E. McK argued that girls not permitted to read works on certain social issues were not kept innocent but ignorant and unaware of vice.¹⁵⁹ The following month Totus Dissentio, claimed that parents were ignorant of the literature their children favoured, with young people reading clandestinely. Dissentio’s solution was for girls to be

¹⁵⁶ *S.* (3.12.1892),p.72.

¹⁵⁷ ‘Books, Magazines, Pamphlets, Papers, &c’, *S.* (31.12.1892),p.141

¹⁵⁸ Flint,p.154.

¹⁵⁹ ‘Choosing Books’, *S.* (21.01.1893),p.190.

informed about the world by their mothers rather than by reading literature. E.K.M also disagreed with E. McK, suggesting that being aware of immorality did not result in an awareness of virtue but instead encouraged vice.¹⁶⁰ Girls required some knowledge but this could be found in real life rather than in literature. A fourth letter by John Blunt,¹⁶¹ possibly writing pseudonymously, claimed: ‘ignorance is infinitely better than imperfect knowledge’, and that ‘Complete ignorance, next to complete knowledge, of vice is perhaps a young girl’s greatest protection’. His conclusion was for mothers to be the best judges of whether their daughters should have knowledge of vice. Sibthorp agreed that ‘a girl’s mother ought to be the best judge whether a girl should have knowledge of vice or not’. She acquiesced with Blunt’s view that the best way to teach a child about chastity was to present them with the horrors of sexual negligence.¹⁶²

The protagonists of New Woman novels read widely and with fervour about a world from which patriarchy had shielded them. In Grand’s *The Heavenly Twins* Evadne Frayling wrote to her mother: ‘You remind me of what other women have done, and how patiently they have submitted. I have found the same thing said over and over again in the course of my reading’.¹⁶³ Whilst corroborating her world view, Evadne’s reading also opened her eyes to that which she was missing. Much later in the novel she refers to books on heredity, asking Dr Gailbraith: ‘Why are women kept in the dark about these things?’ ‘Why are we never taught as you are? We are the people to be informed.’¹⁶⁴ These questions along with Gailbraith’s unsatisfactory response indicate the rather conservative views of Dissentio and

¹⁶⁰ “On the Choice of Books”, *S.* (11.02.1893),p.238.

¹⁶¹ ‘Choosing Books’, *S.* (18.02.1893),p.253.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ Grand, *The Heavenly Twins*,p.92.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*,p.662.

E.K.M. Shielding young women from immorality disabled them from gaining a fair view of the world in which they operated. It combatted *Shafts'* own focus on the search for truth. It also went against the opinions of New Woman writers such as Grand, Egerton and Caird who demanded that women be fully aware of the depraved behaviour of men with whom they were to be tied through marriage. Egerton suggested that mothers had a responsibility to make sure their daughters were informed but in order to do this, they required knowledge.

As well as creating independently-minded, confident readers, *Shafts'* focus on fiction suggested alternatives to traditional romance and melodramatic plots. Whilst not containing the abundance of original literature found in women's magazines such as the *Young Woman* and *Lady's Realm*,¹⁶⁵ *Shafts* did emphasize the role literary material played in signalling female advancement. It encouraged readers to link the progress of women with the literature they were consuming, filling white spaces in the magazine with numerous literary quotations, such as Ibsen's statement: 'In these days it is you, women, who are the pillars of society'.¹⁶⁶ An article from 1894 observed that in current literature women brought 'psychological analysis' and 'detail into prominence', focusing on an inner life by looking at 'introspection of character and motive' and developing storytelling 'into a study of life'.¹⁶⁷ This certainly reflected the New Woman writing of Egerton, who depicted her characters' inner lives by using modernist techniques such as monologues and ellipses. The author of the article claimed that the novel teaches 'where once it only pleased'. Once more this can be applied to New Woman writing; Grand, for instance, believed a novel should be

¹⁶⁵ as I will discuss in Chapters 3 and 4.

¹⁶⁶ 'Choice Morsels from Choice Pens', *S.* (10.12.1892),p.81.

¹⁶⁷ 'Is the Present Increase in Women Authors a Gain to Literature?' *S.* (04.1894),pp.239-40,p.240.

useful, forming part of a social context. Her search for truth made her a role model for Sibthorp. Caird's writing also represented the style described in the article, that which depicted 'the struggling utterance of Soul'. However, one must question the value of literature in relating women's experience: is it a simple case of *reproducing* experiences rather than *contesting* the ideological systems? Such a question was addressed in *Shafts'* literary criticism. Reviews of New Woman fiction enabled readers to gain knowledge through reading. A reviewer writing for the publication advised readers not to put themselves into the author's hands but consider their own perspective and use their own knowledge.¹⁶⁸ Book reviews encouraged readers to do this; yet they also influenced the reader by containing the reviewers' perspective.

Two prominent New Woman novels reviewed in *Shafts* were Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* and Caird's *The Daughters of Danaus*. The anonymous reviewer of *The Heavenly Twins* described it as a novel 'with a purpose',¹⁶⁹ linking it to *Shafts*, which was also written with 'a purpose!'¹⁷⁰ Struck by the reality of Grand's novel but also by its ability to fill one with optimism, the reviewer praised Grand's positive influence on women's writing: 'It is an inexpressible joy to a woman, to know that a woman's pen has done this deed of grace'. Marilyn Bonnell argues that Grand considered her novels to be 'an extension of her ethic of care, written in response to injustices or oppressive elements in society', the worth of which was 'defined in terms of their benefits to readers'.¹⁷¹ Whilst this was certainly reflected in *Shafts'* review, *The Heavenly Twins* was also used to promote *Shafts'* doctrine of thought

¹⁶⁸ Sterne, 'Reviews', *S.* (08.1894),p.309.

¹⁶⁹ 'Reviews – The Heavenly Twins by Sarah Grand', *S.* (25.02.1893),p.268.

¹⁷⁰ 'What the Editor Means', *S.* (05.1895),p.17.

¹⁷¹ Marilyn Bonnell, 'Sarah Grand and the Critical Establishment: Art for [Wo]man's Sake', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 14.1 (1995),pp.123-148,p.125.

and consciousness, claiming that the protagonists created ‘thoughts that breathe and burn, thoughts that grow, stretching forth as they take into themselves the nourishment here supplied’. In this instance, reading became as integral to women as the food they consumed, developing them mentally. Personifying thoughts, the reviewer transformed them into an entity separate from the individual, fed by the novel’s rich contents. It echoed Hartley’s views by insinuating the active nature of these thoughts. It also suggested that women’s reading practices were becoming more sophisticated: in this case it was an analytic educative activity wherein readers were advised to ‘take up the book and read it carefully over again, not missing a line’.

This studious approach to novel reading was echoed further in Sibthorp’s own review of Caird’s *The Daughters of Danaus*, which was also proclaimed to be a novel with a purpose, ‘the vast need of womanhood’ being the factor that called it into existence. The review ran across four issues from April 1895. The review’s length suggested that Sibthorp was keen to provide a detailed analysis of the book, producing a richer picture of this ‘clever work’.¹⁷² Moreover, it reflected her personal interests: having enjoyed the novel she had a good deal to say about it. Yet Sibthorp’s account was less about the novel’s content and more about the social context in which it was placed. Before providing any detail, she critiqued earlier appraisals of Caird’s work. The feminist press often assessed the way their cause was being played out within mainstream publications. Many feminist journals generated content through the reproduction of ‘extracts and commentary on news or feature

¹⁷² ‘Reviews – The Daughters of Danaeus, by Mona Caird’, *S.* (04.1895),pp.5-7, (06.1895),pp.39-41, (07.1895),pp.53-6. Unfortunately I could not locate instalment two of the review which should have appeared in the May 1895 issue of *Shafts*.

articles appearing in other print media'.¹⁷³ In her review, Sibthorp warned of the mischief that arose from skimming and judging books incompetently:

Matters connected with women, especially when on the lines of progression, seem to be beyond the capacity of the average male reviewer, and the woman who reviews, is too often, alas! so cowardly, so dominated by male opinion and conventional prejudice, as to be incapable of uttering original opinions.¹⁷⁴

Sibthorp highlighted the injustice meted out to New Woman fiction in the mainstream press. Her comments underscored the necessity for a tailored press to fulfil the needs of a feminist readership. Unlike many mainstream publications, liberal feminist magazines did not base assessments of literature on entertainment but, particularly in the case of *Shafts*, on a novel's ability to educate its readers to discover 'new truths'. Sibthorp bookended her review with assertions of *The Daughters of Danaus*' educative purpose: in her opening article she claimed: 'it is not intended to amuse, it is even painfully earnest'. In her closing instalment she asked that the book be read 'by those who desire to learn', recommending that it be 'studied slowly and carefully'.¹⁷⁵ Like the review of Grand, Sibthorp's review used *Shafts*' extended metaphor, exclaiming that it 'takes from us our hidden despairings and flashes upon them the light of hope', and that 'It is not possible that the truths it reveals can be much longer hidden'. Key words and phrases, such as the novel's ability to 'arouse those who have slept', 'true nature is hidden', 'covered from sight', further aligned the

¹⁷³ DiCenzo.

¹⁷⁴ S. (04.1895), pp.5-7, p.5.

¹⁷⁵ S. (07.1895), pp.53-6, p.56.

novel to *Shafts'* doctrines.¹⁷⁶ Sibthorp's review progressed earnestly, claiming that the novel 'stirs up the deep waters of the soul; the undercurrent of longings and grave dissatisfactions'. Her emotional response was endemic of the New Journalistic 'structure of feeling'. It also reflected New Woman literature as the writing of feeling; Egerton advised women to 'give [themselves] away, as man had given himself in his writings'.¹⁷⁷ According to Sibthorp Caird achieved this, her pen 'quiver[ing] and flam[ing] with pain and pathos'. By articulating their feelings in their writing, New Women could better relate the complexity of their societal standing.

Female agency was also a major driving factor of New Woman fiction. Sibthorp's review explored marriage and motherhood under Caird's terms. Both of these were drawn negatively in the novel, producing a critique of laws and social failures, rather than the institutions themselves. Caird's writing became a springboard from which to develop Sibthorp's own perspective on woman's role; she praised the novel in particular for upholding morality and assisting in the production of 'free womanhood'. As Pykett has highlighted, a number of New Woman novelists were also contributors to the 'woman' debates in the press, and 'New Woman fiction was sometimes reviewed alongside sociological and other polemical works, as if it were part of a seamless discourse on the Woman Question'.¹⁷⁸ Sibthorp's review relayed her hopes and expectations for the woman's cause. The placement of the New Woman novel in this context repackaged it,

¹⁷⁶ S. (04.1895),pp.5-6.

¹⁷⁷ George Egerton, 'A Keynote to Keynotes' in John Gawsworth, ed., *Ten Contemporaries: Notes Toward Their Definitive Bibliography* (London: Ernest Benn, 1932),p.58.

¹⁷⁸ Lyn Pykett, *The "Improper" Feminine: The Women's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing* (London: Routledge, 1992),p.7.

demonstrating the way that feminists were reading novels such as Caird's. In Sibthorp's case, it was a way to push her agenda and mobilise her readers into action.

Discussions of books in *Shafts* were not confined to reviews. Some of the most interesting reflections on reading were contained in *Shafts*' correspondence section. In May 1895 a series of letters sparked an important debate on reading. These were initiated by 'Modern Woman', on the subject of 'Modern Fiction and the Cause of Women',¹⁷⁹ a significant topic when considering W.T. Stead's infamous article on 'The Novel of the Modern Woman' in the *Review of Reviews* almost a year earlier. In this he wrote: 'the Modern Woman novel is not merely a novel written by a woman, or a novel written about a woman, but it is a novel written by a woman about women from the standpoint of Woman'.¹⁸⁰ Egerton echoed Stead's sentiments several years later: 'There was only one small plot left for [women] to tell: the *terra incognita* of herself, as she knew herself to be, not as man liked to imagine her'.¹⁸¹ As has been shown through *Shafts*' correspondence, writing had become an essential way for woman to present the *terra incognita* of herself.

In her letter to *Shafts*, the aptly named 'Modern Woman' defined the modern novel as bearing 'upon the question of woman's position, and especially upon marriage and sexual topics'. Written a year after the Caird review, 'Modern Woman' echoed Sibthorp's focus on marriage and reinforced the connection between reader and editor. 'Modern Woman' created two categories of novel: those that were helpful to the cause and those that were

¹⁷⁹ S. (05.1895),p.31.

¹⁸⁰ W.T. Stead, 'The Book of the Month', *Review of Reviews* 10 (07.1894),p.64-74,p.64. This statement has grown in significance, used as a way for modern scholars to define New Woman fiction.

¹⁸¹ Egerton, 'A Keynote to Keynotes',p.58.

harmful. In the first category she named Caird's *Daughters of Danaus* and Grand's *The Heavenly Twins*, once more influenced by *Shafts'* reviews. Like Sibthorp, 'Modern Woman' emphasized the educative power of Caird's novel: 'leading the thoughtless to think'. She saw *The Heavenly Twins* as encouraging women to consider their husbands' purity and to demand equal morality for men and women. Her second category of novels posed 'as woman's friends', claiming that marriage was degrading for the female. Yet 'Modern Woman' suggested that marriage was only degrading in its present state. Like Grand, 'Modern Woman' believed in the sacred union of marriage, but advocated woman's right to be married or remain single. 'Modern Woman' cited Allen's *The Woman Who Did* as the novel which harmed the female struggle, with its loosening of the marriage tie and promotion of free love. She claimed that Allen's 'modern woman' bore the brunt of *mankind* and followed in his footsteps. His misogynistic free unions resulted in 'licence for the man and disgrace and desertion for the woman.' Indeed, despite being one of the most successful of the New Woman novels, Allen's novel did little to help the cause, as 'Modern Woman' suggested. Allen's one dimensional and under-characterised protagonist served as a vehicle for his implicit criticism of New Women ideals. The success of the novel implied the promotion of male literature over female literature, particularly when broaching issues of marriage and free love. 'Modern Woman's' response to Allen was not unique. The leader of the suffrage campaign, Garrett Fawcett disassociated herself from the New Woman movement due to her reading of Allen's novel.

Sibthorp encouraged debate with 'Modern Woman', following her letter with the hope that 'some of the readers of *SHAFTS* will reply to this letter; the subject is worthy of earnest thought'. Two months later, Eleanor Keeling criticised 'Modern Woman's' 'basis of

classification', deeming it inappropriate to suggest that books not rousing indifference or awakening thought were harmful.¹⁸² She added that it did not matter whether Allen's novel brought the modern woman into disrepute; as long as women found truth this book would do them no harm. Like Dissentio and E.M.K, 'Modern Woman' suggested that women were passively led by what they read whilst Keeling advocated independent thought. She argued that Allen's novel did 'rouse us to *think*, to examine the question with which it deals'; henceforth, it falls into the first category, not the second. A letter from Walter Lewin further criticized 'Modern Woman'. Lewin suggested that Allen's message was less prescriptive than 'Modern Woman' understood: 'He does not say women ought to do as the heroine of his story did [...] simply that if they choose to do it, they should not be persecuted'.¹⁸³ Both responses argued for the interpretative qualities of women's reading, revealing that whilst aware of negative renderings, female readers were less susceptible to these portrayals than believed. By including this diversity of opinion *Shafts* was instrumental in inspiring readers to consider what they read. Furthermore, correspondents were again influenced by the promotion of thought and truth. With many New Women texts kept out of public circulation,¹⁸⁴ magazines such as *Shafts* made it possible for women to gain knowledge of this material and discuss it at length. The fervent response to New Women literature indicates the importance it had for readers of these magazines, playing active rather than passive roles in reading practices and encouraged by the editor to think critically.

¹⁸² *S.* (07.1895),p.61.

¹⁸³ *S.* (07.1895),pp.61-2,p.62

¹⁸⁴ Ann Ardis, 'Organizing Women: New Women Writers, New Women Readers, and Suffrage Feminism', *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, Nicola Diane Thompson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999),pp.189-203,p.192.

As the reflections and discussions of women's reading and writing have shown, *Shafts* was a collaborative effort between editor and reader, as Sibthorp asserted: 'A bond of purpose between editor and readers makes a paper powerful to accomplish its work'.¹⁸⁵ This 'bond' was echoed throughout with Sibthorp taking ownership of her loyal readers, describing them using the personal pronoun 'my'. She expressed the reciprocal nature of the relationship between reader and editor when she wrote: 'Many hundreds of letters have given me proof unmistakable of the success of the work already done, thus spurring my pen onward to greater endeavours'.¹⁸⁶ Through her encouragement of readers as writers, Sibthorp allowed them to agitate and crusade as once only the journalist could. Moreover, she broke 'down women's isolation' and constructed a discursive community through the interactions of editor and readers. This collaboration was a central aspect of New Woman politics which Sibthorp made manifest through her editorial notes. Placed at the end of articles, these invited a reading of the magazine that went beyond the passive to the active, with the emphasis always on thought:

When we know that others think differently from ourselves we begin – unless we are blind and stupid – to question our own thoughts, to put them to the test they ought to be subjected to, and so we approach by slow and sure degrees to brighter and brighter light.¹⁸⁷

In this context Sibthorp highlighted the need for collaborative thinking, using the evangelistic symbology of *Shafts* to shape a reader community. Communities of readers

¹⁸⁵ *S.* (09.1893),p.125.

¹⁸⁶ *S.* (07.1896),p.85.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

saw 'their reading as both an impetus for and a component of their social and political activism', with "woman's experience" having an essential role in suffrage politics.¹⁸⁸ Readers of *Shafts* were invited consistently to revise their ways of thinking and to adapt to those around them. With 'woman's experience' central to achieving female suffrage, women needed to share their experiences to add to a store of knowledge and expand intellectually and personally. The individualised nature of this publication resulted in its readers' feeling part of a community which was both metaphoric and literal, with the promotion of public lectures. In April 1895, Sibthorp announced: 'A gathering together of women is now being arranged by the Editor of SHAFTS'.¹⁸⁹ This occurred once a month, to discuss 'many subjects'. However, she stressed that it was not a society, or a club, and would have no president: it was a way for women to express their thoughts and let their voices be heard. The invitation to transform their status as readers into active participants in prominent debates of the day enabled consumers of *Shafts* to negotiate their place as New Women more concretely. In the same year this was happening, the magazine was reviewing notorious New Woman novels and including poetry that reflected on the New Woman and her relation to feminine spirituality.

Spiritual and Collective Feminism

The objective, rational tone of the New Woman fiction was somewhat undercut in *Shafts* by its inherent interest in the occult and mystical. Within late nineteenth century feminist

¹⁸⁸ Ardis, 'Organizing Women', p.195.

¹⁸⁹ Sibthorp, 'What the Editor Means', S. (04.1895), p.1.

culture, there was ‘a self-conscious attempt to create a feminist spirituality’.¹⁹⁰ *Shafts* took part in this ‘self-conscious attempt’. Inequality between the sexes in religion emerged in its first issue. ‘Womanhood and Religious Miseducation’ stated that the Old Testament was ‘impatient of womanhood’.¹⁹¹ Two months later a correspondent asked how the equality of genders, of which St. Paul wrote, could be achieved ‘as long as we read and hear of nothing but He, He, He – all of the Father, but *nothing of the Mother*’. She argued that ‘honouring no feminine in Heaven, man has come to honour no feminine on earth!’¹⁹² Theosophy was seen as a solution to the hegemonic infrastructure of religion. Combining the study of religion, science and philosophy with a central thesis to unite mankind in spirituality, it appealed to women by offering ‘a “feminine” form of spirituality’.¹⁹³ Sibthorp was a member of the Theosophical Society (TS), joining the Blavatsky Lodge of the TS in October 1891. She invited those in the society to share their perspectives on feminine spirituality, including Susan Gay’s two-part discussion ‘Womanhood from the Theosophical Point of View’.¹⁹⁴ Gay saw woman as ‘the guardian of the moral and physical health of coming generations’.¹⁹⁵ Her reference to women as guardians could serve as empowerment; yet, it also reasserted her traditional role as moral touchstone. Shortly after Gay’s article, a correspondent wrote on female guardianship:

In religious matters, woman is loaded with the responsibility of being the guardian angel, spiritual guide, sainted upholder of husband, son or brother, but *practically*

¹⁹⁰ Dixon, p.xi.

¹⁹¹ *S.* (3.11.1892), p.7 and (12.11.1892), pp.19-20, p.20.

¹⁹² Marie-Joseph, ‘The Divine Feminine’, *S.* (21.01.1893), p.190.

¹⁹³ Dixon, p.6

¹⁹⁴ *S.* (31.12.1892), pp.131-2 and (7.01.1893), pp.152-3. Significantly, Gay wrote about womanhood under the pseudonym ‘Libra’; in astrology Libra is a masculine symbol. Using this name subverted masculinised ideas about women in religion, particularly those that suppressed them.

¹⁹⁵ *S.* (7.01.1893), pp.152-3, p.153.

dare not prove the position, or even claim equal administration in church or chapel matters.¹⁹⁶

This suggests that women could not enjoy the benefits of guardianship of which Gay wrote until they gained equality over those whose morality they were responsible for. This interaction between readers and contributors invited a re-evaluation of religion for the New Woman.

In contrast to traditional Christianity, theosophy held all religions up as an attempt to discover perfection and fulfil *Shafts'* search for the truth. Beaumont writes that the periodical's 'belief in the process of enlightenment [...] seems almost religiously zealous'.¹⁹⁷ Sibthorp wrote in the July 1895 editorial:

we must *think justly and truly*. We must THINK TRUTH. I often feel convinced that she who thinks forth TRUTH from her quiet chamber [...] does as much [...] to swell the motive power of the world.¹⁹⁸

Once more *Shafts'* calls for action were somewhat curtailed by the connotations of immobility inherent in searching for truth from one's 'quiet chamber'. Sibthorp's structure of feeling was again conveyed in her emphatic discourse, the capital letters lacking subtlety. To emphasize the search for truth further, Sibthorp entwined it within the magazine's religious ethos, as one correspondent wrote in December 1893, Sibthorp 'does

¹⁹⁶ E.G.C. 'Is Marriage the Most Blest Estate?', *S.* (3.12.1892),p.78.

¹⁹⁷ Beaumont,p.3.

¹⁹⁸ *S.* (07.1895),p.50.

not shrink from the true thought that will detach Christianity from its creeds and give woman her birthright'.¹⁹⁹ Sibthorp provided her readers with this birthright but in defining herself as a 'seeker after truth' and 'not a teacher', she reinforced the need for a democratic religion, free of the hierarchy decried by many of *Shafts*' contributors.

In relaying the search for truth Sibthorp used the Biblical technique of allegory. In October 1896 she printed Apis Mellifica's 'The Picture – An Allegory'.²⁰⁰ Two women, one dark, one fair, look upon a picture; they hold hands, depicting a close friendship. However, their opinions of the picture diverge: the fair girl claims it is green, the dark girl argues red. They grow increasingly angered with one another whilst others approach and contend that the painting is yet another colour. All of a sudden men are fighting about the colour, and women are weeping because their children disagree with them. The two women continue to view the painting, trying to understand each other's view. One day they hear the artist ask, 'Can you not learn each your own lesson with joy, trusting one another until your eyes are further opened' (p. 128). Shortly after the women each see the colours the other was referring to: 'The name of that picture was truth' (p. 129). Undoubtedly this allegory contained a religious subtext: forcing one's religion upon others can result in war and sorrow. One should accept the diversity of religious belief. With truth being a shifting, subjective concept in itself it would stand to reason that the opinions of the art admirers deviated. Theosophy provided a solution for this disagreement in its aim to hold all religions up, thus allowing one to gain access to the mystical truth that the readers of *Shafts*

¹⁹⁹ 'The Work of Shafts', *S.* (12.1893),p.169.

²⁰⁰ *S.* (10.1896),pp.128-9.

searched for. In this way they could apply a new, inclusive religion to their understandings of their place as New Women.

Combining *Shafts'* search for truth with its literary interests, the Bible as a text that favoured men was also a heavily discussed issue in relation to female emancipation. 'Womanhood and Religious Miseducation' claimed that woman was given no education that would enable them to judge the wrongs against her in the Bible: 'Men occupied the pulpits, wrote the prayer-books, compiled the marriage-service'. A similar sentiment was expressed at the beginning of 1895, in Effie Johnson's article 'his Gospel – her Comment'. She claimed that men interpreted the Gospel for their own advantage, maintaining control 'under the guise of religion'.²⁰¹ In May 1896, a Male Socialist, displeased about the injustice suffered by women through the Bible, used parenthetical asides to express his discontent with certain sections: "'Let your women keep silence in the Churches" (Why *your* women? Has no woman the right of property in herself? Why keep silence in Church if she can speak to the point?)'²⁰² The Male Socialist took umbrage at the comparison of women to children, objecting to the possessive pronoun. He concluded that woman intended to be recognised 'as a *human being* [...] She will acknowledge no "master" – in the Biblical sense – will be "subject" no longer. She will learn what she chooses, where and from whom she likes'. This radical male view indicated the need to reconsider religion's patriarchal structure, particularly in the context of its central written text. Solutions to this injustice were thus presented through *Shafts*. In her article, Johnson announced that it was time for 'the nineteenth-century woman' to interpret the Bible and 'parry the cowardly

²⁰¹ *S.* (01-02.1895),p.369.

²⁰² 'Woman and the Bible', *S.* (05.1896),p.63.

attempt, expose the logic, and denounce the sin'. In January 1896, 'Mrs Butler's Suggestion' implored women to take theological study seriously:

The Bible [...] has been hitherto left almost exclusively to the tender mercies of male commentators. Butler desired a vigorous school of female expositors, thoroughly equipped with all knowledge of the ancient tongues and of modern methods of Biblical criticism.²⁰³

At the end was a recommendation for *The Woman's Bible*. As these articles suggested, women need not let religious text repress them; rather, they should use it for liberation. In the same way they overturned sexist language, they could also overturn religious rhetoric. This call for action once more suggested a potentially practical action invoked through *Shafts*.

In order to overturn the hegemony of spirituality, religious lexis was utilized throughout *Shafts*. The word of God still played a pivotal role in a society that feared degeneration; in this way, Sibthorp's religious rhetoric made her arguments on female suffrage more persuasive. In her August 1893 editorial, Sibthorp encouraged her readers to 'crush the serpent's head'.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, she declared that 'Evil must be destroyed'. Sibthorp's archaic constructions cemented her religious rhetoric: 'The Soul that knoweth suffering, knoweth the need of others'.²⁰⁵ This language of pilgrimage and pioneering both feminized religion and reclaimed a previously masculinised register, illustrating that the divide

²⁰³ S. (01.1896),p.138.

²⁰⁴ 'From the Editor', S. (08.1893),p.106.

²⁰⁵ S. (12.1893),p.169.

between the genders was no longer so emphatic. This was reflected in the title of Effie Johnson's article, 'his Gospel – her Comment'. The use of lower caps for 'his' and 'her' removed the authoritative capital letter of religious figures and shifted the focus from the gender of the writer. In this way, *Shafts* gave women a new voice and supplied a revised Gospel by which they could live their lives.

Another way in which *Shafts* linked its literary preoccupations to spiritual enlightenment was through poetry and verse, which related the New Woman to mysticism and the search for truth.²⁰⁶ With discourses surrounding the New Woman imbued with doubt and mythology, belief in her involved the same blind faith required to believe in God. In 1895, when the New Woman debate was at its height, *Shafts* printed no less than six poems with connections to the New Woman. The first issue of 1895 included two of these poems, 'A New Creation' and "'The New Woman'".²⁰⁷ 'A New Creation' was composed of four stanzas and originally printed in *The Satirist*. 'New' alluded to the New Woman's novelty status whilst 'Creation' indicated her fabricated nature. The title of the poem also appears in 2 Corinthians 5:17: 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!' Just as believing in God renews his significance, believing in the New Woman would assert woman's new place in society: the 'old', traditional woman was replaced with the New Woman. The first line of each verse uses an interrogative, posed by a child to his/her mother who asks "What is that, mother?" The coupling of a mother and child reinforces women's primary function, harking back to the Virgin Mary and the baby

²⁰⁶ Poetry is an interesting medium, considering the current scholarship which associates the New Woman with fiction.

²⁰⁷ *S.* (01-02.1895), pp.369 & 378. Significantly, they both include 'New' in the title. Another article in the issue 'A New System of Dress', denoted 'New' as a keyword.

Jesus; it also alludes to the inquisitive nature of childhood, a symbol for a society baffled by this new creation of woman. The poem reflected *Shafts*' enlightenment ethos, praising the brain and encouraging thought. It describes a head as, 'A windowed musical palace of thought'. A focus on the head exhibits that woman is now part of the 'growth and gain' of the world, rather than just a subsidiary of man. The 'clear light' of her thoughts once more chimes with *Shafts*' extended metaphor.

With the emphasis on intellect rather than looks, the poem suggests the dangers of vanity, underpinning the practical fashions advertised by *Shafts*. Stanzas two and three describe the woman's hair and hat respectively, beginning positively by using the word 'grace' in both instances (ll. 8 & 13), but ending on a more sinister note; the hair 'Is cut and twisted and tortured' (l. 9) while the hat has 'colours of discord and lines of pain/And ornaments from the dead' (ll. 14-15). The ornaments allude to animal cruelty, a common target for *Shafts*' campaigning. In the last stanza the vain woman with her graceful hair and hat is transformed; over both grow animalistic items, 'Tail, tooth and claw, wing, plume and bow', (l. 19) combined with the feminine assortments of 'Silk, velvet, lace and jewels' (l. 20); sharp, predatory imagery is contrasted with delicate, alluring items to suggest the contradictory nature of this creation. The 'Cigarette, rosette, and bright bandeau' (l. 22) are signatures of the New Woman. The narrator's lack of knowledge of this creation makes it mysterious. Woman no longer twists and tortures her hair, nor wears hats made from dead animals; she has transformed into a multifaceted creature, retaining her 'palace of thought' (l. 3) to lead her on the spiritual journey to renewed self-hood.

Dora B. Montefiore's poetry, known for its mystical, theosophical imagery, was also published in *Shafts*. Her poem, 'The New Woman', takes as its subject a woman angelic and influential in stature; she is not merely a woman but 'a tall and radiant presence' (l. 3). Significantly, she underscores the New Woman's association with Theosophy: 'the mystic watchword/Of the brotherhood of Man' (ll. 7-8). The woman of the poem could be interpreted as a female Jesus, 'pondering social problems' (l. 11) and 'flouting social fictions' (l. 15). *Shafts*' extended metaphor perpetuates the renaissance of this woman: 'one day light broke round her' (l. 21) and she was no longer blindfolded by 'her lord and master' (l. 18). The woman listens 'to the God *within her*' (l. 43), an idea that suggests the immanence of a divine presence. The poem is also about reclamation. Whilst 'her enemies', presumably the popular press, 'have baptised her' (l. 53) as the New Woman, rather than fighting it, she gladly claims the name, using it for her own means: 'Her's it is to make a glory/What was meant should be a shame' (ll. 55-6). Montefiore uses the rhetoric of religion like Sibthorp, inverting the positive associations of baptism with the negative aspersions cast on the advanced woman. Her adaption of the Lord's Prayer, sung in praise of God's Kingdom, maintains the importance of one's internal mettle, a name being nothing more than a label.

Three months after these stirring poems, in April 1895, Sibthorp printed 'The New Message',²⁰⁸ originally published in *Home Maker*, by May Riley Smith. Whilst originally being printed in a domestic publication this poem also accentuated the mystical, with the 'ghosts of women dead a century' (l. 1) haunting the narrator. They are not here, 'To gossip of the secret of the dead,/Or tell their plight' (ll. 11-12), rather, they hear a new tune in the

²⁰⁸ S.(04.1895),p.9.

Christmas bells, 'New Birth to woman!' (ll. 15 & 17) This line is repeated in the following stanza, reinforcing the spectre's message, that woman who once had no right 'To choose her place' (l. 18), could now be 'crowned/With Dignity' (ll. 21-2). The fact that this is chimed in Christmas bells is significant with the birth of Jesus signifying new birth for mankind. Once more, the New Woman is given a divine status. The poem suggests that the women of the past were more than aware of their submissive position in society; rather than bemoaning their suffering, they were keen to provide a new message of rebirth for women, or a new order in which they were freed from the 'barbarous traditions of the past' (l. 25).

As well as spiritualising the New Woman, *Shafts*' poetry also stressed the collective nature of its feminism; indeed collectivism was as necessary for the woman's movement as it was for the establishment of religious practise. Montefiore's 'The New Woman', whilst referencing one woman, stood for the entire female population. Another poem entitled 'The New Woman', by R.L. Gorton used three voices, representing the past, present and future.²⁰⁹ The first voice asks whether it is not better 'To live a life of ease' (l. 1) and 'simple monotone' (l. 5). This represents the old order of womanhood in which 'Her life is a quiet stream' (l. 8), ignorant of stress and tragedy. The second represents the contemporary woman who, through her dream of independence, struggles 'for bare bread' (l. 19), she is 'Hungry of the soul' (l. 23), and she is sad because she 'hears the tragedies of human lives' (l. 29). Men mock her attempts at progression, yet 'With courage still she leads the New Crusade/Demanding justice, and one equal law' (ll. 35-6). The second verse ends asking if is a positive thing 'to lose/The grace and virtue of sweet Womanhood?' (ll. 39-40) The third verse uses natural imagery, with the woman being left to 'learn and grow'

²⁰⁹ S. (06.1895),p.34.

(l. 41). To gain equality, they need to undergo hardships: ‘sharp tongued frost doth make the tendrils strong’ (l. 47). The end of the poem looks forward to the time when women will be ‘Enriched in mind and body’ (l. 52) and ‘walk abroad in fearless liberty’ (l. 57). The three voices in the poems represent three generations of women, linked through a desire for equality. This collectivism extended beyond the spiritual in *Shafts* and moved to the more practical in which a community of readers became a congregation, worshipping the word of Sibthorp and her messages of liberation.

Through her role as spiritual guide, Sibthorp underscored the importance of collectivism, explaining her entry into journalism as one that stemmed from years of carrying on ‘an extensive correspondence with a large circle of friends’.²¹⁰ This statement reflects the work she was doing through *Shafts*’ correspondence section, in which she built a readership community. Women were able to identify with experiences depicted and discuss them at length. Such a community was important as Schaffer has stressed, fin de siècle feminists, ‘agitat[ing] for greater autonomy in everything from etiquette to employment,’ did so anonymously, socially isolated.²¹¹ Liberal feminist journals became ‘a means of “breaking down women’s isolation” and signalling that other women were beset by similar problems in their lives’.²¹² Sibthorp’s desire to create a united woman’s front stemmed from the fact that she was a member of several women’s clubs. Although Sibthorp was careful to remark that *Shafts* was ‘not the organ of the Pioneer Club’,²¹³ discussions of these institutions also became a way to articulate the New Woman, in a similar way to the magazine’s poetry. An

²¹⁰ ‘How I Became a Journalist’, *S.* (02.1897), pp.44-6, p.44..

²¹¹ Schaffer, “‘Nothing but Foolsap and Ink””, p.39.

²¹² Levine, “‘The Humanising Influences of Five O’Clock Tea””, p.296.

²¹³ Sibthorp, ‘What the Editor Means’, *S.* (26.11.1892), p.56.

article on 'The New Cycle' by Miss Helen M. Winslow claimed that woman's clubs were 'largely responsible for the evolution of the modern woman',²¹⁴ establishing a direct relationship of the New Woman to the flourishing of clubs. Winslow's article suggests progression in its title, 'New' reflecting the eponymous New Woman and 'Cycle' indicating movement and fluidity. Winslow added that 'the reform is on its way to a reality, the philanthropy put before the public in its most appealing light, and some corner of the world is made better worth living in'. These clubs not only provided women with a means of self-identification and purpose, they also impacted upon conditions of women on a worldwide scale. Etymologically referring to love of humanity, when connected to the New Woman philanthropy illustrated her potential for moral good, thwarting her connections in the mainstream press to moral degeneration. This focus on morality produced a connection between the magazine's spiritualist and collectivist feminism, suggesting that the search for truth could be attained through a community of women resembling a religious community. The consistent references to 'new' throughout 1895 in relation to spiritual poetry and women's clubs suggested that the New Woman was the central figure in whom women could have faith for their ultimate equality. In the renewal of religious beliefs and the creation of a collective movement, Sibthorp also emphasized the importance of bodily awareness, its strengths and its limitations.

Women's Bodies, Women's Rights

Through Theosophy Sibthorp presented a new ideal of femininity. This new femininity extended to women's everyday life, moving from the home to discussions of maternity,

²¹⁴ Miss Helen M. Winslow, 'The New Cycle', S. (01-02.1895),p.366.

employment and marriage for which self-determination, intellect and courage were paramount. Showalter writes that ‘a literature which attempts to deal comprehensively with female experience must create a vocabulary for the body’.²¹⁵ This could also be applied to periodicals dealing with women. Sibthorp’s emancipatory and religious rhetoric advocated mental liberation and suggested action through collective feminism. Her focus on female physicality further encouraged readers to reclaim not just their social bodies but also their sexual ones. Exhibited in her comments on girl’s reading, Sibthorp promoted the doctrines of Grand and Egerton, believing that girls needed to possess sexual awareness for their self-preservation:

teach children the truth about themselves, and the beauty and power of purity, and they will be armed against all wrong. As they grow older teach them that there is danger; give them a large idea of it, *without the sickening details*, they will soon learn to discern what is pure and true from what is impure and false.²¹⁶

The significance of bodily awareness was followed through practically, with Sibthorp holding physiology classes for girls at the editorial offices of *Shafts*. It was important that women had a greater awareness of their physical as well as mental capacities, particularly as they strove towards emancipation. The passion with which women such as Sibthorp lived their lives often had ramifications for their bodies. Showalter has hypothesised that an increase of ‘psychosomatic illnesses and stress diseases’ were apparent at the end of the

²¹⁵ Elaine Showalter, ‘Review Essay: Literary Criticism’, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1.2 (1975), pp.435-60, pp.451-2.

²¹⁶ ‘Reviews’, *S. 2* (1893), p.92.

century in women, ‘troubled by the new tensions in their role’.²¹⁷ New Women writers Grand, Egerton, Olive Schreiner and Caird all suffered from bouts of nervous exhaustion, often withdrawing to convalesce as a result.²¹⁸ Grand wrote to her publisher William Blackwood in September 1892 claiming that his reception of her work had left her ‘utterly crushed’ and that she would ‘have to go away for a change of air’.²¹⁹ In November of the same year she reported that she was better but had gone away as threatened ‘in order to recover’.²²⁰ Similarly, as the century wound down, there was a marked decrease in Sibthorp’s own output:

This number of SHAFTS is smaller, as the Editor is in immediate need of rest and change, but she hopes to compensate for disappointment, if any such be felt, in the further numbers after her return from a sojourn in woods and fields and by the surrounding sea.²²¹

Sibthorp’s retreat to the coast links her to Grand and her seaside sojourns, a popular Victorian cure for illness. Whilst being a social purity feminist, Sibthorp’s struggle with *Shafts* also fit into A.R. Cunningham’s ‘pale bachelor girl’ category.²²² Showalter claims that these women found the tensions of their role in society troubling, manifested in ‘an

²¹⁷ Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, p.194.

²¹⁸ Heilmann and Forward, p.5.

²¹⁹ Frances McFall to William Blackwood (6.09.1892) in Heilmann and Forward, p.30.

²²⁰ 30.09.1892. Ibid, p.31.

²²¹ Sibthorp, ‘What the Editor Means’, S.

²²² Cunningham identified two types of New Woman. The first was the ‘Purity’ School, which focused on the woman question in relation to marriage. For women of the purity school ‘a monogamous relationship was still the ideal, but her intelligence and independence were used to dispel the hypocrisy which surrounded the Victorian concept of marriage’; the second, “the slight, pale, ‘bachelor’ girl – the intellectualised, emancipated bundle of nerves”, was more radical ‘aware of the sexual motivation of women. They too expressed doubts about the marriage contract, but were more interested in the psychological problems of a monogamous relationship’. A.R. Cunningham, ‘The “New Woman Fiction” of the 1890’s’, *Victorian Studies* 17.2 (1973), pp.179-180.

increase in psychosomatic illnesses and stress diseases, afflictions that contributed to the decline in their literary productivity'.²²³ Sibthorp wrote in an editorial in July 1895, that 'There are many, many women enduring ill-health through the mistakes of past generations, or of this, whose hearts are sore with longing to help, who would be gladdened beyond words, could they but know how great is the help they give'.²²⁴ It is likely that Sibthorp was including herself among the 'many, many women' with ill-health; nonetheless, her comment suggested that one's health need not be a barrier to assisting in female advancement as did Ward's reference to 'germs of helpful vigour'. *Shafts* was bleakly honest about women's physical weakness and the dangers they faced in over-exerting themselves. Its solutions to these problems, such as positive thinking, offered readers hope and courage.

Increased consciousness of the physical body through Sibthorp's allusion to women's ill health led to discussions of maternity and its necessity for all women. With topics presented in *Shafts*, such as cycling and the consumption of vegetarian food, reminding readers 'that a woman's body was her own to control',²²⁵ correspondents wrote avidly on the subject. One stressed that women 'want to *own themselves*, to dispose of their bodies as seems to them best, not to have maternity forced upon them'.²²⁶ Another asked why women were being forced into pregnancy: 'Surely they should let it be clearly understood by their husbands that they are not slaves but equals, and worthy of respect and honour'.²²⁷ Almost twenty years previously, in 1877 Annie Beasant and Charles Bradlaugh published Charles

²²³ Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, p.194

²²⁴ Sibthorp, 'What the Editor Means', *S.* (07.1895), p.50.

²²⁵ Schuch, pp.119–35.

²²⁶ Alma Gillen, 'What do Women Want?', *S.* (03.1894), p.229.

²²⁷ "An Old Maid", 'Womankind', *S.* (12.1895), p.134.

Knowlton's *The Fruits of Philosophy*, a book which advocated birth control for women. This marked a significant turn in woman's reclamation of their bodies, suggesting that sex could be an enjoyable activity and not just necessary for the production of children. Besant was a founding member of the League of Isis, a group in which Sibthorp herself was involved and which supported the ideas of Frances Swiney, who believed in woman's control over her own sexuality. The writings of women such as Swiney and Besant, including Besant's own publication on birth control, *The Laws of Population*, illustrated that by the end of the nineteenth century motherhood was not inevitable for women; they could delay and or even completely bypass maternity. Novels such as Grand's *The Beth Book* (1897) depicted heroines demanding rights over their own bodies. Educating women about birth control was part of the New Woman agenda, promoting female sexuality and an awareness of one's own body; it was also part of *Shafts'* agenda.

Whilst *Shafts* upheld motherhood and encouraged women 'to love and respect maternity...the highest and holiest function that our life holds',²²⁸ it also affirmed that childbirth should not be deemed a woman's sole purpose. In the first issue of 1895, Sibthorp printed the unattributed article 'On Behalf of the Little Ones'.²²⁹ In this was Sibthorp's characteristic textual emphasis in the avowal that 'WOMAN' comes before mother, reinforcing the importance of self-actualization (p. 372). As awareness of the New Woman became paramount, maternity was recognised as something that no longer formed the woman, being simply one aspect of her life. True womanhood was formed by the development of her 'utmost capabilities'. The article acknowledged that whilst being 'a

²²⁸ S. (09.1894),p.314.

²²⁹ S. (01-02.1895),pp.372-3.

noble and sacred thing', self-sacrifice was not necessary: motherhood 'should not fill up a woman's life' (p. 372). This reconfigured the hallowed Angel of the House, overturning the images of selfless womanhood conveyed by Coventry Patmore's heroine several decades earlier. The article also included the practical ramifications of not being a mother by suggesting a variety of activities available to women. Most importantly, the article beseeched women to 'not forget that there is other work' to be done, such as in politics, to stop 'the work of destruction' (p. 372). Tying discussions of motherhood to those of female employment became an important part of Sibthorp's collaboration with the campaigning *New Woman*, positioning work as a significant step towards emancipation and not just a means to fill time.

In order to open the sphere of available emancipatory activities for women, *Shafts* included short fiction about brave, heroic women to rally readers. 'A Lady Cavalier', a three-part true story by James Prelooker featuring in the early issues, placed woman in the position of protector.²³⁰ Prelooker also appeared in the advertisement section of *Shafts*' first issue, announcing his availability to lecture on a number of women-related matters, including: 'The Primitive Family, Matriarchy or Mother-Age. Supremacy of Woman. Origin of Marriage'.²³¹ Prelooker was certainly a friend of the *New Woman*. For *Shafts* he wrote an account of Nadezhda Andreyevna Dourova, a female soldier who fought during the Napoleonic wars. She dressed as a man to enter into battle and escape domestic drudgery. As Esther Newton writes: 'In the nineteenth century and before, individual women passed as men by dressing and acting like them for a variety of economic, sexual, and adventure-

²³⁰ S. (3.11.1892),p.6; (12.11.1892),p.30; (19.11.1892),p.45.

²³¹ S. (3.11.1892),p.16.

seeking reasons'.²³² A separate article in the same issue as Prelooker's account cited author George Meredith who believed 'women can be soldiers and fight',²³³ such as Mary Ambree, a 16th century woman warrior. This interacted with the story of Nadezhda, brought up by her mother and forced to live a traditional female existence: 'continually busy with needlework and other uncongenial household tasks'. Nadezhda's repressed lifestyle and yearning for escape, placed her amongst the heroines of New Women fiction, such as Grand's ambitious twin Angelica. Nadezhda wrote in her diary 'I have made up my mind to leave my father's home *disguised as a boy*'.²³⁴ This reflects Angelica in book IV of *The Heavenly Twins* in which she disguised herself as a boy and struck up a friendship with the local choir's Tenor. Like Angelica, Nadezhda 'resolved to foreswear a sex upon which it was evident that the curse of Heaven rests' (p. 6). This literary transvestism highlighted women's flawed societal position, forced to disguise themselves in order to fulfil the activities of men, many of which they were well able to execute.

In preceding New Woman novels, true stories such as Prelooker's cemented female struggle by suggesting that it was not merely fiction. Nadezhda's lecture to women rang true:

You, of my own sex, can alone enter into my rapture and measure the true value of my prize; you, whose every act is prescribed; you, who may not take one step in the

²³² Esther Newton, 'The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman', *Signs*, 9.4 (1984), p.558.

²³³ Dole, 'Mr George Meredith on Women's Status', *S.* (3.11.1892), p.8.

