

# Communicating Equality or Femininity?: Visual Propaganda of the Edwardian Women's Suffrage Movement

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## Abstract

The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) and the Women's Freedom League (WFL), which led the Edwardian women's suffrage movement in the beginning of the twentieth century, placed great importance on visual propaganda. In a society of mass consumerism, visual appeal had tremendous impact and the women's suffrage societies were very much aware of this. The thesis looks at the visual propaganda of the Edwardian women's suffrage movement through the mediums of procession, plays, bazaars and posters.

Despite the difference in their tactics, both militant and constitutional women's suffrage organisations repeatedly utilised similar visual motifs. In processions, plays and bazaars, femininity was often emphasised in visual representations. The display of femininity in the propaganda was vital in persuading the public of the validity of women's suffrage. Those who promoted femininity in their visual propaganda were very much influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, whose characteristics were suitable to express femininity. By doing so, the women's suffrage movement in the twentieth century reinforced dominant traditional ideals of gender and class, which were also preventing women from obtaining the vote. However, just prior to the First World War, in addition to feminine visual representations, women's suffrage organisations began to include aspects of modernity, such as rationality and organisation, into their visual representations.

Some historians claim that the active sphere of women expanded because of their war efforts. While the work of women on the home front was important, when we look at the working-class representations used in the women's suffrage movement, it is evident that the images of modern types of

working women had been in use before the First World War. These images suggest the widening of women's roles in society. The thesis will reveal that the visual representations of the women's suffrage movement worked as a bridge between the pre-war images of working-class women to the modern representations of working women during the First World War.

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## List of Abbreviations

AFL	Actresses' Franchise League
ELFS	East London Federation of Suffragettes
ILP	Independent Labour Party
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
WFL	Women's Freedom League
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union
WTUL	Women's Trade Union League
WWSL	Women's Writers' Suffrage League



# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Theme of the Thesis

Marxist theorist Guy Dubord describes modern society as ‘the society of the spectacle’.<sup>1</sup> According to Dubord, the social relationship between people is mediated by images. Intellectual historian Martin Jay explains Dubord’s definition in different way. He uses ‘the term “ocularcentrism” to describe the [apparent] centrality of the visual [images]’ in contemporary Western life.<sup>2</sup> Jay claims that people rarely live without seeing visual images and representations, such as those shown in television programmes, movies, advertisements and posters. Indeed, visual representations were effectively used in the women’s liberation movement in the 1960s and 1970s. When the movement spread across North America, Western Europe, Australasia and Japan, various forms of visual representations made the movement easily shared and accessible among people.<sup>3</sup> The movement challenged patriarchy and raised awareness of the importance of female values and experiences. The most famous demonstration of the women’s liberation movement occurred in London; it was a protest against the Miss World beauty contest in November 1970. Hundreds of women participated in a demonstration protesting against the practice of depicting women as sexual objects. They threw stink

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<sup>1</sup> Guy Dubord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1983).

<sup>2</sup> Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies* (London: Sage Publications, 2007), 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Pugh, *The March of the Women: A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women’s Suffrage 1866-1914* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2000), 312.

bombs, flour bombs and smoke bombs. The demonstration attracted a great deal of media publicity.<sup>4</sup>

During public meetings of the women's liberation movement around the world, symbolic rituals such as the burning of bras occurred. For the movement, the bra had become a symbol of restriction because it shapes women's bodies into a form that is meant to be desirable for men.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it was considered that women were restricted and controlled by males through bras. This form of protest was often used by the women's liberation movement in the United Kingdom and the United States. Poems, paintings, novels, sculptures and films were also used by the women's liberation movement to express their political intentions. The women's liberation movement chose these forms of protest because visual action can have tremendous impact.

However, the women's liberation movement was not the first social movement to use visual representations. It was in the nineteenth century that visual representations became crucial media to intercede people and society. The most significant event was the Great Exhibition, the first international exhibition in London held in 1851. One article in 1851 stressed that seeing objects in person was a very natural desire for human beings:

Why have men left homes so distant and sacrificed their ordinary avocations, and incurred heavy expenses? Why! the man would have little soul indeed, who would not desire to see such a sight as England now presents. When the art of the north and the south, of the west and the east, are to be displayed, who would not be there to gaze and

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<sup>4</sup> Susan Kingsley Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990* (London: Routledge, 1999), 340.

<sup>5</sup> Yuko Totani, 'Jyennā', *Pafōmannsu Kennkyū No Kīwādo (Keywords in Performance Studies)*, eds. Yuuichirou Takahashi and Takeshi Suzuki (Tokyo: Sekaishisousha, 2011), 218-19.

to admire. It is natural, highly natural. And surely one is gladdened to see how all earth's contents are made beautiful or useful by skill. That majestic palace of iron and glass!<sup>6</sup>

To view something in person was an entertainment that overrode 'ordinary avocations'. People visited the Great Exhibition to be educated, entertained and to stimulate their desire for consumerism by seeing a multitude of wares.

The presence of visual representations was crucial in society at this time because of technological and industrial advancement and urbanisation. In the nineteenth century, the middle classes started to possess greater levels of economic and political control in British society.<sup>7</sup> It was the emergence of the mass society that created and expanded visual culture. A wide range of exhibitions were held, various magazines and papers targeted at middle-class readers were published and huge concert and event halls were constructed. The aim of this development was to entertain the masses. In addition, people started to organise huge protest demonstrations. It was in the nineteenth century that visual culture aimed at the mass audience flourished.

Socialist movements, which thrived in the latter half of the nineteenth century, especially utilised demonstrations. Trade unions often displayed banners in demonstrations, and the banners added lively colour to their protests. Historian Sheila Rowbotham comments that 'the closeness of art and

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<sup>6</sup> J F Shaw, "The World's Great Assembly", (London: English Monthly Tract Society, 1851), 12-13.

<sup>7</sup> See Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women in the English Middle Class*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

politics were made apparent in the visual rituals of demonstrations’<sup>8</sup> of the women’s liberation movement; however, this closeness of art world and politics had already emerged in this period. Walter Crane (1845–1915), one of the leading figures of the Arts and Crafts movement, lent his illustrations to the design of various trade union banners. William Morris (1834–1896), a designer whose ideas greatly influenced the Arts and Crafts movement, was also a socialist. Among the socialist organisations, the Fabian Society was involved with the utilisation of visual culture. Crane, also a member of the Fabian Society for a short while, provided one of his illustrations for the front page of the *Fabian Essays* (Figure 1-1). Although not officially acknowledged at the time, the Stage Society (est. 1899), an English theatre society that performed new experimental plays