²³⁴ *S.* (3.11.1892), p.6.

open air, even with a friend, without your mother's permission; you, who from the cradle to the grave live in ceaseless dependence. (p. 6)

Nadezhda's accusatory repetition suggested that woman's compliance resulted partly in her subjection. Once more it precedes Grand's protagonists, this time Evadne's claim: 'The mistake from the beginning has been that women have practised self-sacrifice, when they should have been teaching men self-control'.²³⁵ This speech was also significant in its claim that other women could enjoy Nadezhda's freedom. However, there were repercussions to this freedom. Nadezhda realised the drawbacks to her disguise when expected to yield her seat to a lady; on such occasions she longed 'to claim [her] natural privileges as a lady'.²³⁶ Despite Nadezhda's desires to throw off 'womanly' ways she still retained certain 'feminine' expectations, suggesting that gender as a social construct remained deeply inscribed.

Nevertheless, the female soldier symbolised *Shafts'* social purist New Woman: one who participated in 'male' activities and retained her femininity. As Laura E. Morgan-Browne wrote in the second issue, 'Work will never unsex woman',²³⁷ a declaration that had greater significance, given its appearance at the same point as Prelooker's account. The truth in Nadezhda's tale inspired readers desiring more than domesticity. Several correspondents to *Shafts* reinforced this strength of feminine will. L.M.B wrote for the first issue, quoting the adage: "when a woman will, she will, you may depend on't". Women will succeed as well

²³⁵ Grand, *The Heavenly Twins*, p.92.

²³⁶ *S.* (19.11.1892), p.45.

²³⁷ 'Ideals', *S.* (12.11.1892), pp.24-5.

as men when they “*will*” to do so’.²³⁸ This correspondent used the example of a female bank manager to spur women on ‘to preserve until they can do likewise’; like Prelooker’s tale, her actions served as a source of inspiration. Another correspondent a few weeks later informed readers that the first manufacturer of mustard was a woman, ‘who employs a thousand hands’,²³⁹ indicating that women could work just as well, if not better, than men. In the same issue, John Higgins wrote ‘Her womanhood should be no bar to her holding the position to which her abilities and knowledge entitle her’.²⁴⁰ Regular articles such as ‘Influential Lives’ further reinforced the importance of praising the work of those who are doing ‘something to help the world along’.²⁴¹ Certainly, *Shafts* was part of this mission.

In encouraging women to expand their horizons *Shafts* gave a good deal of space to the movements of women in industry, with articles such as ‘What Women of the XXth Century Must Be and Do’²⁴². This article reported back on a lecture given by Miss Fowler discussing new roles for women. Fowler ‘drew an outstanding horizon of great scope for women in the coming century’ but had a slightly limited outlook of keeping ‘within the old lines’. Fowler apparently ‘promised larger brains to the women of the future’. In parenthesis, the writer expressed disdain at this asking ‘Is size of brain material? Is it not rather quality than quantity?’ The writer also reported on Morgan-Dockrell who ‘accused women of running after fads, such as anti-vivisection, vegetarianism, temperance, and the condemning of man’. Morgan-Dockrell believed ‘that men were now, as they had always been *good*’. In this discussion of both Fowler and Morgan-Dockrell, the writer affirmed:

²³⁸ ‘A Woman Bank Manager’, *S.* (3.11.1892),p.13.

²³⁹ Mordant, ‘In *RE* Mustard’, *S.* (26.11.1892),p.63.

²⁴⁰ *S.* (26.11.1892),p.63.

²⁴¹ The Rev. Florence Kollock, *S.* (31.12.1892),p.131.

²⁴² *S.* (01-02.1895),p.368.

The new woman, the pioneer, wars not with man, as man, she wars with the *masculine* spirit of domination. Subdue this, she must [...] She regards man, however, as her brother and her son, from whom she expects better things in the future [...] though she plainly sees into what a pitiful condition his attempt to occupy a usurped throne and rule, has brought this world of ours [...] she never forgets that she is the mother of men, and she seeks the good of man as well as her own in all that she does.

This view of men is rather forgiving and once more does not lay the blame at man's door; though perhaps not as liberal as Grand who claimed that women 'have allowed [men] to arrange the whole social system and manage or mismanage it'.²⁴³ The writer conceded that the perpetuated view of masculinity created a 'spirit' with which women fight as men use the excuse of 'masculinity' to behave in otherwise unacceptable ways. Men were placed in an equal and even lower position, as 'brother' and 'son', rather than father or husband, titles which traditionally possess greater supremacy over women. The writer also emphasized the power of maternity by emphasizing that the New Woman was the 'mother of men', berating them accordingly and expecting 'better things' from them. Once more woman was advertised as the moral touchstone for misbehaving men. Significantly the writer suggested female supremacy by overturning Moran-Dockrell's argument and claiming that man could see the error of his ways in usurping the throne which belonged to women. Masculinity needed to be subdued and femininity promoted.

²⁴³ 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question', pp.270-6, p.271.

The freedom provided to women with new work opportunities was a major impetus for them ceasing to marry, no longer requiring matches for financial reasons. Another major reason was the lessons they were learning from their reading. In September 1893, Mary Fordham wrote: 'Many girls seem utterly unable to rid themselves of the idea that they will have the power to make their husbands good'.²⁴⁴ She cited Grand's Evadne as the example of one who is treated badly by her husband: 'Is a good woman's life to be spoilt because a bad man loves her. His love is worthless, unworthy of consideration, merely a passion!' Fordham believed, as Grand did, that women should expect more from the men they married: 'Men, no less than women, must lead pure lives before marriage, and afterwards remain true to one wife'. In a similar vein, an 1894 article affirmed: 'The time has come when women should *demand* that the men whom they receive into the sanctuary of their homes, shall be free of taint.'²⁴⁵ The New Woman was making a conscious decision to choose a man who was a personal rather than social match. This idea had been long written about by novelists but gained resurgence in representations of the New Woman, such as that seen in the work of Ibsen who illustrated the medical repercussions from forcing women into union with men they did not know well.

Shafts also explored the double standards intrinsic within marriage, including articles that considered it from a philosophical perspective such as Charles M. Beaumont's October 1896 contribution 'What is Marriage?'.²⁴⁶ Beaumont highlighted the double standards that sanctioned desertion by the husband 'to go where the wife *cannot* follow him' whilst a wife's desertion involves going 'where the husband *does not choose* to follow her'.

²⁴⁴ Mary Fordham, 'Knowledge is Power', *S.* (09.1893),p.137.

²⁴⁵ Alma Gillen, *S.*(03.1894)

²⁴⁶ *S.* (10.1896),p.127.

Beaumont viewed the marriage state as one which involved the sale of the wife to the husband. In a similar manner, a short story by H.N. Lehmann, entitled 'No Wedding Ring',²⁴⁷ and printed four years earlier, revealed the double standards of marriage. The story depicted an Englishman called Giles Wilbraham who, on holiday in Germany, encounters 'An extremely opinionated' woman called Agatha (p. 15). He shows an increasing interest in her, meaning 'to ask something of [her] or not'. The mystery that shrouds his question implies that it could be a question of marriage: 'I should not have made all this preamble with some women, but you are so different – so entirely, utterly what I desire – require – that I am absurdly timorous' (p. 15). His use of flattering, elevated language indicates a romantic motive. Agatha's interest in Giles is also piqued over the fortnight in which she comes into contact with him; she reveals her interests when asking her companion Klara about her ideas on marriage. Klara shares a somewhat negative view that was growing in popularity among women of the fin de siècle: 'I don't think much of it, but it is very likely to enter into one's life whether one wants it or not; it is a persistent sort of thing that pursues women' (p. 15). Nevertheless, Agatha appears excited to hear what Giles needs to ask her exclaiming that he 'can ask anything [...] I will try not to be too contemptuously indignant' (p. 15).

What follows is the conventional juxtaposition of two people in their individual raptures of love, or so it seems. Agatha goes to her room 'to confront visions and hold communion with her heart' and Giles strolls 'up and down in the dusk', raising 'up a vision of loveliness than which he determined that the reality should be lovelier' (p. 16). However, when they meet the next day such romantic ideals do not come to fruition as it turns out

²⁴⁷ S. (3.11.1892),pp.15-6.

that Giles is searching for his 'woman of Spring', one to include in his painting. He mentions his wife who has implored him to pursue his search to which Agatha asks, 'Where is your wedding ring?' Giles replies that English men do not wear their ring. When asked if English women wear a ring Giles replies that of course they do. Giles' response highlights the double standards of his actions, and of the marriage state. Whilst Giles claims that 'it is rather womanish wearing rings', Agatha questions the common justice and honesty of Englishmen in not wearing their rings and asks: 'Are they ashamed of being married: do they want to pose as single men?' Giles' response indicates marriage's inherent sexism: 'The ring shows that she is appropriated, and fellows behave differently to her in a way, and she is expected to behave differently too' (p. 16). Giles' conveys the ownership men still possessed even as women were gaining greater equality. The verb 'appropriated' is particularly significant as it suggests that the man has 'seized' his wife from a single existence and now she belongs to him. The lack of mutuality between men and women in the wearing of their rings is what Agatha objects to: 'we like justice and generosity – as being two-sided somehow' (p. 16).

Whilst highlighting the sexual double standard, Lehmann's story also reformed this imbalance, emphasizing a partnership built on equality and friendship, of which Sibthorp wrote four months later:

A perfect marriage should always begin by the two 'being friends', growing into the love which makes wedded life possible. Many a woman is married – and alone...the man she has loved...cased...in a hard shell of masculinity.²⁴⁸

As well as underlining the issues of relationships, Sibthorp also included fiction that suggested absconding from them. Mary Leigh's short story 'Ruth's Struggle', printed in December 1893, is a hyperbolic representation of female dependence upon men with a possible means of escape.²⁴⁹ Ruth is 'proud and sensitive', wild and unruly, trapped in a position against which she rails (p. 177). Like Charlotte Brontë's protagonist Jane Eyre of the eponymous 1847 novel, Ruth is employed as a governess, a typical position for a woman of her class. When the story starts Ruth has been given some time away from the children. She is close to a breakdown and reflects on her young brother Jackie who is in an orphanage. Her hysteria is reflected in the protestation: 'Let me die', 'I can fight no longer' (p. 177). Whilst in the heights of her emotion she is approached by a gentleman, Gerald Thornbury. He claims he can provide 'Freedom from this harsh, uncongenial life', offering 'Passionate love, and devotion, protection from the cruelty of the world' (p. 177). His embellished language manipulates Ruth's vulnerability. He offers to remove Jackie from the orphanage which convinces Ruth to submit to his deal.

Ruth does not submit through passion: 'I do not love you [...] so do not deceive yourself. For the sake of my brother, for my own sake, I will go with you.' (p. 178) Ruth's decision is based on her brother's freedom and not her own joy, emphasized by her 'stony

²⁴⁸ S. (04.1894),p.234.

²⁴⁹ Mary Leigh, 'Ruth's Struggle', S. (12.1893),p.177-8.

unflinching gaze' and 'hard and desperate' eyes (p. 178). Her self-sacrifice preceded New Woman characters such as Ella Hepworth Dixon's Mary Erle in *The Story of a Modern Woman* (1894) who is left to provide for her spendthrift brother after her father's unexpected death. As Ruth leaves with Thornbury she experiences the gazes of men and the 'loud laughs, painted faces and bold eyes' of women and girls. Through their eyes she suddenly sees herself and 'her self-respect, her womanly pride and self-esteem awoke and demanded sternly what the life was she was about to enter upon' (p. 178). This is the point at which this rather generic Victorian tale becomes the tale of a New Woman. Ruth declares: 'I am still a woman, not a poor lost creature in the guise of a woman. I have still [...] my own esteem. I was asleep before, I am awake now, let me go' (p. 178). This moment of awakening is the crux upon which *Shafts'* ethos is based. Ruth realises that she is able to find release without Thornbury's help. She is reunited with Jackie whom she is able to support with her own income, received from payment by a music publisher for her work; Hepworth Dixon's Mary Erle also supported herself through the publication of her novels, whilst the author herself worked as a successful editor for a time. The fact that Ruth is paid for her compositions shows that she has become an independent woman, supporting herself and her brother through her own work.

In July 1896, as the New Woman seemed to be disappearing from view in the mainstream press, Sibthorp wrote: 'Women's Era has begun and is bringing with it great, wide, absolute demands from earth's noblest hearts; wider thoughts, higher aims, clearer, far-seeing, from the bravest and purest souls'.²⁵⁰ This cemented the earlier material from Prelooker and accompanying contributors. Through its fiction and true accounts of pioneering women as

²⁵⁰ S. (07.1896),p.86.

well as its contributions from readers keen to advance the cause of women, *Shafts* presented a rich account of autonomy and liberation. It reclaimed the female body and suggested that employment could help to advance one's position in society. It addressed female physicality in a way that was honest if not somewhat gloomy, acknowledging that those who were infirm could still be central to female advancement. The protagonists of the magazine's often allegorical tales were challenged and left unfulfilled; yet their self-sacrifice served on a higher level to inspire women to escape a repressive, albeit safe existence. In this way *Shafts*' marriage debate made the New Woman central. With many of its allegorical tales published before the polemical novels of Grand and Hepworth Dixon, it preceded the ideas developed by these authors. This leaves one to wonder if in fact *Shafts* directly influenced New Woman authors. Combining this possibility with the obvious impact that the magazine had upon its loyal readers, *Shafts* became an essential part of the New Woman dialogue.

Conclusion

The New Woman of *Shafts* had a penchant for theosophy and a passion for education and the changing of laws concerning marriage. She was politicised as both a writer, and a reader. She was given a quest to ensure that her sex was endowed with ultimate equality. Undoubtedly, *Shafts* was influential for the New Woman, demonstrated through the passionate voices of its correspondents and its candid presentation of issues such as maternity and marriage. Although Sibthorp rejected the 'feminine', 'sensationalist' characteristics of New Journalism, she did personalise information, providing a determined, knowledgeable voice that her readers could trust to lead them through the maze of New

Womanhood. The difficulty in striking out in what was formerly such a restricted society was made easier by Sibthorp's reassuring voice. Yet she did not elevate herself but instead elevated the New Woman as a female role model. Using examples such as Butler and Nadezhda, *Shafts* became central to the formation of campaigning New Women, explicated through the correspondents who discussed matters surrounding advancement and keenly highlighted examples of female progress for their fellow reader. Flint claims that New Woman fiction 'created a community of women readers who could refer to these works as proof of their psychological, social and ideological difference from men'.²⁵¹ *Shafts* played a similar but rather more complex role in its creation of a community. Sibthorp constructed a live debate wherein women were not simply referring to the opinion of one writer but engaging with the multifarious voices of real women, attempting to understand and explicate their everyday lives. This platform was a vital component of political activism. In this way, *Shafts* was essentially a mouthpiece for New Woman concerns.

Whilst claiming that *Shafts* encouraged and inspired its readers, I do not intend to posit the feminist periodical as a didactic tool for moulding the minds of easily persuaded, passive women. As the section on reading shows, Sibthorp was keen to develop active, thoughtful readers. Indeed, I see the magazine as a springboard from which to start discussion and get women actively thinking about their role in society and the significance of their status as 'New Women'. Instead of reasserting the female role in home management, *Shafts* built a new sphere on tenuous, yet exciting ground. Sibthorp reconstructed traditional roles and ideals by blurring the boundaries between feminist and feminine, mother and woman. In

²⁵¹ Flint, p.305.

this way *Shafts* became a site for the exploration of the fin de siècle's 'New' femininity.²⁵²

Women were given a space to contest the patriarchal perceptions of womanhood and subvert power discourses which had previously kept them restrained. As one enthusiastic reader wrote, 'We have not a single organ published in support of the advancement of women [...] which is so *absolutely true to principle* as the journal in which I write'.²⁵³

²⁵² Schuch, p.228.

²⁵³ 'The Work of Shafts', *S.* (12.1893), p.169.

Chapter Two *Signalling the New Women*

The magazine that VanArsdel refers to in her biography of Florence Fenwick Miller as ‘the Most Important Feminist Paper of the Period’ had many names and editors.²⁵⁴ It enjoyed greater notoriety than *Shafts*, both now and in the 1890s, and was regularly commented upon by a number of contemporary women’s magazines. It started its eleven year existence as the *Women’s Penny Paper* from 1888 to 1891. From 1891 to 1893 it became the *Woman’s Herald*. It was incorporated into the *Journal* in 1894 to create the *Woman’s Signal*, which was ‘committed to the promotion of temperance, women’s political, social, and moral advancement, and the development of their literary tastes’.²⁵⁵ Like *Shafts*, the *Signal* only managed to sustain itself through the fin de siècle years, disappearing in 1899. It referred to itself as ‘The only Paper Conducted, Written, Printed and Published by Women’. This certainly highlighted its feminist preoccupations but it was also incorrect, as *Shafts* was also entirely female-produced. Nonetheless, it clearly provided a voice for the late-Victorian woman free of male interference.

In considering the impact that editorial input had on content and reception, this chapter will explore the way in which the *Woman’s Signal* went from being an organ for temperance issues, to a more commercial venture that continued to offer a liberal feminist message to a new market of women readers. It will begin in 1894, when the magazine became the *Woman’s Signal*. The shifting content of the magazine as it was passed from Lady Henry

²⁵⁴ VanArsdel, *Florence Fenwick Miller*, p.179.

²⁵⁵ ‘The Woman’s Signal’, *The Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals: 1800-1900* [<http://www.victorianperiodicals.com/series2/showarticle.asp?id=81836&HighlightedField=title&HighlightedWords=woman%27s%7Eherald>, accessed 7.04.10].

Somerset, president of the British Woman's Temperance Association (BWTA), to professional journalist Fenwick Miller, will be part of the discussion. Under Fenwick Miller the New Woman became a commodity figure, concerned about health and fashion as well as suffrage and education. This chapter seeks to evaluate the New Woman in an extreme feminist environment tempered by a focus on traditional womanhood, showing how Fenwick Miller used her journalistic experience to produce a nuanced, varied discussion of New Womanhood whilst Somerset reverted to more obvious tactics, such as focusing on New Woman literature.

Editing the New Woman

This section explores the history of the *Woman's Signal* and its different editors, assessing their distinctive treatments of the New Woman. It will be largely composed of an in-depth analysis of Fenwick Miller's editorship and attitudes. However, in order to gain a clearer picture of where the *Signal* originated it would be useful to briefly consider its forbear: The *Penny Paper*. The executive of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, Henrietta Müller, started the *Penny Paper* in 1888. According to Doughan and Sanchez, Müller's magazine exhibited, 'Lively and uncompromising feminism' and was 'the most vigorous feminist paper of its time'.²⁵⁶ Reflecting on her reasons for starting a woman's paper Müller claimed that the 'thing which always humiliated me very much was the way in which women's interests and opinions were systematically excluded from the World's Press'.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ Doughan and Sanchez, p.13.

²⁵⁷ Henrietta Muller quoted in *Women's Journals of the Nineteenth Century*, Part 1: The Women's Penny Paper and Woman's Herald, 1888-1893 – A Listing and Guide to Part 1 of the Microfilm Collection (Wiltshire: Adam Matthew Publications, 1997), p.8.

In this sense, being a forerunner to *Shafts*, the *Penny Paper* served the woman's cause by becoming the first magazine assertively to address 'women's interests and opinions'. Assuming the pen-name 'Helena B. Temple', Müller's magazine included diverse content, from interviews and reviews to correspondence and witty sayings of women. Similarities between the *Penny Paper* and *Shafts* are immediately obvious. Müller was a keen advocate for women's rights, writing, 'Our Policy is progressive'.²⁵⁸ Müller also highlighted the importance of female loyalty and solidarity: 'she who hears another woman slandered and does not undertake her defence as she would undertake her own defence, is No True Woman'.²⁵⁹ Müller advocated equality with the reader, ensuring that the *Penny Paper*'s 'pages will be open to all shades of opinion, to the working woman as freely as to the educated lady'.²⁶⁰ All of this suggests that Sibthorp took the *Penny Paper* as a model for *Shafts*. Müller was a member of the Theosophical Society, studying theosophy in India from 1892, so it is possible that the two editors met through the society. Müller's spiritual interests were conveyed when she wrote: 'We believe that the Bible contains spiritual truth, and that the time has come when women are bound to use their intelligence and their conscience for seeking in the spirit for interpretations of that truth'.²⁶¹ Müller certainly set the tone for the campaigning feminist magazines in which a mission was more important than entertainment. Yet when her magazine was acquired and repackaged, its similarities to *Shafts* became less perceptible, controlled by those who did not share her fervour.

²⁵⁸ Henrietta Müller, 'Our Policy', *WPP*. 1:1 (1888), p1.

²⁵⁹ 'Our Creed: A Universal Sisterhood', *WPP*. 3:115, p108.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

The *Women's Penny Paper* changed its name to the *Woman's Herald* on 3 January 1891. The *Herald* is an important publication in the definition of the New; indeed, as my introduction indicates, the *Herald* was the first place in which the New Woman was named. Yet, even before the *Herald* had named her, it had begun building her profile. It printed Frances Willard's 'The New Ideal of Womanhood' in February 1893, which cited 'self-knowledge, self-reverence, and self-control' as ideals of womanhood.²⁶² Like *Shafts*, the *Herald* recognized the fundamental importance that knowledge played in female suffrage. In June 1893, it printed 'Womanly Women' which stated that:

[A] truer type of woman is springing up in our midst, combining the 'sweet domestic grace' of the bygone days with a wide-minded interest in things outside her own immediate circle, extending her womanly influence to the world that so sadly needs the true woman's touch to keep it all that true woman would have it. The woman comes forth for the world's need.²⁶³

The term 'womanly woman' underpinned the combination of domestic, traditional virtues with the expansion of 'wide-minded' interests'; only then could one become a 'truer type of woman'. Somerset echoed such sentiments when she edited the magazine, expressing a wish for the *Signal's* 'womanly voice' to 'be heard in the clashing opinions and sentiments that make a Babel in that quiet place'.²⁶⁴ Advanced womanhood did not involve displacing the activities of 'bygone days' but widening them. Essentially the New Woman of the *Herald* was an amalgamation of the old and the new, combining feminine 'domestic grace'

²⁶² WH. (02.1893). Willard was herself a suffragist and a corresponding editor of the *Woman's Signal*.

²⁶³ WH. (15.06.1893), p.268.

²⁶⁴ Isabel Somerset, 'To Our Friends', WS. (4.01.1894), p.1.

with a greater awareness of and involvement in the world around her. Repetition of the word ‘true’ signified the evangelising search for truth that liberal feminist magazines incorporated and with which the re-evaluation of the self was imbued. ‘True’ was regularly evoked within New Woman discourses, suggesting the legitimacy of female emancipation; women were trying to evoke truth in their representations, rather than the unreliable portrait of masculine design. The rhetoric of the *Herald*’s articles resembled Egerton’s short story ‘Now Spring has Come’: ‘the untrue feminine is of man’s making, whilst the strong, the natural, the true womanly is of God’s making’.²⁶⁵ Published in the same year as the *Herald*’s series of evaluative articles, Egerton’s words were significant for women readers, being directed towards the divide between ‘feminine’ passivity and ‘womanly’ strength. The idea that natural femininity was divine and not constructed by society was made more significant as Fenwick Miller took control of the magazine. As this chapter will illustrate, she made the natural ‘womanly woman’ her central focus.

After five years editing the magazine, Müller handed control over to Mrs Frank Morrison, in April 1892. After Mrs Morrison assumed editorial control of the *Herald*, the publication developed a strong commitment to the Liberal Cause and the Women’s Liberal Federation. By March 1893, editorial control changed hands again, this time to Christina S. Bremer who coedited the magazine with Lady Henry Somerset. Somerset’s input shifted the magazine’s focus to the BWTM.²⁶⁶ With Somerset serving as president of the BWTM and vice-president of the World Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WWCTU), it was hardly surprising that she chose to push this agenda through the *Signal*. Through her focus

²⁶⁵ Egerton, *Discords* (London: John Lane 1893),p.50.

²⁶⁶ formed in 1876 largely to persuade men to stop consuming alcoholic beverages, although it was also targeted at the increasing number of female drinkers.

on temperance Somerset eschewed the periodical's 'light relief' literature and began to lose sight of issues concerning women's rights. Her consistent spotlight on this topic resulted in the feature 'Temperance Notes'. Whilst Sibthorp used spiritualism to convey female liberation, Somerset used temperance, viewed by her as the key to advancement in all areas of life: 'until man brings a clear brain to the study of progress, his ideas are confused and his utterances incoherent'.²⁶⁷ This focus eventually drove readers away due to dullness.²⁶⁸ *Woman's* 'Book Chat' section commented on 'that strain of intensity which marks all [Somerset's] speeches, writings and actions',²⁶⁹ suggesting the overbearing nature of her rhetoric.

The *Herald* stopped on 28 December 1893. A few months before, Somerset had started the *Journal* which transformed into the *Woman's Signal* on 4 January 1894 and which Somerset co-edited with Miss Annie E. Holdsworth. Despite her major focus upon temperance, Somerset was nonetheless aware of the influence exercised by the *New Woman*, exploring the notorious media phenomenon from the end of 1894. She kept discussion of her constant throughout 1895. This coincided with the *New Woman's* appearance in the mainstream press and illustrated the influence that popular journalism had on magazines with specific purposes. No longer a 'cipher', the *New Woman* was debated and considered alongside a number of subjects in the *Signal*. One prominent discussion was the divergence between the journalistic and 'true' *New Woman*. In November 1894 an article asked: 'Is the *New Woman* a title of honour or the reverse?'²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ 'Our Policy', *WS*. (4.01.1894), p.1.

²⁶⁸ 'The *Woman's Signal*', *The Waterloo Directory*.

²⁶⁹ *W*. (1.11.1893), p.8.

²⁷⁰ 'The *New Woman*', *WS*. (29.11.1894), p.345.

The article lamented the media's mockery of the New Woman, which turned her into 'a huge joke', standing for 'the excesses and extravagances which mark the fringe of the woman's movement'. This made women hesitant about defining themselves as New Women. Seven months later, Somerset quoted American civil rights leader Susan B. Anthony on the subject²⁷¹ Anthony reassured readers by emphasizing the effect that media manipulation had upon contemporary understandings of the New Woman. In the media, Anthony explained, the New Woman was a 'loud, mannish woman affecting the boisterous conduct of men, with none of the saving graces of her own sex'. However, Anthony added that there was another kind of New Woman: 'earnest, thoughtful, lofty of purpose, self-reliant and equally well educated with man' who has already made herself manifest 'in our homes, where she stands side by side with her husband, welcoming his friends on the common ground of intellectual equality, joining in their discussions, a college-bred woman who can do something more than pour tea when her husband entertains his friends'. Anthony concluded that the New Woman was existent in 'everything except the counting of her vote at the ballot-box'. However, she added with confidence that that was 'coming sooner than most people think'. Anthony's uplifting commentary on the positive advancement of woman reminded readers of the care they should take in paying heed to the 'mannish' depictions of New Womanhood. It also constructed a less intimidating New Woman, replacing her with an idealised picture that liberal feminist magazines were building through their utopian visions. With Anthony a co-founder of the first Women's Temperance Movement it was significant that Somerset provided a quotation from her on the position of the New Woman.

²⁷¹ 'Concerning Women', *WS*. (13.06.1895), p.374.

Despite including Anthony's polemic in the *Signal*, Somerset herself did not hold such complimentary views of the New Woman, printing comments made by M. Daudent in the *Humanitarian* four weeks later:

I do not see what a woman will gain by this enfranchisement. Zut! if a woman wishes to imitate a man! A woman, to my thinking, can never be womanly enough. Let her have all the qualities of a woman, and I will pardon her for having all a woman's faults. All the women that I have loved and admired have been womanly women.²⁷²

Unlike Anthony, Daudent focused on mainstream press interpretations, associating the franchise with the manly woman. To follow Daudent's comments, Somerset used a jaunty verse that became eponymous with the New Woman to imply that critics such as Daudent did not realise the source of their misinterpretations:

“Who made the ‘New Woman’?”
Said the journalist, “I,
When my fancy ran high,
I made the ‘New Woman.’”²⁷³

Inverted commas emphasized the satirical manner in which the New Woman was received and suggested the possibility of more than one type of New Woman. Yet Somerset

²⁷² ‘Women at Work’, WS. (11.07.1895),p.21.

²⁷³ Ibid.

provided no defence of the New Woman. Instead, she cast her out as a media fancy. Somerset's presentation of the New Woman was beset with tentativeness and contradiction. With her temperance agenda as the central driving force it was hard for her fully to support a figure often associated with the masculine pastimes of drinking and smoking, even if this was, as she admitted, exaggerated by journalistic imagination. Her apprehension about the New Woman was a possible reflection of the time during which the phenomenon was at its peak and during which readers paid close attention to publications which focused upon her. By the time Somerset passed the magazine over to Fenwick Miller, the New Woman was already beginning to fade in the mainstream press. As such, Fenwick Miller's more rigorous exploration may have been possible through the calmer climate in which she operated.

In October 1895, thoroughly in debt, Somerset relinquished the paper to the professional journalist Fenwick Miller who had previously worked as a contributor to the magazine. However, Fenwick Miller was not Somerset's first choice of editor; an interview in the *Young Woman* revealed that she approached Sarah A. Tooley first:

I was invited to join the staff of the *Woman's Signal*, of which Lady Henry Somerset was the editor, and for that paper I wrote interviews regularly for more than a year. Lady Henry then offered me the editorship of the paper, as she was about to retire; but I declined, as I did not feel that I had acquired the necessary

experience for such a post. The *Signal* subsequently passes into the able hands of Mrs. Fenwick Miller.²⁷⁴

This indicates the exclusive and interactive world that formed the woman's press, with the positions of female journalists having the potential for fluidity, switching from interviewer to editor. Researching and interviewing distinguished women, Tooley displayed feminist sympathies and one can infer that under her the *Signal* would have undoubtedly continued with its progressive ethos. The fact that Somerset initially asked Tooley to take control of the paper also possibly reflects the somewhat tense relationship between herself and Fenwick Miller. This tension built as the *Signal* began to flourish under Fenwick Miller's editorship. In July 1897, Fenwick Miller discussed the handover of the paper from Somerset to herself, explaining that Somerset would no longer be named as the paper's corresponding editor.²⁷⁵ This was possibly due to a conflict of views between the two with regards to the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act. Two issues later, Fenwick Miller wrote: 'I have refrained from printing Somerset's scheme here, up to the present, hating to sadden my pages with it'.²⁷⁶ The conflict between the two women may have fed into Fenwick Miller's alteration of the magazine's ethos; nonetheless, the driving reason was more likely to be to popularise the magazine, thus increasing sales.

²⁷⁴ Arthur H. Lawrence, "'Interviewing" as Women's Work. A Chat with Mrs. Sarah A. Tooley', *YW*. (09.1897), pp.441-7, p.443. Tooley wrote for the *Young Woman* and the *Lady's Realm* as well as the *Signal*. The *Young Woman's* interview recognised her as an accomplished journalist, capable of inspiring its readers. The position she occupied was highlighted to be 'well-nigh unique' with 'the number of men and women who make interviewing [...] the backbone of their work, [...] a very small one'. Tooley was also a biographer, for figures such as Florence Nightingale. She observed the biography's relationship to interviews, claiming that writing the former made her equipped to undertake the latter.

²⁷⁵ 'Signals from Our Watch Tower', *WS*. (29.7.1897), p.72.

²⁷⁶ 'Signals from Our Watch Tower', *WS*. (12.08.1897), p.104.

Fenwick Miller attempted to popularise the *Signal* by making it more universal. She began by modifying the appearance, printing more pictures to reflect the period's interest in more aesthetically-pleasing publications. She also changed its epigraph: whilst under Somerset, the *Signal* was 'A Weekly record and review of Woman's Work in Philosophy and Reform'; under Fenwick Miller it became 'A Weekly Record and Review of Women's Work and Interests at Home and in the Wider World'. This new epigraph made the *Signal* accessible for a wider group of women. The *Young Woman* reported on the handover of the *Signal* to Fenwick Miller, reassuring readers that it would 'continue its advocacy of temperance, of purity, and of all other issues important to the race'.²⁷⁷ Although Fenwick Miller retained the temperance section the emphasis on this topic was displaced to an extent by her own interest in suffrage, and the space for 'Temperance News' became gradually smaller. Writing retrospectively Fenwick Miller explained that the notices on the BWTA were 'quite uninteresting to everybody else'.²⁷⁸ She began to include other feminist concerns such as women's education and domestic violence. Articles under titles such as 'Religious Words and Works' were found more regularly, reverting the publication back towards Müller's original vision in the *Penny Paper*. Fenwick Miller was keen to produce a magazine that promoted her suffragist views but one that, unlike Somerset's, would appeal to a mass readership. As well as gradually cutting the Temperance Notes she removed Somerset's editorial notes, reflecting a desire to 'be visible only in the work of the paper'.²⁷⁹ By distancing herself from readers, Fenwick Miller allowed her content to speak for itself. Her lack of opinion pieces was a sharp contrast to Somerset's and even Sibthorp's editorships. In order to produce interactivity with her readers Fenwick Miller expanded the

²⁷⁷ Mrs Esler, 'Answers to Correspondents', *YW*. (12.1895),p.107.

²⁷⁸ 'Editor's Farewell Address', *WS*. (23.03.1899),pp.184-6,p.184.

²⁷⁹ *WS*. (3.10.1895),p.209.

correspondence section; this forum allowed readers to articulate their views on serious issues, with their voices given greater importance than Fenwick Miller's. She made the issue of collective female solidarity explicit in 1898, expressing a wish that the 'sense of the solidarity and sisterhood of women' would increase and that they help their 'sisters the world over'.²⁸⁰ To encourage solidarity, Fenwick Miller, like Sibthorp, focused on prominent female role models, replacing the editorial notes with 'Signals from Our Watch Tower' and 'What Women are Doing', both expounding a variety of important developments on the activities of women. Fenwick Miller believed that a journalist 'may effectively influence the thoughts and consciences and actions of thousands in the near future'.²⁸¹ Like Sibthorp, she intended to echo Stead's New Journalistic ambition to improve the world by inspiring readers. Certainly this was reflected through the *Signal*'s advanced material. Nonetheless, unlike Somerset, Fenwick Miller remained mindful about inserting too much of her own agenda into the magazine, accommodating readers who were sensitive about figures such as the New Woman.

The *Young Woman* commented at length on Fenwick Miller's acquirement of the *Signal*, noting the 'very hopeful auspices' under which it made a fresh start. It referred to Fenwick Miller as being 'so well known to readers of THE YOUNG WOMAN' adding:

Anyone who knows Mrs. Fenwick Miller's courageous but never offensive or foolish advocacy of her own sex, the interest she has always manifested in every

²⁸⁰ 'New Year's Wishes', *WS.* (6.01.1898), p.11.

²⁸¹ Florence Fenwick Miller, *Harriet Martineau* (London: W.H. Allen, 1884), pp.165-6.

movement for the general benefit and happiness of women, must wish her and her new departure every success.²⁸²

This glowing account not only promoted the *Signal*, uniting it with the *Young Woman*, it also suggested that Fenwick Miller's approach would involve more than profit-making, with her interest in the 'benefit and happiness of women'. The *Young Woman* did not lavish such praise upon Somerset in a May 1893 character sketch, noting simply that her 'shapely little hand is untiringly busy with pencil and tablet, writing articles for the *Woman's Herald*, of which she is editor, or classifying her letters, and sending postals, telegrams, or more elaborate replies to the most urgent among her correspondents'.²⁸³ Whilst this conveyed Somerset's industrious nature and her clear commitment to her journalistic venture, engaged in corresponding with readers, she was not shown to possess the admirable spirit of her successor.²⁸⁴ Moreover, the *Young Woman's* commendatory reception of Fenwick Miller was something of a contrast to *Woman's* derisory evaluation of Somerset:

The "Woman Question," teetotalism, and politics monopolise its pages, and but for a couple of signed articles by the Duchess of Bedford and Miss Willard, and for a somewhat more business-like appearance, it is our same old friend which Miss

²⁸² YW. (12.1895),p.107.

²⁸³ Frances E. Willard, 'Lady Henry Somerset: A Character Sketch', YW (05.1893),pp.255-8,p.255.

²⁸⁴ Interestingly the *Young Woman* included an interview with Fenwick Miller in the same issue as Somerset's character sketch. Albert Dawson, 'Mrs Fenwick Miller at Home', YW. (05.1893),pp.272-5. The appearance of both ladies in the same issue linked them, with Fenwick Miller also defined as 'pre-eminently a writer'.

Temple so pluckily conducted for three years or more under the same name. In the Temperance department particularly it has my sincere good wishes.²⁸⁵

Whilst this criticism ended on a positive note, praising the magazine's Temperance department, one cannot help but note the tongue-in-cheek nature of this sentiment. The use of inverted commas for the Woman Question demonstrated the exasperation with which *Woman* viewed Somerset's overbearing rhetoric. Unlike the *Young Woman*'s positive review of Fenwick Miller and her revitalisation of the *Signal*, *Woman* suggested that Somerset had little new to lend the magazine. Furthermore, it implied that her fervent focus on temperance stood little chance of succeeding, a prediction that proved to be true. Certainly, looking at two separate magazines and their perspectives of each editor is not the most reliable way to gauge the differences between Somerset and Fenwick Miller, particularly as *Woman* took a less sympathetic approach to New Woman concerns than the *Young Woman*. However, they do provide some indication of the way these editors were being perceived by their fellow journalists and the potential impact that this could have upon a reading public who, as has been established, stood on tenuous ground in their assessment of New Womanhood.

Fenwick Miller recognised reasons for the *Signal*'s initial failure and instigated changes that would help it to its market share. She explored the New Woman figure in greater detail, rendering a new model for readers. Marks has suggested that the 'manly woman' was an oxymoron lying at the centre of the majority of satire produced about the New

²⁸⁵ Marjorie, 'D'You Know?', *W.* (01.03.1893), pp.5-7, p.7.

Woman.²⁸⁶ It was an oxymoron that Fenwick Miller, following Somerset's tentative footsteps, attempted to dispel by constantly evoking a more assertive New Woman. The New Woman under Somerset had the potential to change the female position; as an already established figure in the public imagination, under Fenwick Miller the New Woman became a symbol of new reform. Fenwick Miller certainly widened the *Signal's* focus by removing its temperance focus. However, as the *Young Woman* noted, she also included 'subjects of narrower and more intimate interest',²⁸⁷ such as suffrage and women's employment, her two major priorities.²⁸⁸ Like Somerset, Fenwick Miller addressed criticism of the New Woman from other publications, but used this criticism more explicitly. In the last issue of 1895, for the regular section 'Our Cause and the Press', Fenwick Miller included a letter on the New Woman which originally appeared in *The Times of India*.²⁸⁹ The writer, 'A Thorough Believer in the New Woman', expressed outrage at the editor of *The Times of India* and his denunciation of the New Woman. She suggested that there existed two types of New Women: 'the "New Woman" proper and the "Manly Maiden" of *Mr Punch*'. The manly New Woman was seeking 'to be an imitation of man in every aspect' whereas the New Woman proper was 'pre-eminently womanly', desiring 'to remain so. She prefers the society of her own sex to that of men, and is, as a rule, popular among women.' This advanced the suggestion by Somerset that the New Woman was simply a creation of the journalist: whilst this was true in part, there still existed a New Woman. The 'manly woman' countered the 'womanly woman', first constructed in the *Herald*, the womanly woman who did not shun domesticity but occupied

²⁸⁶ Marks, p.2.

²⁸⁷ YW. (12.1895), p.107.

²⁸⁸ Rosemary T. VanArsdel, 'Mrs Florence Fenwick Miller and *The Woman's Signal*, 1895-1899', *Victorian Periodicals Review* 15.3 (1982), pp.107-117, p.108.

²⁸⁹ WS. (26.12.1895), p.407.

a more dominant role in society by earning money and gaining an education. It reminded readers that the manly woman was not promoted in the magazine and never had been. Echoing Anthony's sentiments six months previously, the letter also provided a succinct definition of the New Woman:

The New Woman claims the right to higher education, the right to earn an honest livelihood for herself, the right to gain health and amusement from suitable athletic games, the right to take an intelligent interest in the way usual in democratic countries; and lastly, the right to protect herself against harm in her marriage relationships.

Fenwick Miller introduced this letter as 'strong and impressive', suggesting the centrality of its message and demonstrating the subtlety of her journalism. With her priorities being university degrees for women and female suffrage, Fenwick Miller used the material of others to push her own agenda in a careful and less forceful way than Somerset's promotion of the temperance agenda. In this case, the letter endorsed woman's right to higher education and hinted at suffrage by referencing the New Woman's 'intelligent interest' within democratic countries. Fenwick Miller's journalism was certainly shrewd with her messages passed onto readers clandestinely. She pushed her education agenda throughout her editorship by reusing material published elsewhere. In January 1899 she reprinted Grand's 'The New Girl' from the *Young Woman* which asserted that girls 'do not care to be

put off with half an education, and hustled into matrimony while they should still be doing their college course'.²⁹⁰

Fenwick Miller further demonstrated journalistic aptitude by building on Somerset's methods of using a number of different mediums to discuss the New Woman. Not only did she reproduce letters printed in other magazines, she also reprinted material previously included in the *Signal* by Somerset. In August 1897, a paragraph by Miss F.E. Willard stated: 'The new man is as much in evidence as his inevitable correlate, the new woman'.²⁹¹ This emerged from part of an article over two years earlier, "'The Statelier Eden" – Marrying and Giving in Marriage'.²⁹² By reprinting part of Willard's article, originally included by Somerset, Fenwick Miller refocused her readers on messages about gender, in particular the emergence of the New Man, her title for this paragraph. Focusing on the New Man instructed readers to assess woman's role in conjunction with man's, as the genders actually developed simultaneously to accommodate one another. The original title of Willard's article, 'The Statelier Eden', provided a rather different thrust, connoting original sin and feminine weakness. Instead of implying the equality of male and female relations in their simultaneous development, the original, although suggesting an improved Eden, also harked back to a moment when woman's inequality became paramount. Fenwick Miller seemed keen to move away from Miltonic womanhood. In February 1896, she included a satirical sketch which mocked such standards, in which a man defined his ideal as not listening 'to slander's tongue, nor see[ing his] indiscretions', 'not scold[ing] when [he did]

²⁹⁰ WS. (5.01.1899),p.10.

²⁹¹ Miss F.E. Willard, 'The New Man', WS. (26.08.1897),p.138.

²⁹² Frances E. Willard, "'The Statelier Eden" – Marrying and Giving in Marriage', WS. (4.04.1895),p.212.

wrong'.²⁹³ He finds a girl fitting these criteria: not listening 'when slander made advances', never throwing 'suspicion's cruel glances', never speaking 'an angry word'. However as the piece concluded, this ideal comes at a price: the woman is 'deaf and dumb and blind', the only way a man can obtain such standards. Women no longer tolerated male vice and the only way man could gain approval was from a woman who had literally lost her senses. This empowered the subjugated female by placing the male in the position of sinner, freeing woman from her original sin. Four months later, notes from a lecture given by Garrett Fawcett further critiqued the Miltonic woman, claiming that when thinking of old ideals, one did not evoke Shakespeare's heroines or even Solomon's virtuous woman, but Milton's Eve.²⁹⁴ Her key attributes were 'softness and sweet attractive grace', and 'Submission' and her absorption in her husband resulted in her ultimate temptation. Garrett Fawcett pointed to Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* to highlight the length of time that this ideal has been disputed. In the same issue were an article on 'Women as Inventors' and one asking 'Do Women Want the Suffrage?' Fenwick Miller ensured that the material of the *Signal* interacted to produce a reinvigorated image of womanhood: woman now had political and vocational options. The New Woman of Fenwick Miller's *Signal* was passionate about fashion and home management as well as the franchise and university. Home management was a useful filter for the reconstructed woman, providing a safe, familiar environment from which she could begin to adjust her lifestyle without making drastic changes. Following on from the *Herald's* 'womanly woman', Fenwick Miller promoted an image of an educated housewife who was politically mindful as well as physically able to carry out her suffrage goals. This multi-tasking female may not have

²⁹³ 'He Found His Ideal', Special Supplement to the WS. (20.02.1896),p.122.

²⁹⁴ 'Old Ideals of Women' from a Lecture by Mrs. Fawcett, WS. (7.05.1896),p.295.

been the radical figure we come to associate with contemporary feminism. However, by incorporating the political and academic world into the domestic arena she became a radical woman of a decidedly new kind.

The Politicised, Healthy Housewife

The *Signal* itself was a reassertion and reclamation of the word ‘feminine’. According to Tusan, 1895 was the third stage of the New Woman debate,²⁹⁵ during which, New Women were keen to fight the onslaught of conservative press representations that positioned her as a degenerative and dystopic figure. As a result, they focused on feminine qualities, particularly domestic abilities. This observation is certainly negated in *Shafts* which had little space for domestic concerns. In contrast, whilst still edited by Somerset the *Signal* stressed that domestic work was a serious business requiring training. An interview with William Morris in April 1894 stated that housekeeping ‘is one of the most difficult and important branches of study’, on a par with traditional academia: ‘Anybody can learn mathematics, but it takes a lot of skill to manage a house well’.²⁹⁶ Many late-Victorian feminists, whilst publicly active, did not challenge gender divisions too acutely, instead claiming a more dynamic role within the domestic arena. This was evident in Somerset’s observation that: ‘The woman of to-day is but the woman of yesterday, at a more advanced stage of her growth’.²⁹⁷ Woman had not so much changed as ‘gained a clearer knowledge of her own nature’. Even before self-actualisation became an established psychological

²⁹⁵ Stage one occurred in August 1893 when the *Woman’s Herald* first discussed the fin-de-siècle New Woman, whilst stage two occurred in 1894 when the conservative press began their own discussion of the New Woman, working to counter feminist visions of political transformation.

²⁹⁶ Sarah A. Tooley, ‘A Living Wage for Women – An Interview With Mr. William Morris’, *WS*. (19.04.1894), p.260.

²⁹⁷ One Who Knows, ‘The “Old Woman”’, *WS*. (8.11.1894), p.302.

theory, it was an unnamed factor central to the campaigning New Woman who demanded the right to fulfil her true potential. Fenwick Miller also redefined the contemporary female, building on the work of Somerset by educating readers about the political implications of their domestic role and moving as far away from the conceptualised manly New Woman as possible. She did this emphatically, including ‘A domestic department and a fashion department’,²⁹⁸ as new features in the *Signal*. Fashion articles not only shifted the *Signal* to a New Journalistic mode, it also aligned it with publications such as *Woman*. However, in February 1899 the *Young Woman* categorised the *Signal* with the *Queen*, *Gentlewoman*, and *Lady’s Pictorial*, claiming that it was a paper rather than a magazine.²⁹⁹ Classifying the *Signal* with these high-quality fashion papers suggested that its consideration of fashion, like its discussion of the domestic, was of a more serious nature than that seen in *Woman*. It is curious that the *Young Woman* referred to the *Signal* as a paper, considering its similarity to *Shafts* which Sibthorp assertively named a magazine. It suggests that the perceptions of publications diverged amongst readers. The *Signal*’s regular features such as, ‘Chats for the Housewife on Health in the Home and Domestic things of note’, ‘Hints on Etiquette Up-to-Date’, and ‘What to Wear’, perhaps made it the purveyor of gossip that Sibthorp avoided.

It is difficult to know whether Fenwick Miller’s mixed-media approach to the *Signal* demonstrated her inherent political beliefs or her editorial canniness, using journalistic tactics to attract a wider readership. Her extensive content reached a larger audience of women intimidated by the political material in *Shafts*, gaining a happier medium through the *Signal* whilst also being introduced to ‘wider’ issues. Under Fenwick Miller, self-

²⁹⁸ YW. (12.1895),p.107.

²⁹⁹ Mrs. E.R. Esler, ‘Answers to Correspondents’, YW (02.1899),p. 199

actualisation occurred through re-educating and re-directing readers' understanding of advanced womanhood. She empowered the domestic sphere by balancing commentary on women in politics with conventional womanhood. Fenwick Miller's first editorial asserted that the editor should be as 'a wise house-mistress is known to be in the home, not by talking about her work, but only by the smoothness with which everything is done at the right time and in the proper way'.³⁰⁰ Her domestic imagery conflated the angel in the house with the independent female writer, suggesting that their work was not too dissimilar. The authorisation of the female sphere came full circle in the *Signal*'s final issue, in which Fenwick Miller insisted that she did not 'wish [women] to overthrow society, to abandon domestic duties, to cease to be wives and mothers'.³⁰¹ Yet Fenwick Miller was not necessarily fighting mainstream press representations of the New Woman in her repackaging of femininity. Rather, she repositioned the conceptual framework that had entrapped women in a quest for a feminist utopia unrelated to the lampooned New Woman. Fenwick Miller's bid to celebrate womanhood necessitated the constant invocation of domesticity. This reassertion of the domestic occurred alongside a major focus on the body as a site for renewed womanhood. Women were taking up sports and the result on their physical bodies was striking, particularly with regards to the impact it had upon their work. Woman's role and her physical body were two separate but intimately linked areas in discourses of the New Woman; as such they are the two areas of focus in this section.

³⁰⁰ 'The New Editor', *WS*. (3.10.1895),p.209. Unlike Sibthorp, Fenwick Miller did not regularly interact with readers. Any personal addresses she made appeared rarely, generally at the beginning of the year, when she would discuss the advances of the previous year and her hopes for the coming one.

³⁰¹ 'Editor's Farewell Address', *WS*. (23.03.1899),pp.184-6, p.184.

The multifaceted nature of woman's role, simultaneously a homemaker and an educated, politically-active individual, was made explicit in the *Signal's* 1896 'Midsummer Dress Supplement', which included a paragraph on 'Influence of Women Politically'.³⁰² According to this, politics started in the home: 'The larger lesson of respecting the rights of nations can be taught in the family, where each one has rights that call for respect.' Women and politics, previously considered incompatible, were made harmonious: 'Consciously or unconsciously they must influence the world politically as in all other ways'. With women having an influence on politics, albeit indirectly, this raised the question of why they could not be involved intelligently. The idea that woman's political role began at home simultaneously colluded with their confinement whilst reinvigorating the legitimacy of home management. On the same page as the 'Influence of Women Politically', the 'Midsummer Dress Supplement' also included a short informational sketch on the 'Family Dinner' in which Martha Davidson, bemoaned the complacency of the modern woman who treated her family with 'habitual insolence'.³⁰³ She advocated that the housewife remove pretentious, burdensome superfluities present in 'polite' society and make the home ready for the most grand or simple society. Women were reminded to take pride in their domestic work and to value the family unit. Yet this professional housewifery was in potential conflict with the Stead-inspired New Journalistic 'Character Sketches' that Fenwick Miller also included in the same year.

Fenwick Miller motivated readers to take examples from women such as Schreiner and Harriet Martineau. According to Fraser et al., these sketches demonstrated 'the breadth of

³⁰² WS. Midsummer Dress Supplement (4.06.1896),p.362.

³⁰³ WS. Midsummer Dress Supplement (4.06.1896),p.362.

issue that Fenwick Miller was attempting to embrace'.³⁰⁴ Whilst this is undoubtedly true, the sketches also had a potentially more complex position. Having written Martineau's biography twelve years earlier, Fenwick Miller revealed to readers of the *Signal* that this inspirational figure took a distinguished place 'Among the pioneer women of the wonderful "Woman's Movement"'.³⁰⁵ Martineau's polemical writings of the 1850s, which encouraged women to obtain a full education and gain financial independence, drove Fenwick Miller's education agenda. More significant was the material printed in the same issue as Martineau's sketch. The first part of an account on 'Our Modern Bastilles: What Life in an Asylum is Like' by a former inmate,³⁰⁶ depicted the wrongful imprisonment of a woman, detained for her advanced religious views. The theme of emancipation was reinforced by an excerpt from the eighteenth-century epic poem 'The Task' by William Cowper, immediately following the inmate's account.³⁰⁷ Whilst Cowper's work focused on slavery and oppression in the second book, this particular excerpt was from Book III, in which Cowper depicted his life in a rural environment, longing for 'a lodge in some vast wilderness', (l.1) 'Where rumour of oppression and deceit', (l.3) 'Might never reach me more' (l.4). The poet's metaphorical desire for open space reinforced the inmate's literal desire for freedom from the asylum and the injustice of her detainment. When contextualised with Miller's sketch of Martineau, the harrowing experience of the inmate and Cowper's claim that he was 'sick with every day's report/Of wrong and outrage' (ll. 6-7), underscored the injustice suffered by women. Furthermore, another feature in the issue, 'Women in Morocco To-Day', exclaimed that 'The lot of a woman in Morocco is,

³⁰⁴ Fraser et al., p.166.

³⁰⁵ WS. (26.03.1896), pp.193-4, p.193.

³⁰⁶ WS. (26.03.1896), pp.196-7

³⁰⁷ 'Strife and Peace', WS. (26.03.1896), p.197.

generally speaking, appalling'.³⁰⁸ Martineau's sociological background and her belief that an analysis of society was necessary to study women's lives tied into these accounts and their depictions of societies that had previously been hidden away. Martineau's sketch provided a feminist- and women-centred context encouraging readers to consider discourses of madness and the struggle of their international sisters outside of their home comforts. Whilst Fenwick Miller enlarged the domestic sphere on the one hand, there was also an undercurrent of desperate escape from oppression on the other. Yet, the inmate's account did demonstrate triumph over adversity; just as Martineau fought 'Moral and intellectual troubles' to become one who raised 'the opinion of men about women in regard to public life' (p. 193), women were struggling in other areas of their lives to gain freedom, whether from literal prisons or political ones. Readers were encouraged to utilize the strength exhibited by Martineau and help their fellow women. The pronoun in the title, 'Our Modern Bastilles', emphasized a collective responsibility. This possibly contradictory message underscored the complexity of the New Woman's position and the difficulty Fenwick Miller faced in defining a new femininity.

Whilst defining a new femininity through the promotion of the professional housewife and undercutting this with discourses of imprisonment, Fenwick Miller also provided a focus on health. The *Signal's* renewal of the feminine bound up physical advancements with psychological well-being, suggesting that women were able to reduce illness through the activities they undertook. Professor A. Mosso wrote that 'Gymnastics' strengthened the internal organs and prevented hysteria.³⁰⁹ As this article appeared less than two months

³⁰⁸ Rev. James Johnston, Ibid,p.196.

³⁰⁹ WS. (14.05.1896),p.317.

after the former inmate's account, it is possible that Fenwick Miller was protecting her readers from a similar fate. Sporting activity was positioned as a liberating device, opening and enlarging the circumference of female existence by improving their quality of life. Articles such as 'Exercise for Women', printed in August 1896, shortly after the midsummer dress special, built on the image of the healthy, robust housewife. It cited the eighteenth-century Dr. Gregory: 'We so naturally associate the idea of female delicacy and softness with a correspondent delicacy of constitution, that when a woman speaks of her great strength, her good appetite, her ability to bear excessive fatigue, we recoil at the description in a way she is little aware of.'³¹⁰ The article set this comment against the advantages women of the nineteenth century possessed: being members of swimming clubs, cycling in rational dress, and earning money. This independence was contrasted with the eighteenth-century woman, only able 'to lie upon a sofa and speak in feeble tones of her fragile and delicate state of health', an image that was 'completely exploded'. As Fenwick Miller's midsummer special suggested, the housewife had far better things to do. The article celebrated 'the rounded contours and the supple movements which come due to muscular exertion', adding that 'a fragile constitution means early decrepitude'. By rejecting medical opinion, this article questioned the authority of the male doctor, following the lead of New Woman texts such as Hepworth Dixon's *The Story of a Modern Woman* and her unflattering portrait of Dr Strange: in New Woman discourses male doctors often curtailed female advancement, claiming that higher education made girls prone to nervous breakdowns.³¹¹ However, Fenwick Miller did use medical authority when it backed her

³¹⁰ WS. (27.08.1896),p.136.

³¹¹ Julie-Marie Strange, 'Menstrual Fictions: languages of medicine and menstruation, c. 1850–1930', *Women's History Review* 9 (2000),pp.607-28,p.612.

emancipatory agenda, including advice from doctors about the appropriateness of one's lifestyle, with pieces such as 'Hints for Health' in September 1897.³¹²

Woman had become strong mentally and physically; the article on exercise noted: 'disease has not disappeared, "hysterics," fainting fits, sudden weepings, and the general malaise and delicacy that used to be so common have all "gone out of fashion"'. This gesture towards performative illness suggested that women perhaps used their health to gain certain benefits. Although it was a role given to them by patriarchal society, Fenwick Miller challenged this tendency to play upon feminine dependency. Three issues later, 'Sick Wives' criticised women who took advantage of being ill by prolonging their maladies and neglecting their domestic duties: this affected 'the well-being of' the home.³¹³ Women were given no excuse to languish. Neither was the masculine occupation of smoking, regularly associated with the lampooned New Woman, tolerated with an October 1896 article on 'Tobacco and Health' reporting that impaired vision was the result of a habitual tobacco intake.³¹⁴ Articles such as these encouraged readers to be responsible about their health.

From 1897 Fenwick Miller built on the active, politically-minded housewife by tying discussions of domestic training directly to the New Woman. 'More New Women' by S.T. discussed domestic training with reference to the women workers of Board School cookery kitchens: 'it is only of late years that this work has been taken up by the authorities'.³¹⁵ This was an important step in taking the female role seriously. Positioned alongside S.T.'s

³¹² Edward Chester, *WS*. (23.09.1897),p.199.

³¹³ *WS*. (17.09.1896),p.179.

³¹⁴ 'Tobacco and Health', *WS*. (29.10.1896),p.278.

³¹⁵ *WS*. (25.02.1897),p.118.

article, 'Why Women Have Not Developed Scientific Housekeeping' emphasized the New Woman's role in reconfiguring the domestic arena.³¹⁶ In the latter article, a woman writing on scientific cookery was reported to have rebuked her fellow women for not understanding their own work: 'instead of developing the great science of housekeeping, they had left it for men to make the discoveries for them'. Previously women had 'been educated to be nothing but housekeepers and cooks'; now 'every girl, regardless of her natural gifts and tastes, must be trained in all the multitudinous domestic arts'. Driving Fenwick Miller's education agenda the article suggested: 'it is the best educated women who are taking the lead in domestic education [...], it is not those brought up with the idea that housekeeping and cooking were the *ne plus ultra* in woman's education.' Women incorporated professionalism into their work by understanding the theory behind it rather than mindlessly executing it. Once more this re-consideration of domesticity was not a direct reaction to negative portrayals of the New Woman but rather part of Fenwick Miller's bid to produce a greater understanding of womanhood as a status to be celebrated. Although women had been entrapped and restricted by domestic work, this was not due to the nature of the work but rather to the perception of this work combined with the patriarchal society that enforced it.

At the same time as linking the New Woman directly to domesticity, Fenwick Miller also included numerous articles about cycling from the middle of 1897. With its promise of physical freedom, the sport of cycling was zealously advocated by the New Woman. As the New Woman began to lose her cachet in the mainstream press, women's magazines used her legacy to encourage heightened activity. *The Lady Cyclist*, a publication for female

³¹⁶ WS. (25.02.1897),p.118.

cyclists, made the connection between cycling and the New Woman in August 1896 at the same time that Fenwick Miller began to include more articles about exercise for women. *The Lady Cyclist* claimed that cycling not only provided a new freedom for women to broaden their minds, but it also adapted woman to the responsibilities of suffrage, already having the experience of venturing into new territory.³¹⁷ Following the mould of her character sketches, Fenwick Miller acknowledged famous women who had been known to cycle, encouraging readers to take up the sport. In June 1897, she reported that the novelist Henrietta Eliza Vaughan Stannard claimed cycling to be a ‘blessed means of relaxation and relief from the many cares which do and always must beset the lot of women’.³¹⁸ Stannard’s observation reinforced Professor Mosso’s reflections on gymnastics by stressing the mind and body link: whilst still desiring a room of their own, they could at least have an activity of their own, through which good health would bloom from the connection between a satisfied mind and, in turn, a satisfied body. Stannard’s comment also acknowledged the serious role of domesticity in women’s lives by suggesting that they required some relief occasionally. Yet women were reminded to remain mindful of their feminine duties whilst adopting these new activities. In the following issue, Fenwick Miller reported upon the formation of The Lady Cyclists Association which had: ‘A cottage among the Surrey hills [...] as a house of rest for members of the Association’.³¹⁹ Whilst encouraging female togetherness, this communal space could also be seen as an extension of the domestic realm, a space for gossip and conversation, in the comfort of a cottage. The stress was not so much on the physical activity but on the doors that the activity opened.

³¹⁷ ‘The New Woman’, *The Lady Cyclist* (22.08.1896),p.430.

³¹⁸ ‘Signals from Our Watch Tower’, *WS.* (10.06.1897),p.361.

³¹⁹ ‘For and About Women’, *WS.* (17.06.1897),p.380.

Whilst informing readers about the communities created by cycling, Fenwick Miller simultaneously educated readers about the relation of class to gender in the same issue. ‘The “Lady” and the “Woman”’ by L.L.K. observed the recent, unsatisfactory attempt to explain the difference between these two words.³²⁰ Upper class connotations of ‘lady’ were dispelled by the author, its literal meaning being ‘loaf-giver’: ‘one who has the power and will to assist the poor’. Although ‘ladies’ were thought to be incapable of hard toil the etymology of ‘lady’ suggested that under adversity they could prove most capable. An example was working in the nurseries of the upper-classes. The maternal role was a natural function that the ‘lady’ was most capable of, reaffirming traditional roles whilst dispelling the incapable upper class woman. Work for ‘ladies’ was considered again almost two years later. ‘An “Open Door” for Women’³²¹ revealed an opportunity for older women: the “practical housekeeper”. With the stress on ‘management’ rather than ‘duties’, a practical housekeeper possessed ‘intelligent action and resource’. The position commanded respect and authority, ensuring that the employee retained ‘her status as a lady’. Whilst Fenwick Miller’s following editorial revealed that such positions ‘very few and hard to find’, the *Signal* continued to uphold the importance of finding work that would allow one to fulfil her potential and celebrate her womanly aptitude.

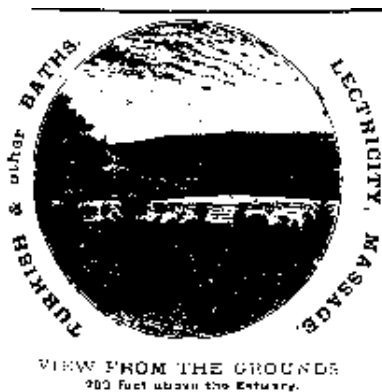
In encouraging her readers to fulfil their New Womanhood by assuming traditional duties with new vigour, Fenwick Miller reminded readers of the importance of defending their gender. A month following L.L.K’s article, Fenwick Miller drew her reader’s attention to sexist language. ““Feminine””, by Hortense Wood bemoaned common misuse of

³²⁰ WS. (17.06.1897),p.372.

³²¹ WS. (2.02.1899),p.68.

‘feminine’: ‘indispensable for sounding the depths of human turpitude and foolishness’.³²²

The female sex was a peg from which men hung ‘the undesirable attributes of humanity’ (p. 6), attaching it to every mean vice; meanwhile virtue was attributed to masculinity. When women demonstrated weaknesses it was deemed ‘feminine’ whereas, when displayed by a male it was left genderless. Wood critiqued women who echoed similar sentiments and failed to defend this linguistic misuse. Printed in July 1897, several years after many of the major New Woman texts, such as Schreiner’s *The Story of an African Farm* (1883), Caird’s *The Wing of Azrael* (1889), Grand’s *Ideala* (1888) and *The Heavenly Twins*, and Egerton’s short story collections *Keynotes* (1893) and *Discords* (1894), the *Signal* built on the work of these writers by avowing that women need no longer collude with injustices such as enforced marriage, male licentiousness and the Victorian sexual double standard. Wood’s solution of educating women about language misuse once more highlighted Fenwick Miller’s education policy. By reconsidering the terms used to depict the contemporary female, Fenwick Miller harked back to the ‘womanly woman’ debate of the *Herald* and further educated women to reclaim their femininity.



The South Devon (Hydropathic) Health Resort.

CONDUCTED BY THOMAS CARPENTER, M.D.

[The resort is situated in a beautiful and healthy spot, and is well adapted for the treatment of all diseases. It is one of the most beautiful spots in the county, and has an excellent view of the sea and the surrounding country. The water is pure and soft, and the climate is healthy. The resort is well adapted for the treatment of all diseases, and is a most desirable place for the invalid and the aged. The resort is situated in a beautiful and healthy spot, and is well adapted for the treatment of all diseases. It is one of the most beautiful spots in the county, and has an excellent view of the sea and the surrounding country. The water is pure and soft, and the climate is healthy. The resort is well adapted for the treatment of all diseases, and is a most desirable place for the invalid and the aged.]

C. F. CARPENTER, Bishops Teynton, near Teignmouth.

THE DIET CURE,

[The diet cure is a most important part of the treatment, and is well adapted for the treatment of all diseases. It is a most desirable place for the invalid and the aged. The diet cure is a most important part of the treatment, and is well adapted for the treatment of all diseases. It is a most desirable place for the invalid and the aged.]

Figure 3 WS. (17.01.1895).

³²² WS. (1.07.1897),pp.6-7.

Like *Shafts*, the *Signal* also retained a realistic outlook on the limitations of its female readers whilst encouraging their sporting activity. Two issues after the debate on 'Feminine', Fenwick Miller reported that social activist and suffragist Frances E. Willard and Miss Anna A. Gordon were settled in the New England Hills at Amherst, N.H.: 'Mountain air has been prescribed by Mrs Willard's physician as a condition for the improvement in health which has been coming to her for some weeks'.³²³ The *Signal* often publicised health resorts, including one in South Devon where those 'needing rest and pleasant and healthful change' could go and enjoy the private grounds and the sea (Figure 3). To be sent from big cities to the coast was a common cure for stress and anxiety-related illnesses. This created a direct link between labouring for the woman's cause and poor health. In 1899, during its final few months, health became an even more substantive issue in the *Signal*, focusing on the vulnerable female body. A January 1899 editorial echoed Sibthorp, stressing the connection between good health and the fight for equality: 'In welcoming the New Year, the editor wishes all her readers health and happiness, and increased strength in the advocacy and advancement of all those righteous causes in which most of them are interested, and for which they actively labour'.³²⁴ Health was not only required in order to carry out domestic duties, but also to campaign for one's emancipatory rights.

Dr. Rachel Gleason's February 1899 article 'The Need of Rest' suggested women's sports were impacting on their health: 'few listen to these warnings, for along with them comes a

³²³ 'For and About Women', *WS.* (15.07.1897),p.45.

³²⁴ *WS.* (5.01.1899),p.8.

restless haste, a nervous solicitude, which impels them onwards faster than ever before'.³²⁵

This necessity to move onwards coincided with the New Woman's aspiration to take part in a wider sphere. The New Woman was visible in Gleason's bemoaning of 'greater simplicity in diet, dress, and in the home life' resulting in increased 'leisure to "go up into the mountain," down by the river side [...]'. By cutting down traditional roles, women were given time to embark on activities which Gleason considered overly strenuous; her close succession of prepositions, 'up' and 'down', echoed the possible consequence of these activities upon women's health. Whilst Fenwick Miller did not want women to shun their domestic responsibilities, Gleason's hyperbolic argument was somewhat extreme, particularly her suggestion that 'more obscure diseases of the brain and nervous system' were the result of increased hobbies. Interestingly, this time the doctor who lectured readers was female, not only indicating the advancement in women's roles but also the potential influence of her male colleagues in restricting female activity. Indeed, three weeks earlier the article 'One Result of Athletic Games for Girls' declared: 'The girl who goes out a-wheeling with her beau, and takes the rain, and sun, and dust, [...] may not be a divinity to him, [...] but she is a human girl, and he has a chance to know her'.³²⁶ This plucky New Woman dressed comfortably and practically, was undeterred by the elements. Women who took part in athletics were just as feminine as their formerly inactive counterparts. Moreover, this woman was natural and attracted a man through her game attitude, giving her 'nothing to fear from fading good looks'. This freedom from consistently maintaining one's appearance emphasized internal, natural beauty. The combination of these articles sent out a potentially mixed message about the benefits and simultaneously the dangers of a

³²⁵ WS. (16.02.1899),p.101.

³²⁶ WS. (26.01.1899),p.54.

more active lifestyle. The warning against too much exercise goes against the spirit of much of the *Signal*'s content. However, it also produces a parallel with *Shafts* in which the delicacy of female physicality pervaded messages of emancipation. Whilst sporting activity was generally excluded from *Shafts*, the readers of the *Signal* were encouraged to take up a more active lifestyle that would allow them more physical freedom but that would not encroach on their domestic responsibilities.

By April 1899 the *Signal* had ceased publication, not long before *Shafts*. The end of *Shafts* coincided with its editor's declining health. Although no such evidence was provided for the end of the *Signal*, Fenwick Miller did write in her 'Editor's Farewell Address' that she 'must have rest from such incessant detail and such varied responsibility'.³²⁷ This need for rest was foregrounded through a steadily growing interest in health which impacted on all areas of female existence with Fenwick Miller's retirement serving as the climax, implying that the female body remained as vulnerable as ever. Whilst conveying the freedom the New Woman engendered, the magazine inflated fears about potential dangers. Nonetheless, being aware of these dangers was not necessarily harmful. Women were demanding more information about health risks and publications such as the *Signal* provided a key for enhanced liberty, no longer censoring women as to their bodily limitations but rather, unlocking female potential. By mixing discussions on the female role with dialogues of sport and health, the *Signal* underscored the fact that whilst active the advanced woman's role was beset with the complication of transitioning from her place in the home to the wider world. Interestingly, the uncertainty of this transition was manipulated in the *Signal* for commercial gain. Although a focus on the body in the *Signal* carried a similar message

³²⁷ WS. (23.03.1899),pp.184-6,p.184.

of reclamation to that found in *Shafts*, the magazine's canny editor also commodified the female form by including an array of health-focused advertisements.

The Commercialised, Rational Body

The evolving female role and its connection to the female body entailed complication: namely the commodification inherent in New Journalism. For advertisers New Women formed an ideal point of exploitation: an audience of readers interested in change and 'who had not been appealed to before by journalists'.³²⁸ By creating a New Woman in which domestic virtue was linked to progressive values, the *Signal* created an individualised market for advertisers. Its focus on the emancipated woman and her tenuous place fed into the commodification of the body. Whereas Somerset asserted, 'We have not gone into this enterprise to make money'³²⁹, Fenwick Miller unashamedly ensured that the magazine made a profit. The regularity of the *Signal*'s health-related advertisements, even from Somerset's editorship, enhanced a desire for readers to build on their feminine strength by recognising their weaknesses and in being aware of their limitations, strengthen their roles accordingly.

³²⁸ Margaret Diane Stetz, 'The New Woman and the British Periodical Press of the 1890s, *Journal of Victorian Culture* 6 (2001), p.278.

³²⁹ Isabel Somerset, 'To Our Friends', *WS*. (4.01.1894), p.1.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL
BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,
SICK HEADACHE, CONSTIPATION,
Weak Stomach, Impaired Digestion,
Disordered Liver, and Female Affections.

ANNUAL SALE SIX MILLION BOXES.

BEECHAM'S TOOTH PASTE
Will recommend itself. It is Effaceous, Economical,
Gleens the Teeth, Perfumes the Breath, and is a Reliable
and Pleasant Dentifrice.

THOMAS BEECHAM, ST. HELENS, LANCASHIRE.
Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

BREAD HOVIS BISCUITS

PROMOTE DIGESTION.

Supplied to the Queen and Royal Family.

S. FITTON & SON, Millers, MAGGERSFIELD.

HOW TO OBTAIN COLOUR AND COMELINESS.

If you are Pale you Lack Good Health.

Pale persons have less power to resist disease than those with plenty of natural colour in the cheeks. Pale persons are constitutionally weaker.

If you wish to have rosy cheeks, good nerves, and greater strength, you can have your desire.

And the path is easy and pleasant.

Paleness and pallor is all a matter of the red globules of your blood. If they are deficient in quality and quantity, you grow paler and weaker.

These tiny red globules are to be numbered by millions. They are minute reservoirs of nutriment and strength which they impart to the nerves, the muscles, and tissues of the body.

They also give colour to the blood and also to the cheeks.


True essential nourishment will vitalise the red globules of the blood.

Then the route returns to your cheeks, and your nerves are tuned to a firmer chord.

Herein lies the great value of Dr. Tassan's 'Vi-Cocoa'. It is a food beverage of the most concentrated vitalising nourishment yet known. By the help of an Extract of Malt it is partially predigested, and does not therefore tax your digestion, but rather aids in the digestion of other foods. In the power of imparting vigour and vitality to women whose paleness paled it has no rival. It is not a medicine, but essential restorative nourishment.

An Appreciation.

VI-COCOA nerves men for the strife, the battle and the stress of life, VI-COCOA strengthens those who toil, in mill or mine, on sea or soil. VI-COCOA mellow the old man's pain, and paces a summer through the veins.



The South Devon (Hydropathic) Health Resort.
C. F. CARPENTER, Bishops Topleigh, near Teignmouth.

Figure 4 WS. (26.07.1894); (17.01.1895); special supplement (16.04.1896).

The *Signal*'s plethora of advertisements contrasted sharply with *Shafts*. They covered several pages and indicated the source of the magazine's revenue stream. In terms of volume, the *Signal*'s advertisements were similar to that of domestic magazines. However, their placement in the paper was different; as in *Shafts* these advertisements were found towards the end of the publication, suggesting their lower importance in comparison to the magazine's content. In domestic magazines, advertisements commented on the content. The *Signal*'s advertisements served their own purpose, differing from those found in *Shafts*. Many of them demonstrated a focus on the female consumer, rather than containing publicity for lectures, in particular the female consumer interested in health. Products included: 'Beecham's Pills' for 'Billious & Nervous Disorders', 'Hovis Bread Biscuits' to 'promote digestion', and 'Vi-Cocoa', for 'colour and comeliness' (Figure 4). Women were targeted with medicines that would help cure the ever stressed nerves and strengthen internal organs, consolidating the association between physical and psychological functioning. 'Carter's Little Liver Pills' were also an interesting inclusion: targeting the liver was particularly significant for a magazine with temperance associations, suggesting that readers were aware of alcohol-related issues. Advertisements for cod liver oil appeared

often, a product associated with pregnant women and children, because of its vitamin A content. By targeting potential mothers and their children the *Signal* underscored woman's primary function as the care-giver and made her the consumer of products for her husband and children. Although this was not new in itself, highlighted by Mrs Beeton in the late 1850s, the New Woman brought a new dimension to this activity, gaining a more comprehensive education and a more active lifestyle through which her role as primary care-giver formed a more potent symbol of the care-giver of society. This was a responsibility that could not be achieved without more freedom in her role.

Advertisers also latched onto female vanity. Whilst 'Mason's Extract of Herbs' food beverage appeared often, Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa Food Beverage was the *Signal's* most frequently advertised product: 'By nourishing the body, the cheeks become rosy and plump'.³³⁰ This introduced a link between health and beauty, as Alisa Webb points out: 'No girl could be beautiful who was not in good health'.³³¹ The assertion that paleness was equal to bad health ('If you are Pale you Lack Good Health') opposed the belief that 'clear, [...] white skin' was a measure of beauty.³³² The new measure of health had become rosy cheeks, highlighted in the aforementioned article on athletics which promoted the plucky New Woman. Certainly, the campaigning New Woman influenced beauty and health: increased activity was reflected in her physical stature and the feeble, languishing female was unacceptable. Thinness was no longer tantamount to beauty either. With an increase in the study of conditions such as anorexia, this was comforting to readers who were able to

³³⁰ WS. (14.01.1897),p.29.

³³¹ Alisa Webb, 'Constructing the Gendered Body: Girls, Health, Beauty, Advice, and the *Girls' Best Friend*, 1898-99', *Women's History Review* 15.2 (2006),pp. 253-75,p.255.

³³² Cheryl Buckley & Hilary Fawcett, *Fashioning the Feminine: representation and women's fashion from the fin de siècle to the present* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002),p.37.

equate plumpness with health, and therefore beauty. Yet the advertisement for Vi-Cocoa offered ‘a dainty sample tin’; ‘dainty’ does not really cohere with the image of a rosy, plump-cheeked woman, but it does bear out the contradiction of a more robust woman who retained her femininity. Even under Somerset, hobbies were encouraged for girls as a way to achieve ‘bright eyes, rosy cheeks, and an expression of animation which in themselves constitute beauty’.³³³ Again, the desired image is a ruddy-cheeked New Woman. However, if a more active lifestyle promoted this appearance, rather than a specific product, why did the *Signal* include such advertisements? The formatting of these advertisements suggests a possible answer.

Advertisements for Vi-Cocoa were not only placed regularly in the *Signal*, they were also placed in various ways, often concealed within what appeared to be an article, or as narrative advertisements in which health was promoted subliminally through the short story format. White has observed that support for advertisers ‘came directly, through editorial mentions or recommendations, and the incorporation of advertising matter indistinguishable from editorial content’.³³⁴ In the *Signal*, advertisements were disguised under a number of striking headings. Within a two month period Vi-Cocoa was variously advertised under ‘Excessive Eating and Drinking’,³³⁵ ‘When Cheeks Become Rosy’,³³⁶ and ‘Health Without Medicine’.³³⁷ The appearance of these advertisements, around the middle of 1896, coincided with Fenwick Miller’s growing focus on exercise as well as her emphasis on domestic duties in the midsummer fashion supplement. The collective force of

³³³ ‘Editorial Notes’, *WS.* (13.12.1894),p.379.

³³⁴ White,p.63.

³³⁵ *WS.* (28.05.1896),p.350.

³³⁶ *WS.* (9.07.1896),p.28.

³³⁷ *WS.* (23.07.1896),p.60.

these topics called for a reconfiguration of womanhood wherein she was bombarded with all manner of renewed physical activities, even if these were in the home. Vi-Cocoa then fell into a necessary space to supplement those qualities already possessed by the *Signal's* New Woman. All three titles underscored health concerns; the first emphasized the magazine's former temperance associations while the latter two indicated the product's effects. The rhetoric of these advertisements also supplemented the magazine's features on health, claiming that 'tone and vigour can be promoted, and the rosy cheeks natural to health, restored'. The use of medical jargon was particularly striking: 'It is only by the proper assimilation of food that the waste of tissue daily taking place can be stopped'. It insinuated the product's necessity by providing a knowledgeable, reliable voice. All three advertisements emphasized the fact that Vi-Cocoa was a 'Food Beverage', not medicine. 'Health Without Medicine' emphatically opened: 'Do not use drugs, medicines, and so-called curatives'. The fact that the *Signal* regularly promoted food beverages indicated a drive towards natural remedies. The female body had become a site of accelerated interest. Her ever busy existence disabled her from creating her own cures as she may have done in previous decades. The *Signal's* New Woman was a professional housewife, partaking in political debates, stepping out into the sporting arena and requiring the aid of supplements.

As Patricia Anne Vertinsky argues, a reappraisal of the concerns and experiences surrounding the female body in the late-nineteenth century needs to be undertaken.³³⁸ By examining the material aimed at women and their health, one is able to begin this reappraisal. Yet, as far as the body is concerned, it was not just a matter of internal health

³³⁸ Patricia Anne Vertinsky, *The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors, and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p.5.

but also of appearance, most notably in the *Signal* through clothing. Fashion was a prominent feature under the editorship of Fenwick Miller. She regularly combined fashion features with more serious political discussion on dress reform and the rational dress movement. This was a common amongst women's magazines; even conservative domestic publications such as *Woman's Life* were advertising 'The "Rational" Corset Bodice'. Whilst clothing indicated social status and political persuasion,³³⁹ it also, more importantly, brought women's attention to their health. Whilst denoting their sexuality, their clothing physically restricted them, leading to their poor health. Historian Stephen Kern asserts that: 'in no other age throughout history was...the female body so concealed and disfigured by clothing'.³⁴⁰ This was reflected in the *Signal's* heavy focus on the corset, one of the most controversial pieces of woman's clothing. In a January 1895 editorial, Somerset reported that a 'poor actress' was 'slain' by tight lacing.³⁴¹ Such tragedies were the impetus behind organizations such as the "'Anti-Corset" League'.³⁴² In the case of the *Signal*, readers were being encouraged to be at once desirable yet, particularly under Somerset, moral. Fashions of the first half of Victorian period defined women as inactive, their clothing restrictive and impractical. Even as she began to take up more active pursuits, the Victorian woman could not escape the connotations expressed through her clothing. What she wore helped to define her femininity in the midst of previously uncharacteristic behaviour. Consequently, although often reformed for sports, female clothing continued to be paramount.

³³⁹ Helene E. Roberts, 'The Exquisite Slave: The Role of Clothes in the Making of the Victorian Woman', *Signs*, 2.3 (Spring, 1977), pp. 554-569, p.554.

³⁴⁰ Stephen Kern, *Anatomy and Destiny: A Cultural History of the Human Body* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975), p.10.

³⁴¹ 'Editorial Notes', *WS*. (3.01.1895), p.6.

³⁴² A. A., 'Rational Dress', *WS*. (6.12.1894), p.363. Yet Edward Shorter has also suggested that corset-related deaths were a fallacy, being coincidental or incorrectly diagnosed. Edward Shorter, *A History of Women's Bodies* (London: Penguin, 1982), p.30.

The *Signal*'s discussion of fashion was deeply politicised. Dialogue concerning rational dress increased with the change in editorial control. In a January 1895 issue of the *Signal* Somerset commented on a new society forming 'with the object of discountenancing the "rational" and "sensible" costumes of which we have heard so much of late'.³⁴³ She observed 'that "rational dress" is making little progress in England, and it will not be helped by any demonstrations which serve to make the wearers of it more than before into something peculiar'.³⁴⁴ Yet Somerset herself did not oppose the rational dress, remarking on the female cyclists she spotted on the Surrey roads during Easter 1895 that 'not one had progressed far enough to modify her dress to the necessities of cycling'. Four issues later, a reader named Grace Murrell wrote a letter of correction concerning 'Lady Cyclists' which informed Somerset that the Surrey roads were filled with female cyclists, many wearing 'knickers'.³⁴⁵ For both editor and contributor, wearing some brand of rational clothing was important; however, this was not necessarily a demonstration of feminism but more simply a means of practicality. Murrell stressed that women wearing knickers experienced far less trouble than those donning cycling skirts. Somerset too insinuated that it was essential to modify one's dress when cycling. The crucial difference between this and earlier perspectives was that women's comfort was being incorporated into discourses of fashion.

In contrast to Somerset, Fenwick Miller displayed a more marked interest in reformed fashions. In December 1896 she included an article on 'Lady Cyclists' Dress', reporting that one portion of the Lady Cyclists Association had boycotted another for wearing

³⁴³ 'Editorial Notes', WS. (31.05.1894),p.375.

³⁴⁴ 'Signals from Our Watch Tower', WS. (16.09.1897),p.184.

³⁴⁵ WS (23.05.1895),p.332.

rational dress.³⁴⁶ The rational dress was so disliked by some members of the association that it was decided that the society would split in two, with those in skirts riding with a different captain to those in rational dress. It even went as far as the two groups arranging separate meetings. As the author commented, this seemed rather retrograde for a society that was considered advanced. However, the article pointed out that woman's opinions did not often matter when it came to issues such as these; as has been suggested in discourses of health, it was still men who decided what was best for women when engaging in physical activities. Countering this, Fenwick Miller gauged the impact of fashion on the contemporary woman from her readers. Her final address noted that the *Signal's* correspondence section demonstrated the inspiration that the paper possessed. This correspondence section gave women a voice on the subject of their bodies. As Vertinsky writes on women's physicality, women were not 'passive creatures' and 'evidence of [their] reaction is important'.³⁴⁷ Letters printed in the *Signal* revealed the influence periodicals possessed in producing a readership with a keen bodily awareness.

From April 1897, amidst discussions of the political housewife and the health-conscious consumer, readers of the *Signal* discussed 'Corsets', impelled by the letter from A.J.C. asking: 'Can any woman give a good reason for wearing corsets?'³⁴⁸ Ada J.O. Adams responded the next month: 'we do, on the whole, look such frights without them!'³⁴⁹ Adams explained that the corset she found most agreeable was one that was knitted with only light, thin bones. She added that if they designed a replacement dress she would

³⁴⁶ 'Lady Cyclists' Dress', *WS.* (3.12.1896), p.360.

³⁴⁷ Vertinsky, p.12.

³⁴⁸ *WS.* (29.04.1897), p.271.

³⁴⁹ *WS.* (27.05.1897), p.335.

discard her corset; but the modern dress did not conceal the larger aspect of the plump woman. In Adam's opinion, the greatest help the anti-corset movement could give 'would be to design an appropriate costume, semi-Greek, or something of the kind', but until then 'the corset will remain'. This was striking in view of the fact that the aesthetes of the time were promoting precisely that silhouette. It suggested that images of the New Woman and the decadents could complement one another whilst indicating that the *Signal's* promotion of a plumper female figure was compounded by feminine vanity. Another reader, M.W.U, responded with social criticism: 'it has so long been the evil custom for women to hide their natural figure, that now [...] it is indecent or improper to show it'.³⁵⁰ This furthered the idea that patriarchal society made a piece of clothing 'entirely at variance with all nature's laws' culturally accepted. Women did not restrain themselves vocally but physically, 'bound and rigid' in their corsets. M.W.U also touched on the health fallacy: 'The great pressure of even a loose corset upon some of the most vital organs of the body is so exceedingly injurious. Then the muscles become weaker and flabby, and quite unfit for their original use'. The following issue included a solution from Jennie F. Wilson: 'All weight must be supported from the shoulders, not from the waist'. She pointed out that if the skirt was fitted onto a well-fitting bodice then the complaint about weight about the hips would be removed. Although she admitted that most clothes are planned to be worn with a corset, she advised a substitute. Touching on M.W.C.'s point, Wilson claimed that eventually the muscles would 'learn to do their own work' without the aid of a corset. She advocated that 'any woman who wishes a really healthy comfortable style of dress to try' the alternative one that she depicted in her letter.³⁵¹ In July 1897, A.G.T. explicated the

³⁵⁰ WS. (3.06.1897),p.351.

³⁵¹ WS. (10.06.1897),p.367.

long term benefits of alternative fashions, one being the ‘absence of weight or drag’,³⁵² from the heavy, multi-layered skirts. A.G.T also suggested ‘reducing the underclothing to woven combinations’ and using a waistband to which a skirt can be attached.

Providing ways for women simultaneously to preserve their femininity and sustain their health was an important part of Fenwick Miller’s bid for a liberated future. By acclimatising to a world without corsets, readers of the *Signal* were not only avoiding health risks, but, more importantly, competing on a more level playing field with men, freed from the physical constraints of this clothing. Fenwick Miller’s increased focus on correspondence gave her readers opportunities to come to such conclusions on their own, whilst absorbing the influential material of the magazine. In the previous year, Gwyneth Vaughan wrote on the subject of women’s dress reform for the *Signal*, explaining that ‘until [women] put away for ever the slavery their clothing entails upon them they can never become free’.³⁵³ This kind of embedded critique was apparent under Fenwick Miller’s editorship, exposing her suffragist views and indicating a future in which women could make these extremely personal decisions themselves. Through the correspondence section they collectively discovered practical solutions to their problems. Yet these decisions were subliminally directed by the magazine’s extensive advertisements which reminded readers that their health was of the utmost importance. Many of the correspondents made their fashion choices based upon their health concerns, structuring their New Womanhood around the *Signal*’s commercialised health drive which guided them towards the feminized,

³⁵² WS. (1.07.1897),p.15.

³⁵³ WS. (16.07.1896),p.38

emancipated female. This picture was complicated further by the *Signal*'s earlier literary content.

‘Between the Lights’ of Women’s Writing

Whilst Fenwick Miller’s journalism focused on the deconstructed female body, her simultaneously growing and ailing health as well as her responsible fashion decisions, Somerset included a greater exploration of New Woman literature, publishing the magazine during the peak of this literary movement. This section focuses largely on Somerset’s inclusion of an intriguing serialisation entitled ‘Between the Lights’. It was here that the literary material of the *Signal* grew roots and expanded into discussions that were more open to the New Woman.

In the second ever issue Somerset printed a two-piece article on ‘Women Writers of 1893’ by the publisher and writer Grant Richards.³⁵⁴ *Woman* responded to Richards’ article in the following:

the editors of the *Signal* have shown that they are wide-awake by unconsciously forestalling us in a very interesting series of articles [...] on “Women Writers of 1893.” Our assistant editor has been hard at work for some time collecting material for the same subject, and congratulates the *Signal* on having been first in the field. It

³⁵⁴ WS. (11.01.1894),p.20 and (18.01.1894),pp.42-3.

is often remarked among journalists how often the same idea occurs simultaneously to several minds.³⁵⁵

Given *Woman's* virulent criticism of the *Signal* this comment was unavoidably sarcastic: the assistant editor 'hard at work' on this topic was the same person who wrote the above comment. Yet the fact that *Woman* could not print its own version of the article now that it had already appeared in the *Signal* suggested the superiority of the latter magazine's feature. Alternatively it could reflect *Woman's* aversion towards replicating the material of this 'aggressive' magazine.³⁵⁶ Nevertheless, it is interesting that Somerset chose to have a prominent article by a male writer so early in a periodical claiming to be exclusively female. It potentially reflected the authoritative voice of the male reviewer, yet with the increase of successful female critics it was more likely to be a tactic by Somerset to include recognisable names in the *Signal's* early issues. In his article, Richards mentioned Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* arguing that she was 'not primarily artistic; she had a message to deliver, and she delivered it strongly, forcibly, and with too little thought for the artistic requirements of her theme'.³⁵⁷ Grand's work is often viewed as 'an instrument of social concern'.³⁵⁸ Richards commented that books such as Grand's were 'a sign of the same awakening to the intellectual needs of the better public in literature'. Richards was hopeful that 'the reverent, honest and earnest treatment of all subjects bound up with the great welfare of our race shall by none be thought common or unclean' (p. 20). Being involved in

³⁵⁵ 'D'You Know?', *W.* (24.01.1894),p.7.

³⁵⁶ An element explored in Chapter 4.

³⁵⁷ *WS.* (11.01.1894),p.20.

³⁵⁸ Marilyn Bonnell, 'Sarah Grand and the Critical Establishment: Art for [Wo]man's Sake', *Tulsa Studies of Women's Literature* 14.1 (1995),p.124.

W.T. Stead's *Review of Reviews*, Richards clearly echoed his support of the modern woman writer.

Richards' comments contrasted sharply with the views of Mrs Caffyn's ('Iota') an interview with whom was printed in the *Signal* two months later,³⁵⁹ presenting readers with conflicting interpretations of what a New Woman novel should achieve. When asked whether she thought novels should have a purpose, 'Iota' declared: 'As a rule I think they should not. A book with a purpose is apt to be dull [...] It is impossible, however, not to have a little opinion of your own, things are now so freely discussed.' (p. 154) Furthermore, and somewhat surprisingly, 'Iota' maintained that she was 'not an advanced woman' and did not 'believe in "woman's rights." A woman has her rights in her own hands without trying to advance them obliquely.' 'Iota' did not want women to have the franchise, believing they were not 'fit for more freedom yet', as they lacked knowledge (p. 154). The unexpected nature of these comments was perhaps tempered by the fact that Iota was one of the more conservative of the New Woman writers. Moreover, her gesture towards knowledge colluded with the liberal feminist's emphasis on thought and knowledge. Yet, the same issue as 'Iota's' interview included an advertisement of the second edition of New Woman novelist Emma Frances Brooke's book *A Superfluous Woman* (Figure 5). Feminine psychology was central in Brooke's writing: Jessamine Halliday is a passionate heroine whose overly sensitive nature thwarts her ultimate desires. The *Signal's* advertisement listed the title of Brooke's novel six times after its initial heading. Under each was a different newspaper review, all favourable and supplemented by the declaration that it was available from all libraries. This emphatic structure indicated the promotion of New

³⁵⁹ Percy L. Parker, "'A YELLOW ASTER – The Author at Home', WS. (8.03.1894), pp.153-155.

Woman literature, as did the advertisement's inclusion on the same page as an instalment of the literary serial 'In Between the Lights'.³⁶⁰ A genre containing few consistent rules, save for a focus upon female characters searching for some form of autonomy, it was difficult to support or reject such novels as a whole. Somerset overcame this issue by including a diversity of opinion on the subject.

A REMARKABLE NOVEL.
 "Uncommonly well worth reading."—*National Observer*.
A SUPERFLUOUS WOMAN.
In Three Volumes. Second Edition. At all Libraries.
Daily Telegraph—"A novel upon which has been expended an infinity of thought, and the pages of which betray a capacity for the analysis of human feelings and emotions rarely to be met with."
A REMARKABLE NOVEL.
A SUPERFLUOUS WOMAN.
In Three Volumes. Second Edition. At all Libraries.
Westminster Gazette—"There is much strong and some pathetic writing in 'A Superfluous Woman,' and we dare say it will be proclaimed a remarkable book. It shows power and imagination in no small degree."
A REMARKABLE NOVEL.
A SUPERFLUOUS WOMAN.
In Three Volumes. Second Edition. At all Libraries.
National Observer—"The book is but where it is nearest passionate life. . . . There are singular qualities: force, cleverness, insight—in the last scene. . . . Altogether the book has a great deal of good in it, is refreshing and frank, and is uncommonly well worth reading."
A REMARKABLE NOVEL.
A SUPERFLUOUS WOMAN.
In Three Volumes. Second Edition. At all Libraries.
Review of Reviews—"The anonymous author presents a primal passion, unencumbered of the trappings of shame and habit, with a simplicity and directness unequalled in recent English fiction. . . . In short, 'A Superfluous Woman' is a clever book, and a useful. Whether it will attain the success of 'The Heavenly Twins' is yet to be seen, but the good that it will do will be much on the same lines."
A REMARKABLE NOVEL.
A SUPERFLUOUS WOMAN.
In Three Volumes. Second Edition. At all Libraries.
St. James's Gazette—"A bold work. We are very much afraid that 'the young person' will not be allowed to read it. If so, we sincerely hope that she will do so without permission; for though it may not be the best novel of the season, it is amongst those best worth reading."
A REMARKABLE NOVEL.
A SUPERFLUOUS WOMAN.
In Three Volumes. Second Edition. At all Libraries.
Standard—"A love story that is a very remarkable piece of writing, told with real power and beauty. The author is full of undisciplined power; she has poetry and promise and courage, and, unless we are mistaken, has a future before her. The last two or three pages of her book lift it into a poem."
A REMARKABLE NOVEL.
A SUPERFLUOUS WOMAN.
In Three Volumes. Second Edition. At all Libraries.
The Queen—"One is fascinated, and devours the whole three volumes at a sitting."
 London: WM. HEINEMANN, 21, Bedford Street, W.C.

Figure 5 WS. (8.03.1894).

1894 was certainly the year in which the New Woman phenomenon exploded on the pages of the *Signal*. Foregrounded by interviews with publishers and writers of the New Woman novel, the correspondence pages responded to the growing interest in the phenomenon, serving as an ideal focus for the consideration of literary tropes. An August 1894 issue included two correspondents writing on women authors: E.L. Cambeir on 'The Influence of

³⁶⁰ Discussed later.

the Feminine Novel' and E.A. Vine on 'Women Novelists'.³⁶¹ Vine's letter drew attention to a correspondence printed two issues earlier in which the writer, G.B., complained about the following review in *The British Weekly*: 'The book is written by a woman, but is quite pure. It is also interesting'.³⁶² G.B. asked if such censure on women's writing was occurring and if it was what was being done to rectify it. In referencing this letter, Vine also demonstrated outrage about this slight on female novelists. She had written to *The British Weekly* demanding a withdrawal of the remark or at least a justification. However, she received neither and concluded that the matter was considered 'unworthy of notice'. By including these comments on another magazine, Somerset assigned her readers the role usually reserved for the editor, analysing relevant issues but more imperatively, steering the material within the magazine. Cambeir, writing on 'The Influence of the Feminine Novel', also took the unsavoury review as her subject. She claimed that it was men who had begun writing in the vein of the modern novel, using the example of George Eliot's reserve in depicting Hetty Sorrel in contrast with Thomas Hardy's portrayal of Tess. Cambeir also referred to W.T. Stead's July 1894 review of the feminine novel,³⁶³ claiming that these novels 'represent a passing phase in cosmopolitan fiction' (p. 92). Cambeir suggested that G.B. was concerned with the 'possible evil effects of fashionable novels' but that this concern should not restrict girls' reading; instead they should follow 'Ruskin's counsel to give girls access to classical and scientific libraries, where they may be trusted to leave all that is unlovely and of ill report severely alone' (p. 93). This discussion of girls reading was, as discussed in Chapter 1, visible across the woman's press. It provided an

³⁶¹ WS. (9.08.1894), pp. 92-3.

³⁶² "'Written by a Woman But Quite Pure'", WS. (26.07.1894), p. 61.

³⁶³ See Chapter 1.

acknowledgement of the importance of the younger generation's reading as they emerged into society as potential New Women.

Yet these correspondents, whilst offended by the attack on female novelists, seemed generally unsupportive of New Woman writing. Cambeir wrote ironically: 'I have not the least desire to make acquaintance with "Dodo," "The Twins," "Superfluous Women" suffering from "Yellow Asteria" or to listen to "Keynotes" to conjugal discords' (p. 93). Cambeir's claim that G.B. was concerned with the effects of fashionable novels was nevertheless a mere interpretation as G.B. did not mention any concern in her letter. Her unease seemed more directed towards the obvious censure on women's writing. Cambeir, whilst arguing that she had no issue with the New Woman writing, seemed the more threatened. Somerset herself showed some opposition to New Woman novels, writing in March 1895: 'That the tone of the woman novel is unhealthy it requires no acumen to discern, it is absolutely poisonous'.³⁶⁴ Writing in the May 31st 1894 editorial notes she disclaimed E. F. Benson's Dodo 'as a type of the advanced woman at all'. She saw her as evolved from the mind of the modern man rather than being any particular type of woman. She then mentioned Allen's similar betrayal of the woman's cause, writing in the same editorial that he confined women's freedom to the 'scope to passion',³⁶⁵ echoing the sentiments expressed in *Shafts*. Somerset commented upon the difference between the male and female perspective on emancipation. Whilst to men it meant 'liberty to use slang, to smoke, and to ignore manners', to women it signified 'only freedom for individual development, physical, moral, intellectual'. Certainly Somerset shared the view of many

³⁶⁴ "'The Woman Who' – Didn't', WS. (28.03.1895).p.193.

³⁶⁵ WS. (31.05.1894),p.374.

New Women on the unhelpful nature of Allen's novel; yet, her support for the New Woman was less clear and often contradictory. She seemed to promote her reader's consumption of the novels whilst openly denigrating their content. In this sense she produced both an open platform for the reading of the novels and a simultaneous censorship of their content. This puzzling contradiction perhaps reflected the difficulty that Somerset faced in presenting women's suffrage alongside her temperance agenda. Although she was an advocate for suffrage, she was advised to focus on temperance when editing the *Signal*, a factor that seemed to work against her, given the failure of the magazine under her editorship. Her close companionship with Frances Willard suggested that she maintained her interest in suffrage, even if this did not come to fruition through her editorial comments. Yet a feature through which it did potentially emerge was the serialisation she included from the second number of the *Signal*: 'Between the Lights' by Aurora.

Over a number of short instalments,³⁶⁶ Aurora illuminated various interpretations of femininity as it manifested at the fin de siècle which would later be explored by Fenwick Miller in relation to the healthy, politicised housewife. Aurora covered a variety of New Woman-related issues, including the Revolt of the Daughters, maternity, the franchise, the female form, and women in parliament. The serial featured four protagonists named for their personal and societal positions: the 'Ordinary Person', the 'Society Dame', the 'Woman of No Importance' and the 'Advanced Woman'. These women represented polar extremes: the Ordinary Person is conservative and could reasonably be termed an 'old' woman. She often demonstrates timidity on subjects where the Advanced Woman is very

³⁶⁶ From January 11, 1894 to August 22, 1895.

vocal, indicating a lack of confidence and self-assurance and reflecting her confusion with the new world. The Society Dame is, as her name suggests, concerned with status and social standing and consistently demonstrates a shallow penchant for what is fashionable. On the other hand, the Advanced Woman is a manifestation of the extreme New Woman created by journalistic imagination. Her objections are based on principle and she deliberately rejects the fashionable society of the Society Dame. The Woman of No Importance is the mediator and the ultimate sign of measured, ideal womanhood. Her comments consistently shed light on the hypocrisy, narrow-mindedness and irrationality of her contemporaries. Her ironic name becomes immediately apparent with her comments holding a great deal of importance. She highlights the ridiculous claims made within the various exchanges. For instance, when asked if her daughters are married the Ordinary Person replies that they are not but that they are developing their mother's theories of household management and childcare.³⁶⁷ The Woman of No Importance sarcastically replies that her 'system must be very successful', since the Ordinary Person had claimed that she brought up her daughters to be the sort a man would desire for his wife. Both girls remain single rendering this tactic unsuccessful. When, at the end of a discussion of women in Collectivism, the sixth instalment, the Woman of No Importance states that Collectivism is impossible for that state but useful for the individual, the Advanced Woman replies: 'Tell that to the Marines'. To this the Woman of No Importance simply replies: 'You mean the Fabians', exposing the hypocrisy of the societies supported by radical feminists.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁷ 'III. The Revolt of the Daughters', *WS*. (8.02.1894), p.89.

³⁶⁸ 'VI. Women in Collectivism', *WS*. (1.03.1894), pp.144-6.

The Woman of No Importance provides grey areas for the argument and asks questions that have not been considered. She generally gets the last word, with the final line of each instalment given to her. Yet, by instalments ten and 11 the last line is given to the Advanced Woman, whilst 12 is given back to the Woman of No Importance, 14 is given to the Society Dame, 15 back to the Woman of No Importance and 16 to the Advanced Woman again.³⁶⁹ This change in format suggests that common sense is not always allowed to win through when it comes to debates of this nature. Whilst the Ordinary Person states that girls should be happy at home and the Advanced Woman asserts that women need to go out into the world to demonstrate their equality with men, the Woman of No Importance points out that the idea of women being unfit for work is ‘sheer waste of breath’: ‘If woman can do the work she is fit for it. If she can’t do the work it is unfit for her.’³⁷⁰ Such a simple statement invalidates the two extremes and reminds readers that real New Women were not looking for radical change but merely a world in which they were given the same consideration as men. The Woman of No Importance also offers some comedic light relief from heavy topics; when the Society Dame exclaims that she has heard Girton ‘called the Society for the Prevention of –’, the Woman of No Importance interjects with the quip: ‘Cruelty to Animals’,³⁷¹ surely a reference to the new morality displayed in *Shafts* with its interest in vivisection and vegetarianism. Blind to this humorous interruption the Society Dame replies: ‘No – the Prevention of Matrimony’.

³⁶⁹ ‘The Match-Girl’s Strike’, *WS*. (16.04.1894), pp.256-7; ‘On “The Yellow Book”’, *WS*. (03.05.1894), p.296; “‘The Tree of Knowledge’”, *WS*. (14.06.1894), p.412; ‘An Ideal Husband’, *WS*. (10.01.1895), pp.24-5; ‘Some Modern Pictures’, *WS*. (11.04.1895), p.229.

³⁷⁰ ‘I. On the Position of Women’, *WS*. (11.01.1894), p.24.

³⁷¹ ‘II. “The Revolt of the Daughters”’, *WS*. (25.01.1894), p.56.

In discussion of the New Woman, the Ordinary Person persistently asks ‘What is the New Woman?’³⁷² The Society Dame’s response is to refer to the novel *George Mandeville’s Husband*, written by the suffragette Elizabeth Robins, under her penname C.E. Raimond. Whilst it was not an explicitly anti-New Woman novel, exposing the conditions imposed upon women which could lead them to behave in certain ways, the Society Dame’s promotion of it in this context suggested the appropriation of such works for anti-feminist means. It underscored the dangers of reading without the careful analysis promoted by the liberal feminist magazines. In contrast the *Advanced Woman* proposes that the New Woman is ‘The opposite of the old man’. It is the Woman of No Importance who aptly claims that she is ‘a modern play upon words’. Indeed, as the series progresses, *Aurora* highlights contrasts between the different views of contemporary womanhood. The first instalment ‘On the Position of Woman’ opened with the Ordinary Person bemoaning women’s present status, ‘In my day women were not always trying to push men out of creation [...] Forty years ago a girl was a girl’.³⁷³ This embodied the opinion that woman’s social progress made her less feminine. The *Advanced Woman* asks, ‘why should not a woman be admired when she develops a new phase of her nature, or strikes out a line for herself?’ Yet she is rebuffed by the Ordinary Person who claims that education gives girls ‘masculine ideas’. This concept of the womanly woman is evinced through the serial with a discussion of nude models producing an odd comment from the Ordinary Person, ‘We don’t wish to be reminded that we have – er – figures’.³⁷⁴ This squeamish response to the female form undercuts any equality: to achieve man’s respect women needed to respect

³⁷² “‘The New Woman’”, *WS.* (06.09.1894),p.149.

³⁷³ *WS.* (11.01.1894),p.24.

³⁷⁴ ‘IV.Models and Morals’, *WS.* (15.02.1894),p.108.

themselves. The anti-New Woman character exclaims, 'In my day women were not always trying to push men out of creation [...] Forty years ago a girl was a girl'.³⁷⁵

The seventh instalment of 'Between the Lights' is intriguing in its sudden shift from the four regular protagonists to four completely new characters³⁷⁶: Patricia Kemble, Ideala, the Enemy of the People, the Superfluous Woman. Ideala is Grand's heroine of the same-named novel, whilst the Superfluous Woman is based on Brooke's *A Superfluous Woman* as well as being another term for advanced women at the end of the century. Patricia Kemble embodies Lynn Linton's 1872 novel *Patricia Kemball*. Linton's novels *The One Too Many* (1894), a scathing reflection of the Girton Girl, and *The Atonement Of Leam Dundas* (1876) are also alluded to, as well as an article in the *New Review*, undoubtedly her notorious *Saturday Review* piece 'The Girl of the Period' (1868). These references are made by Ideala who is regularly found murmuring remarks that undercut Patricia's ludicrous comments, highlighting the feud between Grand and Lynn Linton in the periodical press. When the Enemy of the People asks why Patricia advocates man's rights, Ideala murmurs, 'It is the Atonement of Leam Dundas'. With Ibsen's connection to the New Woman movement, the Enemy of the People reflected his 1882 play 'An Enemy of the People'. Patricia herself mentions Helmer's lack of influence over his wife to which the Enemy of the People exclaims, 'Is it possible you have seen the Doll's House!' The Enemy of the People's commentary encompasses a more general critique of society. Patricia embodies Lynn Linton's conventional protagonist as well as the author's rhetoric surrounding modern womanhood. She suggests that their mastery of men represented 'the

³⁷⁵ WS. (11.01.1894),p.24.

³⁷⁶ 'VII. In the Rapids', WS. (08.03.1894),p.160.

disintegration of Society'. She bemoans a time before increased female liberty, 'In the olden days women stayed at home and managed the house. Now they keep Satan at work inventing mischief for their idle hands'. This echoes the marriage depicted in *Patricia Kemball*. Ideala and the Superfluous Woman fulfil the Woman of No Importance's role, gently mocking Patricia for her comment that 'the duty of woman is to please man'. Ideala suggests that such women are 'only in books – or in the asylum' whilst the Superfluous Woman's rejoinder is that 'They sometimes escape to the Highlands'.

When considering their original contexts, all three New Woman supporters of Aurora's seventh instalment share a desire for individual and collective power. Grand's Ideala believes in self-sacrifice for the good of the community. In 'Between the Lights' she underscores the original protagonist's eugenic mind-set, desiring 'To be the mothers of men'. According to Aurora, the Superfluous Woman yearns for 'The New Womanhood'; in *A Superfluous Woman* society eventually overcomes Jessamine, despite her protests, suggesting that the New Womanhood was not yet powerful enough to overcome patriarchal strictures. Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* is ultimately a consideration of democracy in which the individual emerges superior to the multitude; the Enemy of the People of Aurora's piece wants 'Truth first, Liberty second', underscoring the feminist quest as well as the qualities of democracy. Meanwhile, Patricia, who embodies anti-feminism, expresses relief that whilst middle-class women are indelicate, the higher circles 'still have womanly girls'. Ideala assumes the Woman of No Importance's role murmuring the concluding line: 'Pray God we be not all Patricians'.

Despite the seemingly conservative perspective of Patricia, the *Signal* suggested around the same time in July 1894 that Lynn Linton was perhaps not such an advocate for her anti-feminist views:

this uncompromising opponent of the advanced woman of to-day was herself a 'revolting daughter.' Her father believed in the type of woman who was a busy Martha for six days in the week and a Mary on the seventh. Mrs Lynn Linton did not agree with such limitations on her sex and defied parental control by acquiring much intellectual knowledge. She even aspired to be learned in Greek, Latin and Hebrew. Her attitude appears to have been justified, for she quickly gained a lucrative place in journalism as a leader writer. Surely this was a terribly unfeminine kind of occupation in Mrs Lynn Linton's young days. Why does she begrudge to the young womanhood of to-day such liberty to develop heaven-born powers as she herself took?³⁷⁷

Whilst Aurora's spoof perpetuated the idea that Grand and Linton held directly antagonistic views, this editorial implies that the lines were not so clear cut. Andrea L. Broomfield has suggested that there were contradictions in the writings of both women and that, rather than being strongly-held personal beliefs, much of their journalism was designed to sensationalise and shock.³⁷⁸ Yet Lynn Linton's unreasonable views were criticised in 'The Eternal Feminine' six months later.³⁷⁹ This exhibited the New Woman's lack of stability:

³⁷⁷ WS. (5.07.1894),p.6.

³⁷⁸ 'Eliza Lynn Linton, Sarah Grand and the Spectacle of the Victorian Woman Question: Catch Phrases, Buzz Words and Sound Bites', *ELT* 47.3 (2004),pp.251-69.

³⁷⁹ 'The Eternal Feminine', WS. (17.01.1895),p.33.

those associated or disassociated from her never firmly retained their positions but rather asserted a place that was convenient or useful to them. This can also be applied to magazines which used the New Woman debate to popularise their content.

As the example of Eliza Lynn Linton shows, 'Between the Lights' was in active dialogue with other content in the *Signal*. Instalment six appeared alongside, 'Woman in Collectivism', an article on 'The Revolt of the Daughters', Somerset's review of *A Superfluous Woman*, and a take on Walter Besant's *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, renamed "'All Sorts and Conditions of" – Women'. All of these were mentioned within the series; in this way, the *Signal* was not only topical but it reinforced its own content, ensuring that it was tangled within the New Woman debates that sold magazines. As instalment seven showed, there were also direct literary associations, such as one on the little magazine *The Yellow Book*, and another on Oscar Wilde's play *An Ideal Husband*, as well as regular mention of contemporary novels and plays within the text itself, such as Sydney Grundy's *The New Woman*.³⁸⁰ By associating with this literature, Aurora suggested its influence upon active woman reader. She reflected on literature as a means of self-identification.

The June 13 1895 episode of 'Between the Lights' focused on 'The Women Writers' Dinner'.³⁸¹ The protagonists seem unfavourable towards it with the Woman of No Importance objecting to its exclusivity, the Society Dame suggesting its dullness, and the Advanced Woman denouncing it as 'a waste of time'. Only the Ordinary Person timidly

³⁸⁰ WS. (3.05.1894),p.296; (10.01.1895),pp.24-5; (6.09.1894), p.149.

³⁸¹ WS. (13.06.1895),p.384.

confesses that she would like ‘to see all the literary ladies together’. In the previous year the fifth annual Women Writers’ Dinner was reported upon in the *Signal*.³⁸² ‘Literary Ladies’ was a woman writers’ dining club founded in 1889. It represented, as Linda Hughes has argued, the New Woman’s ‘pre-history in life and in print’.³⁸³ More significantly it presented the innovations present in female fin de siècle authorship, and was an important part of the message of solidarity for the advanced woman.³⁸⁴ In the *Signal* report Mrs Haweis took ‘a very rosy view of the future prospects and influence of women writers’. Her speech at this dinner was recorded by her husband the Reverend Haweis in a collection of her works, *Words to Women*:

In women’s hands – in women writers’ hands – lies the regeneration of the world. Let us go on with our tongues of fire, consecrated to an entirely holy work, cleansing, repairing, beautifying as we go, the page of the world’s history which lies before us now.³⁸⁵

As Showalter highlights, Haweis used domestic imagery, reinforcing Fenwick Miller’s later message that women employ the skills they have honed to perfection over their years in the domestic sphere in order to rid the world of inequality, ‘cleansing’, ‘repairing’ and ‘beautifying’.³⁸⁶ Haweis also echoed the religious aspects of feminism, suggesting that women’s work is ‘holy’, encompassing the divinity that Stetson outlined in her poetry.

³⁸² ‘The Women Writers’ Dinner’, *WS*. (7.06.1894), p.396.

³⁸³ Linda Hughes, ‘A Club of Their Own: The “Literary Ladies,” New Women Writers, and Fin-de-Siècle Authorship’, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 35 (2007), p.233.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁵ Mary Haweis, *Words to Women*, p.71.

³⁸⁶ Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, p.183.

Matthew Beaumont also claims that Haweis' words underpin utopian feminism, dreaming 'of a community of active women readers'.³⁸⁷

Following Aurora's last serialisation, printed in the July 11, 1895 issue, an article by Mary L. Pendered demonstrated how literature was used in the feminist press to understand and discuss the New Woman.³⁸⁸ Pendered examined Dr. O. W. Holmes' perspective on the New Woman, looking back at his novel, *A Moral Antipathy*, written in 1885 and thus prefiguring the New Woman. Pendered opened by asserting that: 'It is sufficient to urge that the author of the "Moral Antipathy" saw no danger in the conversion of an "advanced woman" of the most extreme kind, into a wife and mother'. She illustrated Holmes' prediction of this advanced woman claiming that he 'expected her. He knew she was coming long ago'. He 'believed in the new woman, trusting implicitly in her innate good sense, in the "eternal feminine" within her.' Furthermore, he did not believe that development of her mind through learning 'will make her a monster, or that the use of dumb-bells will unsex her'. Holmes died in 1892, not long before the New Woman debuted in the *Herald*. Pendered used Holmes' work to demonstrate that literature had an important place in championing and supporting women's rights. Amongst serious media, the accessible novel educated not only a female reader, but also a male one. Undoubtedly there are issues with anachronistic reading. Yet the search for the New Woman in earlier works became increasingly popular through the *Signal*. Fenwick Miller harked back to early and mid-Victorian female novelists such as the Brontë sisters and George Eliot in her

³⁸⁷ Matthew Beaumont, 'Feminism and Utopianism at the Fin de Siècle' in Richardson and Willis, eds. *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact*, pp.212-223, p.221.

³⁸⁸ Pendered, a writer with a keen interest in the New Woman, also appeared in *The Idler* a year earlier in a feature entitled: 'How to Court the "Advanced Woman"'.

analysis of New Woman writing. From August 19, 1897 to August 11, 1898 Fenwick Miller also serialised Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, following a character sketch of Wollstonecraft. Although written 100 years earlier, Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* still held a great deal of influence over women, in particular New Women who could find solace in her advanced views. Readers were reminded that role models could be found generations earlier in women ahead of their times and whose impact would be felt for hundreds of years to come. Through both editors the *Signal* encouraged active reading, positioning original literature alongside articles that produced a New Woman context. As the New Woman phenomenon seemed to diminish in popular culture women were encouraged to return to earlier fiction in which they could discover emancipatory messages as well as appreciating the new freedoms they had gained since, in terms of domestic roles, clothing and physical activity.

Conclusion

Fenwick Miller defined the New Woman as one who desired to earn a living, get a degree and work to serve her generation; as VanArsdel puts it, the *Signal* was 'her guidebook to achieving these goals'.³⁸⁹ Yet, it was more than a guidebook and its contribution towards understanding the self through a focus on the female body was just as important. Although Fenwick Miller claimed not to adopt a personal approach to the editorship of her publication, her work came from a personal place. Indeed, she pronounced the *Signal* 'my great contribution to the woman's cause'.³⁹⁰ This is an interesting assertion to make as it

³⁸⁹ VanArsdel, *Florence Fenwick Miller*, p.208.

³⁹⁰ WS. (4.03.1897), p.137.

echoes comments made by Sibthorp, yet Fenwick Miller was clearly of a different editorial mind-set to her contemporary. In contrast to *Shafts*, the *Signal* indicated the commercialisation of the late nineteenth century feminist figure. Undoubtedly the magazine had a real drive to make a difference to women's lives. However, it was also unapologetic about its desire to turn a profit in the process. Women in revolt was an ideal marketing tool for magazines such as these and whilst the *Signal* did not exhibit the same commercial ends as the domestic magazines, advertising revenue was still integral to its existence. In this sense, examining its advertisements reveals much about its ethos and its readership.

I am not suggesting that the *Signal's* motives were more commercial than feminist as I do not believe this to be the case. However, the liberal feminist press could not escape commercialism. The regularity of the *Signal's* health-related advertisements suggested that though women recognised their changing roles they preserved some personal indulgences, coupled with a desire to be healthy. Moreover, the *Signal* ultimately revived ideal womanhood by redrawing notions of femininity. The magazine's literary definitions of the New Woman both underscored and deconstructed traditional notions of femininity; 'Between the Lights' produced a wholly supportive voice for the liberal feminist New Woman, one that Somerset did not advocate personally. The series interacted with the material printed around it which tempered its supportive voice, questioning its message and producing an active readership. The New Woman of the *Signal* revelled in her femininity and was carefully educated about the tropes of the advanced female novel; yet she also distanced herself from fully supporting the literary New Woman, more concerned with a revived concept of womanhood that was occurring in the legacy of this media phenomenon.

Chapter Three ‘merely a figurative Aunt Sally’: the New Woman in *Young Woman*

A serious yet potentially controversial monthly magazine, the *Young Woman* (1892-1915) synthesised domestic matters such as child care, room arrangement and articles on ‘How to Dress on Twelve Pounds a Year’, with feminist matters, including ‘The Laws Which Affect Women’, in a way that embodied the very spirit of New Womanhood.³⁹¹ Such synthesis makes it problematic for modern criticism to categorise the publication. The Women’s Library bookmarks the *Young Woman* under ‘Feminist and Campaigning’ and the Harvester Press claim that it ‘was aimed at an attitude group rather than at a specific class’.³⁹² These views paint an unrealistic picture of the magazine’s ethos, suggesting a radicalness that it never actually fulfilled. Indeed, whilst Doughan and Sanchez include the *Young Woman* in their bibliography of Feminist Periodicals, they maintain that it was ‘Not really a feminist paper’ but contained ‘a considerable amount of mildly pro-feminist material’.³⁹³ Certainly, Doughan concedes, it ‘had some sympathy towards feminism’;³⁹⁴ yet as an organ for the Young Woman’s Christian Association it was more conservative than *Shafts* or the *Signal*. Contemporary criticism positions the *Young Woman* as a conflicted publication. As such, this chapter will redraw claims made by modern scholars, exploring the New Woman as both a feminist touchstone and a figure who was disdained.

³⁹¹ Miss Billington, ‘How to Dress on Twelve Pounds a Year’ and Mrs Jacob Bright, ‘The Laws Which Affect Women’, *YW*. (02.1893), pp.161-3, pp.165-8.

³⁹² ‘Periodical Collection’, *The Women’s Library* (London Metropolitan University) [<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/thewomenslibrary/aboutthecollections/collections/periodical-collection.cfm>, accessed 8.07.2010]; ‘Publisher’s Note’, *Harvester Microfilm* (Harvester Press)

³⁹³ Doughan and Sanchez, p.17.

³⁹⁴ Doughan, p.264.

The complexities of this particular magazine have earned it an individual chapter in this thesis. Generally it has been coupled and contrasted with its more conservative counterpart *Woman*, by Doughan and Liggins respectively.³⁹⁵ Yet despite both magazines representing the multi-faceted woman question, the two were at odds in their approach and it would be of greater benefit to allow the *Young Woman* the isolated study it deserves. *The Young Woman* had less affinity with the New Woman than the previous two magazines, yet it drew a readership both sympathetic and unsympathetic towards the movement. The first section of this chapter will explore the definitions of womanhood built collectively by the readers and the magazine's agony aunt, informed by the influence of the New Woman. The second section will build on these constructions of womanhood, exploring female role models and the possibilities of female friendship within the context of the autonomous New Woman. The third section will assess the way fiction in the *Young Woman* complicated and questioned these careful constructions. The fourth section will investigate the various and often conflicting ways in which marriage was exploited as a major discursive aspect of New Womanhood which further united and separated women. All four sections will demonstrate the dynamic, sometimes contradictory nature of the *Young Woman*, a magazine deserving a closer investigation than it has hitherto received.

A Magazine 'for those who read and think'

Whilst support for the New Woman was not outright, there was an attempt by both the editors and readers of the *Young Woman* to understand the place of women in contemporary society and collectively to shape the contours of womanhood. This collective

³⁹⁵ Ibid; Liggins, "'The Life of a Bachelor Girl'", pp.216-34.

shaping was complicated by the fact that, unlike the previous two magazines studied, the *Young Woman* was edited by a man: Frederick A. Atkins. One regular contributor, Hulda Friederichs, a protégée of the pioneering journalist William Thomas Stead and a writer specializing in serious women's issues,³⁹⁶ noted that Atkins did not take the *New Woman* too seriously, smiling quietly and 'a little mischievously' when Friederichs sang her praises.³⁹⁷ Nonetheless, he took women seriously, demonstrating his commercial awareness but also an intention to broaden woman's outlook:

THE YOUNG WOMAN was never intended to be a mere commercial speculation – we felt that amidst the multitude of women's journals there was room for one which should avoid the fashion-plate and the society novelette and cater for those who read and think; and so our aim from the first has been to interest, to inspire, to counsel, and to help our readers in the living of the best possible life.³⁹⁸

Atkins' words potentially endorsed modern claims for the *Young Woman*'s feminism, although a desire to read and think was not a specifically feminist attribute. Nevertheless, the magazine's objective to make a difference and provide something more than a 'society novelette' or 'fashion-plate' positioned it as one with a serious approach towards the contemporary woman's life, echoing *Shafts'* and the *Signal*'s purpose-driven philosophies and promoting active rather than recreational reading. The extent to which it was not a commercial venture was however debatable, since even vehicles of protest such as *The*

³⁹⁶ Linda Walker, 'Friederichs, Hulda (1856/7–1927)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46354>, accessed 1.03.2012]

³⁹⁷ 'The "Old" Woman and the "New"', *YW*. (03.1895), pp.202-4, p.202.

³⁹⁸ 'A Word with Our Readers', *YW*. (04.1896), p.242.

Shield had some element of commercialism. *Shafts*' financial issues embodied the problems encountered by message-driven rather than profit-driven endeavours. The *Young Woman*'s mixed approach was less of a commercial risk. This is the first magazine assessed thus far that did not incorporate an obviously feminist ethos, although it clearly had advanced views. Rather, as the chapter progresses it becomes apparent that the driving factor was didacticism, guiding young women in a eugenically-aware society, plagued by a fear of degeneration.

In appearance, the *Young Woman* was similar to *Shafts*, but was less dense in its typographical presentation, consisting of two columns of text and using a larger font. This appearance reflected a commercial decision to reach an audience who desired a friendlier looking paper. The magazine's potential readers were encapsulated in its epigraph: 'The sweetest lives are those to duty wed.' A more submissive female is depicted than that of *Shafts* who gains 'shafts of light' from daring to think. Daring suggests risk and subversion of the natural order. 'Duty wed' implies the opposite; readers were not encouraged to stray from their womanly path to discover the truth pursued within *Shafts*. 'Sweetest' emphasized conventional womanhood: to be sweet was to be feminine and to be feminine was to be submissive. A woman smoking a cigarette, donning rational dress would not be considered 'sweet'. Therefore, to be the sweetest would be to shun the caricatured New Woman, something Atkins did throughout. Yet despite a more conservative outlook than liberal feminist publications, the *Young Woman* articulated an aspiration to develop its readers' minds: 'I am not aware of any magazine that distinctly aims at providing an organ

for women who think, who read'.³⁹⁹ Written a month before *Shafts* commenced publication, the *Young Woman* was quick to try to capture this market of thoughtful, intelligent women with whom it regularly corresponded.

An important aspect of the *Young Woman* was the way it collaborated with readers, 'improving the magazine' in line with their comments. By tailoring the subject matter to reader demands the *Young Woman* made its readers feel valued, loyal and, as a result, more likely to take out subscriptions, presenting a doubly ideological and commercial ploy on Atkins' part. The magazine used diary and letter entries to provide a personal touch, such as Ella Day's 'Letters to the Harassed' column. In 'Letters to a Young Wife', appearing from 1893, Phyllis Browne opened each contribution with the personalised address, 'My Dear Daisy'. A further example of this approach appeared in December 1895, when a reader, Devonian, complained about the new 'Dress Notes' section which was first printed in the previous issue. The response follows:

I am sorry you do not like the Dress Notes. Many of our readers live in the country and do not see fashion magazines, so that a few little paragraphs about the gay world are interesting and welcome to them. We debated a good deal over this departure before making it. Should we find it undesired by the majority of our readers or unnecessary, we shall let it lapse with the greatest of pleasure. I am gratified to know that you think anything everyday beneath THE YOUNG WOMAN.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁹ W.J. Dawson, 'My Study Diary', *YW*. (10.1892),p.31.

⁴⁰⁰ Mrs Esler, 'Answers to Correspondents', *YW*. (12.1895),p.107.

The idea that ‘anything everyday’ was beneath the *Young Woman* provided a significant clue about the readership, wary of avoiding negative associations such as would be possible through affinity with the *New Woman*. The *Young Woman* was more than a ‘society novelette’ or ‘fashion-plate’, not just to its editor but also to its readers. As Liggins observes, the magazine minimised ‘its fashion coverage in order to leave more space for the dissemination of information on women’s careers’.⁴⁰¹ Devonian’s protest implied that the magazine was less about style and more about substance, contradicting Fraser, Green and Johnston’s observation that the *Young Woman* occupied the ‘more stylish end’ of publications available to women.⁴⁰² The response indicated the care taken in choosing material to go into the magazine. In accommodating its content to reader demands, the *Young Woman* ensured that it remained contemporary and accessible. Yet the magazine’s assorted readership complicated this, reflected by a correspondence six months after Devonian’s complaint:

I am sorry you miss the fashion notes from our pages. Such a number of our readers seemed to think that to add dress notes was to imply that their intelligence was of a trifling order, that they rendered us depressed and self-reproachful at the office.⁴⁰³

This response echoed the former, opening with a not entirely sincere apology. The facetious, tongue-in-cheek tone suggested that the concerns of some readers were trivial at times. Nevertheless, the readers of *Young Woman* had their part in shaping the magazine:

⁴⁰¹ Liggins, “‘The Life of a Bachelor Girl’”, p.222.

⁴⁰² Fraser, et al, p.168.

⁴⁰³ YW. (06.1896), p.324

by the seventh volume, fashion had become a more prominent feature. An article was accompanied by a picture each month, focusing on topics such as ‘Seasonal dress’ and ‘hats in particular’. Perhaps this was prompted by the floundering of *Shafts* at the end of 1899 which failed to include such features, as well as the conversion of the *Signal* into a publication incorporating fashion with feminism. Competition from other women’s magazines was another influence over the content of the *Young Woman*.

In producing an organ for women who ‘read and think’, the *Young Woman* attempted fully to understand the nature of woman as she stood on the precipice between girlhood and womanhood, bridging the gap accordingly. The New Girl became a focal point during the fin de siècle, with Edith Lyttelton Gell defining the period between childhood and womanhood as ‘adolescence’.⁴⁰⁴ Adolescence signified a period in which young girls were clamouring for improved education and a general improvement in their rights; in this way the ‘New Girl’ can be coupled with the New Woman. The New Girl was becoming so apparent at the fin de siècle that, as Kristen Drotner has pointed out: she ‘began to be targeted as a specific readership group in [her] own right’.⁴⁰⁵ The *Young Woman*’s title directly referenced this new readership. Whilst readers of the *Young Woman* were most likely ‘young and upwardly mobile’,⁴⁰⁶ one could argue that the older ‘Girl-of-the-Period’ was targeted by this magazine also. This was evinced most conspicuously within discourses of marriage in which the role of the mother was regularly remarked upon. ‘Incompetent Wives’ announced: ‘There is no greater injustice that can be inflicted upon a girl than for a

⁴⁰⁴ Sarah, Bilston, *The Awkward Age in Women’s Popular Fiction, 1850-1900: Girls and the Transition to Womanhood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.170.

⁴⁰⁵ Kristen Drotner (1988) cited in Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?*, p.137.

⁴⁰⁶ ‘Publisher’s Note’, *Harvester Microfilm*.

mother to allow a daughter to enter womanhood or wifehood without a practical knowledge of a household'.⁴⁰⁷ This was clearly intended to be read by mothers; furthermore, there was an insistence that this advice 'cannot be too strongly impressed upon our girls'. The possessive pronoun enforced a sense of responsibility, speaking to the mothers of would-be brides. The mother was instructed to keep watch over her daughter, ensuring that she was not too reckless with her new-found liberty.

The mother-figure was certainly significant in the *Young Woman* with one particular contributor most assertively assuming a maternal role for the magazine's readers. Although the *Young Woman* was technically edited by Frederick A. Atkins, the editorial voice itself emerged more vociferously from the 'agony aunt', Mrs. Esler. Originating from Ulster, Esler was a writer of both novels and short stories, infused with her Presbyterian moral values. By endowing Esler with the 'agony aunt' role, Atkins suggested that the thrust of the *Young Woman* was towards a more feminine voice that could relate to its readers. Esler was not afraid of providing frank, sometimes scathing opinions. She informed readers in no uncertain terms whether their literary attempts were praiseworthy or if their personal problems were worthwhile. However, her sage words rang true with readers, one of whom wrote: 'It is such a real treat to me to read your Chats and Answers'.⁴⁰⁸ In a variation of the correspondence format seen in *Shafts* and the *Signal*, in which the readers' letters were printed, Esler's 'Answers to Correspondents' included only her reply and not the original reader letter. This is not only restricting for the researcher, it is also indicative of the contrast between this magazine and the liberal feminist publications, which provided no

⁴⁰⁷ YW. (01.1895),p.115.

⁴⁰⁸ YW. (06.1896),p.323

such censure. The reader was required to reconstruct the original enquiry from the response given; this produced an active but more isolated reader, and restricted the level of community that was built in the previous two magazines. Yet Esler did encourage a reader community by passing on letters: 'The letters which came for INQUIRER, *re* left-off clothing, have all been forwarded to her. As they were numerous, it is unlikely that she will be able to respond to all'.⁴⁰⁹

As well as responding to correspondents, Esler wrote a regular column entitled, 'My Monthly Chat with the Girls'. By 1893 this column was renamed: 'Between Ourselves: A Friendly Chat with the Girls'. It was significant that Esler's column mentioned 'girls', thinking once more about the magazine's dual audience. This audience enhanced Esler's column, suggesting that, on the one hand it was targeted towards the young girl, the 'New Woman', but that the mother of this woman also read it, tempering her daughter's tendency towards rebellion by taking subtle advice from the *Young Woman*'s contributors. 'Chat' in this context reflected the 'fireside chats' exploited within many of the women's magazines in which more advanced topics could be broached in a way that appealed to women in the domestic sphere.⁴¹⁰ In her column, Esler became a parental figure, sharing the benefit of her advanced years and revealing the advantages that young girls had by being born at a time when doors were opening for women: 'To be a clever young woman nowadays is to be a fortunate creature, and to each young woman who opens the opens the pages of her namesake I offer my congratulations that she was born at the end of this century of grace

⁴⁰⁹ YW. (04.1897),p.280.

⁴¹⁰ Fraser, et al.,p. 42.

and not at its beginning'.⁴¹¹ By the end of 1893, Esler began to include sketches of different kinds of girl, from the 'unpopular girl' to the 'popular girl' to the 'girl with a temper'. On 'The Girl with a Temper', Esler wrote: 'In time she will realise that she is little loved. [...] that she has somehow missed the place in life which she once intended to fill so pompously'.⁴¹² A temper was demonstrated to be a handicap, one that could cause a girl to be shut out from the 'intimate counsels' of her relations and friends. Such advice conformed to the 'friendly' nature of this feature, lacking a directly edifying tone yet holding some admonition at its heart. Through Esler's column the *Young Woman's* readers were, in Atkins' words, helped 'in the living of the best possible life'. Esler not only drew on the complex and multi-faceted spirit of womanhood but also provided life guides for readers. At a time of gender instability, Esler fulfilled Atkin's desire 'to counsel' his readers, reassuring them that they fitted somewhere within the vast continuum of the modern female.

Whilst acknowledging woman's multi-faceted nature, Esler did not support the New Woman as an appropriate representative. In December 1894, when the New Woman controversy was at its peak, Esler explored this type of female, recording her birth as occurring when woman was made aware of the revelation that she could have 'opinions of her own, [...] that she might study seriously any subject that interested her, [...] if she owned or earned anything she might justly retain or dispose of it uncontrolled'.⁴¹³ Rather than degrading the New Woman to the smoking, swearing, mannish stereotype, Esler argued: 'There is no female type represented by the New Woman'; 'the individual is not

⁴¹¹ YW. (10.1892),p.25.

⁴¹² YW. (02.1894),p.177.

⁴¹³ 'The New Woman', YW. (12.1894),pp.106-7, p.106.

necessarily the truth of the race' and one cannot take a single image of womanhood to represent a whole movement negatively (p. 107). Esler concluded by describing the New Woman as 'the mythical and absolutely non-existent type' (p. 107). Yet, in response to a reader two months later she wrote: 'The world will never be at its best or happiest until the equality of the sexes is recognised as fully as the equality of men and men, or women and women'.⁴¹⁴ Certainly Esler shared many of the views of this 'mythical', 'non-existence' type. Yet, she denied the New Woman the right to represent equality between the sexes, informing a reader in July 1895 that the New Woman was 'merely a figurative Aunt Sally, at which the Press takes "shies" when interesting matter is off, and the giant gooseberry is rampant in the land. Woman has been a literary stalking-horse of this kind from time immemorial'.⁴¹⁵ For Esler, the New Woman was an inadequate representative for the woman's movement, serving as a distraction rather than an aid. Her column provided a frank and nuanced portrait of womanhood, one that refused to fall into a category created for the media and whose identity was informed by 'real' women rather than by a 'mythical' figure.

Nevertheless, almost a year following Esler's attack on the New Woman, one appreciative correspondent, Jane M, thanked Esler for her 'excellent and healthy endeavour to raise the general estimate of our sex':

I am really glad the 'New Woman' has appeared on the stage of human life – the woman who thinks for herself, and believes the part allotted her is not altogether to

⁴¹⁴ YW. (02.1895),p.179.

⁴¹⁵ YW. (07.1895),p.357.

take care of her hands, study the fashions. And look forward not only to being engaged. Thank you once more for upholding the 'New Woman' as you do. Long may the New Woman live, in so far as she is better than the Old!⁴¹⁶

This was one of the few occasions where Esler printed the reader's letter directly, rather than just providing her response. This highlights the significance of the New Woman as a topic for the magazine. By including the reader's praises and not her own response, Esler conveyed the persistence and mutability of the term New Woman. For readers such as Jane, she was a figure from whom to take solace in her life as 'a farmer's daughter'. Jane was one of the readers Esler referred to in her response to 'Dress Notes', who lived 'in a very lonely part of the country, near the mountains', caring for both the farm and her aged father. Needing something to support her through her solitude, Jane used the New Woman as a recognised shorthand in a sympathetic context where it would be properly understood. She believed that the New Woman lived within the *Young Woman*, despite Esler's claim that she was 'merely a figurative Aunt Sally'. Regardless of the confliction between Esler's views and those of her readers, the *Young Woman* clearly expanded its readers' world views, particularly through the adventures depicted by its role models.⁴¹⁷

In the face of her statement that 'A writer of the press should have no personality',⁴¹⁸ Jane's passionate entreaty demonstrated that Esler made herself known to readers. In the December 1896 issue, the 'Between Ourselves' column included an illustration in its header for the first time of a woman sitting on a chair, encircled by three young women,

⁴¹⁶ YW (06.1896),p.323.

⁴¹⁷ Explored in detail in the following section.

⁴¹⁸ 'To the Girl Who is About to Become of Note', YW. (04.1896),p.249.

leaning in eagerly.⁴¹⁹ By the seventh volume the header was more prominent, depicting two society women in hats conferring on one side and a woman in less extravagant clothing, most likely a maid, looking at them from across the room where she was seated at a table with a jug and a cup. This illustration changed from month to month, echoing the changing position of woman through the century. The first emphasized Esler's counselling role, one she was proud to play, ensuring that readers knew that responses to their communication came from her:

The answers to correspondents in THE YOUNG WOMAN are not written by the Editor. This is not notified in every number, owing to want of space; but I think it would not require more than a moderate amount of reasoning power to discover that the name at the top of an article is the same that would stand at the bottom.⁴²⁰

However, the contrast between the December 1896 illustration and those following gradually diminished Esler's function, prefiguring her unexplained disappearance from the magazine. This may have been a result of her increasingly zealous views on the woman's movement from 1897:

I have the very highest opinion of my own sex, of its intelligence, patience and fortitude, as well as of its human need of justice, approval of its good deeds, and

⁴¹⁹ From volume five, more illustrations appeared and the headings for articles and features became ornate and bold suggesting the influence of New Journalism.

⁴²⁰ YW. (04.1897),p.280.

love in return for love. [...] I think it was owing to want of education that the world did not tire ages ago of forming and repeating unworthy estimates of woman.⁴²¹

Esler looked towards a future where 'Woman will unquestionably do many things which are forbidden to her to-day'.⁴²² However, by May 1899, the textual composition of Esler's column had been modified, containing only 'Answers to Correspondents', with no editorial.⁴²³ In the following issue 'Between Ourselves' was composed of paragraphs separated by asterisks, rather than forming the continuous text of previous issues.⁴²⁴ The next issue saw 'Between Ourselves' included 'with Answers to Correspondents' in its subtitle; Esler was not named as the author.⁴²⁵ By August 1899 it became clear that column had changed hands. From this point author Ethel F. Heddle corresponded with readers. It was requested that letters be addressed to 'Mrs. W. Marshall'; whether this was the same person or not it is difficult to know. Heddle admitted to being disadvantaged by reader loyalty to her predecessor: 'I offer this suggestion with some diffidence, as it was Mrs. Esler's views you wished to hear, not mine'. She referred to Esler often: 'Mrs. Esler was quite right in saying you were original'; 'A.B.'s letter in reference to Mrs. Esler's article upon sixpenny editions is so interesting'. Under Heddle, the Correspondence section became less radical and more domestic with headings such as FOR MOTHERS, THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL, and FOR THE NURSERY.⁴²⁶ She also discussed topics such as 'The Art of Happiness', 'When Women Dine', 'Tired Mothers', and 'Our Manners'.⁴²⁷

⁴²¹ 'Answers to Correspondents', *YW*. (03.1897),p.240

⁴²² 'Man's Estimate of Woman', *YW*. (04.1897),p.277.

⁴²³ *YW*. (05.1899).

⁴²⁴ *YW*. (06.1899).

⁴²⁵ *YW*. (07.1899).

⁴²⁶ *YW*. (12.1899),p.120

⁴²⁷ *YW*. (08.1899); (09.1899); (10.1899); (11.1899).

Many readers missed their reliable agony aunt, and continuing to mention Esler within the section may well have been a ploy to avoid upsetting loyal readers. Esler's column, like the *New Woman*, had come to serve as a role model for the magazine's readers, the importance of which, real or not, was undeniable. Although sceptical of the *New Woman*, Esler embodied her desire for equality, and may have faced a potentially similar struggle with censorship. Disappearing from the *Young Woman*'s pages by 1899 further paralleled her with this 'figurative Aunt Sally'. Yet, in her short time as the magazine's guiding voice, Esler inspired and counselled Atkins' readers and became the very role model that the magazine held at its centre.

Constructing the Ideal Woman

With young, thereby potentially impressionable, women forming at least half of its readership, the *Young Woman* produced a regular focus on the character of the modern female, setting her against her more submissive forebear. Modern critics' claims for the *Young Woman*'s feminism rest on the interviews and favourable biographies it included of 'prominent feminists',⁴²⁸ and 'achieving women' and its 'news of women's activities from around the world'.⁴²⁹ However, this did not necessarily reflect the *Young Woman*'s feminism but rather the magazine's attempt to persuade readers away from unsavoury behaviour by exhibiting women who upheld the more admirable traits of their gender. Indeed, the magazine regularly cited Romantic writers such as Tennyson and Wordsworth, as well as the Victorian art critic Ruskin, using them to reassert the feminine ideal:

⁴²⁸ Doughan and Sanchez, p.7.

⁴²⁹ Levine, "'The Humanising Influences of Five O'Clock Tea'", p.264.

Wordsworth was named as the writer who portrayed womanhood most effectively.⁴³⁰ This focus on women from the male perspective further implied that female character sketches were not necessarily a part of a feminist bid but a way to highlight the attributes outlined by the Romantics. In its early articles, the *Young Woman* habitually discussed sensible young women. It was these sensible young women that the magazine projected itself towards, those who were uninfluenced by forthright, brash females. However, as the decade progressed, the *Young Woman* began to fear the ‘manly woman’. Its character sketches drew the reader’s attention to true femininity. In examining the construction of modern womanhood, the magazine also explored contemporary notions of solidarity, allying sisterhood with the distasteful, campaigning New Woman, rather than using it as a means of protection for the vulnerable individual.

The *Young Woman*’s first issue quoted Ruskin: ‘You fancy [...], that a wife’s rule should only be over her husband’s house, not over his mind. [...] the rule is just the reverse of that: a true wife in her husband’s house is his servant; it is in his heart that she is queen’.⁴³¹ From the outset readers were reminded of their status, and more importantly, their responsibilities as women. Ruskin’s quotation appeared subsequently through the magazine, incorporated into varying discourses. The somewhat conservative author Sarah Doudney wrote: ‘As Ruskin says, “Queens you must always be; queens to your lovers; queens to your husbands and your sons”’,⁴³² whilst the more feminist Butler asserted: women ‘ought to remember

⁴³⁰ ‘The Ideal Woman’, *YW*. (11.1892), pp.39-42.

⁴³¹ ‘Mr Ruskin’s Message to Women’, *YW*. (10.1892), p.11.

⁴³² ‘How I Write My Books – An Interview With Miss Sarah Doudney’, *YW*. (02.1893), p.160.

that they are queens born, and that they must comport themselves as such'.⁴³³ Despite these women occupying different stances on the woman question, they concurred about the importance of maintaining feminine dignity. This was bolstered in the second issue's character sketch of Frances E. Willard.⁴³⁴ Readers were urged to 'emulate the achievements' of Willard, and if this was not possible to 'at least follow her' ideal of womanhood, by taking 'an active and prominent part in social movements without the loss of feminine dignity' (p. 52). As I have suggested, building the campaigning woman alongside the traditional feminine icon became central to the woman's magazine asserting its difference from the mainstream press.

Esler had explicitly steered her readers towards the magazine's role models, writing in the same issue as Willard's character sketch: 'cultivate your powers and your individuality to the best of your ability [...] Think for yourselves, see for yourselves, and form your characters on the best models you know'.⁴³⁵ This entreaty pointed women back to the character sketch ten pages previously, and also prefigured Willard's own words three issues later in which she advocated greater maturity for young women. Those with 'the mental calibre to care for' this magazine need not 'be afraid to talk sense rather than nonsense'.⁴³⁶ Once more the serious nature of the *Young Woman* was underscored. Willard herself was a strong advocate of the sensible female, disapproving of 'that nervous cachinnation' or the 'unendurable giggles' for which women were sometimes known. Like Esler in the magazine's first issue, Willard acknowledged the power that 'young women were coming

⁴³³ Albert Dawson, 'A Noble Woman and Her Work. A Talk With Mrs. Josephine E. Butler', *YW*. (08.1893),p.366.

⁴³⁴ Dora M. Jones, *YW*. (11.1892),pp.49-52.

⁴³⁵ *YW*. (11.1892),pp.62-4,,p.62.

⁴³⁶ 'The Young Woman in Society', *YW*. (02.1893),pp.147-9,p.149.

to realise' but added that they 'turn their beautiful gifts to the best account for the uplifting of humanity'. This sense of responsibility sustained the readership of sagacious young women. The fact that Esler's commentary interacted with, and was reflected by, the magazine's role models also helped to cement her role as agony aunt by legitimizing her words. Collaboratively, Esler and Willard encouraged readers to procure work and be useful, rather than serving as a complement to another, with Esler reminding them that once, 'girls were everywhere advised to prepare for wifehood, to regard wifehood as their destiny; that matrimony was put before them as the only desirable career'.⁴³⁷

With Esler supporting the contributors' image of a queenly, but increasingly liberated individual as an ideal to aspire to, the *Young Woman* seemed initially confident about their readers' immunity to the spectre of the 'manly woman'. An October 1893 article on religious womanhood asserted: 'To talk about woman being under any conceivable circumstances "unsexed" is to talk utter nonsense. Sex is a fact too patent, too vital, too essential, to be altered by any law or custom'.⁴³⁸ Two months later an interview with Mrs. Alexander revealed that she was unafraid 'of women ever losing their womanliness. [...] Nature in the long run will have her way, and consequently I have no fear of the manly woman becoming a permanent type'.⁴³⁹ Traditional values of femininity were held in high regard and nature was used to uphold these values. The December 1892 issue included 'Tennyson's Pictures of Womanhood' which asserted: 'The ideal womanhood must be nursed upon the bosom of Nature'.⁴⁴⁰ New Woman novels also evoked nature. Ménie

⁴³⁷ YW. (11.1892),pp.62-4,p.62.

⁴³⁸ Hugh Price Hughes, 'What Christianity Has Done for Women', YW. (10.1893),p.25.

⁴³⁹ Frederick Dolman, 'A Popular Novelist at Home. A Chat with Mrs Alexander', YW. (12.1893),p.88.

⁴⁴⁰ YW. (12.1892),p.86.

Muriel Dowie's *A Girl in the Karpathians* (1892) urged women to: 'Give your whims a loose rein, follow the promptings of that queer live soul in you which always retains its affinity to simpleness and green-growing things, and be prepared to be thought very odd when you come back'.⁴⁴¹ In *The Story of a Modern Woman*, Mary contemplated her lonely journey through life: 'Nature, [...] was once again at her work of recreation. Once again the lilac-trees were burgeoning with waxen blossoms. Once again a thrush, [...] was swelling its brown throat with an amorous song. The air was loaded with the perfume of may'.⁴⁴² The sensuous quality of this passage associates Mary's freedom with the femininity of nature and implies that to be independent is truly to be womanly. In this sense, nature was used by both the *Young Woman* and contemporaneous New Woman authors to suggest that gender was a biological, natural fact, perhaps influenced but not changed by external forces.

In January 1894, 'A Voyage with Olive Schreiner', by Rev. R.E. Welsh, upheld Willard's example of strong womanhood by also conjuring nature: '[Schreiner] can tell you how as a young girl she used to look on the very weeds and feel intensely that she was one with them'.⁴⁴³ This contemplation of nature was bound up with Schreiner's 'brave bid for the emancipation of woman'.⁴⁴⁴ Welsh's description of Schreiner echoed that of Willard, being 'the bravest of women' as well as 'pure womanly'. He added: 'When her heart burns, she scorches with her words. Yet one of her strongest qualities is her restraint'. Whilst the New Woman figure had not yet debuted in the mainstream press, Welsh upheld the fact that: 'we

⁴⁴¹ Méné Muriel Dowie, *A Girl in the Karpathians* (London: George Philip and Son, 1892), p.109.

⁴⁴² Ella Hepworth Dixon, *The Story of a Modern Woman* (London: Merlin Press, 1900; 1894), p.270.

⁴⁴³ YW. (01.1894), p.112.

⁴⁴⁴ YW. (01.1894), p.112.

do not *like* her *Story*. We are amazed at its insight and overwhelmed by its force, [...] But it is not *pleasant* reading'. The style of her writing was also scrutinized: 'She uses the plain words of one who wants to shock people into the reality of truth'. Whilst young women could learn from Schreiner's womanliness and courage, the disengagement engineered between the woman and her work suggested that the *Young Woman* was wary of the emerging campaigning New Woman.

By the middle of 1894, in tandem with the mainstream New Woman, the *Young Woman* began to rethink its stress upon natural womanhood, suggesting that in fact, one could unsex one's self to become a New Woman. Miss Billington advised women workers to 'never forget that they are women. With all smartness and energy it is quite possible to maintain a womanly reserve and dignity'.⁴⁴⁵ Four months later, distaste for advanced womanhood came to a head in 'A Talk with Mr Hall Caine' about his novel *The Manxman*.⁴⁴⁶ In Caine's novel women gained the vote: 'Spinsters and widows with necessary legal qualifications have the suffrage, and the married woman also [...] has control over the property of her husband' (p. 21). However, this feminist utopia was undercut by the fact that women could only enjoy it as spinsters or widows. Highly threatened by the New Woman, Caine focused on women's relationship to men rather than to other women. Their freedom existed through disassociation from men, suggesting that their ability to have relationships was only possible through submission. Furthermore, Manx women were disassociated from the unifying symbol of the New Woman, a figure with whom Caine was greatly uncomfortable: 'He shifted his position, threw his feet across

⁴⁴⁵ 'How Can I Earn My Living? IV – In Journalism, Art, or Photography', *YW*. (06.1894),p.308.

⁴⁴⁶ *YW*. (10.1894),pp.18-22.

a chair, adjusted his white sailor-knot scarf and tapped his box of wax vestas meditatively' (pp.21-2). The active verbs – 'shifted', 'threw', 'adjusted', 'tapped' – express discomfort as well as prevarication. When he began talking it was 'at length slowly' (p. 22); he stated defensively that New Women had 'an erroneous idea of the lives that men live [...] the large proportion of men live clean and wholesome lives' (p. 22). Caine focused on defending men against the advanced woman, unable to view her as a separate entity with desires of her own.

Interestingly, despite its desire to build an autonomous figure of femininity, the *Young Woman* did not redress Caine's androcentric claims, the interviewer acquiescing with many of his comments. Caine declared that New Womanhood could not succeed as it failed to acknowledge 'the fundamental and natural inferiority of women as a sex'. The *Young Woman* responded by asking 'Our Contributors' Club' in the following issue: 'Are Women Inferior to Men?'⁴⁴⁷ The Club included L.T. Meade and Doudeny, both actively involved in writing fiction for the *Young Woman*, as well as Grand and Butler. Their responses supported female freedom but, like the *Young Woman*, failed to endorse the New Woman, viewing her presence as retarding progress. Meade and Doudney both disagreed with Caine's comments on female inferiority and rejected the New Woman, blaming men for her appearance. Doudney also revealed a dislike for Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* suggesting that it had gone too far. Butler similarly defended women against Caine whilst also rejecting New Womanhood and arguing that *The Heavenly Twins* missed out on greatness by betraying a low opinion of men. In her own response Grand disapproved of the manners and customs associated with her writing. She denied having a bitter view of men and, like

⁴⁴⁷ YW. (11.1894),pp.67-8.

Caine, disassociated her novel from the New Woman. Despite her clear objections, Grand in particular seemed unable to escape constant association with this ‘figurative Aunt Sally’, with Caine’s interviewer referring to the woman question as ‘Sarah Grandism’ (p. 21). Yet referring to the movement as Sarah Grandism was not entirely inaccurate. It demonstrates the constant associations of the New Woman with discussions on the contemporary female, even when she was not mentioned directly. Grand’s own defensive diatribe echoed Caine’s vindication of the male sex, suggesting that the New Woman was just as much of a threat to women’s ideal woman as it was to man’s. The following month contained Esler’s assessment of the New Woman, not only indicating the interactive nature of this topic in the *Young Woman*, but also showing the way the magazine guided readers towards the fact that, threatening as she may seem, the New Woman was ‘the mythical and absolutely non-existent type’. Being printed in the last issue of 1894, Esler’s dismissal of the New Woman seemed to suggest that the matter was closed, but this was far from true.

In the following year the *Young Woman* included a two part paper on ‘The “Old” Woman and the “New”’ by self-confessed New Woman supporter Hulda Friederichs, from March 1895.⁴⁴⁸ Friederichs was another role model for readers, being one of the few women ‘employed on the same terms and conditions as male reporters’.⁴⁴⁹ Friederichs’ article began defensively, claiming that perhaps the reader was ‘lifting up [her] hands in horror that anyone should [...] say one word in defence of the New Woman’ (p. 202). By commencing thus Friederichs indicated the potential backlash from readers of the *Young Woman*, particularly that great number who acquiesced with Esler. To accommodate these

⁴⁴⁸ YW. (03.1895),pp.202-4.

⁴⁴⁹ Walker, ‘Friederichs, Hulda’.

readers Friederichs used ‘asterisks at very short intervals’ which served as resting-places where the reader, having been shocked, could regain their breath (p.202). Friederichs built on Esler’s claim for the New Woman’s mythical qualities, reiterating the increasingly popular view that there were two types of New Women: real and caricatured. The latter New Woman was the one who appeared on the stage, in the work of the caricaturist, and in ‘the cheap sensation novel’ (p. 203). The former inspired one ‘with gladness and great satisfaction’ (p. 203). In her reconstruction of the New Woman, Friederichs was careful to echo the *Young Woman*’s emphasis on wife and mother remaining the ideal; however, ‘over and above her housewifely qualities, a woman had other attributes which made her more human’ (p. 204). This gestured towards the development of woman’s role. The *Young Woman* certainly provided its readers with a renewed focus on women’s work; however, it was also wary of encouraging more ambitious vocations, suggesting careers such as art that were ‘eminently fitted to women’ as ‘no one disputes the propriety of their following’ it.⁴⁵⁰ This comment appeared in the issue after Friederichs’ first instalment, and carefully tempered her promotion of the New Woman.

Part two of Friederichs’ article built upon the contemporary arguments surrounding the New Woman, suggesting that she was ‘anything but new’.⁴⁵¹ In comparing the old woman and the new, Friederichs’ devised an ideal New Woman with whom readers could feel more comfortable: ‘the New Woman is only the Old Woman made perfect’ (p. 276). Friederichs mingled feminine gentleness and tenacity as the two qualities that drove the movement forward, once more reinforcing the *Young Woman*’s role models. Whilst the New Woman

⁴⁵⁰ Marion Leslie, ‘Women Who Work’, *YW*. (04.1895), pp.230-4.

⁴⁵¹ *YW*. (05.1895), pp.273-6.

was considered by her critics to be selfish and self-centred, rejecting traditional womanly duties to follow her own goals,⁴⁵² Friedrichs kept the New Woman at ‘the centre of the home circle’ (p. 275), combining the best aspects of the Victorian ideal promoted in the *Young Woman*. However, instead of being self-sacrificing she searched for selfhood; instead of identifying herself through her family she fulfilled her individual potential. Despite Friederichs’ creation of a New Woman who epitomised the *Young Woman*’s Romantic ideals, Esler’s commentary on the New Woman as a figurative Aunt Sally followed two months later: the *Young Woman* could not help but to continue to disassociate from the harangued individual.

By June 1896 the *Young Woman* interviewed a role model of outlandish accomplishments but one who also rejected the New Woman: the lady explorer Mary Kingsley.⁴⁵³ Kingsley revealed that her father was horrified at the idea of educated women and believed children should help themselves, providing Kingsley with invaluable domestic training. This training aided her in Africa where she mixed freely with women, studying their home life. By applying domestic training to cultural learning Kingsley became involved in dialogues about foreign customs previously reserved for men. She used her newfound information to make an argument for women’s equal rights: ‘amongst savage tribes it is the women who do the hardest work and are often stronger than the men.’ (p.294) Accordingly Kingsley believed that British women should be treated less like wallflowers: it is ‘such nonsense to make a fuss about everything which a woman happens to do [...] a woman has more deep-down endurance than a man’ (p. 294). The first-hand perspective of this pioneering

⁴⁵² Bjørhovde, p.4.

⁴⁵³ ‘Adventures of a Lady Explorer. An Interview with Miss Mary Kingsley’, *YW*. (06.1896), pp.289-95.

traveller, combining domesticity with adventure, demonstrated once more how one could practically participate in male activity ‘without the loss of feminine dignity’.⁴⁵⁴ Yet, like Esler, Kingsley did not support the New Woman, refusing to sign a petition requesting female admission to the learned societies and claiming that she had no time for ‘These androgynes’. By using female role models who outwardly rejected the New Woman, the *Young Woman* indicated its own rejection of the figure as an ideal of femininity. Yet its construction of womanhood conveyed by the attributes of Willard, Schreiner and Kingsley – ‘deep-down endurance’, ‘feminine dignity’, and courage – seemed to be a direct embodiment of the campaigning New Woman supported by readers such as Jane. This reiterated the New Woman’s potential to be a concept of interpretation: although Esler associated her with all that was negative in woman’s progression, others associated her with positive regeneration.

Kingsley’s obituary in *The Lady’s Pictorial* claimed that ‘The greatest good she has done, perhaps, is to show in her life and works that it is possible to stand shoulder to shoulder with Man, and yet preserve every womanly characteristic and every feminine charm’.⁴⁵⁵ The women explored and praised by the *Young Woman* possessed this essential characteristic which was also central to the campaigning New Woman, as espoused by writers such as Grand. Yet with Grand similarly rejecting direct association with the New Woman, by including these characteristics the *Young Woman* created an alternative to the figurative Aunt Sally: one who did not have the same controversial reputation but who was essentially the same woman repackaged to suit the magazine’s sensible readership. This

⁴⁵⁴ Dora M. Jones, ‘Frances E. Willard – A Character Sketch’, *YW*. (11.1892), pp. 49-52, p. 50.

⁴⁵⁵ “Obituary. Mary Kingsley,” *Lady’s Pictorial* (16.06.1900) in Robert Pearce, *Mary Kingsley: Light in the Heart of Darkness* (Oxford: The Kensal Press, 1900), p.137.

idea is supported in the same issue as Kingsley's interview with Friederichs' article, 'A Peep at the Pioneer Club'.⁴⁵⁶ Friederichs documented her shock at learning that the president, Mrs Massingberd was not the 'red-faced, athletic-looking' character she expected but 'a most graceful figure, tall, lithe, and slender' (p. 304), echoing Kingsley who sloshed 'through the mangrove swamps' dressed 'in full Victorian skirts', like a 'spinster-aunt'.⁴⁵⁷ The disparity between advanced behaviour and feminine appearance became an important part of repackaging the unsavoury manly woman. In the month following, Mayo wrote 'To the Girl Who Wishes She Was a Man',⁴⁵⁸ conceding that this was understandable in previous years, when the lot of women was so unequal to that of her brothers. However, contemporary women do not have the same woes and should not abandon their sphere to enter into men's work. Three months later, Esler lamented the 'unsexed woman' who showed 'her superiority to her sisters by railing at them'; such women were 'ashamed to be girls', instead desiring 'to ape boys'.⁴⁵⁹ In order to steer women away from this undesirable behaviour, the *Young Woman* also used its female role models to encourage female solidarity.

Willard entreated readers 'to help forward in sisterly fashion those whose intentions have been just as good as our own, but whose temptations are a hundredfold greater'.⁴⁶⁰ This positioned women as guardian, not just of men, but of each other. The combination of Kingsley's article with Friederichs' focus on the Pioneer Club underscored the importance

⁴⁵⁶ YW. (06.1896),pp.302-6. The Pioneer Club was an organisation founded in 1892 by Emily Massingberd who used it as a home for women of advanced views

⁴⁵⁷ Monica Anderson, *Women and the Politics of Travel, 1870-1914* (Madison, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006),p.200.

⁴⁵⁸ YW. (07.1896),pp.347-9.

⁴⁵⁹ 'Maligned Woman', YW. (10.1896),pp.38-40,p.38.

⁴⁶⁰ YW. (02.1893),pp. 147-9,p.148.

of female bonding within the *Young Woman*. Massingberd revealed that the Pioneer Club had proved ‘most helpful to a large number of women of all classes. It is stimulating and encouraging to find that whereas you stood alone before, you are now a member of a community which has the same aims and aspirations’ (pp. 305-6). Compounding this view in the following issue, Mayo wrote in her article on ‘the Girl Who Wishes She Was a Man’, that women who talked about ‘womanhood’ and ‘loyalty to [their] own sex’ were only mentioning half of humanity and if this loyalty ‘means anything but loyalty to truth and right, it is something to blush for, not to be proud of’.⁴⁶¹ An emphasis on female solidarity served, in Mayo’s view, to alienate the rest of the population. In the following issue, when writing on the ‘unsexed woman’ Esler cited an article in the April 1895 issue of *Tit-Bits*, ‘The Frailty of Feminine Friendships’, which began: ‘The best-natured woman that ever lived can say bitter things about her dearest friend when that friend’s back is turned’.⁴⁶² Whilst not necessarily arguing for female solidarity, Esler objected to woman’s supposedly disloyal attitude, deeming these ‘baseless charges’ which put ‘false ideas into the minds of readers too uneducated to judge the statements on their merits’. She was confident in her own readers’ intelligence and their ability to interpret a range of opinions. Despite producing a fairly supportive voice for female solidarity at the beginning of the decade, by the end the *Young Woman* contained criticism of female loyalty. In August 1899, an article by Dora M. Jones on ‘The Ladies’ Clubs of London’ suggested that loyalty was not as strong as between men, with women still coaxed into ‘betraying their fellow-workers’, and thus requiring training ‘to fight for their sex’.⁴⁶³ This endorsed the article from *Tit-Bits* with

⁴⁶¹ YW. (07.1896), pp. 347-9, p. 349.

⁴⁶² YW. (10.1896), pp. 38-40, p. 38.

⁴⁶³ YW. (08.1899), pp. 409-413, p. 413.

which Esler disagreed. Clearly, the *Young Woman* did not want to be seen as a magazine that supported the sisterhood of the campaigning liberal feminist magazine.

The magazine's interviews with female authors also often revealed a less positive attitude towards the woman question. The popular novelist Mrs Alexander admitted that she was 'not enthusiastic about what are termed "women's rights."' ⁴⁶⁴ John Strange Winter asserted: 'I cannot bear women's rights'⁴⁶⁵ and Doudney said of the 'woman movement': 'Women have always had quite enough power, if they knew how to use it'.⁴⁶⁶ Doudney added that she would not exercise her right to vote if she were given it. Annie S. Swan believed the desire for the franchise was not 'anything like unanimous among women. While my interest and sympathy are with every movement that would raise the standard of womanhood, [...] I do not regard with favour the extreme views held by the more advanced advocates of woman's rights'.⁴⁶⁷ When interviewed latterly, Butler expressed surprise 'that Mrs Burnett-Smith should take this view, and evidently regarded her attitude as disappointing from the point of view of progress'.⁴⁶⁸ It is interesting that most of the female authors who contributed with regularity to the *Young Woman* were not entirely supportive of female suffrage, which probably reflected the state of affairs in the nation more broadly. What was more intriguing was the fact that these women were interviewed before the New Woman had manifested. It was not necessarily the New Woman who influenced their rejection of the woman movement, at least not completely. These writers upheld the *Young*

⁴⁶⁴ Frederick Dolman, 'A Popular Novelist at Home. A Chat with Mrs Alexander', *YW*. (12.1893),p.88.

⁴⁶⁵ Percy L. Parker, 'The Author of "Bottles' Baby" At Home. An Interview with John Strange Winter', *YW*. (02.1894),p.159.

⁴⁶⁶ Our Special Commissioner, 'How I Write My Books – An Interview With Miss Sarah Doudney', *YW*. *Young Woman* (02.1893),pp. 159-160,p.160.

⁴⁶⁷ Albert Dawson, 'Annie S. Swan at Home', *YW*. (03.1893),p.186.

⁴⁶⁸ Albert Dawson, 'A Noble Woman and Her Work. A Talk With Mrs. Josephine E. Butler', *YW*. (08.1893),p.366.

Woman's diffident approach to female advancement. Whilst their success as female workers suggested increasing opportunities for autonomy, the emphasis remained always within the domestic realm. These interviews with novelists were conspicuous for taking place 'At Home'. The home was still undoubtedly the natural environment for women. However, this emphasis jarred somewhat with the presentation of women such as Kingsley whose pursuits went well beyond the home. In the case of Kingsley, however, the focus remained on her domestic abilities as well as her admirable appearance. Moreover, the potentially liberating message of Kingsley's activities was undercut in the same issue by the surrounding content. Reverend A.R. Buckland bemoaned the unrest felt amongst modern women wishing 'to break loose from the restraint which at present surrounds the life of woman in the English home and in English society', and advised readers to find distinction closer to home, in charitable acts.⁴⁶⁹ This approach of tempering the active woman was used again in October 1899: following 'A Chat with A Famous Singer, Miss Clara Butt at Home', an article on 'Women in Public Life' preferred to see women in domestic circumstances than at large in the outside world.⁴⁷⁰ If they took on public matters, then these should be missionary, temperance, or philanthropic.

Fraser, Green and Johnson write that the *Young Woman's* politics were often 'confounded both by the discourses of the domestic feminine and by the awareness of the practical limitations of women's lives'.⁴⁷¹ With a growing emphasis on the home undercutting discourses of liberation, the *Young Woman* encouraged readers to be aware of the way their lives were changing and to take these changes seriously. There were real dangers facing

⁴⁶⁹ *YW*. (06.1896),p.319.

⁴⁷⁰ M.E. Sangster, *YW*. (10.1898),p.14.

⁴⁷¹ Fraser, et al.,p.167.

women as was indicated towards the end of the century, when the *Young Woman* included articles on fighting one's battles.⁴⁷² The importance of being assertive was a new idea for Victorian women but one that emerged more fully as the lines of responsibility were redrawn. An article on young women's liberty in October 1898 warned that freer thought and action was 'healthful for people of years and self-control' but not for those younger members of society who had not 'lived long enough to know how to use' the advantages of the modern age. The *Young Woman's* focus on the individual and its move away from promoting female sisterhood became more notable as Esler's dominance waned. The ideal woman of the *Young Woman* was not merely the figurative Aunt Sally of the mainstream press, nor the campaigning figure of liberal feminist publications. She did not wish to be man's muse, or placed on a pedestal for other women. She was neither weak nor silly, nor was she a political do-gooder. She was sensible and independent but hesitated to stray too far from her domestic duties and womanly grace. She was addressing her individual needs more fervently, showing she could expand her outlook and still keep a good home. This figure was both reinforced and complicated through the magazine's fiction.

Young Woman Fiction

In contrast to *Shafts* and the *Signal*, the *Young Woman* contained a plethora of short fiction. Writers included 'conservatively progressive' types such as Katharine Tynan, Meade, and Grace Stebbing, virtually unknown today but prolific and popular during the 1890s, particularly amongst younger readers. As in its character sketches and interviews, the

⁴⁷² 'The Young Girl's Liberty. Years Are a Woman's Protection, and Youth is a Time of Danger', *YW*. (10.1898),p.17; 'The Girl Who Has to Fight Her Own Battles', *YW*. (06.1899),p.353.

setting for much of the *Young Woman*'s fiction was the domestic sphere. The stories were generally third-person narrated, and if they were first-person it was a male narrator. Many of the stories emphasised the female character's appearance. Furthermore, the stories often bore the name of the heroine – 'Rebecca', 'Teresa', 'Saucy Susy Singleton' – indicating a focus on one particular woman, comparable to the magazine's character sketches. Kimberly Reynolds suggests that at the end of the nineteenth century, fiction for girls 'was seized upon as having a potentially beneficial function: that of keeping young ladies pure by deflecting them from inappropriate reading matter and the knowledge of the world it might impart'.⁴⁷³ Whilst authors contributing to this morally upstanding publication had a responsibility to produce literature that was entertaining but didactic, the *Young Woman* kept its readers pure predominately through the real life examples of its character sketches and portraits of womanhood. Although the magazine's short stories appeared to follow this format, reading them more closely one can at times detect a more progressive tone.

A particularly interesting piece of fiction is 'Alice: A Village Sketch', printed in the eighth issue by the author of 'The Way of Transgressors'.⁴⁷⁴ Although there is an attempt at anonymity in leaving out the author's name, the more perceptive reader would ascertain that it was written by the magazine's agony aunt, Esler, under whose name 'The Way of Transgressors' appears in her regular column. Alice is a young woman whose demanding mother keeps her constantly occupied with housework and scolds her for daydreaming or displaying idleness. She believes her daughter should only pursue education that is strictly necessary:

⁴⁷³ Kimberly Reynolds, *Girls Only? Gender and Popular Children's Fiction in Britain, 1880-1910* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), p.xviii.

⁴⁷⁴ YW. (05.1893), pp.259-61.

She learned to read simple books when they were available, and to scrawl an unformed hand, and she acquired a few vague ideas about rivers and towns, and the multiplication table. Then it was believed that she knew enough for a girl, and she thought so too. (p. 259)

This portrays the limits of nineteenth-century female education and the way some women naturally acquiesced with it. Yet read in the magazine's conservatively progressive context Alice's limited education also resonated with changes occurring towards the end of the century, including Forster's 1870 Education Act, as well as the concern that New Women had with an enclosed existence. Whilst Alice is brought into the conspiracy that a basic education is enough for women, so too does her mother collude with traditional order. When Alice's father's cousin claims that she is being treated unfairly, her mother disagrees: 'She thought it was enough for girls to mind their work and do their duty. She thought they were better for not having their heads turned.' (p. 259) This overtly conservative picture was intended to provoke dissent. In the same issue as Alice's woeful tale, there were character sketches and interviews with journalists Somerset and Fenwick Miller, as well as an article on 'The Lady Clerk'.⁴⁷⁵ All three had departed from feminine confines and established an independent, autonomous lifestyle. Alice is given the potential to adopt this way of life; her father's cousin invites her to spend a week in the city with his girls. During this time Alice has 'nothing to do but dress [her]self, and eat what is set before [her] and walk out to look at the shop-windows', an existence almost inconceivable 'to the little

⁴⁷⁵ Frances E. Willard, 'Lady Henry Somerset: A Character Sketch', pp.255-8; Albert Dawson; 'Mrs Fenwick Miller at Home', pp.272-5; O.P.V., 'The Lady Clerk. What She Ought to Know, and What She Has to do', pp.262-3.

rustic' (p. 260). However, this does not develop Alice's assertiveness. She falls for a man named Harry Gale who promises to visit her at home but her mother sends him away and when Alice discovers this she simply 'drooped', 'grew listless, ceased to smile', (p. 261) hardly the reaction of an empowered woman.

'Alice' is apparently conservative; yet, the *Young Woman's* synthesis of this with its character sketches, as well as the fact that this story is by Esler, suggests that Alice's behaviour is not designed to be adopted by the magazine's reader. Rather 'Alice' embodies conceptions of womanhood previously catalogued by Esler in her column, incorporating a warning about yielding to gender stereotypes. This is supported through the tale's regular evocation of fairy tales. Alice's brothers 'kept the wolf from the door' (p. 259), reflecting masculine protection and control whilst also alluding to 'Red Riding Hood'. The mean matriarchal figure links to feminine compliance, echoing a number of tales including 'Cinderella' and 'Snow White'. Alice also 'helped in the house' (p. 259), washing, cooking and mending for six boys, harking back once again to 'Cinderella' and 'Snow White'. Alice's temporary foray into the fashionable world also reflects Cinderella's brief escape from domestic drudgery. The significance of Alice's name is also drawn on in the tale: she is called so 'for the squire's wife' (p. 259). With the name Alice meaning 'noble' a high standard is set for this simple protagonist. Her name is also reminiscent of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and Alice's adventures in the city reflect a kind of wonderland. With fairy tales intended as life lessons for children, it is significant that such allusions are made within the fiction of a magazine that was aimed at both young and older audiences. By referencing, and renouncing, the fairy tale, Esler not only draws on the

didacticism of this genre, but also underscores gender stereotypes inherent in much fiction for women, parodying it for her more discerning readers.

The ending of Esler's tale satirises the traditional romance plot, being rather abrupt: Alice's mother regrets her actions and pursues Harry for her daughter's sake, only to report, 'He was married yesterday' (p. 261). One may question the reliability of Alice's mother, already proving to be oblivious of her daughter's desires. Nevertheless, the tale's open-endedness and thwarting of romance suggests that if Alice had fought for the relationship herself she may have been otherwise rewarded. The bleak ending also reflects, to a lesser extreme, the tragic plots of many of the New Woman novels although here the critique is not pointed at the male character but instead at the mother-figure whose adherence to the old order compromises her daughter's happiness. This story provokes women into questioning their natural ways of thinking and reacting against those who curtailed their lifestyle. In this sense, it was a story of New Woman sentiment, disguised by its domestic settings and fairy tale resonances.

Tynan and Meade were regular contributors to the *Young Woman*. Although not assertively 'New Women', they are often categorised as feminist, something of a misnomer. Tynan wrote wholesome love stories and believed in mending oneself before the rest of the world. Peter van de Kamp points out that a description of Tynan as 'champion of the feminist cause' is hyperbolic; she 'was foremost, a true lyrical poet, who extolled the virtues of simplicity, love of nature, love of family, and love of love'.⁴⁷⁶ However, as her work in the

⁴⁷⁶ Peter van de Kamp, 'Tynan, Katharine (1859–1931)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33887>, accessed 18.05.2011]

Young Woman demonstrates, this is a matter of context. In February 1894 the *Young Woman* printed Tynan's short story 'Teresa',⁴⁷⁷ in which Tynan suggests that outward appearance can compromise a woman's education. When the nuns tried to teach Teresa she 'looked at them out of her velvety eyes in the way that won her many kisses and embraces' and it did not matter that 'she was dull' (p. 156). Teresa is not encouraged to pursue her education, advancing through life because of her girlish charms but growing up 'the most helpless of mortals' (p. 156). Her sheltered upbringing hampers her chances of becoming a good wife and she is ultimately punished for her lack of household learning as her husband leaves her. Tynan's story is cautionary, emphasizing the importance of not relying on feminine looks but also being skilled in household management. As the character sketch of Kingsley demonstrated, readers of the *Young Woman* needed to be industrious; in the climate of cries for education and employment from New Women they could no longer rely on being mere muses. Although the work of the private sphere is once more made paramount, Tynan's story also highlights women's appalling vulnerability and their ultimate lack of control in relationships with men.

Despite presenting a maternal, homely image, Tynan's life was beset with depression and anxiety.⁴⁷⁸ This is reflected at the story's end: Teresa is clothed forever in black, waiting in vain for her husband to return. Tynan's presentation of feminine folly is undoubtedly dismal, with Teresa given little opportunity or warning to develop herself for marriage. Tynan punishes her protagonist for her vanity and reflects Esler's message that undereducated women are destined to wait for a prince who will never arrive. Tynan

⁴⁷⁷ YW (02.1894), pp.155-8.

⁴⁷⁸ van de Kamp, 'Tynan, Katharine'.

suggests that the duties of womanhood are a serious business. She does not romanticise the situation but renders its ramifications. Although Teresa is a rather weak character, Tynan did include progressive, industrious women in her later fiction. In April 1899, “‘Where Are You Going to, My Pretty Maid?’” featured the more independently-minded Sally Corrigan,⁴⁷⁹ a ‘modern woman’, with a ‘clever pale face’, ‘bright eyes’, a ‘short chin’ and a ‘decisive manner’ (p. 248). These succinct, simple details reflect her strength of character, further exhibited in her desire to buy the land that her family rents so that she can manage it and bring it out of disrepair. However, Sally’s strong will and even her clever trickery of the neighbouring farmer, who also wants to buy the land, is undermined by the fact that she trades it all for love. This ending is certainly less depressing than ‘Teresa’, and fulfils the romantic mould of women’s popular fiction. It also demonstrates that whilst Tynan’s work reflected social change, this change was gradual; Sally gains independence but does not quite reach the heights of novelistic New Womanhood where the protagonist would have ensured her ambitions were fulfilled before settling into a marriage of equality. Hepworth Dixon’s Mary Erle, for instance, cannot live her autonomous life with a man and so chooses a solitary existence. With its rejection of the New Woman, Tynan’s conservative feminism provided a more suitable guiding voice to the magazine’s readers in which the protagonist offered a credible image of forward-thinking femininity, an alternative to the New Woman novels that had preceded it.

This guiding tone was also reflected in Meade’s work. As an author of ‘girl’s stories’ the youth implied in the magazine’s name and one half of its audience is reinforced by the inclusion of Meade. It indicated the *Young Woman*’s desire to protect its adolescent readers.

⁴⁷⁹ YW. (04.1898),pp.247-51.

Meade's work was described in the *Young Woman* as one in which 'A healthy tone pervades', 'her pictures of English home life in particular are among the best of their kind'.⁴⁸⁰ Esler reported: 'Many readers have expressed their warm appreciation of her clever work'.⁴⁸¹ Yet Meade's work had a potentially more controversial message. In March 1897, her 'A Modern Woman'⁴⁸² introduced the character Kitty Holroyd, who, always in submission to her husband Jim, decides finally to defy him. The depiction of the husband and wife indicates physical incongruities of power: Jim is 'tall and distinctly good-looking' with 'a brilliant smile' (p. 201); Kitty is 'small, very thin, with a nervous, intense expression of face'. Kitty is certainly 'the antipodes of her husband' (p. 202). Yet she is now standing up to 'men who have kept us poor women in bondage for century after century' (p. 202). The main plot consists of Kitty going out to present a speech on the rights of women which is 'a distinct success' (p. 203). Her husband implores her not to go as he has an important matter which he must discuss with her; however, Kitty reasons to herself that 'she would be one of the most despicable of her sex if she yielded to Jim's request on this occasion' (p. 203). Yet after she completes the speech she still yearns for her husband, 'to witness her triumph' (p. 203). Upon returning Kitty discovers that her husband was asked to complete a dangerous mission to sail on a ship from Liverpool to New York which was known to be plotted against and to serve in resisting any attacks. It was a decision he had wished to make with his wife, yet her late return resulted in him making it alone. Deciding to go, Jim is seriously injured on the train journey to Liverpool and does not recover. The dramatic scene of Jim's death indicates the retribution suffered by women

⁴⁸⁰ 'How I Write My Books – An Interview with Mrs. L.T. Meade', *YW*. (01.1893),p.122. Meade was described in *Woman* as 'a pleasant, chatty, wholesome writer'. Barbara, 'Book Chat', *W*. (8.02.1893),p.9.

⁴⁸¹ 'Answers to Correspondents', *YW*. (03.1897),p.240.

⁴⁸² *YW*. (03.1897),pp.201-7.

who attempted to work outside of their contained spheres. As the story concludes, Kitty follows ‘her husband into the Valley of the Shadow of Death’. She ceases afterwards to experience the ‘brightness of fun, or the light, sunshiney side of life’ (p. 207). The religious reference indicates the relationship between husband and wife, one of subservience and worship: Jim is Kitty’s shepherd. For all the empowerment Kitty experiences from her ‘wonderful gift – the power of convincing people’ (p. 205), she is unable to recover from the guilt of abandoning her husband to follow her own passions. Jim requests that she lives and looks ‘after the little ones’: she ‘kept her word, and Jim, who waits for her in Paradise, is satisfied’ (p. 207). In his death, Jim once more assumes control over his wife.

Chris Willis highlights Meade as an author who used her popular fiction to feature the New Woman, conveying ‘a political message in a light-hearted way’.⁴⁸³ However, there is nothing light-hearted about Kitty’s plight. It served a cautionary, moralizing purpose. There is no suggestion that Kitty continues to work for the women’s cause, following instead the instructions of her tyrant husband. Meade’s Kitty echoes Tynan’s ‘Teresa’, trapped like sleeping beauty. However, Meade’s story could produce an alternative reading. Whilst New Women writers often placed the woman in a tragic position as a result of the man, like Grand’s Edith Beale in *The Heavenly Twins* and Brooke’s Jessamine Halliday in *A Superfluous Woman*, Meade placed the man in a tragic position at the hands of his wife, ‘so absorbed in herself that she did not notice’ Jim’s ‘heavy, dull, half-despairing look’ (p. 203). Essentially, Meade’s story highlighted the difficulty of being a modern woman whilst simultaneously holding together a family. She thwarted traditional masculinity to indicate

⁴⁸³ Chris Willis, “‘Heaven defend me from political or highly-educated women!’”: Packaging the New Woman for Mass Consumption’ in Richardson and Willis, eds., *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact*, pp.53-65, p.54.

the slippery nature of private and public spheres. Jim is introduced running ‘quickly up the steps of his little house in West Kensington’ and letting ‘himself in with a latchkey’ (p. 201). The latchkey is a strongly evocative symbol for the New Woman who demanded the right to enter her homes when she pleased through the ownership of her own latchkey. Jim also retreats to ‘his dressing room’, leaving Kitty downstairs (p. 203). Furthermore, Kitty refers to Jim as ‘the dear old boy’ (p. 203), indicating her affection for him whilst demonstrating a lack of submission. His death potentially served as punishment for men such as Jim who treated advanced women with contempt.

The inquiry into what it meant to be modern was consistent in New Women writing; this affiliates Meade’s work with this canon. Yet Meade entitled her story ‘A Modern Woman’, rather than A New Woman, veiling the story from criticism whilst signposting the presence of a New Woman. There are allusions to the New Woman, such as Jim’s suggestion that Kitty is part of the ‘shrieking sisterhood’ (p. 201); yet the New Woman is never directly referenced. However, Meade herself embodied New Womanhood: she was assertively independent, retaining her maiden name upon marriage. She was on the managing committee of the Pioneer Club. She also asserted that she could ‘manage a home, raise children, commute into London for editorial work, write thoroughly professional fiction, and enjoy a public life’.⁴⁸⁴ Whilst she did write romances, she also wrote problem stories on advanced topics such as vivisection. Much of her work negotiated modernity: *A Modern Tomboy: A Story for Girls* (1904), ‘A Very Up To Date Girl’. Meade was invested in teasing out the New Woman concept. She edited *Atalanta*, a periodical aimed expressly at

⁴⁸⁴ Sally Mitchell, ‘Meade, Elizabeth Thomasina (1844–1914)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online 2007) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/52740>, accessed 8.06.2011]

modern girls. In the magazine she printed prose of a conservative persuasion, alongside articles concerning major contemporary feminists.⁴⁸⁵ The *Young Woman*, as has been demonstrated, was similarly diverse in its content. Meade highlighted the opposition women faced and the ease with which they were made scapegoats for man's mistakes.

As Meade's story shows, from the mid-1890s, allusions to the New Woman in *Young Woman* fiction appeared more emphatically. Stebbing's "'The New Woman'" was printed in September 1896,⁴⁸⁶ around the time that Esler and Mayo denounced the masculine woman. Although little is known about Stebbing today, she 'achieved renown' as an author.⁴⁸⁷ Her numerous volumes and the fact that she was writing for a publication such as the *Young Woman* indicate her popularity. Like Meade she also regularly wrote for a younger readership. In "'The New Woman'", 'Three girls between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two', Rosalie la Motte, Mary Elderslie and Laura MacWhirter, discuss the New Woman phenomenon. The girls are at Newnham College, Cambridge, significant in itself for being, like Girton, a woman-only college. With the Girton Girl seeping into New Woman fiction, Stebbing's story moves the focus onto the less parodied college. The fact that Stebbing's three women are Newnham students rather than Girton students is significant. As Duncan Crow highlights, whilst Girton was founded on the grounds that woman as a human being in her own right 'should take the same degree examinations as a man', Newnham was formed with the belief that woman was a relative creature to man and

⁴⁸⁵ Bilston, p.182.

⁴⁸⁶ YW. (09.1896), pp.405-10.

⁴⁸⁷ Arthur Burns, 'Stebbing, Henry (1799–1883)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online 05.2008) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26337>, accessed 15.09.2011]

‘examinations must be tempered to her lesser brain’.⁴⁸⁸ The characters themselves acknowledge the Girton/Newnham divide. When asked what brought her to Newnham Rosalie explained: “‘I was tired of the alliteration of ‘Girton Girl’ and the Girton spirit of monopoly fostered by common speech and consent. Newnham students are as much Tennyson’s ‘girl graduates’ as are those at Girton, every bit’” (p. 408). Rosalie’s justification for the intellectual worth of Newnham students is set beside her desire to be distinct from the negative connotations of the alliterative Girton Girl. As Rosemary Auchmuty notes, the genre of the women’s college novel was distinct in English fiction between 1891 and 1926, It coincided with the rise of women’s university education, serving both as a source of novelty and as a way to explore new ideas concerning the female role.⁴⁸⁹ The New Woman was also a source of novelty; however, she did not simply explore the female role but, rather, reconfigured it. Stebbing’s use of the New Woman as a central exploratory device for female education suggested that this was an area that also required reconfiguration. Stories about or written around the context of female education illuminated the burgeoning opportunities available to the young woman.

The girls in this story are caricatures, reflecting Esler’s vast community of womanhood. Rosalie, described in romantic, feminine terms as a ‘fairy-like figure’, serves as a foil to Laura who fulfills the stereotypical academic, with no ‘time for anything but study’ (p. 405). The contrast suggests the diversity of women attending university. Moreover, the fact that these educated women discussed the New Woman demonstrated that she was not just a media fancy but a subject worthy of intellectual debate. In their discussion Rosalie serves

⁴⁸⁸ Duncan Crow, *The Victorian Woman* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971), p.185.

⁴⁸⁹ Rosemary Auchmuty, ‘The Woman Law Student and the Girls’ College Novel’, *Canadian Journal of Women & the Law* 19.1 (2007), pp.37-71, p.41.

as a mediator, asking Laura if she means ‘to go in for the whole thing one of these days – emancipation complete?’ by wearing the bicycle dress (p. 406). Laura responds ‘haughtily’:

it is remarkably deficient in grace, beauty, and the charm of variety; and it is one of the most inalienable rights of woman to indulge her innate love for attire. You would be defrauding my eyes shamefully if you exchanged this fluffy bodice and the soft flowing lines of this crimson skirt for a black or grey coat and trousers. (p. 406)

The clothing she describes as favorable reflects that worn by Rosalie whom she consistently belittles, describing her as a ‘small, teasing baby’ (p. 405). Yet Laura, the ‘clear-skinned, intellectual-looking’ Scot promotes the round femininity she is so critical of in Rosalie (p. 405). In this way, Stebbing mocks the contrary nature of some of the more radical figures who loudly voiced themselves on female emancipation but remained critical of the movement as a whole. Despite maintaining that she is a New Woman, Laura proclaims she is ‘tired to loathing of the subject’ of ‘the “Woman’s Rights” question’ (p. 407). Rosalie’s views are rather less rigid but they hold little sway among the other girls and by presenting these views through characters who seem mutually exclusive, Stebbing highlights the difficulty in establishing the New Woman and her true affinity with the issues that she is believed to support, such as rational dress, the ‘Woman’s Rights’ question, and Girton.

Willis asserts that ‘a heroine who is “political or highly educated” is almost sure to come to a bad end unless she abandons her socio-political and intellectual activities in favour of a

conventional wifely role'.⁴⁹⁰ Yet in Stebbing's story there is no male character, only the three women and their discussions of the New Woman. Any romance exists between the girls themselves, questioning the *Young Woman's* ambivalent stance on sisterhood. With its roots in the family, the issue of sisterhood could be palatably political and legitimately exclusive of men whilst avoiding the associations made with a shrieking sisterhood. Despite Laura's consistent teasing of Rosalie, the younger girl's sudden death at the story's end forces Laura to understand that the New Woman 'should be the embodiment of charity, of perfect love' (p. 410). In this context, the New Woman avoids being an Aunt Sally and is instead feminine and educated, with a sense of female solidarity.

In evoking the New Woman in its original fiction, the *Young Woman* nuanced her character further. Whether she was used as an exploratory device, as in Stebbing's narrative, or as a thwarted modern woman, she reflected the *Young Woman's* sensible attitude whilst advancing the magazine's more conservative discourses. Both Meade and Tynan adapted their styles for the market for which they were writing. In this context it was impressionable young women for whom they drew the perils that came with marriage. The husband was removed rather than the wife and the protagonist was refused the autonomy presented in the polemical New Woman novel. The *Young Woman's* fiction was not strikingly feminist. Instead, it ensured that women were aware of the ramifications their actions could bring. What was notable about the fiction of the *Young Woman* was its potential for interpretation. As Beetham suggests, female readers are not fixed entities but

⁴⁹⁰ Willis, p. 53.

‘in process’, ‘becoming a different self or subject through the process of reading’.⁴⁹¹ To nuance this idea further, the readers of the *Young Woman* were not just becoming a different self through their reading of the magazine; they were learning to form themselves. The protagonists of the *Young Woman*’s fiction, with her meek attitude and the reduction of her life, both literally with regards to Rosalie’s sudden death and metaphorically in terms of Kitty’s termination of her political life and the loss of Alice’s potential suitor, suggested that female liberty was still being curtailed. The contrast of this curtailment with the presentation of autonomous female role models enabled readers to rail against injustice, whilst remaining wary that their behaviour did risk tragic outcomes. As well as signposting its material on role models, the fiction of the *Young Woman* reinforced discourses of marriage. Romance and the thwarting of romance was another way in which the *Young Woman* suggested the inconsistent nature of the modern female and her relationship with the dreaded New Woman. This idea is explored in the final section of this chapter through the study of the *Young Woman*’s marriage discourses.

Discourses of Marriage

Marriage was a striking topic in the *Young Woman*, not least because it occupied so many pages, perhaps more so than any other topic. Much advice came from clergymen and with the *Young Woman* described as having ‘low church affiliations’,⁴⁹² religion in relation to marriage served as a reminder of the sacred marital bond. The *Young Woman* also included celebrity writers, reinforcing the magazine’s desire to open ‘its columns to all the foremost

⁴⁹¹ Margaret Beetham, ‘Women and the Consumption of Print’, in Joanne Shattock, ed, *Women and Literature and Britain 1800-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp.55-77, p.58.

⁴⁹² Fraser, Johnston, Green, p.227.

writers of our day, and particularly to those women who are best qualified to address women'.⁴⁹³ Grand was a particularly interesting figure in the magazine's marriage debate. Heilmann has highlighted her 'ideological shape-shifting', and the way she played 'with voices'.⁴⁹⁴ This was evident in the *Young Woman* which set religious and satirical writers against one of the most infamous New Woman figures, presenting a nuanced picture of marriage.

With regards to marriage the clergy was not the best moral touchstone. Whilst married to the writer and illustrator Mary Eliza Haweis, the Reverend Hugh Reginald Haweis, a regular contributor to the *Young Woman*, had a mistress and an illegitimate child. He was supposedly jealous of his wife's popularity as a writer and her involvement in social movements such as women's suffrage.⁴⁹⁵ Perhaps as a reaction, Haweis wrote for the *Young Woman* on the 'Mannish Girl' Clarisse, who embodied the New Woman. According to Haweis, Clarisse was interested in 'horsey and mannish things that were fast spoiling her'.⁴⁹⁶ However, she eventually loses her taste for such things and ends up engaged to a doctor, fulfilling her 'role' as a woman. This conversion from independence to married life indicates the loss of self about which New Women writers such as Brooke, Caird and Egerton were concerned; they rejected the notion of marriage as an occupation for women and used unsuccessful matches within their fiction to suggest the dangers of entering into partnerships in which women were unable to follow their own pursuits. The marriage of Brooke's *Superfluous Woman* (1894), Jessamine Halliday, results in three damaged

⁴⁹³ W.J. Dawson, 'My Study Diary', *YW*. (10.1892),p.31.

⁴⁹⁴ Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies*,p.15.

⁴⁹⁵ Elizabeth Baigent, 'Haweis, Hugh Reginald (1838–1901)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33763>,accessed 24.05.2011]

⁴⁹⁶ *YW*. (06.1897),p.334.

children and her eventual death from syphilis. Egerton's characters experience marriage as an inescapable trap. Similarly, Caird wrote about '*possession* in marriage' in which 'The woman became the property of the man, [...] by right of law'.⁴⁹⁷ She emphasizes the importance of freedom, equality and love in marriage. Such views were not emulated by Haweis, either in his personal or professional life. Yet, read by a modern woman, Clarisse serves as a warning for what could happen if one submitted to a marriage of possession. Haweis was by no means aiming to convey such a message. Rather, he was reinstating traditional marriage roles for the readers of *Young Woman*. Yet, as hesitant as the magazine was about the New Woman, considering its role models such as Willard and Schreiner and its rejection of the submission shown by Esler's Alice, the magazine did not strongly reinforce Haweis' views.

The Reverend E.J. Hardy often wrote on the subject of marriage; he was not usually identified by name but rather as 'the Author of *How to be Happy Though Married*'. This book was well-known within the woman's press and Hardy's reiterated association with it reminded readers of his words, that marriage does not have 'a magic power of conferring happiness' and that 'domestic felicity, like everything else worth having, must be worked for'.⁴⁹⁸ For the *Young Woman*, Hardy wrote 'That Husband of Yours!' in which he advised women who have rushed into marrying a man whom they do not love not to mourn and be sentimental, but rather to, 'See that his meals are punctual and well prepared, that his house is as tidy and beautiful as you can make it, that you pay bills regularly, and keep them as

⁴⁹⁷ 'Marriage', *Westminster Review* (1888),p.189.

⁴⁹⁸ E.J. Hardy, *How to be Happy Though Married* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1887),p.6.

low as possible'.⁴⁹⁹ Hardy's views were disputed by both Egerton and Caird who believed that marriage was equal to prostitution; nevertheless, he does endow the wife with some financial responsibility. Furthermore, Hardy's intimation of the unbreakable quality of marriage reflected the *Young Woman's* pragmatic approach to the marriage question. There was no doubt that advanced women remained in unhappy marriages. Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* was published in 1893, the same year as Hardy's article; being the bestseller of that year it is likely that readers of the *Young Woman* would have also encountered the novel and been aware of the plot in which Evadne decides to remain married to Colonel Colquhoun after discovering his immoral character. However, rather than play the role of domestic helpmeet, Evadne emphatically refuses to fulfil her wifely duties, notably refusing to pursue a sexual relationship with Colquhoun. Colquhoun is disdainful of the societies, speeches and books of which Evadne is so fond. Mirroring Colquhoun's tone Hardy writes:

Do not imagine that your life is not worth living unless you can have as many new bonnets and gowns [...] You will find it an excellent means of grace to occasionally stand opposite the window of a [...] shop and say to yourself, 'How many things there are there that I do not want and can be very happy without!' (p. 11)

It has already been established through the letters written to Esler on 'Dress Notes' that many *Young Woman* readers were not concerned with fashion and material goods. Although even the advanced woman upheld marriage as an ideal and encouraged balancing married life with expanding one's sphere, the subservience intrinsic in marriage would have been a source of contention. By referencing this subservience, the *Young Woman* showed

⁴⁹⁹ 'That Husband of Yours!', *YW* (10.1893), pp.10-11.

that it was not ready to ally itself with the campaigning New Woman. Instead its variety of texts educated a readership of conservatively progressive women, wary of being tarred with the appellation of New Woman.

The edifying tone of the magazine's religious contributors was bound up with a more mocking tone, demonstrated through a short story printed in the same issue as Hardy's article: 'A Man Proposes' by Barry Pain,⁵⁰⁰ which scorns the New Woman's attitude towards marriage. Constance informs her friend Hilda that she is going to propose to Dr. Morrien:

I cannot see that it is more immodest to make a proposal than to accept one, or any worse to ask a man to marry you than it is to marry him. The present custom is a conceited man-made custom. Men like to feel that they are our masters, and that it is for them to take the first steps; so they frighten us into the back-seats by raising this cry of immodesty. Now, I believe in the equality of the sexes. I'm sure it ought to be a matter of complete indifference whether the man proposes or the woman proposes. (p. 26)

Constance's companion, Hilda, is more reserved, exclaiming that 'It would be awful – immodest – for [Constance] to ask a man to marry [her]' (p. 26). Pain was a writer of comedy and parody and often contributed to *Punch*. Constance is a deeply caricatured New Woman, echoing *Punch*'s scathing representations. Pain mocks the New Woman, exaggerating her belief 'in the equality of the sexes' (p. 26). Constance is foolish and

⁵⁰⁰ YW. (10.1893),pp.26-7.

overdramatic. Her principles dominate all, preventing her from forming true relationships. Hilda is more conventional and level-headed. Constance has money which leads to her independence but not to happiness. At the story's close Hilda is happily engaged to Dr. Morrien whilst Constance bemoans her feelings for George. Although Hilda accepts 'the settled judgement' (p. 26) and does not agitate for equal rights, she is depicted more favourably than Constance. Whilst the misogynistic reputation of Pain strikes a peculiar chord in a magazine such as the *Young Woman*, contextualising his inclusion with Esler's view of the New Woman, as the press's Aunt Sally, reminded readers to continue emulating the sensible, educated female, promoted by Willard, rather than the lampooned shrieking sister, presented through Constance.

Set against these conventional, satirical perspectives was more pragmatic advice, focusing on the type of man that one should marry. In the second issue 'Don't Marry Him!' advised women not to marry a man who was 'sowing a few wild oats' or 'whose linen is more spotless than his character'.⁵⁰¹ This man embodied the type portrayed by Grand, Egerton and Hepworth Dixon. The article warned: 'what is sown before marriage is reaped after marriage', alluding to sexual infections spread by the man who has sown his 'wild oats', the man who will undoubtedly then pass these to his future wife and children. Repetition of 'Don't marry' at the beginning of each paragraph emphasized that women had options and did not have to settle for the first man who proposed. The *Young Woman's* role models also dispensed helpful advice. Butler, in an interview in August 1893 exclaimed that girls

⁵⁰¹ YW. (11.1892),p.42.

‘should never be taught to look to marriage as a necessity’.⁵⁰² Whilst not objecting to marriage, she advocated the importance of autonomy: ‘The more independent young women are, the more will they be able to find real happiness in marriage’. Esler endorsed this the following month, writing to a correspondent: ‘That the helpless woman is the more attractive and womanly is quite an exploded idea; indeed, it might be observed that a majority of eminent women nowadays are married women, and rather proud of that fact’.⁵⁰³ The *Young Woman* added meaning to the advice it proffered by disseminating it through celebrity writers; this was particularly prominent in ‘The Ideal Husband’ debate, a series of papers printed from October 1894 to August 1895 that outlined ‘the qualities in a man which most conduce to a girl’s happiness in married life’.⁵⁰⁴

The women Atkins chose to include in this debate were certainly prominent when it came to the woman question. They included the Society hostess and journalist Lady Jeune,⁵⁰⁵ Fenwick Miller,⁵⁰⁶ as well as the novelist and essayist Isabella Fyvie Mayo.⁵⁰⁷ The impact of this debate was illustrated by the fact that the various responses were collected and bound in a book: ‘*The Ideal Husband* is published at 1s. by Messrs. Horace Marshall & Son, Temple House, Temple Avenue, E.C., and can be ordered of any bookseller’.⁵⁰⁸ Whilst the debate echoed the title of Oscar Wilde’s 1895 play, *An Ideal Husband*, suggesting a continued debate on the models of marriage that Wilde ironically presented,

⁵⁰² Albert Dawson, ‘A Noble Woman and Her Work. A Talk With Mrs. Josephine E. Butler’, *YW*. (08.1893), p.366.

⁵⁰³ *YW*. (09.1893), p.425.

⁵⁰⁴ Mrs Isabella Fyvie Mayo, ‘The Ideal Husband V.’, *YW*. (03.1895), pp.194-7, p.194.

⁵⁰⁵ ‘The Ideal Husband I.’, *YW*. (10.1894), pp.23-5.

⁵⁰⁶ ‘The Ideal Husband IV.’, *YW* (02.1895), pp.163-5.

⁵⁰⁷ ‘The Ideal Husband V.’, *YW*. (03.1895), pp.194-7.

⁵⁰⁸ ‘Answers to Correspondents’, *YW*. (01.1896), p.142. There is also a reference to *The Ideal Husband* in the ‘Book Chat’ of *Woman* (11.09.1895), p.6. Additionally, it may have sparked an 1896 discussion in the *Woman’s Signal* on the actual existence of the ideal husband.

another reason for this feature's popularity was possibly its reflection of the New Woman's marriage discourses. Certainly, at the more radical end of the scale there were New Women who rigorously opposed marriage; however, most, whilst not rejecting it outright, upheld 'an *ideal* marriage – a future vision – for men and women to aspire towards'.⁵⁰⁹ They desired a fundamental reformation of marriage, and a major step towards this objective was finding a man who did not enforce the sexual double standard. The *Young Woman's* attention to the role of the husband in marriage further emphasized the female New Woman writer's stance on marriage: whilst male New Women writers such as Allen, and Gissing, and indeed female anti-New Woman writers, focused on women's sexual freedom, female New Women writers focused on men's sexuality.⁵¹⁰

The key issue of the Ideal Husband debate was male sexual purity. The first contributor, Jeune, insisted that women needed to work radical changes into the lives of men, 'not by preaching abuse, or vituperation, but by making their own example such as will raise the standard of life, and [...] make the men they live with better' (p. 23). This echoed the words spoken by Grand's Evadne: 'You have it in your power to set up a high standard of excellence for men to reach in order to have the privilege of associating with you'.⁵¹¹ New Women decried men's sexual double standards; social purity feminist Blanche Leppington believed that men needed to be 'debrutalised' before they could be fitting husbands.⁵¹² It is interesting that Jeune concurred on such a point, generally holding anti-New Woman views and countering Grand's opinions. Jeune further asserted that 'men should endeavour to

⁵⁰⁹ Lucy Bland, 'The Married Woman, the 'New Woman' and the Feminist', p.147.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid, p.151.

⁵¹¹ Grand, *The Heavenly Twins*, p.80.

⁵¹² Blanche Leppington, *Contemporary Review* 67 (05.1895), pp.725-43.

attain an equality of morality and purity with women' (p. 23). Fenwick Miller also agreed: 'the equal morality of husband and wife is essential to honourable wedlock and to married happiness' (p. 164). Although Mayo was less forthright, she did concede that 'a woman's heart cannot truly rest in any man who has not a strong sense of right and wrong' (p. 196). As Liggins writes, 'a generation of newly-liberated New Women were beginning to voice their anger at the physical and moral suffering of women within marriage'.⁵¹³ Mrs Pankhurst's infamous slogan, 'Votes for Women and Chastity for Men' suggested that the New Woman movement was based less on sexual freedom and more on extending sexual morality to include men.⁵¹⁴

Showing the interactivity of the *Young Woman's* content, the ideal husband debate also mirrored the magazine's fiction, such as Tynan's 'Teresa', which had been printed in February 1894. Strange Winter claimed that the ideal husband will 'choose a girl for her personal qualities before all else'.⁵¹⁵ In this sense, Teresa's husband failed by choosing his wife based on her appearance. Staunch anti-feminist Lynn Linton outlined traditional values of masculinity and femininity, claiming that it was the husband's fault if his wife was not well trained in household duties.⁵¹⁶ She believed that the Ideal Husband should not remove his wife's domestic duties nor should he become subservient to her, and that it was the fault of the husband if his interference in domestic matters resulted in his home falling into chaos. In marriage, Teresa reflected the words of Linton, 'absolutely destitute of the womanly instinct of household management' (p. 56). Her sheltered upbringing certainly

⁵¹³ Emma Liggins, 'Writing against the "Husband-Fiend": syphilis and male sexual vice in the New Woman novel', *Women's Writing* 7. 2 (2000), pp. 175-95, p. 175.

⁵¹⁴ Valerie Steele, *Fashion and Eroticism: Ideals of Feminine Beauty from the Victorian Era to the Jazz Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 97.

⁵¹⁵ 'The Ideal Husband III.', *YW*. (01.1895), pp. 119-20, p. 119.

⁵¹⁶ 'The Ideal Husband II.', *YW*. (11.1894), pp. 56-7.

hampered her chances of becoming a good wife. Yet if one follows Lynn Linton's view, it is the fault of the husband for allowing his wife not to fulfil her household duties. This abnegated the woman's responsibility. Lynn Linton added: 'fight against it as much as the new Woman may, the sex as a sex is happiest when nobly mastered [...] by the justice, the large-mindedness, the high principles of the man' (p. 57). Fenwick Miller, immediately asserted her opposing viewpoint stating: 'I say contrariwise to Mrs Lynn Linton' (p. 163). She objected to the ownership of men over women: 'The ideal marriage is not a relation of master and subject' (p. 163).

From 1898, the *Young Woman* included a number of articles by Grand relating to marriage: 'On the Choice of a Husband',⁵¹⁷ 'At What Age Should Girls Marry?',⁵¹⁸ and 'Should Married Women Follow Professions?'⁵¹⁹ Not only did Grand expand the ideal husband debate, but her articles also appeared at a time when the *Young Woman* was emphasizing the dangers surrounding women. Grand did not disdain marriage, but sought to enlighten, educate and empower women on the subject.⁵²⁰ Notably, the title of Grand's article 'On the Choice of a Husband' was the same as that contributed by the Reverend E.J. Hardy in the very first issue.⁵²¹ Yet the contrast between the two is striking. Hardy wrote: 'however handsome and agreeable a man may be, he should not be thought of as a husband if his character does not commend itself to the father and brother of the girl' (p. 10). The expectation of women to obey male relatives once more emphasized the conservatism of the clergy. In contrast to Hardy, Grand viewed marriage as a business: 'It is startling,

⁵¹⁷ YW. (10.1898),pp.1-3.

⁵¹⁸ YW. (02.1899),pp.161-4.

⁵¹⁹ YW. (04.1899),pp.257-9.

⁵²⁰ Marianne Berger Woods, *The New Woman in Print and Pictures: An Annotated Bibliography* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland and Company, 2009),p.7.

⁵²¹ YW. (10.1892),pp.10-11.

perhaps to see marriage ranked as a business; but in one of its aspects it certainly is a business – the great business of life – and everything depends upon how it is conducted.’ (p. 3) This placed a monetary emphasis on the marital bond, harking back to the Married Women’s Property Act which ensured women more rights with regards to their marital home; yet, as Margaret Maynard suggests, this Act ‘did not necessarily mark a major change in the nature of economic balance within marriage at the end of the nineteenth century’.⁵²² Hardy’s emphasis on the authority of a woman’s brother or father painted a more honest picture. There is certainly no suggestion that marriage is a joint enterprise. In contrast, Grand presented the fading optimism of the New Woman novel.

Discourses of marriage were inevitably bound up in hereditary concepts, particularly when the discussion was steered by Grand and her eugenic agenda. Choosing a partner who would produce strong offspring to regenerate the population was a concept present even in religious sects, with Reverend Hardy writing: ‘Good health is too important a matter to be overlooked in choosing a partner for life [...] Some diseases are hereditary. Deliberately to marry where such diseases are known to exist is worse than folly.’ (p. 11) It was not just the New Woman who feared racial degeneration. Converting marriage from a union of spirituality to one of genetics was rife with controversy and complication. It was extended into a consideration of the age at which girls should marry in which Grand pointed out that a suitable match ‘makes for the higher evolution of the race’ (p. 162). Health was an

⁵²² Margaret Maynard, “‘A Dream of Fair Women’: Revival Dress and the Formation of Late Victorian Images of Femininity’, *Classic and Modern Writings on Fashion* [<http://www.bergfashionlibrary.com.proxy.cecybrary.com/view/CMWF/chapter-FCPS0327.xml>, accessed 16.01.2012]

important focus in the *Young Woman*.⁵²³ Through its advice-manual format, the magazine encouraged both activity and general living that did not interfere with the well-being of its younger reader.

Following Grand's article on the age at which girls should marry, a note revealed that the editor 'submitted a proof of the article to several well-known women'.⁵²⁴ The communications generated were published following the article, and echoed Grand, with Fenwick Miller and Meade both seeing the question of age as a physiological matter, 'from the health point of view'.⁵²⁵ The author Adeline Sergeant clarified that 'a woman's constitution is hardly settled before three-and-twenty, and if she takes upon her the duties of wife and mother before that age she is apt to incur the danger of an early breakdown in later life'.⁵²⁶ Strange Winter was the only contributor who did not agree with girls delaying the age for marriage. She believed that 18 to 25 was the best window as the younger a woman marries the better chance she has 'of bringing healthy children into the world'.⁵²⁷ Maternity was the driving factor in all cases, suggesting that this remained integral to women's relationships with men. In discussing work and marriage, Grand termed women without maternal instinct 'abnormal'; these types should instead 'take up law, literature, medicine, or art, [...] distinguish themselves if they can' (p. 257). Yet, Grand was separated from her husband and son; moreover, her novels did not make marriage and motherhood beneficial to her heroine's lives, with both Edith and Evadne suffering through marriage. Heilmann claims that Grand marshalled traditional values for a feminist agenda, being

⁵²³ An issue too large to explore fully within this chapter.

⁵²⁴ 'Some Interesting Letters', *YW*. (02.1899), pp.164-5.

⁵²⁵ I. Isabella Fyvie Mayo; III. Mrs Fenwick Miller, *Ibid*, pp.164 & 5.

⁵²⁶ VII. Adeline Sergeant, *Ibid*, p.165.

⁵²⁷ 'At What Age Should Girls Marry?', I. John Strange Winter, *YW* (03.1899), pp.207-9, p.207.

‘consistently concerned with celebrating, mimicking, staging, de/reconstructing and subverting the multiple feminine faces of the New Woman’.⁵²⁸ Writing for vulnerable, young readers Grand emphasized the imperativeness of their procreation. Nonetheless, maturity was on the whole, a leading factor. Age was an important consideration when discussing the compatibility of marriage with professional life as Grand did in ‘Should Married Women Follow Professions?’ It required experience to realise that the ideal life for a married woman was ‘a good husband and ample leisure for her household duties’ (p. 257). If stories such as ‘Teresa’ taught readers anything it was that one required full self-developed before embarking upon the serious business of marriage.

Articles such as ‘The Ideal Husband’ exposed the value that the *Young Woman* placed on ensuring that readers were well versed in the marriage debate. In many ways, the advice on choosing a partner echoed New Woman novels, an interesting feature given the *Young Woman*’s rejection of her. Such guidance raised awareness of the risks involved in entering into a union that was commonly seen as unbreakable. In discussing the choice of a husband, Grand wrote: ‘All their knowledge of the subject they obtain haphazard, and often from the most undesirable sources’ (p. 1). One particular source included ‘novels of the day, which, as a rule, give but a poor, fragmentary, and altogether primitive view of it’ (p. 1). Grand’s novels offered an alternative outlook on married life and the dangers of being misled by bad men. One could argue that the ‘primitive’ view that Grand was opposed to was presented in the short stories of the *Young Woman*. Yet, the *Young Woman* aimed not to be an undesirable source; instead it promoted a range of opinions including antiquated views. The inclusion of religious figures such as Reverend Haweis ensured that readers were kept

⁵²⁸ Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies*, pp.14,16-17.

mindful of the divinity of marriage. Nonetheless, the magazine stressed the most important aspect of the marriage debate within New Woman discourse which was morality. By warning readers about men who had morally strayed, the *Young Woman* echoed New Woman sentiments. Men's immoral behaviour was not just a concern for the campaigning individual of *Shafts* and the *Signal* but also for her conservatively progressive counterpart of the *Young Woman*.

Conclusion

The concept of the New Woman was never fully supported in the *Young Woman* in the way that the Women's Library suggests in its inclusion of the magazine under 'Feminist and Campaigning'. It did not redraw the mainstream interpretations, in the way that *Shafts* and the *Signal* did, but rather often agreed with them. The *Young Woman* seems better suited to Emma Liggins' depiction: prepared 'to acknowledge, if not always to celebrate, the existence of the New Woman'.⁵²⁹ However, I take this further to suggest that the *Young Woman* supported arguments for equality posited by the campaigning New Woman, but rejected the New Woman as a representative figure. The *Young Woman* reveals the ways conservatively progressive individuals, influenced by mainstream press representations, were reading. Yet, as one reader wrote, the *Young Woman* was 'neither weak nor silly nor in the least goody-goody'.⁵³⁰ This accurately encapsulated a magazine which implored readers not to disgrace the female gender, but rejected an insipid old-fashioned morality.

⁵²⁹ Liggins, "The Life of a Bachelor Girl", p.219.

⁵³⁰ *YW*. (11.1899), p.439.

In her rejection of the New Woman, Esler directed one reader towards issues of the *Woman's Signal*, placing them as an alternative source of 'matter on the Woman Question'. Liggins claims that this not only suggests 'the magazine's links to its rival journal but also perhaps a recognition of its own limitations in coverage of the New Woman'.⁵³¹ Yet, the *Young Woman* was not limited in its exploration of the New Woman, with several articles devoted entirely to the concept. Esler's redirection of readers towards the *Signal* instead suggested that the *Young Woman* was more interested in educating readers on contemporary debate than fulfilling emancipatory messages. Esler explained, 'The *Young Woman* is intended to be the companion of girls who think, and therefore it aims at saying not the thing that is hackneyed, but the thing that is true'.⁵³² The young readers of this magazine were bearers of the future generation; they were encouraged to be sensible, demure and dependable, whilst also making a suitable marriage match that would sustain the English race. As such, the *Young Woman* was more fixated on the definition of modern womanhood along with a desire to gauge public perception of 'the young woman of to-day'. Its range of contributors, from the feminist Grand and Willard to the conservative and even misogynistic Barry Pain and Reverend Haweis, made it complex and fascinating. As Sarah Bilston points out: 'The idea that conservative and radical positions may not co-exist is a peculiarly twentieth-century phenomenon; certainly no editor of a Victorian girls' magazine accepted such an idea'.⁵³³ The *Young Woman* exhibited two ends of the spectrum on the woman question. This polyphony of views articulated the variety of the New Woman debate. Strikingly, the *Young Woman's* fiction countered Victorian ideas that women were uncritical readers. Readers of this magazine were sophisticated, and invited to

⁵³¹ Emma Liggins, "'The Life of a Bachelor Girl'", p. 222.

⁵³² *YW*. (11.1892), p. 62.

⁵³³ Bilston, p. 183.

read against the grain, not simply agreeing with what was presented as 'correct'. Through its own interpretative qualities, the *Young Woman* embodied the description that Ardis has reserved for the New Woman: 'contradictory, heteroglossic'.⁵³⁴ Its diverse content reflected, more than *Shafts* or the *Signal*, the ideological complexity of New Womanhood. The potential influence of its male editor, who remained dubious about the New Woman, was tempered by a distinctly female voice in Esler. Further contradictions were found in the magazine's debates on marriage, in one instance urging women to sacrifice their own happiness for the good of their husbands; in the next, imploring them to take their time in finding a suitable partner. These ambiguities reflected the New Woman who demanded equality in marriage, yet would remain in an unhappy marriage to respect the union's sacredness. Indeed, how could the *Young Woman* fully endorse a figure who demanded a radical change in all aspects of society yet clung to the laws of propriety? The New Woman required constant formation and reformation and in its intentional disassociation with the New Woman, the *Young Woman* itself was constantly amended.

⁵³⁴ Ardis, 'Organizing Women', p.190.

Chapter Four ‘Forward but Not Too Fast’: *Woman* and *Lady’s Realm*

In contrast to the previous magazines discussed in this study, *Woman* (1890-1912) and the *Lady’s Realm* (1896-1914) paved rather more tentative paths towards New Womanhood. *Woman* has generally been contrasted with the *Young Woman* in academic criticism;⁵³⁵ however, I see it as beneficial and even necessary to consider it alongside its more likely bedfellow, the *Lady’s Realm*. First published in January 1890, *Woman* was a cheap domestic magazine. Its weekly issue enabled it to chart dynamic and changeable media phenomena such as the New Woman. In contrast, the ‘elite’ “‘quality” monthly”,⁵³⁶ *Lady’s Realm*, eschewed the gossipy, but revealing voice of *Woman*. Yet the contrasting editorial approaches of *Woman* and the *Lady’s Realm* were underpinned by a similar ideology. This chapter tracks ideological standpoints concerning the New Woman, exploring progression through the 1890s across the two magazines. Essentially it highlights the transition between the first and second half of the nineties by focusing on *Woman* from the last months of 1892 to the end of 1895, and the *Lady’s Realm* from its commencement in November 1896, three years after the New Woman’s initiation into the liberal feminist press, and two years after her appearance in the *North American Review*. This is most appropriate for an examination of the New Woman as, from 1896, under the editorship of Arnold Bennett, *Woman* is acknowledged as having become ‘less interested in the New Woman and her concerns’ and by the early twentieth century ‘had become a fashionable lady’s

⁵³⁵ Doughan, p.261-73; Liggins, “‘The Life of a Bachelor Girl in the Big City””, pp.216-34.

⁵³⁶ Gráinne Goodwin, “‘I Was Chosen Out As Oracular’: The *Fin-De-Siècle* Journalism of Flora Annie Steel”, *Women’s Writing* 18.4 (2011), pp.505-523, p.507-8.

magazine'.⁵³⁷ Doughan reinforces this, writing that *Woman* had 'some sympathy towards feminism' but became 'unhappy about "man-hating" feminists' and 'ended up as yet another fashion magazine'.⁵³⁸ Examining *Woman* during its 'progressive' years will produce a more varied exploration of the New Woman; did this controversial figure force *Woman* to assume a more conservative ethos? As *Woman* was morphing into a more conservative form, the *Lady's Realm* was emerging anew. 1896 became a watershed year in which ideas were being recalibrated, following the Wilde trials and the public burning of Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. New magazines for women after this date had an important role to play in the reinvention of womanhood: would she retain her outspokenness or return to submissiveness? When the *Yellow Book* ceased publication in April 1897, the *Lady's Realm* had only been in print for five months. Studying the *Lady's Realm* will ascertain whether the New Woman's influence diminished or whether she was as potent as ever

Whilst I argue that *Woman* and the *Lady's Realm* were followers of the New Woman debate rather than leaders, this chapter complicates these often simplified publications and their contributions towards the New Woman debate within the woman's press, demonstrating that the New Woman was more than a symbol of advancement. Both magazines' have been inaccurately categorised by Liggins, who referred to *Woman* as anti-feminist and the *Lady's Realm* as conservative.⁵³⁹ Such classification only seems appropriate when considering the publications against works such as *Shafts* and the *Signal*.

⁵³⁷ 'Woman', *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, p.681.

⁵³⁸ David T.J. Doughan, 'Periodicals by, for, and about women in Britain', *Women's Studies International Forum* 10.3 (1987), p.264.

⁵³⁹ Liggins, 'The "Modern Spinster's Lot" and Female Sexuality in Ella Hepworth Dixon's *One Doubtful Hour*', *Women's Writing*, 19.1 (2012), pp.5-22, p.7.

In isolation, neither magazine fulfils these descriptions. Rather, they represent the hesitancy and ambivalence of publications that drew on the New Woman phenomenon to gain greater commercial cachet. *Woman* used this commerciality more explicitly whilst *Lady's Realm* included the New Woman as subject that readers were aware of and 'comfortable' with. This seemed a recipe for success: both magazines had similar shelf lives, *Woman* lasting 22 years and the *Lady's Realm* 18 years, both far longer than *Shafts* or the *Woman's Signal* and similar to the *Young Woman's* 23 years. As White has suggested, of all the women's magazines to cater for the educated woman, the ones that were most successful were those which took a political middle road.⁵⁴⁰ By taking this 'middle road', the New Woman of *Woman* and *Lady's Realm* could not be a symbol for political emancipation, being instead a more domestic New Woman.

Journalistic Approaches

This section evaluates the potential readerships of both magazines: volatile and complex, interested in matters of the day. It will also consider the magazines' titles which indicated the slipperiness of fin de siècle femininity, their connotations often misleading. A further complication for both was their entirely male-run editorial staff, in conflict with appeals for a female voice. Through the analysis of *Woman's* 'disguised' female voices, this section will also consider the magazine's personal attitude towards the New Woman and how this is manifested through its editorial section.

⁵⁴⁰ White, p.73.

Costing 6d the *Lady's Realm* is the most expensive of the magazines studied thus far, illustrating the increasing spending power of some women at the end of the period. The appearance and cost of the *Lady's Realm* would feasibly indicate a wealthier readership than *Woman*, the prolific 120 pages of the *Lady's Realm* a stark contrast to *Woman's* 24. The *Lady's Realm* was aimed at middle- and upper-middle-class women. Yet *Woman*, as Beetham has argued, was also targeted at the middle class.⁵⁴¹ Lynne Warren has further revealed through exhaustive work on the names and addresses of *Woman's* readers that, as well as a middle-class readership, the magazine was also consumed by upper-class women: 'Woman's claim to be read by the middle- and upper-class woman seems to be upheld during the 1890s'.⁵⁴² Whilst *Woman* had a wealthier readership than one would assume from its appearance and cost, the reader of the *Lady's Realm* was a social-climber, rather than a 'lady' in the positional sense of the word, interested in 'celebrity' ladies, and emerging from the 'upper class or aspiring middle class'.⁵⁴³ The 'aspirational' aspect suggests a move away from modernity and back to traditionalism. It potentially signalled a change in mood, following the middle part of the 1890s. Certainly it emphasized the New Woman's influence upon magazines in this period, which were embroiled in the surrounding debates even in her aftermath.

When considered together, the titles of these magazines embody the dynamism and complexities inherent in defining femininity in the 1890s. Previously, 'lady' indicated the upper-class female whilst 'woman' designated her working-class counterpart. The polarities

⁵⁴¹ *A Magazine of Her Own?*, p.120.

⁵⁴² Lynne Warren, "'Women in Conference': Reading the Correspondence Columns in *Woman* 1890-1910' in Laurel Brake, Bill Bell, David Finkelstein, eds., *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp.122-33, p.122.

⁵⁴³ Joan Huddleston, 'Introduction' to Margaret Versteeg, Sue Thomas, Joan Huddleston, eds., *Index to Fiction in the Lady's Realm Vol. 5 Victorian Fiction Research Guides* (University of Queensland, 1981), p.2.

between the two terms were as distinct as they were between white and black, home and empire, as Leonore Davidoff has highlighted: Victorian women ‘were not only divided between working class and middle class, they were divided between “ladies” and “women”, categories which signified as much gender as economic and social meaning’.⁵⁴⁴ This division was complicated at the end of the 1880s and beginning of the 1890s, during which lady was being replaced with woman, and thus all classes were addressed. In October 1887, when Oscar Wilde became editor of the *Lady’s World* he changed its title to *Woman’s World* at the suggestion of Dinah Craik; Wilde claimed that this distinguished between ‘feminine’ and ‘womanly’.⁵⁴⁵ Distinguishing between ‘feminine’ and ‘womanly’ was reflected in the writing of New Women such as Grand who wrote that ‘when a woman is strengthened she is strengthened into womanliness’.⁵⁴⁶ Wilde attached ‘feminine’ to lady, with its connotations of submission and compliance. In contrast, ‘womanly’ heralded a new position in society. This was acknowledged in 1892 by the ‘literary ladies’ dining club who changed their name to the ‘Women Writers’, following several suggestions that they become ‘writing women’. *Woman* praised this name change:

I am much gratified to learn that those who are responsible for the annual bit of feminine dissipation, hitherto known as the ‘Literary Ladies’ Dinner,’ have decided that in future their institution shall be termed the ‘Women Writers’ Dinner.’ Apart from the fact that the title ‘lady’ has fallen into disrepute.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁴ Leonore Davidoff, ‘Class and Gender in Victorian England: The Diaries of Arthur J. Munby and Hannah Cullwick’, *Feminist Studies* 5.1 (1979), pp.86-141, p.91.

⁵⁴⁵ Laurel Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges: Journalism, Gender & Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington Square, New York: New York University Press, 1994), p.128.

⁵⁴⁶ Sarah Grand, ‘The Modern Man and Maid’ (1898) in *Women’s Writing of the Victorian Period 1837-1901: An Anthology*, Harriet Devine Jump, ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p.312.

⁵⁴⁷ Marjorie, ‘D’You Know?’, *W.* (19.04.1893), p.6.

There was no explanation as to why lady had become a term of disrepute; perhaps it was the growing interest in a socialist, less elitist society. Previously considered a derogatory term, attached to the working classes, 'woman' became a more suitable address for contemporary females. Richardson asserts that the term 'woman' marked 'a shift in attitude' from the 'conservative notions of respectability and sexual modesty'.⁵⁴⁸ Whilst one could argue that the term New Woman could engender positive associations as a result, woman was a more universal term than New Woman; the addition of 'new' once more signalled a specifically middle-class female.

Despite its audience of middle-class readers, *Woman* embraced the decade's new liberalism, scoffing at the snobbish, self-appointed title of lady three months after its comments on the Literary Ladies:

The difference in these fin de siècle days between the woman who is a lady and the woman who describes herself as one is as distinct as the difference between the natural complexion of a genuine beauty and the rouged cheek of the average ballet girl.⁵⁴⁹

The difficulty in ascertaining the magazine's standpoint on the lady/woman debate is evident; in this instance, *Woman* ignored the fact that 'lady' had fallen into disrepute, suggesting instead that those who mistakenly believed they were ladies were unnatural and

⁵⁴⁸ Angelique Richardson, *Women Who Did: Stories by Men and Women, 1890-1914* (London: Penguin, 2002), p. xxxiv.

⁵⁴⁹ Marjorie, 'D'You Know?', *W.* (5.07.1893), p. 6.

undignified in contrast to the true lady, like the average-looking woman who tried to beautify herself with rouge. It also reflects an element of improper dissembling. Indeed, those who tried to control the discursive practises depicting class, used signifiers such as dress to assert their position. The second definition of 'lady' in the OED is 'to act as a lady or mistress; to behave in a superior manner'. This suggests a performative aspect to lady in contrast to the more natural status of woman. *Woman* suggested that lady is applicable only to a rare few. It focused on 'lady' as a term loaded with upper-class associations; those who claimed to be ladies vied for respect.⁵⁵⁰ The ballet dancer reference is also significant. Whilst the New Woman was often seen as brazenly performing her womanhood, or lack thereof, the Victorian ballet dancer was detached from the phenomenon. Depictions of ballet dancers in art and popular culture remained conservative, carefully avoiding allusions to the changing roles of women which were being depicted on the stage by Ibsen's *A Doll House* and Pinero's *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* (1897).⁵⁵¹

One could argue then that, in using 'lady' rather than 'woman', the *Lady's Realm* was less advanced than *Woman*. Despite an apparent move from 'lady' to 'woman', Margaret Diane Stetz claims that by 1896 the press were beginning to shun rather than embrace the New Woman in order to assert their modernity.⁵⁵² Following the Wilde trials in the Spring of 1895, publications were wary of associating with figures such as the New Woman, who were often linked to Wilde's decadence, and so by presenting females as 'ladies' rather than 'women', periodicals escaped these negative associations. This has some validity

⁵⁵⁰ The term was socially inscribed and would continue to be into the following century with writers such as George Bernard Shaw discussing the possibility of transforming a woman into a lady.

⁵⁵¹ Alexandra Carter, *Dance and Dancers in the Victorian and Edwardian Music Hall Ballet* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), p.88.

⁵⁵² Stetz, p.282.

when one considers the time at which the *Lady's Realm* appeared. As Fraser, Green and Johnston suggest, it shows 'the extent to which the trope of Victorian woman was changing and contested'.⁵⁵³ Whilst lady has connotations of the upper classes it was also, as *Woman* suggests, an aspirational title; readers were invited into an elevated readership. This elevated readership was not new; as Ledbetter has highlighted, the *Lady's Realm* owed much to the example set by Wilde in his time as editor of the *Woman's World*, a magazine that 'recognized the importance of class and celebrity' in women's magazines.⁵⁵⁴ Whilst the *Lady's Realm* rejected some of the more advanced material of the *Woman's World*, it did follow its lead by including society news, fiction, articles on fashion and food, as well as poetry, wit and wisdom, articles on ladies' income, London and Paris fashion, the home, illustrated biographies and royal gossip.

Both magazines indicated that the terms used to describe the female gender were contestable and loaded with social complication. A further complication was both magazines' lack of strong female presence over the editorial process, a key factor that distinguished them from the periodicals studied previously in this thesis. Both promoted female voices yet both functioned on a male hegemonic structure. The *Lady's Realm* was edited by William Henry Wilkins. Wilkins was a zealous conservative, making him suited to the editing of a magazine with a somewhat conservative tone. He also had an interest in social questions and connections with Society through his friend and literary associate Lady Burton, who contributed to the *Lady's Realm* on one occasion.⁵⁵⁵ *Woman's* first editor was Fitzroy Gardiner, with Arnold Bennett serving as the assistant editor from 1894 to 1896

⁵⁵³ Fraser et al., p.177.

⁵⁵⁴ Ledbetter, p.55.

⁵⁵⁵ Huddleston, p.3.

before becoming the editor in 1896.⁵⁵⁶ This male influence manifested itself through the fact that many of *Woman's* writers were men, presented under female pseudonyms in what Beetham describes as 'a kind of journalistic cross-dressing'.⁵⁵⁷ Whilst Wilkins' input to the content of *Lady's Realm* was minimal and female writers were regularly included, Arnold Bennett wrote as multiple authors for *Woman*.⁵⁵⁸ The unimaginative names, such as 'Marjorie' for the writer of the gossip column 'D'You Know?', 'Barbara' as the author of 'Book Chat', and 'Cecile' as the writer of 'Music and Mummery', served perhaps as a subtle clue. As such, the exploration of womanhood became compounded in its presentation through a male writer, assuming the guise of a woman. 'Marjorie' was the most striking of these disguised female voices, with his gossip column 'D'You Know?' an apt example of fashionable journalism. The contraction of 'Do' conveyed a light-hearted, chatty tone, and most distinctly, a playful tone that pervaded the contents of the magazine. One prize competition was 'For the best set of verses not exceeding twelve lines into which are introduced the names of the several regular pseudonymic contributors to "Woman": "Marjorie," "Cecile," &c',⁵⁵⁹ inviting readers to speculate upon the mysterious writers and simultaneously self-gesturing. This was also referenced in September 1892 in which an article on 'Men v. Women in Journalism' berated Walter Besant's claim in his magazine *Author*, 'that in many of the women's journals, papers written for women, and supposed to be written by women, are actually written by men at a lower rate of pay'.⁵⁶⁰ *Woman* deemed this 'very stupid' and 'groundless', a highly ironic protest conveying its playful attitude. Such an attitude lent *Woman* a unique voice amongst the other magazines in this

⁵⁵⁶ The first female editor of *Woman*, Ida Meller, was not appointed until 1897.

⁵⁵⁷ Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?*, p.129.

⁵⁵⁸ Fraser et al., p.194.

⁵⁵⁹ 'Prize Competitions', *W.* (3.04.1895), p.1.

⁵⁶⁰ 'Woman to "Women"', *W.* (21.09.1892), p.3.

study. *Shafts* and the *Signal* strove for the rights of women; the *Young Woman* carefully protected and led its young readers; the *Lady's Realm* presented a range of material to the conservatively educated. By contrast, *Woman* introduced the light-hearted, pleasurable side of New Journalism. The result was a fragmentary, sometimes contradictory picture of the modern woman, in which readers were encouraged to fight for their rights yet mocked for doing so in the same breath.

As this shows, a quality that consistently emerges from reading *Woman* is its highly self-referential nature; one prize competition asked 'For the best letter to the Editor giving as briefly as possible the writer's views of the present requirements of the readers of "Woman."' ⁵⁶¹ Like the *Young Woman*, it used reader responses to tailor content. *Woman's* constant interaction with its readers was a sharp contrast to the *Lady's Realm*. Unlike the other publications that have been examined thus far, the *Lady's Realm* lacked editorial commentary. It was not until June 1899 that 'The Editor's Page' appeared. ⁵⁶² However, as Joan Huddleston notes, 'it is not a regular occurrence, nor does it comment upon the journal and its policy'. ⁵⁶³ It discussed upcoming publications, such as Mrs. Hugh Fraser's volume of short stories, biographies of Thackeray and Ludwig II. It also provided information on the 'Central Bureau for the Employment of Women', and corrections for the previous issue, including the comment 'that Lady Hamilton is the Secretary, and not the President, of the Pioneer Club'. These indicated a reader with an interest in literature, women's employment, as well as some involvement in women's clubs. This profile is familiar when compared to the readership of the other magazines studied; yet the lack of interaction suggests a more

⁵⁶¹ 'Prize Winners', *W.* (31.07.1895), p.1.

⁵⁶² *LR.* (06.1899), p.239.

⁵⁶³ Huddleston, p.3.

independent reader, one who perhaps did not seek the circle created by the self-referring writing of *Woman*. It is a significant contrast when one considers the input that Sibthorp had in *Shafts*. Even in magazines where the editor was not such a recognised presence, there was still some form of comment upon the journal, if only in the form of calls for subscriptions and an utterance of the journal's aims. Accordingly, the *Lady's Realm's* less personalised approach conformed to its book-like appearance. In contrast to *Woman* – regular, cheap, throwaway – the *Lady's Realm* was a collectable item, standing alongside its readers' books on shelves; it provided entertainment, information and reference, rather than solace and comfort. Whilst *Woman* reflected the commodification of fin de siècle culture, the *Lady's Realm* was more of a throwback to periodicals of the previous generation, embodying the upper-class nature of periodical reading and ignoring the newly-literate lower classes. In this way, the material of the *Lady's Realm* did not date in the same way as that of *Woman* did; nor did it have the transience of *Woman*, in its absence of an editorial or gossip page. This makes it a potentially less suitable representation of New Womanhood, as it adhered to an older journalistic order. It maintained a consistent appearance, opening with an illustration, followed by a piece on royalty. It closed with 'The Home Beautiful', 'London and Paris Fashions' and 'The Cuisine', although over the years these changed positions and were supplemented with features such as 'The Children's Own Corner', 'The Temple of Hymen' and 'The Great World'. In any case, these articles collectively drew a picture of womanhood ridden with the potential contradictions highlighted at the century's close: metropolitan yet domestic, fashionable yet practical, modern yet traditional.

Beetham and Boardman have argued that *Woman* had ‘a reputation for being advanced’.⁵⁶⁴ The length and price of *Woman* allied it with advanced magazines such as *Shafts*; furthermore an editorial maintained that *Woman* was the first magazine to discover, ‘that women demanded something more than fashion-letters, cosmetic recipes, mild descriptions of suburban dances, and the advertisement of mediocrity of all sorts, from their journalistic caterers’.⁵⁶⁵ Appearing almost three years before *Shafts* and four years before the *Woman’s Herald* became the *Woman’s Signal*, *Woman* certainly set the wheels of advanced women’s magazines in motion, if only slowly. This was evident from its epigraph: ‘Forward! But not too Fast’. With its disguised female voices, *Woman’s* tone and content contrasted the female-run liberal feminist publications. Yet taking its role as the first of its kind seriously, *Woman* was highly intertextual, consistently referring to the other women’s magazines;⁵⁶⁶ this made readers aware of the market in which it operated, retaining its place as the first and as a result, most knowledgeable amongst ‘advanced magazines’. A November 1892 editorial reported: ‘*Shafts* is the name of a new woman’s monthly periodical. It is obviously run with a mission – in search of “wisdom, justice in truth.” It is published at Granville House, Arundel Street, Strand’.⁵⁶⁷ This statement lacked judgement of *Shafts* and its contents, providing only information. Yet three months later, reporting on the failure of the *Woman’s Herald*, the editorial was significantly more critical: ‘advanced womanhood has had to admit that it cannot edit a paper’.⁵⁶⁸ The following month’s comments were equally scathing about the same paper and its new editors: ‘The new journalistic venture of aggressive, or, perhaps, to be more respectful, I should say “active” womanhood, made its

⁵⁶⁴ Beetham and Boardman, p.87

⁵⁶⁵ ‘Woman to “Women”’, *W.* (21.09.1892), p.3.

⁵⁶⁶ In contrast, the *Lady’s Realm* rarely referenced other publications.

⁵⁶⁷ *W.* (9.11.1892), p.8

⁵⁶⁸ *W.* (8.02.1893), p.7.

appearance last week'.⁵⁶⁹ By patronisingly relabeling 'aggressive' as 'active' Bennett dug at the womanhood presented in liberal feminist periodicals. *Woman* carefully kept its distance from 'aggressive' womanhood. The New Woman had yet to be named at this point but her presence was clearly foregrounded in the observation of 'aggressive' womanhood.

The mention of *Shafts'* mission in the November 1892 editorial became more significant when combined with the commentary on the *Woman's Herald*, suggesting that magazines run with a mission were distasteful to *Woman*. In February 1893, it asserted its own lack of mission:

Our editor is constantly being asked to take up this, that, and the other cry for reform of some kind, and is obliged to decline on the ground that WOMAN was started not in the interest of a particular movement, but to amuse and instruct average women of rather more than average intelligence – and not as a political and personal enterprise.⁵⁷⁰

Yet, whilst *Woman* was sold as an organ of entertainment, it was also, interestingly, instructional. Since it was not striving to convey a political impetus, *Woman's* instructional function regarded the living of everyday life. It provided its own model of womanhood through fashion articles, recipes, and domestic décor; it also provided something more substantial for its readers by including features on work and education. As such, it moved forward, but not too fast.

⁵⁶⁹ W. (01.03.1893), pp.6-7, p.6.

⁵⁷⁰ W. (8.02.1893), p.7.

At the end of 1892, 'Marjorie' claimed to prefer 'advancing' womanhood to 'aggressive' womanhood.⁵⁷¹ The feminist magazines were 'aggressive' whilst *Woman's* more steady approach made it 'advancing'. *Woman* also rejected extreme anti-feminists at the other end of the scale, labelling Ouida's tirades in the press in December 1892 as 'the "Ouida" benefit performance'; she was simply 'one more recruit to the ranks of women who, in their feverish yearning for publicity, expose themselves and their sex to ridicule by writing or speaking on anything that turns up, irrespective of their knowledge of the subject or their power of reasoning'.⁵⁷² *Woman* condemned Ouida's attention-seeking in the same way it rejected the campaigning New Woman of the 'aggressive' woman's magazine. The magazine's editorial ethos did not allow space for material of an impassioned nature. Instead it praised individuals such as the Hon. Mrs Lyttleton Gell for not being a 'hysterical "shrieking sister"'.⁵⁷³

Whilst condemning those individuals considered 'shrieking sisters', *Woman* was also defensive of those women who were wrongly labelled as such:

Now 'shrieking,' as applied to women who make themselves heard or read on subjects of public interest relating to their own sex, has come to be used rather comprehensively and carelessly. There are many earnest, truthful, and tolerant

⁵⁷¹ *W.* (23.11.1892),p.8.

⁵⁷² "'Woman" to Women', *W.* (14.12.1892),p.3.

⁵⁷³ 'Squandered Girlhood', *W.* (7.12.1892),p.3.

women of common sense and intelligence who find it absolutely necessary to shriek before they can get a genuine grievance remedied.⁵⁷⁴

Yet two and a half years later the magazine's sympathy for the forthright female began to diminish, perhaps exasperated by the New Woman's consistent appearance in the press:

A common but necessary characteristic of the emancipated woman is an ambition to do something that will shock the susceptibilities of ordinary mortals. She must attempt something which other women have not hitherto done, and proclaim herself the pioneer of some new movement. She is often unconscious of the real motive of her new departure, and works herself up to believe that her sole object in view is to serve what she imagines to be a great cause.⁵⁷⁵

By the time the New Woman was established, any praise of noteworthy women was followed by the reassurance that they were not overtly 'New': Miss Shorrock 'is a striking illustration of the fact that an academic education does not necessarily make a woman "blue;" that feminine culture is not bound up with dowdiness, a lack of manner and style, and a lofty contempt for ladies' papers';⁵⁷⁶ 'Miss Estelle Flagler is a type of revolting daughter which one can but admire';⁵⁷⁷ 'In spite of the manifold and sometimes alarming developments of the New Woman, it is refreshing to find that in many respects she is still

⁵⁷⁴ "'Woman" to Women', *W.* (17.05.1893),p.3.

⁵⁷⁵ Marjorie, 'D'You Know?', *W.* (6.11.1895),p.5.

⁵⁷⁶ 'Our Readers' Friends', *W.* (3.01.1894)p.5.

⁵⁷⁷ Marjorie, 'D'You Know?', *W.* (16.05.1894),p.6.

only a woman after all'.⁵⁷⁸ This firmly disassociated *Woman* from the blue-stockinged, revolting figures of controversy, toward which its readership was equally hesitant. Whilst both did not entirely reject New Womanhood, being open to her demands if they were reasonable, they did lose sympathy as the decade progressed.

Woman regularly broached issues connected to advanced womanhood; for instance, containing several articles on the subject of what young women should do in this new age, a central discourse at the end of the century. Yet, it was often ambivalent about these subjects, including material from other magazines and either providing an overview of the argument or reprinting the article under a new title. Indeed, *Woman* was notorious for quoting from other contemporary publications. These inclusions were often free of the magazine's own analysis, an approach that is both frustrating and intriguing for the modern reader. Unlike its liberal feminist competitors it did not lead readers to definitive conclusions; instead it anthologised the material of its competing magazines. Using this range of voices, inflammatory topics, such as those surrounding the New Woman, could morph into more acceptable forms or be disguised altogether. This demonstrates the editorial prowess of Gardiner and his team. As such, when placed alongside the *Lady's Realm*, *Woman* emerges most prominently as a publication that embedded its message amongst a range of seemingly conflicting material, with its discussions of woman/lady continually eluding the reader. Whilst it favoured a more objective tone in its serious articles, its gossip feature, the place where the opinions of the editors truly emerged, used a light-hearted voice that often veiled its meaning. The *Lady's Realm* produced a less personalised, more detached approach to its editorial process. In this there was little room

⁵⁷⁸ Marjorie, 'D'You Know?', *W.* (22.08.1894), p.5.

for abstract, lexical concerns, such as the appropriateness of ‘woman’ or ‘lady’; its content was more concrete. However, like *Woman*, the *Lady’s Realm* produced an assortment of voices. These were more clearly attributed to tangible individuals with definitive views, to whom readers could relate, as illustrated more clearly in the following section.

Love, Marriage and the Ideal Woman

This section considers the way in which *Woman* and the *Lady’s Realm* filtered and diluted New Woman ideas through to day-to-day matters such as relationships. As followers of the debate rather than leaders, both publications found marriage was an ideal topic. The Matrimonial Causes Acts of 1857 and 1878 and the Married Women’s Property Acts of 1870 and 1882 brought marriage into the spotlight within the popular press: with its ties to the New Woman, it was an alluring topic for fashionable magazines. The journalistic devices used to discuss marriage diverged between the two magazines. In its discussion of marriage, the *Lady’s Realm* regularly used symposia, in which it incorporated a host of celebrity voices to influence and inspire its readership. One could assume that the type of women who consumed the ‘celebrity journalism’⁵⁷⁹ of the *Lady’s Realm* aspired to be like the women about whose glamorous lifestyles they read, celebrities such as Caird, Frances Hodgson Burnett, M.E. Braddon, Grand, ‘Iota’, and Marie Corelli. The *Lady’s Realm* included these contributors of an elevated, celebrity status to produce numerous voices on pertinent subjects. The symposium approach was never used by *Woman* which relied more on allegorical, satirical tales and reader input from its prize competitions. Yet, there were

⁵⁷⁹ ‘The Lady’s Realm (1896-1915), *DNCJ*, p.342.

similarities in the ideological stances emerging, with the focus in these publications on the relationship itself.

Woman's 'instructional' ethos was often manifested in its discussions of marriage, such as an October 1892 article in which Rika implored readers to 'Be Loyal Wives'.⁵⁸⁰ She advised remaining calm and patient when one's husband was out of sorts; not moaning to one's mother or friends when he lost his temper and said unkind things; standing up for one's husband, and appearing neatly before him: male weakness meant that man abhorred the sight of a dishevelled wife. Advice of this nature spurred the writings of New Women authors such as Hepworth Dixon who claimed in *The Story of a Modern Woman* that 'the very fabric of society was based on that acquiescent feminine smile'.⁵⁸¹ In order to steer women away from the bachelor lifestyle, mainstream magazines used images of family bliss to negate the positives of single life. Rika's instructional article potentially fulfilled a similar role for *Woman's* readers, encouraging acquiescent smiles over man's unreasonable nature. It certainly challenged radical New Women such as Caird who wrote: 'The notion that the man ought to be the commander, because one must have a head in every commonwealth, is an amusing crude solution of the difficulty, to say nothing of its calm and complete injustice'.⁵⁸² She referred to 'the fatal sense of power and possession' as being a factor 'which ruins so many unions'. However, there was also a deeper meaning at work in Rika's inciting of acquiescence.

⁵⁸⁰ *W.* (26.10.1892),p.5.

⁵⁸¹ Hepworth Dixon,p.134.

⁵⁸² Mona Caird, *The Morality of Marriage And Other Essays on the Status and Destiny of Woman* (Cambridge University Press Online, 2012;1897)
[<http://ebooks.cambridge.org/ebook.jsf?bid=CBO9780511704468>,accessed 21.01.13]

Whilst Caird's is not a view explicitly shared by *Woman*, the magazine did subtly suggest progression in female relationships. Rika's article was accompanied on the same page by a poem from *Punch* in which a man proposed to his beloved and received an illegible scrawl in return.⁵⁸³ He anguishes over the potential content of her letter, wondering if she has accepted or not. Intriguingly, *Woman* omitted the final stanza of the original poem. In this the man concludes that he must meet with his sweetheart and that if she says yes he must provide a type-writer, 'For the use of my wife!' This last verse pokes fun at the working woman and the rise of the clerical profession.⁵⁸⁴ *Woman* also omitted the quotation that *Punch* printed above the original poem from *A Ladies' Journal*: 'The hand-writing of well-educated Ladies is often disgracefully illegible'. These exclusions reveal a more careful control over the interaction of its content than one may have originally supposed. Read in conjunction with Rika's article, *Woman's* version of the poem bestows control upon the female, leaving the man baffled. *Woman's* reader was encouraged by Rika to serve her husband loyally, yet she could also torment him by disguising her feelings. In *Punch* the woman simply has not mastered legible handwriting; the reference to her being a 'well-educated' lady suggests that even educated women cannot achieve the standards of educated men and she is relegated to the white-collar profession of type-writer by her bemused lover. Although the reader of *Woman* was encouraged to practise a certain amount of self-control in her relationships she still had some liberties. As if to fortify the freedom that women were gaining, the blurb at the bottom corner of the same page informed readers that next week's issue would commence the series 'Where Girls Grow Wise': 'dealing with some of the most successful colleges and schools of general and technical education'. In a

⁵⁸³ 'Yes or No?' Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴ From the 1880s women gained employment in local government offices through completing typing courses. Suzanne Fagence Cooper, *The Victorian Woman* (London: V & A Publications, 2001), p.62.

single page, *Woman* instructed its readers to be meek wives, whilst indicating their gradual progression.

With its symposium approach, the *Lady's Realm* exploited a different method of providing readers with divergent perspectives on marriage. From March 1897 Lady Mary Jeune, Susan, Countess of Malmesbury, Flora Annie Steel and the popular author Corelli discussed 'The Modern Marriage Market' across four issues of the *Lady's Realm*.⁵⁸⁵ This assortment of celebrity authors and the nobility, all sharing an interest in women's issues, reflected the magazine's glamorisation of important topics. All four regularly contributed to the *Lady's Realm*. They are also notable for a somewhat diffident approach towards New Woman issues, endorsing the orthodoxy of the *Lady's Realm*. Corelli saw the New Woman as a threat to modernity, whilst Jeune believed her to be a social abnormality. In their contributions they both expressed dissatisfaction with the 'mannish' woman. They also reflected the sentiments of Blanche Alethea Crackanthorpe's 1894 article 'The Revolt of the Daughters',⁵⁸⁶ Steel emphasizing the vocational nature of marriage, and Corelli promoting child-rearing as a central aspect of women's lives.

Gráinne Goodwin points out that 'The Modern Marriage Market' sidestepped issues such as coverture, domestic abuse, male sexual morality,⁵⁸⁷ topics at the heart of the campaigning New Woman. Instead, the symposium focused upon whether love or money was more important in marriage. The economic basis of marriage was still a central concern

⁵⁸⁵ Marie Corelli, 'The Modern Marriage Market', *LR*. (03.1897), pp.522-7; Lady Jeune, 'A Reply to Marie Corelli', *LR*. (04.1897), pp.641-6; Flora Annie Steel, 'The Modern Marriage Market', *LR*. (09.1897), pp.555-9. Susan, Countess of Malmesbury, 'The Modern Marriage Market', *LR*. (10.1897.), pp.665-70.

⁵⁸⁶ This article came on the back of the New Woman's insistence on economic independence and sexual liberation. B.A. Crackanthorpe, 'The Revolt of the Daughters,' *Nineteenth Century* 35 (1894), pp.23-31, p.25.

⁵⁸⁷ Goodwin, p.509.

for the New Woman: Caird's article 'Marriage' (1888) in the *Westminster Review* suggested that marriage had its roots in capitalism; Egerton paralleled marriage with prostitution in 'Virgin Soil': 'marriage becomes for many women a legal prostitution, a nightly degradation, a hateful yoke under which they age, mere bearers of children conceived in a sense of duty, not love'.⁵⁸⁸ The link to prostitution was not made so explicit by the *Lady's Realm's* discussion; however, like *Woman*, the message was underlying and subtle. Corelli wrote that 'in England, women [...] are not to-day married, but bought for a price' (p. 523). Jeune objected to this, underplaying the evils outlined by Corelli and suggesting that they only represented one small sector of society. However, she shared Corelli's belief in love overcoming the lure of marriage. Interestingly, in the third instalment Steel declared: 'The girl who gives herself for exchange in pure passion is quite as mercenary as the one who sells herself for gold. Both claim their own desire, irrespective of everything but themselves' (p. 556) Her words pre-empted Grand's a year later who wrote in the *Fortnightly Review* that a woman 'should never marry a man because she has a passion for him'.⁵⁸⁹ Steel's pragmatism contrasted with her fellow contributors who fulfilled the romantic aspirations of the magazine's readers by promoting a marriage based on romantic love. Steel thwarted such ideals, declaring love to be a 'virtuous act' and 'a very commonplace, a very natural one' (p. 557). Her article directed readers to take a more responsible approach towards marriage, invoking the eugenic standpoint promoted by New Woman writers such as Grand. By combining the traditional idea of marriage as a career and the rational, detached notion of conscientious matches, Steel was repositioning the woman's status in marriage without collapsing the structures. The combination of her views

⁵⁸⁸ George Egerton, 'Virgin Soil', *Discords* (London: John Lane, 1894), p.155.

⁵⁸⁹ Grand, 'The Modern Man and Maid', p.317.

along with Corelli's and Jeune's revealed that readers of the *Lady's Realm* were not committed to a feminist or traditionalist cause. The symposium structure reflected the dialogic quality of the woman's press which, in its fragmentary nature, produced a voice of negotiation, rather than a clear coherent argument.

The satirical tales of *Woman* also distorted the magazine's perspective on marriage. Interestingly, the lack of romanticism endorsed by Steel was a point of criticism concerning the *New Woman*; such pragmatism was shown to inhibit relationships. In August 1895 'She Was Practical' depicted the pragmatic protagonist Ethel who is being doggedly pursued by Alfred, pleading for her hand in marriage.⁵⁹⁰ Ethel refuses him until he points out that she is a *New Woman* and as such 'must be practical'. Ethel admits that 'As a new woman, I am in duty bound to consider such an appeal as that. I am bound to look at your proposition in a calm, business-like way'. Thus bolstered, Alfred appeals to Ethel's health concerns, alluding to the numerous diseases recently discovered and the cost of health care. When Ethel seems suitably apprehensive Alfred announces 'I am a physician myself'. With that Ethel leaps into his arms. Ethel's practicality is undermined by this hysterical action. Her closing words, said 'in her simple new womanly way', convey a 'cold' and 'calculating' interest in love: 'You appeal to my business judgement'. Her resolve is not particularly hardy and she is easily won over, appearing flippant. Her words mock the *New Woman's* eugenic concerns, particularly the plots of writers such as Grand, Egerton and Dowie. Yet these writers did not reject romantic love: in her love letters *Rosa Amorosa*,

⁵⁹⁰ W. (14.08.1895),p.8.

Egerton wrote: 'the one dominant fact in a woman's life' is 'her need to love and be loved'.⁵⁹¹

In the same issue, a short story entitled 'The Curious History of a Maiden Journalist in Love',⁵⁹² compounded the idea that love and the New Woman were incompatible. The anonymous piece depicts Leonora's engagement to Richard Larch, news-editor of the *Whiteport Guardian*. The author alludes to the importance of suitable marriage matches, against which Corelli protested, explaining that Richard's promotion was the only reason Leonora's parents would accept her engagement: 'for a mere news-editor, of practically no social position, cannot be considered a suitable match for an archdeacon's daughter' (p. 14). However, Richard gets an editorial position in London and, despite his pleading Leonora refuses to go with him on the basis of not leaving her parents. Within a year Leonora's parents die and her independent spirit, along with £300 left by her father, drive her to London to become a woman journalist. She also hopes to meet Richard again. After two years with little success Leonora meets a 'fellow-craftswoman' who advises her to write, not on 'the moral purpose of' Mrs Humphry Ward's novels but on how the author 'was dressed, and how she looked, and what sort of carriage it was' (p. 15).⁵⁹³ It was writing of this feminine nature that helped Leonora's career in journalism to flourish. Eventually Leonora is summoned to write for the *Outline*, the periodical edited by Richard who personally sent for her. Believing this to be an indication of his love, Leonora is anguished upon meeting Richard again to find that he makes no allusion to the past and

⁵⁹¹ *Rosa Amorosa: The Love-letters of a Woman* (1901) cited in Angelique Richardson, *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.165.

⁵⁹² *W.* (14.08.1895), pp.14-15.

⁵⁹³ This is another example of *Woman's* self-gesturing, wherein the celebrity figure embodied greater significance than her work

treats her brusquely. The ending is not romantic or idealistic but bland and realistic, countering the story's opening line that 'Love is eternal, without beginning and without end' (p. 14). Rather the end announces: 'life is not a novel by Sir Walter Beasant. Life is less symmetrical' (p. 15). Independence of mind is punished; if Leonora had left for London with Richard when he requested she would have been his wife, instead she becomes barely an acquaintance. Yet, the success Leonora achieves begs the question of whether marriage in fact hinders a woman's development. Such questions were shrewdly broached by *Woman* whilst in the *Lady's Realm* they were asked directly.

In February 1899 another celebrity symposium in *Lady's Realm* asked 'Does Marriage Hinder a Woman's Development?'⁵⁹⁴ Contained within one issue, the seven contributors included Grand, Gertrude Atherton, Caird and Lady Teresa F. Hamilton. Grand believed marriage could positively develop the individual; however, 'marriage to a dolt in either sex is a hindrance to self-development' (p. 576). Her words suggested that that the female journalist from *Woman's* short story did not need to alter herself for the man she loved; woman should make 'the best of her wits' and be independent, qualities that make her a better wife (p. 577). Grand concluded by advocating intellectual equality: 'If a woman be married to a right-minded man, then marriage will not hinder her self-development' (p. 577). Conversely, the American writer Gertrude Atherton suggested that marriage was not compatible with female success and independence: 'if a woman had made up her mind to train her gifts to the highest perfection, and rise to the first rank, then she must leave personal happiness to other people' (p. 579). Atherton's statement that 'Matrimony is in itself a career' evoked Egerton's 'Spell of the White Elf' in which the narrator writes to her

⁵⁹⁴ *LR*. (02.1899), pp.576-86.

sweetheart expressing her belief that marriage is 'a vocation and I hadn't one for it'.⁵⁹⁵ Egerton's protagonist sees other women as less evolved, slaves to their emotions. Atherton echoed this potential weakness, suggesting that the woman embroiled in a love affair became 'a mass of sensitive nerves' whilst the woman who shut herself up to work became 'detached from practical life' (p. 579). The status of Egerton's protagonist as a female writer echoed Atherton's emphasis on the incompatibility of writing with a personal life. It was not until her husband's death that Atherton embarked upon a successful career as a writer, a career which helped her to shut out the tragedy of losing both her husband and son: 'When I am in the middle of a book I might hear of the death of every relative I have in the world, and it would mean nothing to me whatever' (p. 579). The view that a woman with ambition could not make room for a husband was echoed throughout New Woman writing; *The Story of a Modern Woman* ended with Mary's successful writing career and her failed personal life. It is echoed in *Woman's* 'Curious History of a Maiden Journalist in Love', providing little hope of a successful and happy marriage, or even love, for the ambitious female reader.

In her contribution Caird inverted gender roles, writing about the boy whose 'father pointed out how selfish it was for a young fellow to indulge his own little fads and fancies, when he might make himself useful in a nice manly way, at home' (p. 582). Through her amusing tale of John and his controlling wife Sophia, who laughed at his scientific discoveries and informed him that he would be more usefully employed in attending to the house and children, Caird demonstrated that marriage 'rather effaced' the parts of one's 'nature which are said to distinguish the human from the animal kingdom' (p. 582). By placing the

⁵⁹⁵ *Keynotes* (London: John Lane, 1893), p.25..

usually powerful man in a subordinate position, Caird highlighted female subjection, reinforcing her *Westminster Review* article ten years earlier in which she compared marriage to 'degradation'. Where Atherton saw marriage as only possible for women with lower ambitions, Caird saw marriage as only possible for women willing to be reduced to animals. Hamilton's views diverged a great deal from Caird's. Surprisingly, the President of the Pioneer Club suggested that 'Self-development may mean only the development of selfishness' (p. 585). Hamilton argued that 'Marriage and motherhood is the glorious summer-time of a woman's self-development' (p. 584) with its incorporation of 'government and administration' (p. 585); once more, the argument of marriage as a career was induced, this time positively. Hamilton even contended that the unhappy marriage resulted in a stronger, more resilient woman, echoing Rika's words on loyal wives in *Woman*. The central focus on how much a husband could liberate his wife and whether a woman could develop whilst dealing with domestic matters emphasized the middle ground of *Woman* and *Lady's Realm*.

Despite incorporating an encouraging voice on women's potential autonomy within marriage, *Woman* also suggested that advanced females faced difficulty in attaining a husband to begin with. More striking examples of this appeared from the middle of 1895, marking the New Woman's influence. In July 1895, 'Which?',⁵⁹⁶ a short story by Amy Irvine depicted a male protagonist in love with two women: Norah for her strength and Alice for her weakness. He chooses Alice: 'The woman's weakness had conquered him'. Norah is left to go through life alone: 'She lived to be a blessing to all women, and so to the whole world'. This implied that advanced women did not require a partner to the same

⁵⁹⁶ W. (24.07.1895), p.9.

extent as the helpless woman. The conclusion that Norah's philanthropic work affected the world positively but she remained unknown is a non-threatening ending and can be compared to the ending of George Eliot's *Middlemarch* in which Dorothea, becoming Mrs Ladislaw, failed to reach her 'epic' potential: 'many who knew her, thought it a pity that so substantive and rare a creature should have been absorbed into the life of another, and be only known in a certain circle as a wife and mother'. Yet, Eliot adds that the 'effect [...] on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts'.⁵⁹⁷ This suggests that married women could achieve an impact but that they struggled to find a man to marry them if they were too autonomous. One required the self-control advocated by Rika to attract a husband.

The connection of the advanced woman to discourses of marriage suggested the difficulty of being a woman in a transitory age. Whilst both magazines assumed that their readers were not New Women, they still viewed it as important to explore the concept of 'newness', most likely from a commercial point of view in which they used a figure of controversy to sell copies. The *Lady's Realm* once more relied on its celebrity contributors, including Grand in August 1898 on the Old and the New Woman.⁵⁹⁸ Grand railed against the hypocrisy of anti-feminists, claiming that whilst Old Women were critical of New Women, they seemed quick to take advantage of the advances the New Women made. Yet she also maintained that the New Woman was, 'the finest work of the imagination which the newspapers have yet produced', somewhat mitigating her argument for the magazine's sensitive readers. Lady Jeune wrote in response the following month, calling the New

⁵⁹⁷ George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (London: Penguin Books, 1994; 1874), p.838.

⁵⁹⁸ 'The New Woman and the Old', *LR*. (08.1898), p.466. This was summarised in the *Signal* the following month, indicating the interactivity of the woman's press.

Woman ‘a bad dream’ and criticising Grand for her depiction of the Old Woman and representation of men’s immorality.⁵⁹⁹ She made no mention of sexually transmitted diseases, once more romanticising woman’s role. Whilst Grand modified her views for the publications in which she wrote, Jeune was even more careful to articulate only that which was acceptable. The readers’ perceptions of love and marriage became entrenched in a careful rejection of the campaigning New Woman.

Instead of asking celebrity writers for their views on the New Woman, *Woman* encouraged readers to think about it themselves. For the February 7, 1894 issue, *Woman* offered ten shillings ‘For the best answer to – What is the greatest and most genuine of modern women’s grievances, and why?’⁶⁰⁰ Answers were to be ‘no more than 100 words; less if possible’. The results were printed four weeks later.⁶⁰¹ Copied from the March 7, 1894 issue, the table below demonstrates that most readers were aggrieved by issues distinctly related to the New Women, although significantly they avoided naming her. Certainly, one, four, five, and six reflect feminist concerns; to a certain extent, two was also an issue for the advanced women, having no choice but to live the bachelorette lifestyle because of the lack of available men.

⁵⁹⁹ ‘The New Woman and the Old: A Reply to Sarah Grand’, *LR*. (09.1898),pp.600-4.

⁶⁰⁰ ‘Prize Competitions’, *W*. (7.02.1894),p.1.

⁶⁰¹ *W*. (7.03.1894),pp.3-4.

No.	Grievance.	Percentage of Votes.
1.	"One law for a man, and another for a woman"	37
2.	Numerical preponderance of women	19
3.	Absence of good servants	14
4.	Smallness of women's wages, compared with men's	12
5.	That men refuse to take women seriously	7
6.	The overcrowded state of the female labour market	6
7.	The absence of grievance	5

This was broken down further, illustrating how the 37 per cent for number one was composed:

	Grievance	Percentage
<i>a</i>	Mrs. Grundy and social laws	15
<i>b</i>	Divorce Laws	14
<i>c</i>	Absence of female suffrage	8
	Total	<u>37</u>

The decision to group these issues as one item was interestingly sympathetic to the advanced woman. By September 1894, invitations to discuss the New Woman through the competition pages were made even more explicit and this time she was named: 'New Lights on the "New" Woman' presented the results of 'the best epigrammatic definition of the expression, the "New Woman," as interpreted by the writer'.⁶⁰² The fact that readers were asked to provide succinct answers suggested the potential for great and possibly conflicting detail on the subject. Moreover, referring to the "New Woman" as an 'expression' somewhat underplayed her significance. Embedded in the responses of the

⁶⁰² W. (26.09.1894),p.7.

four prize winners was the influence that *Woman's* carefully edited material had upon readers. Miss Edith Ready, the 'most liberal-minded' summed up the New Woman as being: 'At her worst – A creature of one idea – emancipation; liberty at all costs. At her best – A cultured woman, claiming the right to order her life and use her powers' (p. 7). *Woman* selected Ready as the top winner as her response embodied the magazine's philosophy, rejecting the emancipation-seeking New Woman and positing the more refined individual which *Woman* aimed to render. Isabella Burgin was 'most to the point', presenting the New Woman quirkily as a recipe listing:

¼ – Masculine Attire
¼ – Love of sensation
½ – Journalistic imagination
(p. 7)

Using a domestic format, Burgin mocked 'aggressive' womanhood in a similar way to 'Marjorie'. With journalistic imagination forming half of the New Woman, Burgin reflected views such as Eastwood's in the *Humanitarian*. The reader pronounced wittiest, Miss Carrie Phipson, also presented stereotypes associated with New Womanhood: flouting 'Love's caresses', reforming 'ladies' dresses', and scorning 'the Man-Monster's tirades'. In this way 'She seems scarcely human,/This Mannish "New Woman,"/This "Queen of the Blushless Brigade"' (p. 7). In these responses, the readers remained confident that the New Woman was a rare breed who generally existed only in magazines. They also automatically associated the New Woman with 'aggressive' womanhood. Interestingly, Miss S.P. Henderson, deemed the 'most moderate of those who champion the New Woman', took an opposing angle, writing: 'Her faults are those of imagination,/And of Sydney Grundy's

smart creation'. She added: 'The "New Woman" will never lose her caste –/For her aim is "Forward! but not too fast" (p. 7). Henderson did not suggest that the New Woman was mythical or aggressive; rather, the negative aspersions surrounding her were the result of exaggerated literary imagination. She very much existed, but reflected *Woman's* epigraph, advancing gradually and retaining her dignity.

The prize competitions were both ideological and commercial. Like *Shafts* they transformed readers into writers; however, whilst *Woman's* readers absorbed the magazine's philosophy, their contributions were spurred by commercial gain, by the prize offered. In this sense, their responses were engineered differently to the correspondents of *Shafts* or the *Signal* who vented frustrations or sought solace from their fellow readers. Nonetheless, these contributions are invaluable in gauging the type of reader that *Woman* attracted. The *Lady's Realm* on the other hand gave few clues on this front, being more focused upon the opinions of its celebrated contributors. Nonetheless, both produced some sympathy with the plight of the modern women, negotiating marriage and relationships in a period in which change impacted upon even the most conservative of individuals. With debates on marriage and relationships inevitably bound up in the New Woman concept, they also brought allusions to her literature. These allusions will be more closely scrutinised in the following section.

Literary New Women

This section explores the approaches that each magazine adopted towards women's reading and the woman reader. Of *Woman* the *DNCJ* notes: 'Unusually, it did not include as much serialized fiction as other contemporary women's magazines'.⁶⁰³ Certainly, the previous section has demonstrated that *Woman* did include some fiction, generally short, allegorical or satirical pieces, designed to simultaneously instruct and amuse the reader. However, it was more notable for its commentary upon literature. Unlike *Woman*, the *Lady's Realm* contained little comment on fiction but original fiction was central to its composition, reflecting its novelistic format. During its print run it included well over 1000 short stories and the first issue included '45 pages of fiction out of a total of 118 pages'.⁶⁰⁴ In order to explore the relationship between the fiction of the *Lady's Realm* and the New Woman, I will consider three authors who contributed to the *Lady's Realm* regularly: Grand, Corelli and Kenealy. Whilst Kenealy and Corelli were anti-New Woman, Grand was more progressive, although she wrote in the *Lady's Realm* that the New Woman was a 'Gorgon', 'epicene creature'.⁶⁰⁵

At the peak of the New Woman movement, in May 1895, *Woman* printed a 'Literary Supplement' in which it included a symposium of readers and publishers on 'The Modern Novel: Its Length', 'The Evolution of the British Heroine' by poet Arthur Cecil Hillier, and 'Fiction of the Future: A Prophetic Fantasia' by Sarah Volatile. Collectively, these features reasserted a readership whose time was pressed, preferring novels of a shorter length.

⁶⁰³ 'Woman', *DNCJ*, p.681.

⁶⁰⁴ Huddleston, p.6.

⁶⁰⁵ 'The New Woman and the Old', *LR*. (1898), p.466.

Reasons for this involved the increased pace of life as well as the extra time needed to read three volume novels. *Woman* itself catered to this preference for brevity, in contrast to the *Lady's Realm*. The difference in article length between the two magazines is prominent: in contrast to *Woman's* short bursts of text, articles in the *Lady's Realm* covered several pages. Mark Hampton suggests the press's commercialization involved 'speed of production'; publications catering 'to readers who were "busy" or "in a hurry" justified the use of headlines and shorter paragraphs in place of longer columns'.⁶⁰⁶ *Woman* is most illustrative of the commercialization of the late-Victorian press when compared to the other magazines in this study. Yet, whilst its brevity could conceivably be the result of targeting busy readers, it was also possibly accommodating towards those readers less interested in the political world and more in the everyday. As such, its content was presented in a light-hearted, accessible format.

Writing on the novelistic heroine, Hillier suggested that the present female protagonist was an evolutionary throwback in contrast to her refined forebear. As for the novel's future, the tongue-in-cheek predictions indicated both the commercial and celebrity status of fiction. Novels would be written for shock purposes and readers would consume them for their sensational content. Yet, at the end of this bleak narrative, 'Volatile' added that eventually tyrannical novelists would be deposed and the public would once more read 'Sir Walter Scott, Jane Austen, and other writers upon love'. Whilst admiration of great fiction drove much of *Woman's* literary discussions, aware that tastes were changing but seeing these changes as transitory and reversible, the magazine itself included some praise for the burgeoning advanced novels, indicating the editors' commercial awareness; indeed, while

⁶⁰⁶ Hampton, p.89.

cautious to embrace the literal New Woman, readers were curious and intrigued by her literary counterpart, even if the editors believed it was only a phase.

As Beetham writes, magazines addressed to women often included advice on reading and book reviews; by the 1890s, under the influence of New Journalistic modes these had become ‘Chats about Books’,⁶⁰⁷ the title that Arnold Bennett, writing under ‘Barbara’, gave his weekly column. This column is comparable to ‘Half Hours in the Library’ from the *Young Woman*. The connotations of the two reflected each magazine: the *Young Woman* inspired studious, serious reading, whilst *Woman* provided a more informal approach towards literary observations. Despite including potentially controversial matter, ‘Book Chat’ discussions did not contain the detailed analysis of those printed in *Shafts* or even the *Young Woman*, generally ranging between one and three paragraphs. In February 1895, ‘Barbara’ wrote in two separate issues on Allen’s *The Woman Who Did*,⁶⁰⁸ and Dowie’s *Gallia*.⁶⁰⁹ Both novels were published in February 1895 and notable for their depictions of the New Woman; yet both novels were received very differently. Whilst ‘Barbara’ was enthusiastic about *Gallia*, his analysis of Allen’s work was far more scathing, claiming that the author himself had admitted to his novels being ‘weak and preposterous and manufactured simply for trade purposes’, with *The Woman Who Did* ‘the weakest and most preposterous of the lot’.⁶¹⁰ Barbara’s exclamation that, ‘The whole thing is really too crude for words to describe’ was not an unusual reaction, evident from the virulent response of feminist figures such as Garrett Fawcett. It is curious that *Woman* followed feminist

⁶⁰⁷ Margaret Beetham, ‘Women and the Consumption of Print’, in *Women and Literature and Britain 1800-1900*, Joanne Shattock, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.57.

⁶⁰⁸ *W.* (13.02.1895), p.7.

⁶⁰⁹ *W.* (27.02.1895), p.6.

⁶¹⁰ Whilst Allen’s other novels catered to conservatives and radicals alike, *The Woman Who Did* was a definitive expression of his true beliefs on marriage and its comparability to prostitution.

reactions to New Woman fiction, whilst being more reflective of the mainstream press when discussing the New Woman herself. The controversy of the New Woman novel was articulated by Hugh Stutfield who wrote in the Tory publication *Blackwood's Magazine* that they were 'hysterical and disgusting', as well as 'neurotic and repulsive'.⁶¹¹ *Woman* seemed to reject this view; indeed, Bennett claimed that the magazine was progressive precisely because of its sympathetic approach to 'advanced fiction' rather than the 'advanced woman'.⁶¹² Whilst supporting the fictional advanced woman, *Woman* rejected her more radical real life form, suggesting a concurrence with the view that the New Woman was fictional; collusion with her was safe, so long as she did not escape from the page.

The *Saturday Review* set Gallia against Allen's Herminia as the 'girl who didn't' because she did not choose 'free love', instead opting for a eugenic match with a man she did not love. *Woman* did not explore the eugenic complexities of *Gallia*, nor the controversial free love of *The Woman Who Did*, instead it referred to *Gallia* as 'a romance built around a theory', in which the author did not try to 'pass off her peculiar heroine as a representative type' (p. 6). As in discussions of marriage, the relationship was the central factor, rather than its political ramifications. Barbara's critique was concerned more with writing style and characterisation, largely glossing over the novel's content. Whilst Barbara asserted that 'Herminia was not the pioneer she imagined herself to be' (p. 7), the conclusion to the *Gallia* review was less clear: 'it is hard to say whether *Gallia* oversteps the existing frontier or not'. Once more, these reactions were fairly common, with *Gallia* received more

⁶¹¹ Hugh Stutfield, 'Tommyrotics', *Blackwood's Magazine* (06.1895), pp.833-845, p.834 & p.835.

⁶¹² James Hepburn, ed., *Arnold Bennett: Sketches for Autobiography* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1979), p.35.

ambiguously than *The Woman Who Did*. Three months following these reviews, in May 1895, 'Barbara' cemented *Woman's* interest in advanced fiction, boldly asserting: 'I like the *Yellow Book*; I emphatically like it; and my regard for it grows, in spite of the attitude of the daily Press'.⁶¹³ 'Barbara' particularly admired the way the *Yellow Book* captured the spirit of the time whilst avoiding topical subjects. This praise seems somewhat hypocritical given *Woman's* own tendency to capture the spirit of the time whilst covering subjects that could be seen as topical, a potentially self-referential dig. Nevertheless, *Woman's* disapproval of sensationalism was perhaps evident in its avoidance of the inflammatory themes of which writers such as Stutfield wrote.

Strikingly the mode with which *Woman* discussed New Woman novels began to change through 1895. In a September issue, Victoria Crosse's *The Woman Who Didn't* was mentioned in *Woman's* gossip section rather than its 'Book Chat' segment.⁶¹⁴ 'Marjorie' praised Crosse's work, asserting that the novel 'marks the beginning of a career which is likely to be very brilliant'. Her story was termed as 'unimpeachably moral', not bearing 'the least flavour of "newness," which augurs well for the future of fiction'. The fact that the novel did not explicitly reflect radical New Woman themes, such as sexuality, was important for the hesitantly progressive magazine. Yet in the same issue, 'Barbara' critiqued the over moralising nature of *The Ideal Woman*, the collection of essays taken from the *Young Woman's* serial. 'Barbara' claimed that the essays avoided the question at hand and that if a girl 'is sensible she will come to no conclusion at all about the ideal

⁶¹³ W. (8.05.1895),p.7. Including the *Yellow Book* under 'Book Chat' was significant, indicating that readers were more regularly accessing fiction in magazines

⁶¹⁴ W. (11.09.1895),p.6.

husband until she sees him'.⁶¹⁵ In this sense *Woman*'s focus on relationships made it a more effective guide than the often didactic *Young Woman*, whose focus on moral implications resulted in a sidestepping of the central issue.

After reviewing New Woman novels for its readers in the early part of 1895, by the latter part, *Woman* challenged its readers to put into practice what they had learned and come up with the best title and plot of a modern novel.⁶¹⁶ The fact that *Woman* only requested a title and outline further emphasized their readers' busy lifestyle, not having time to compose an entire story. By inspiring readers actively to think about what the New Woman meant to them, *Woman* engaged readers in literary discussions, demonstrating an active, intelligent readership with ideas of modernity. Yet upon receiving responses the editor revealed that the titles were disappointing: 'We expected something weirdly modern, something bewitchingly new'.⁶¹⁷ This served as a ploy to spur those readers who had not entered the competition to better these disappointing contributions in the next offering. The winner of the competition, Miss McCalman, entitled her piece 'A Martyr to Modernity', about playwright Hammersley who experienced both the highs and lows of his profession. The woman he loved tried to step in during 'the crisis in his history' (p. 7). However, he resisted her assistance and she married another. He married a woman named Esther who dutifully let no one disturb him but then wearied of it and died in a year. Weeping over the loss of his wife he decided to write a play based on her memoirs. This was a success with critics announcing that this had the soul that his previous production did not. *Woman* announced McCalman's outline to be 'the foundation of an excellent novel' (p. 7). It certainly

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ W. (28.08.1895),p.7.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

contained the melodrama of New Woman literature with Hammersley's original love embodying the modern woman and his short-lived wife representing the subservient, 'old' woman. The other outline printed, by Mrs Lilius Dawson, used the quirky title: 'Love me, Love my Bicycle' (p. 7). Maud, a New Woman having gained 'a modern education at a Brighton school', is bored of the Essex village in which she resides, passing time by flirting with the vicar's son, Graham Anderson. She wins a bicycle in a prize competition in a periodical and takes up cycling lessons at a school in London where she falls in love with the French instructor, Victor Malot. However, she is forced to return home upon the death of her father. Graham is horrified to find her 'spinning along the country lanes in a *chic* cycling suit' (p. 7). Embarking upon a Continental tour in Paris, Maud is reunited with Victor and marries him, only to discover 'he is an inveterate gambler' (p. 7). Victor dies suddenly and Maud returns to England whereupon she renews her affections for Graham. He accepts her cycling while she accepts his penchant for golf. Death is again used as an instrument for the protagonist's ultimate happy ending. Once more, the readers were influenced by *Woman*, aware of the conventions of the New Woman, gently echoing and mocking her to produce a modified femininity with which they could sympathise. A similar technique was exploited by the authors contributing to the *Lady's Realm*.

Grand seems an unusual choice of author for a magazine such as the *Lady's Realm*. Whilst Grand's feminism is considered conservative in current criticism, for readers of the *Lady's Realm* she would have carried a more radical cachet, her writing synonymous with the New Woman. Marianne Berger Woods notes that Grand's interest was in morality.⁶¹⁸ This was

⁶¹⁸ Berger Woods, p.7.

evident in her December 1897 contribution to the *Lady's Realm*: 'A Baby's Tragedy'.⁶¹⁹ The narrator of the story, an old north-country nurse, works for a woman of the upper classes who is more concerned with her appearance than with her own baby's health. Not only does she refuse to nurse the child but her first question upon giving birth is: 'do you think my figure will suffer at all?' (p. 188) Grand's tale illustrates the selfish attitudes of the upper classes towards parenting. According to Nicole Fluhr, 'New Woman writers re-evaluated maternity', representing mothers' 'ambivalence toward or distaste for maternity' and challenging 'maternal selflessness', which in turn left women open to 'selfishness and egotism'.⁶²⁰ The mother in Grand's story is guilty of self-love, admiring herself in the mirror where she exhibited 'love enough in her face to console half a dozen motherless bairns' (p. 191). The parents of this story 'thought of everything but the child' (p. 193), being so shallow they cast off their faithful family doctor because he had 'worn the same hat for the last ten years' (p. 191); in his stead they selected a 'flashy sort of man, much in request by Society people, and quite the fashionable doctor just then' (p. 190). His diagnosis kills the baby, echoing the eugenic undertones of the *Heavenly Twins*, but this time the sins of the mother are passed onto the child.

Grand's story warned the *Lady's Realm*'s social-climbing readers about the types of individuals found in the upper classes, announcing: 'There is nothing that brutalises a lady like Society' (p. 187). Although the moralising tone of Grand's tale was not as extreme of that of her novels, readers of the *Lady's Realm* were unable to escape from her critique of decadent society. Her allegory of sorts reminded readers of their womanly instincts in

⁶¹⁹ *LR*. (12.1897), pp.187-93.

⁶²⁰ Nicole M. Fluhr, 'Figuring the New Woman: Writers and Mothers in George Egerton's Early Stories', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 43.3 (2001), pp.243-66, p.244.

which motherhood remained most important. Concern with self-image became ridiculous in contrast. The woman's child is born as 'nothing but skin and bone' because she practised 'great self-denial' whilst pregnant, hardly eating anything (p. 188). She proudly announces that her 'waist is only nineteen inches' (p. 189).⁶²¹ Previously an image that women aspired to, Grand illustrated the stupidity of excess, using the emotive concept of a deprived child to contextualise the reader's interest in fashion. Readers of the *Lady's Realm* were warned about self-indulgence, consuming Society news with a view to its less glamorous side. The New Woman advocated this objective perspective, promoting more important matters. Stella Margetson sums this up, defining the New Woman as 'the intelligent who could no longer tolerate the restrictions of a life of useless leisure bounded by social trivialities and domesticity'.⁶²² Certainly, the *Lady's Realm* was mindful of this, presenting fiction that questioned its more trivial content.

Corelli's fictional contributions also critiqued modern society. However, this criticism was aimed directly at the New Woman, suggesting that she was to blame for its decadent ways. 'Jane',⁶²³ Corelli's short story in the first issue of the *Lady's Realm*, depicts an older woman who comes into a fortune and is manipulated by a New Woman, Mrs. Maddenham:

The Honourable Mrs. Maddenham, in a short tweed skirt with knickers appearing beneath, sitting astride a bicycle, her thick ankles and flat feet well exposed, and

⁶²¹ Interestingly, Grand's portrayal of the mother's vanity paralleled the views of Ouida, who had written in the previous month's *Lady's Realm*: 'The terrible mistake which women have made is in imagining that for the female form to be nipped into nothing in the middle, like an hour glass, has any beauty in it...it is essentially a deformity'. 'Jules Lemaître on Dress', *LR*. (11.1897), pp.65-9

⁶²² Stella Margetson, *Leisure & Pleasure in the 19th Century* (London: Cassel & Company, 1969), p.202.

⁶²³ *LR*. (11.1896), pp.17-35.

working at the machine she thus immodestly bestrode with the measured regularity of a convict working the treadmill. (p. 24)

Maddenham's humorous portrayal embodies Corelli's objection to the New Woman of the polemic novel, casting her against the dignified 'old' woman. Maddenham uses Jane's fortune to hold decadent, unseemly parties. Maddenham invites 'ruffians' (p. 30) and neglects to present Jane to the Royal set, causing Jane to grow assertive. She demands that Maddenham turn out the guests immediately. Contrasting the ridiculous, undignified Maddenham against Jane's 'independent display of spirit', Corelli's illustrated preference for the latter's virtues. Jane is initially submissive to Maddenham, suggesting that her nature as a lady compels her to remain polite. However, Maddenham's behaviour encourages Jane to display 'a straightforward and singularly firm character' by shutting down the party. This strength is called into question when she receives a letter of proposal from Arthur Morvyn. Reacting as her old-fashioned self she sobs 'till her nerves were all a quiver' (p. 34). Corelli depicts Jane's vulnerability, retaining her traditional womanly values. Jane is aggrieved because Arthur Morvyn is the son of her sweetheart whom she could not be with due to their societal standings. Arthur has proposed because of Jane's wealth and she replies: 'such wrong and foolish notions [...] are the result of a bad system of education and pernicious laxity of moral force and fine feeling which is so sad to see nowadays in latter-day society' (p. 34). Jane's high morals contrast with those considerably less sensitive ones of the contemporary female. Corelli's story ends on a warning:

the lack of straightforward principle is everywhere painfully manifest, and a lesson or two in honesty and courage might not be without wholesome effect. Half a dozen

‘Janes’ dotted about in various quarters during a London ‘season’ might work wonders, and bring Society round to the remembrance and re-cultivation of its lost graces. (p. 35)

Corelli distaste for London Society was made manifest in ‘Jane’, backed by the publication of *The Sorrows of Satan* a year previously, in which she critiqued fin de siècle decadence. Whilst ‘Jane’ is decidedly simpler, it was meaningful to readers of the *Lady’s Realm*, underscoring the frivolities that Grand broached almost a year later. Although Corelli maintained the position of an old-fashioned woman, her diatribe echoed New Woman novels, highlighting social hypocrisy and ensuring that a female voice was heard. Her focus was on traditional values and the maintenance of the womanly woman, rather than female emancipation, yet her fiction reflected a personal agenda and perpetuated corrective qualities for mainstream consumption in the same way as Grand’s.

Kenealy, a physician as well as a writer, is also a complex figure within New Woman scholarship, described by Heilmann as anti-New Woman yet by Teresa Mangum as a New Woman.⁶²⁴ Kenealy’s work contained representations of feminine sexuality; Richardson highlights her ‘contradictory relation to feminism’, indicated through her ‘eugenic feminism’.⁶²⁵ Kenealy’s fiction incorporated her medical interests, particularly eugenics. Although ambivalent in her views on feminism Kenealy expressed some progressive opinions on work and marriage:

⁶²⁴ Ann Heilmann, *Anti-Feminism in the Victorian Novel: Victorian and Edwardian Anti-Feminism* (London: Routledge, Thoemmes Press, 2004); Teresa Magnum, *Married, Middlebrow, and Militant: Sarah Grand and the New Woman Novel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.1.

⁶²⁵ Angelique Richardson, ‘Kenealy, Arabella Madonna (1859–1938)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50057>, accessed 1.04.2010]

Marriage has been to her who has no other means of livelihood, no other scope for her faculties, the sole profession or refuge. Such charms and talent as she has possessed have become mere marketable commodities.⁶²⁶

Such views were reflected in Kenealy's fiction for the *Lady's Realm*. From February 1897 to February 1899, Kenealy contributed four stories about a superficial young woman named Belinda. The first, 'Belinda's Beaux', explains the way Belinda's marriage to Richard transpires.⁶²⁷ Belinda's appearance is continually highlighted, the word 'pretty' surfacing to a comic degree (p. 415). Kenealy desired women to retain their femininity; however, Belinda, like Grand's protagonist, demonstrated the dangers of vanity. Additionally, Kenealy signposts a more profound preoccupation with appearance; Belinda is 'Richly endowed by nature', with 'health and sense and straight enough limbs [...] good eyesight', excellent teeth, 'for purposes of mastication'. Her digestion is 'sound' her 'hearing admirable' (p. 417). References to digestion, eyesight, limbs seem unusual when praising one's attractiveness; such a focus emanates from Kenealy's interest in Darwinian theories. The Victorians constructed sexual differences based on Darwin's sexual selection theory in *The Descent of Man*: 'Man is more powerful in body and mind than woman...therefore it is not surprising that he should have gained the power of selection'.⁶²⁸ Women were passive, using their physical beauty to be selected by men. Kenealy believed that only women could improve the future race; through her tale she reversed the traditional roles and allowed

⁶²⁶ Arabella Kenealy, 'The Dignity of Love', *Humanitarian* 8 (1896), p.437.

⁶²⁷ *LR*. (02.1897), pp.415-24.

⁶²⁸ Quoted in Stephanie Eggermont, 'The Scientific Design of Sarah Grand's Short Story Collection *Our Manifold Nature* (1894)', *Nineteenth Century Gender Studies* 7.2 (2011) [<http://www.ncgsjournal.com/issue72/eggermont.htm>, accessed 15.03.2012]

Belinda to choose her partner. Belinda is initially flippant towards the selection process, basing her decision on hair colour. Her behaviour reflects the shallow nature of young women, behaviour that Kenealy, along with authors such as Grand and Corelli, were concerned about. With Belinda and other young women being responsible for perpetuating the future race, Kenealy needed to subdue her protagonist's wild behaviour, producing a more sensible, conscientious individual.

Each story follows a pattern: Belinda is assertive and wild to begin with but by the end an incident has caused her to become meek and pliant. In 'Belinda Bewildered', she worries that Richard has money problems and industriously starts to make button holes for extra income.⁶²⁹ Although it is often short-lived, Belinda demonstrates a hard-working nature, fulfilling several strands of traditional femininity on separate occasions, from maternally caring for babies after a train accident, to using her domestic skills for employment. The constant deferral of her marriage to Richard indicates that Belinda must first develop as a woman to ensure that she has not made her decision based on a girlish whim. These tales critique dominating womanhood, with characters such as Belinda and Mrs Maddenham used as caricatures of the New Woman. Yet in contrast, Kenealy's eugenic agenda suggested that women needed to maintain traditional roles to sustain the race, rather than to uphold established standards of etiquette. Kenealy's fiction was educative but also tongue-in-cheek and humorous, mocking the New Woman whilst suggesting alternative ways of refashioning womanhood.

⁶²⁹ *LR*. (05.1897), pp. 601-7.

The reader of *Woman* was encouraged to think analytically about fiction; the *Lady's Realm* denied this critical approach, yet the reader of the *Lady's Realm* was presented with an array of original fiction, rendering womanhood through a prism that aptly suggested the contradictions of the New Woman. The fiction of the *Lady's Realm* seems initially trite, non-progressive; sometimes romantic, often bleak. Yet it could also carry a more serious note. Both Grand and Corelli believed in the transformative power of literature. Corelli expressed a 'sincere desire to make the world better' and be 'a power working for good'. With Grand's short stories tending towards didacticism and her belief in writing being instructional, the stories featured in the *Lady's Realm* were more than a means of entertainment. Like the symposia, these divergent fictions suggest that the readers of *Lady's Realm* were potentially more diffuse than those of *Woman*, presented with disparate perspectives that were tied together through their moralising tone. The readers of *Woman* meanwhile were presented with reviews of New Woman novels that were generally sympathetic towards those with a moral message whilst retaining a focus on an intriguing plot that would maintain the attention of the busy, or simply inattentive, reader. These readers were well versed in the formula of the advanced novel, even composing their own versions. Although brief, these contributions were a direct demonstration of the kinds of activities that readers of these magazines undertook in their leisure time. Set within the context of women's employment, this leisure time is explored in the more detail in the following section.

Work and Leisure

Woman and the *Lady's Realm* present this study's most explicit examples of publications produced to fulfil the growing leisure time of women in the 1890s. Whilst the New Woman decried an existence concerned solely with social and domestic matters, *Woman* and *Lady's Realm* presented work and leisure as collective rather than individualistic pursuits, sedentary rather than active and a means of socialisation rather than a political step forward. Although discussions of employment, societies, sports and travel presented some progress they also protested against the impact of the New Woman on these areas of life, with *Woman* using satire and the *Lady's Realm* encouraging domesticity.

Pictorially, *Woman's* presentation of work and leisure was striking, and embodied on its header illustration. From its early issues, *Woman's* header depicted the spectrum of womanhood: from the round-limbed infant to its doting mother, holding one end of the banner proclaiming 'For Women and Girls', a young girl clinging to the other end. A sense of unity was evoked through the touching of hands among the women, so femininely attired. It portrayed the traditional angel. The August 2 1893 issue marked a significant change in which classical imagery was replaced with the industrious, multi-tasking female. She was variously shown attending to the ill as a nurse, reading to children, horse riding, singing, reading, painting, riding in a carriage, and being courted. This was the accomplished and balanced late-Victorian woman: nurturing and maternal, active and sporting, talented and cultivated, all whilst retaining her femininity, riding with a female chaperone and appropriately enjoying male company. It flouted brazen New Womanhood but advanced the docile 'Angel' of the previous banner. By the summer 1895 issue

Woman's header transformed once more. This time it contained on one side illustrations of a female golfer, a female tennis player, a female rower; on the other side was a female swimmer, a female hunter with shotgun, and a woman lying prostrate in a hammock, the only inactive figure. It reflected the seasonal aspect of this particular issue, encouraging sports that could be done outside in the summer, endorsing active womanhood whilst also reminding one to be restful. Significantly, this banner also removed the bonding element of the original banner. This change of banners suggested that *Woman* was indeed progressing forward but not too fast, moving from inactive angel to the working, active, autonomous individual who retained her femininity but lost some form of collective identity.

The gradual progress of *Woman*'s banner illustrations was also evident within the interplay of its varied content. In the 7 September 1892 issue quotations from prominent figures discussing women's work were included in 'Marjorie's' column: the American statistician Mr. Carroll Wright asserted that woman's 'lack of physical endurance' was the reason for her lower wage.⁶³⁰ Allen's observations on literature as a profession in the *Idler* were also printed: 'Brain for brain, in no market can you sell your abilities to such poor advantage. Don't take to literature if you've capital enough in hand to buy a good broom and energy enough to annex a vacant crossing'.⁶³¹ These references were accompanied by the opening articles: "'Woman" to Women: Gentlewomen in Hotel Management' and Blanche Oram's 'What Are Modern Influences Doing For Women?'.⁶³² Of hotel management it was stated: 'there is no form of remunerative employment to which [gentlewomen] are more suited', given their 'experience of the comforts of a well-regulated home'. This placed the domestic

⁶³⁰ *W.* (7.09.1892), pp.7-8, p.7.

⁶³¹ *W.* (7.09.1892), p.8.

⁶³² *W.* (7.09.1892), pp.3-4.

role within a professionalised environment. In Oram's article she denounced lady doctors for being incompetent by only performing operations to prove their steel, lady politicians for being shallow and only interested in politics until women were enfranchised, and lady travellers for being purposelessness and graceless. However, Oram claimed that modern influences were mainly positive, resulting in 'Courage, perseverance, resolution' (p. 4); woman's sentimental side was destroyed, forcing her to be resilient. Oram's argument embodied *Woman's* gradual advancement, suggesting that these character traits were of more importance than the accolade of politician or doctor, roles reserved for men. By combining this with the domestication of work as well as Wright's comments on women's physicality, *Woman* suggested that readers should focus more on personal development than professional success. The *DNCJ* claims that *Woman* 'advised readers never to forget their womanliness'.⁶³³ This focus on personal achievement cemented a message of womanliness, giving it a physiological grounding. Moreover, the terminology used – 'lady' depicting politicians, doctors and travellers; hotel managers described as 'gentlewomen' – reinforced the transition from lady to woman: a woman embodied an admirable character whilst being aware of her physical limitations. Yet, whilst Allen's comments could also be read as a reinforcement of the domestic sphere, they convey a more bitter resonance. 'Crossing' in this context refers to street cleaners, the lowest of low occupations. Allen believes that women would do better to take up such occupations than to take up literature. Considering these comments alongside Wright's, one can recognise the criticism of women's work that *Woman* simultaneously rejected and colluded with.

⁶³³ *Woman's*, *DNCJ*, p.681.

Woman's assessment of work and leisure presented a controlled and measured picture of femininity from which the New Woman seemed expelled. However, subtle divergences between its gossip columns and its more serious features complicated this picture. The earnestness of the opening "'Woman" to Women' feature and the article printed beside it, covering serious issues relating to women, were regularly undermined by 'Marjorie's' mocking, satirical voice. In January 1893 'Marjorie' reported on the 'Middlesborough High School for Girls' which had recently instituted 'A Housewife's Diploma' in connection with the School of Domestic Economy. This was to 'be granted to students who give evidence of proficiency in cooking, dressmaking, sick-nursing, and other domestic subjects'. Marjorie scoffed at this, adding 'Possibly we shall hear in the future of ladies taking First-class Honours in pastry, or Scholarships in soups and entrées, or getting "Distinction" in jams and jellies!'⁶³⁴ This could be an objection to the reassertion of the feminine sphere. Yet eight months later 'Marjorie' reassured readers that 'For the home-woman, her who can make a home happy, help a husband or brother in his work by moral encouragement, and keep down expenses, there is more room than ever'.⁶³⁵ 'Marjorie's' affront seemed in response to the concept of professional housewife; certainly he did not agree that diplomas were suited to domestic subjects. Where the *Signal* altered and reshaped the female sphere in celebration of the New Woman, *Woman* displayed resistance to such a move, more interested in retaining its traditional values. Conversely, 'Marjorie's' objection to the Housewife's Diploma combined with his seemingly contradictory celebration of 'the home-woman' conveyed a belief that women's work did not necessitate academic accolade. Women's work was grounded in a tradition that did not translate into

⁶³⁴ W. (4.01.1893),p.10.

⁶³⁵ W. (13.09.1893),pp.6-7.p.7.

the classroom. ‘Marjorie’s’ light-hearted tone avoided didacticism, encouraging smiles of agreement and displaying his shrewd journalistic abilities.

“‘Woman’ to Women’ employed a serious tone to counter ‘Marjorie’s’ gossip voice. In August 1893, “‘Woman’ to Women’ gave thought to ‘The Brain of Women’.⁶³⁶ It argued with Professor Huschke’s view that: ‘Woman is a constantly growing child, and in the brain, [...] she conforms to her childish type’. Professor Huschke had argued that because of her smaller brain, woman had ‘lower moral and intellectual powers’. The Galtonian consensus that brain size reflected intellect was increasingly questioned by the New Woman. *Woman* suggested that perhaps ‘the difference should not be regarded as the effect’ but ‘the cause of the present social standing of the sex’, arguing that, in being required to evolve like men, women had smaller brains. These views conveyed a hopeful outlook on woman’s ability to acquire new skills for work; yet her lifestyle was once more curtailed by ‘Marjorie’ shortly after, writing on the women’s clubs:

We are satiated with paragraphs and articles about ladies’ clubs in London, and are assured by ill-informed or imaginative lady journalists that these institutions are making great strides, and are as club-like as men’s clubs.⁶³⁷

This dig at female journalists further disparaged the campaigning New Woman and her attempt at solidarity, re-emphasized almost a month later when Marjorie mentioned ‘Yet another attempt at a club to which ladies are to be admitted! [...] It is called the Prince of

⁶³⁶ W. (2.08.1893),p.3.

⁶³⁷ W. (30.08.1893),p.6.

Wales's Club, although the Heir Apparent is as likely to go there as he is to become a "captain" in the Salvation Army'.⁶³⁸ In both instances 'Marjorie' mocked the progress of advanced women, destabilizing the collective movement that was promoted in *Shafts*. Yet, notably 'Marjorie' once more referred to these clubs as belonging to 'ladies', written about by 'lady journalists'. In this regard it could be the class-bound implications which were critiqued in the same way that privileged women travelling, training as doctors, and taking cookery diplomas were derided subjects. *Woman* was in conflict, not simply with the other magazines it quoted from and critiqued, but with itself. It presented the divergence of interests on the subject of women's leisure and work in which petty steps forward such as diplomas in housewifery were overshadowed by the growing realisation that women had the potential to be as intellectually competent as their male counterparts were they only given the chance.

When discussing leisure activities connected to New Womanhood, *Woman* objected more to the emancipatory message than the activity itself. In September 1895, 'In Praise of the Bicycle'⁶³⁹ discussed 'Bicycling for Women', American journalist, Mrs Reginald de Koven's earlier contribution to *Cosmopolitan*. In this Koven argued that the bicycle stood for 'deliverance, revolution, salvation' and that it influenced not only woman's physical and mental health, but also 'matters of dress and social reform'. *Woman* believed that de Koven's praises were 'a little too enthusiastic', but that 'she has much sensible advice to give, and not a little interesting history'. This insincere and patronising attitude towards the female athlete was displayed more vociferously three years earlier in the 'The Athletic

⁶³⁸ W. (27.09.1893),p.6.

⁶³⁹ W. (4.09.1895),p.9.

Girl': 'The athletic girl loves a boat better than she does a man, and would rather fish than flirt or swim than dance'.⁶⁴⁰ She was also incongruous in ballrooms, at a dining table, and at afternoon tea; she did not fulfil *Woman's* desire to be 'womanly', instead she was described as a 'girl', with the potential to grow out of this faddish activity. The fact that the criticism of sporting women became somewhat less intense through the decade demonstrated a growing tolerance with her activities. Yet *Woman* perpetuated the idea that sporting accomplishments were incompatible with the activities of the 'ladies' clubs, both of which were allied with the New Woman.

The *Lady's Realm* placed work and leisure in an explicitly domestic setting, regularly promoting activities such as embroidery and homemaking. Like the readers of *Woman*, those consuming the *Lady's Realm* desired to retain traditional notions of 'what it meant to be feminine and how to be fulfilled as a woman'.⁶⁴¹ Realizing this, in May 1897 Marion Leslie reported on 'the Women's Work Section' of the Victorian Era Exhibition, in particular on 'Domestic Economy, in which cooking and laundry demonstrations will prove that the modern woman has advanced in this most essential study'.⁶⁴² Six months later, Mrs. Henry Chetwynd wrote that women were best at 'Domestic Economy' above all other occupations.⁶⁴³ There was no sarcasm or underlying message in these observations. In its very set up the *Lady's Realm* consistently heralded domesticity. Mary E. Haweis' regular column 'The Home Beautiful' was presented simultaneously with Wilhelmina Wimble's

⁶⁴⁰ *W.* (7.09.1892),p.4.

⁶⁴¹ *Ledbetter*,pp.55-6.

⁶⁴² 'Women's Work: Victorian Era Exhibition', *LR.* (05.1897),pp.58-65,p.62.

⁶⁴³ 'What to do with Our Daughters', *LR.* (11.1897),p.92.

regular column 'Income for Ladies'. Wimble advocated 'sedentary occupation[s]',⁶⁴⁴ such as indexing, book-binding, weaving and jewellery-making: 'The spindle and the loom have ever been the symbols of feminine activity'.⁶⁴⁵ These were leisure activities rather than careers. Interestingly, Wimble referred to readers as 'gentlewomen', discussing the misfortunes of women 'of gentle birth and breeding' who had been forced to work.⁶⁴⁶ Once more the aspirational aspect of the magazine emerged with readers viewing themselves as the unfortunate type who only work from necessity. The readers of this magazine were not necessarily 'gentlewomen'; however, they identified themselves as such. Moreover, Wimble's 'department' was aimed at the 'unmarried woman' who has found herself 'face to face with the necessity of making money'. By targeting 'unmarried' women Wimble suggested marriage was itself a career. Women did not need to work if they were married as their husband would support them. Moreover, it was not only assumed that married, middle-class women did not need to work for pay outside the home, but it was also shaming if they did.

Whilst Ledbetter argues that the *Lady's Realm* translated earlier nineteenth-century notions of the ideal woman for a contemporary readership,⁶⁴⁷ it did not reinvent the domestic role in the same way as the *Signal*, which transformed domestic labour into paid work and enabled readers to reclaim mundane, traditional roles. Wimble disassociated women workers from the New Woman, a 'feminine Frankenstein', 'waiting to fall upon us to our

⁶⁴⁴ *LR*. (11.1896),p.106.

⁶⁴⁵ 'Weaving and Jewellery', *LR*. (03.1897),p.564.

⁶⁴⁶ *LR*. (11.1896),p.104.

⁶⁴⁷ Ledbetter,p.56.

undoing',⁶⁴⁸ suggesting that like *Woman*, the *Lady's Realm* did not search for an emancipatory message in women's work. Moreover, like *Woman*, the *Lady's Realm* underscored the importance of maintaining one's femininity. Discussing women's entry into The Primrose League Reginald Bennett exclaimed that there was nothing more repellent 'than the masculine woman' and that, when 'actively engaged in [the Primrose League's] work' women 'invariably remained women in all things'.⁶⁴⁹ To ensure that readers 'remained women' the *Lady's Realm*, like *Woman*, encouraged readers to use their social skills to their advantage: Wimble suggested utilizing 'the advantages of their social tact' to gain an income. With socialising central to the lives of many middle-class women, Wimble transformed it into an economic skill, thus commercialising traditional womanhood. Reginald Bennett suggested that woman's success in the Primrose League was due to fact that they can carry 'on far better than the men. It is a distinct function, proper and natural to their sex'. In turn, socialisation was an important part of the working woman's life as Marion Leslie suggested: 'Lady Warwick is very keen about establishing a club which will be a boon and enjoyment to all professional women', who 'can meet for recreation and social intercourse'.⁶⁵⁰ Certainly, solidarity between working women was important; however, this did not signal emancipation.

In November 1897 the *Lady's Realm* printed an article central to the discussion of women's work: 'What to do with Our Daughters'.⁶⁵¹ Using the symposium structure, a number of well-respected women wrote on their younger counterparts: The honourable Mrs Henry

⁶⁴⁸ *LR.* (11.1896),pp.104-6,p.104.

⁶⁴⁹ 'The Primrose League', *LR.* (4.1897),p.572.

⁶⁵⁰ *LR.* (05.1897),pp.58-65,p.62.

⁶⁵¹ *LR.* (11.1897),pp.92-6.

Chetwynd, Mary Eliza Haweis and Esler. All three were older women with Esler aged 45 at the time of the article, Haweis 49, and Chetwynd the eldest at 69. Chetwynd commented on the 'enormous advantages women have enjoyed for many years'. Being older this was something that Chetwynd was acutely aware of. She complained that few girls 'have distinguished themselves, although the mental level of the sex is incomparably higher than that of our grandmothers' (p. 92). This underlined the importance of encouraging careers for girls and, thus, woman's advance. Although Chetwynd was hesitant about the New Woman she recognised that the lives of women needed to change; work would ensure this. In contrast, Esler was surprisingly traditional. Usually a forceful supporter of female advancement in the *Young Woman*, she acknowledged the commendable nature of careers in art or science but asked what else but marriage 'gives a woman the permanent and material things which will follow her union with the ordinary fairly successful man?' (p. 94) The *Lady's Realm's* readership was a possible reason for Esler's more careful approach, being considerably more conservative. It was also read by women of the upper classes who did not possess the same necessity for their daughters to work.⁶⁵² Esler was realistic about the difficulty of female employment, advising mothers on the best way to 'marry off our daughters' (p. 95); once more the collective emphasised shared responsibility.

Unlike the other contributors, Haweis believed young women should assume responsibility: 'This question is surely rather what our emancipated daughters mean to do with themselves' (p. 95). Yet in the *Young Woman* she wrote on marriage that it was 'Very

⁶⁵² Different readerships necessitated different attitudes; this became an important tactic for woman's contribution to the press.

wrong of the mother not to prepare the girl',⁶⁵³ suggesting that she still believed in the mother's influence. Haweis warned readers of the *Lady's Realm* about teaching young women to 'be nothing but the playthings of their parents'; instead mothers should help their daughters 'to put to profitable use such talents as they may possess' so 'young women of energy and social influence' could become 'useful members of Society' (p. 95). Whilst engaging with the debates of popular journalism, this symposium was significant for the progressive views it presented about women's work in contrast to Wimble's conservative column. Work was tenuously connected to female advancement, although it seemed more important that young women attain personal achievements, rather than advancing the New Woman's ideals. Like *Woman*, the *Lady's Realm* encouraged development of the self rather than political movement.

A key difference between the presentation of leisure in *Woman* and the *Lady's Realm* was the focus that the latter magazine had upon travel, a subject rarely broached by *Woman*. A regular feature of the *Lady's Realm*, 'The Great World', reinforced its worldly exploration, as did its coverage of Paris Fashions and its focus on royal families inhabiting foreign, exotic countries. Yet, whilst the magazine consistently reported upon customs in exotic countries, it kept its reader at bay by providing everything she needed in the magazine, remaining an observer, entertained by reports of ambitious women. Ledbetter has claimed that the *Lady's Realm*'s articles on 'Women's Colleges at Oxford and Cambridge' allowed readers to imagine themselves as educated, independent individuals.⁶⁵⁴ However, in this instance the keyword is 'imagine': readers were given ample opportunity to imagine

⁶⁵³ 'Young Wives and their Difficulties', *YW*. (09.1896), pp.417-9, p.418.

⁶⁵⁴ Ledbetter, p.66.

themselves in the position of women whom they read about, without carrying out these roles personally. In March 1897 Tooley celebrated the achievement of brave, nomadic women, writing on 'Famous Women Travellers'.⁶⁵⁵ Lady Hester Stanhope was named as 'the forerunner of the adventurous women travellers', 'at the head of fierce bands of Bedouin warriors' (p. 480). This powerful imagery was stirring for a female readership, absorbing Tooley's words in sitting rooms, delighting in this depiction of feminine force and reminding that there were plenty of strong women before the New Woman. Mrs Bishop was another example of self-assured womanhood, protected from ruffians by her pluck and admired by those in the Wild West. The importance of domestic training discussed throughout the *Lady's Realm* seeped into discourses of the female traveller: 'when circumstances became particularly discouraging [Mrs Bishop] sat down and knitted violently, which feminine occupation appears to have acted as a sedative to her nerves, much as a man's pipe does in times of anxiety' (p. 484). The shocking imagery of Bishop's 'violent' knitting, compared to the pipe, juxtaposed the usually sedate housewife with the advanced woman's distasteful habit of smoking. However, Mrs Bishop remained 'womanly', foregoing the pipe and using her domestic training to relieve her tension.

Although the actions of these women could be connected to New Womanhood, the majority disassociated themselves from the movement, just as Wimble did in her column. As was discussed in the previous chapter, Kingsley denounced associations with the New Woman. Mrs Alec Tweedie was also noted by Tooley to be no friend of the woman 'scorcher', despite being a pioneering cyclist and riding through Iceland on horseback 'like

⁶⁵⁵ *LR*. (03.1897), pp.480-90. This issue also contained features on the Riviera and Tokyo, exposing a wider world to readers.

a man' (p. 490). Tooley added that they 'are adding by their research and exploration to the world's store of knowledge' (p. 480), suggesting that they were avoiding the ostentatious New Woman figure of popular press. Certainly, Tooley still promoted the emancipatory message of these women's actions, concluding triumphantly: 'Enough has been narrated to show that in the domain of travel women hold their own, and have progressed by leaps and bounds from the meek-faced damsel in the stage-coach with whom we started' (p. 490). Tooley's examination of these intrepid female travellers came after the watershed year of 1895. The New Woman was no longer at her peak in the mainstream press and discussions of her were somewhat mitigated. However, her influence remained strong in women's magazines, with even the conservatively progressive celebrating pioneering women. Even in denying the New Woman's impact on these women the impetus behind articles such as these was the increased interest in women's work and leisure which was initiated by the New Woman. This was reinforced by the development of locomotive dialogues in the *Lady's Realm*. For instance, in December 1896, the magazine contained two articles on cycling in which Lynn Linton and Susan, Countess of Malmesbury argued over the pros and cons.⁶⁵⁶ By 1899, the magazine was no longer questioning the propriety of cycling; instead, it was integrating it with European travel. 'Valley Cycling Tours in Germany' appeared in August 1899,⁶⁵⁷ detailing numerous routes and their difficulty as well as descriptions of the landscape and points of visitor attraction.

As Tooley's article demonstrated, travel assumed a feminine form in the *Lady's Realm*. International matters were couched in commentaries on fashion, marriage customs, and

⁶⁵⁶ Mrs Lynn Linton, 'The Cycling Craze for Ladies', pp.173-7; Susan, Countess of Malmesbury, 'Cycling for Ladies: A Defence', *LR*. (12.1896), pp.178-82.

⁶⁵⁷ 'Valley Cycling Tours in Germany', *LR*. (08.1899), pp.425-32.

society. Whilst Tooley described the famous women travellers through their exploits, she also included a significant focus on their appearance. Hester Stanhope was a ‘woman of majestic figure’ with ‘a face of commanding expression and awful whiteness, dressed like an Emir, riding astride her Arab horse’ (p. 480); Isabel, Lady Burton was ‘graceful’ and ‘beautiful’ (p. 482); Miss Kingsley was ‘a slight, fair lady, with a twinkle of fun in her pleasant face, [...] quite the reverse of ferocious’ (p. 487); Mrs. Alec Tweedie had ‘a splendid physique’ and was ‘a very handsome and attractive woman’ (p. 490). The linking of traditionally feminine attributes to discussions of the wider world was important in the *Lady’s Realm*, reinforced in its very title: ‘Realm’ depicts a territory ruled by a sovereign. With ‘Lady’ prefixing ‘realm’ the magazine created a territory for its readers in which ladies reigned; as such, discussions of a wider world were inescapably bound to subjects interesting ladies. For instance, ‘Marriage Customs’ by Darley Day recorded a variety of traditional and outdated customs the world over, including Germany, Switzerland, Lapland, the Hervy Islands, Japan, China, and India.⁶⁵⁸ In April 1899, ‘Women’s Dress in Many Lands’ by Evelyn Wills,⁶⁵⁹ transported readers to distant islands: Polynesia, Honolulu, and Melanesia. This transatlantic fashion investigation raised awareness of cultural difference as well as a universal interest in clothing amongst women, forging an alliance with foreign women and their domestic concerns. By the end of the decade, international debates began to gain political dimension. In May 1899, Tooley’s ‘The Women’s International Conference’ detailed the links between ‘women of various nationalities for the common cause of humanity’.⁶⁶⁰ Dialogues between cultures were vital, promoting unity and allowing women’s organisations the world over to communicate on the welfare of family

⁶⁵⁸ *LR*. (04.1898).

⁶⁵⁹ *LR*. (04.1899), pp. 684-90.

⁶⁶⁰ Sarah A. Tooley, ‘The Women’s International Conference’, *LR*. (05.1899), pp. 90-5.

and the commonwealth. This desire to reach out to women of various nationalities seemed to be the most obvious way in which readers of the *Lady's Realm* were enabled to travel and experience a wider world. Significantly, whilst the *Lady's Realm* invited its readers to imagine a wider world, *Woman* avoided discussions of an international nature altogether. Whilst the *Lady's Realm* conveyed an ever growing selection of leisure activities, *Woman* seemed more concerned with criticising or undermining the activities being taken up by the contemporary female. However, this served as an attack more on the New Woman than on woman's more liberated lifestyle.

Conclusion

Both *Woman* and the *Lady's Realm* considered the New Woman as a source of novelty,. Both magazines followed the lead of mainstream publications and rejected the New Woman role model of the feminist magazines. Indeed, *Woman* used a New Journalistic approach to convey a growing distaste towards advanced womanhood, starting with the feminist magazines of which it was so critical. Undoubtedly, the threat of female-run magazines to the male editors of *Woman* had some part to play in this distaste. Yet the magazine's attempt to produce a female voice demonstrated its interest in the lives of its female readers, even if this was mostly a commercial move. Readers were similarly motivated by commercial gain in their contributions to the magazine in which they reached out to editors' sense of humour and wit. With its celebrity contributors mostly broaching issues surrounding the New Woman, the *Lady's Realm* was rather different in its editorial approach. Whilst *Woman* used the New Woman's celebrity status and notoriety as subject matter to sell copies, *Lady's Realm* addressed those celebrities associated with or named as

New Women themselves to produce a potentially more objective stance. At the very least it was free of the satire of *Woman*.

Despite these differences, *Woman* and the *Lady's Realm* did share some common ground. Neither magazine possessed the didacticism of the *Young Woman*, or the passion of *Shafts* and the *Signal*. Both magazines depoliticised and subjugated the campaigning New Woman. The empowerment of the domestic sphere seen in the *Signal* was sneered at in *Woman* and not achieved in the *Lady's Realm*. Despite undercutting the political New Woman, both magazines strove to enquire into modernity. The repetitive nature of this word, including the *Lady's Realm*'s symposia on 'The Modern Marriage Market', moved the reader from Victorianism into the new modern era. The prevailing message for readers of *Woman* and *Lady's Realm* was to maintain their womanliness and not to stray too far from domestic roles. Articles on marriage avoided contentious issues such as the law, violence, divorce and sexual immorality. Both magazines also conveyed conflicting messages to a readership that did not require political engagement. Serving as means of entertainment, both magazines exploited the didactic and the political to engage an ambivalent readership. Corelli referred to the *Lady's Realm* directly as a 'popular magazine', claiming that readers expect to 'find something therein to minister pleasure or vanity'; they did not read it because they wanted 'to be told where [they] fail in the very mission and intention of Womanhood'.⁶⁶¹ This is a point that could be safely applied to both publications.

⁶⁶¹ *LR*. (03.1897),pp.522-7,p.522..

Comparing the New Woman: A Conclusion

This thesis has uncovered a vast wealth of undiscovered material on the figure of the New Woman in women's magazines of the 1890s. Analysis of *Shafts*, *Woman's Signal*, *Young Woman*, *Woman* and *Lady's Realm* and the deviation between these publications in their renderings of the New Woman has made her more inconsistent than ever: a role model and personal source of inspiration for *Shafts*; a healthy, politically-minded housewife in the *Signal*; a warning about the dangers of degenerative womanhood in the *Young Woman*; a point of satire in *Woman*; a glamorous, celebrity figure in the *Lady's Realm*. Divergences occur between magazines of a similar persuasion: liberal feminist publications *Shafts* and the *Signal* supplied female utopias whilst using significantly different approaches. The *Signal* suggested that rigorous self-improvement could push social reform, while *Shafts* focused on the improvement of society first. Meanwhile, the conservatively progressive magazines simultaneously rejected and embraced the New Woman, her presence often emerging as a side effect of discussions on contemporary femininity, rather than being the impetus behind these discussions. However, the New Woman's potency was certainly not lost in her various representations and her variability was central to her staying power within these magazines. Having used four loose categories of exploration throughout each chapter, I will use these categories to conclude.

Editorial Approaches

The first three chapters explicitly demonstrate that the recalibration of womanhood was a collaborative effort between journalistic influence and reader correspondence. *Shafts* and the *Signal* created their own New Woman, distinct from the lampooned figure of the mainstream press. By consistently emphasizing thought, *Shafts* established autonomously-minded readers. Yet, whilst Sibthorp's conversion of these readers into writers made them in part responsible for the magazine's content, her powerful rhetoric was clearly emulated by the magazine's consumers. In contrast, the *Signal*'s changeover of editors gave it a less stable position. Somerset's prudent vision of the campaigning New Woman did not come fully to fruition until Fenwick Miller acquired the magazine. She transformed Somerset's temperance agenda into a more diffuse discourse embracing traditional aspects of woman's role as well as her own interests in suffrage. Readers were given greater space in which to correspond and combined with the magazine's increasingly subliminal advertising, the New Woman concept was used to celebrate renewed femininity and empowered domesticity.

Commandeering subscriptions in much the same way as the *Signal* and *Shafts*, and producing content for women who thought and read, the *Young Woman* served as a crossover between the liberal feminism of *Shafts* and the *Signal* and the conservative progression of *Woman* and the *Lady's Realm*. Its readers shaped content as in the liberal feminist publications. However, the messages of liberation in *Shafts* and the *Signal* were tempered by the *Young Woman*'s edifying tone. Whilst some readers chose to use the New Woman as a role model, the dominant voice of the magazine's agony aunt, combined with its character sketches, spurned the New Woman as a symbol for advancement. Intriguingly,

despite rejecting the New Woman, Esler became increasingly passionate about the emancipation issue. However, her sudden disappearance from the magazine suggested that the publication's underlying ethos would remain conservatively progressive.

Eschewing the caution of the *Young Woman*, *Woman* reflected images of the New Woman from the mainstream press and used the guise of 'female' contributors to convert the campaigning New Woman into a figure of scorn. This re-reading of woman's role, whilst entertaining, was deceptively instructive. Reader responses to prize competitions often shared the satirical, jovial tone of the magazine's editors, mocking their own gender through their exploration of the New Woman. The *Lady's Realm* meanwhile did not include reader contributions, instead using celebrity New Women such as Grand and Caird, who were polemical in their novel writing but who adapted to a conservatively progressive audience by providing assessments of the New Woman that did not necessarily convey one coherent message. Whilst this collection of material conveyed a sense of women's advancement, it was also subtly embedded within a context that emphasized a domestic commitment to 'The Home Beautiful' and 'The Great Cuisine'. Although using the New Woman for a number of means, all of these magazines revealed the relationship of reliance between the periodical mode and the New Woman. Without the journalistic catchphrase, these magazines would not have produced such a multiplicity of voices to push their individual agendas.

Women's Relationships to Others

In considering women's relationship with each other and with men, marriage and female solidarity have emerged as major topics that migrated between the magazines. Marriage is certainly salient in discussions of the New Woman being central to many novels and essays about the New Woman. In the woman's press marriage discussions signposted a magazine's acceptance or rejection of the New Woman. Marriage in *Shafts* was bound up with discourses on female employment, suggesting that autonomy was necessary for women to achieve marriages of equality. Similarly, the *Signal* incorporated work into marriage, legitimising the role of housewife as one that should retain its traditional values whilst being extended to include the New Woman's increasing involvement in the political world. *Woman* and the *Lady's Realm* refocused marriage debates away from politics and employment and back onto the relationship itself. Where the *Young Woman* explored the moral repercussions inherent in the current system of marriage, *Woman* and the *Lady's Realm* avoided these more controversial matters. *Woman* used satire to mock the New Woman's pragmatic approach. The *Lady's Realm* used symposia to explore topics such as the impact of marriage on female development. Although female development in marriage was part of the New Woman's agenda, the *Lady's Realm* lacked judgement over these discussions and generated a fragmented argument. Readers were left with fashionable opinions rather than one guiding voice.

These discourses of marriage were placed alongside considerations of solidarity. As I suggested in the introduction, solidarity was a complex subject for the New Woman. Whilst *Shafts* explicitly encouraged a community of readers, promoting a range of women's clubs

and constantly exploiting the language of collectivism, the *Young Woman* had a more ambivalent stance. It presented role models through its character sketches but suggested that whilst women's clubs could boast positive impacts, they also represented places where women could be betrayed by their fellow females who lacked the loyalty of their male counterparts. Yet, whilst *Shafts*, the *Signal*, and the *Young Woman* all constructed a community through correspondent pages, *Woman* and the *Lady's Realm* demonstrated that such solidarity was harder to create when a magazine was published by a male editorial team. More strikingly, the liberal feminist magazines combined their emphasis on solidarity with calls to action, seen in *Shafts* through Sibthorp's meetings and lectures. This practical aspect extended the New Woman from the page into the real world and emphasized her role as more than a mere symbol. In contrast, the conservatively progressive publications were more concerned with entertaining and informing, or in the case of the *Young Woman*, diverting readers from behaviours that would disgrace their gender. Calls for action were translated as a source of amusement in magazines such as *Woman* whilst being a dangerous proposition to the didactic *Young Woman*.

Women's Relationships to Themselves

All of the magazines prominently questioned the features that constituted the ideal woman, touching upon ideas of gender performativity and the socially constructed nature of their roles. Ledger wrote that: 'The putting-on of "masculine" attributes was thoroughly characteristic of the textual New Woman'.⁶⁶² While the New Woman often deliberately constructed her role, more conventional femininity did not necessarily come naturally to

⁶⁶² Ledger, p.13.

women either. As such, their magazines became a way to understand themselves, whether socially, through questioning their codes of honour, or physically. The female body was being reclaimed particularly within the liberal feminist press. Discourses of the mother and woman writer constantly surfaced, with the writer addressed in interviews and character sketches. She represented the independent woman worker who preserved her femininity by working from home: many of the interviews and ‘chats’ with women writers took place in explicitly domestic settings. Upholding femininity was important to the *Signal* and the *Young Woman* in their individual promotions of domesticity. It also remained integral for *Shafts*’ social purity agenda.

In terms of individual self-development, the *Young Woman* emerges as the most striking of the magazines studied. As Bilston intimates in her study of Victorian adolescence, many of the terms attributed to the New Woman were associated with youth.⁶⁶³ The New Woman herself illustrated the transition between girlhood and womanhood, burgeoning politically and socially into a more legitimate member of society. Whilst the magazine’s character sketches did not necessarily indicate the feminism argued for in contemporary criticism, they served as an ideal platform to portray the admiral character of the advanced woman who remained ever distinct from the figurative Aunt Sally.

Literary Presentations

Shafts and the *Signal*’s lengthy book reviews suggested analytical, well-educated readers. The inclusion of poetry under the editorship of Fenwick Miller also aligned the *Signal* with

⁶⁶³ Bilston, p. 172.

Shafts, both exploiting a literary voice to underpin the woman's movement and yield a collective, rallying call to its readers. By contrast, *Woman* used ironic anecdotes to thwart the campaigning New Woman's emancipatory messages, whilst supporting her novels in its 'Book Chat' section. This intriguing contradiction suggested the magazine's awareness of the disparity between the journalistic New Woman and her more level-headed, novelistic counterpart. It was potentially a commercial move, with *Woman* retaining its original reputation for being advanced by supporting the 'real' New Woman and denouncing the manly version. Although the *Lady's Realm* and *Young Woman* reached different classes, the *Young Woman* a lower-middle class readership, the *Lady's Realm* a middle- to upper-middle-class readership, they both shared a plethora of original fiction that was not present to the same extent in the other three magazines. Moreover, the authors they included were striking. The *Lady's Realm* being generally more conservative than the *Young Woman* included well-known names such as Grand, Corelli and Kenealy, who were nonetheless often fairly advanced in their portraits of womanhood. The *Young Woman* was perhaps more conventional, containing fiction from authors writing predominately for children. This impacted upon plot: Kenealy's Belinda is given a series of opportunities to develop herself for marriage in the *Lady's Realm*, whilst Katharine Tynan's Teresa is given no such chance in the *Young Woman*. While at first glance, the *Young Woman*'s fiction seems more conservative than that of the *Lady's Realm*, when one considers the purpose-driven nature of New Woman novels, the moralising tone of the *Young Woman*'s literature engenders more commonalities with this type of literature. The *Young Woman*'s rejection of the New Woman as a figurative Aunt Sally, combined with its support of female advancement was most visible within its discordant fiction.

Conclusion

The New Woman remains complex and heteroglossic, a responsive and fragile concept, embodying a period that simultaneously created and denounced her. This thesis has not set out to define the concept anew. Instead it produces a more diffuse idea and a new pool of data on the New Woman. This re-engagement distils the New Woman's most distinctive element: that of her self-actualisation. Through this important subset of the press, women were discussing topics from which they had been excluded by the male-dominated popular press. The woman's press inflected and changed readings of the New Woman, capturing an important cultural moment through a range of New Journalistic techniques: creating role models through character sketches; engaging debate through correspondence; encouraging women's writing through reader competitions; yielding a greater understanding of the body through discourses of health which could be used to strengthen or weaken women's role. The power was in the hands of the editors but increasingly, it was being handed over to the readers.

Undoubtedly there are limits to exploring the New Woman through only five magazines, given the vast amount of publications available at the close of the nineteenth century. This thesis comprises a replication of a fin de siècle woman's reading experience, selecting as a contemporary reader might, several publications that complemented one another. Whilst appealing to a similar class of women they also demonstrated variety. Through this selection of magazines I have humanised the mythological New Woman by using the readers and editors as direct embodiments of her ever-changing spirit. In the nineteen nineties Showalter argued that the New Woman brought about sexual anarchy, whilst Lyn

Pykett modified this to sexual anxiety.⁶⁶⁴ I would like to adapt both views to suggest that whilst the New Woman brought these elements to a mainstream readership, to a smaller group of specialised, dedicated female readers she brought sexual, social, political, and intellectual awareness. She also brought a great deal of joy and comfort to the isolated and confused. This operated on a number of levels, from the political to the domestic. Whether readers supported the phenomenon or not, the creation and facilitation of the New Woman debate in these magazines ensured that nineteenth-century women's lives would never be the same again.

⁶⁶⁴ Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*; Pykett, *The Improper Feminine*.

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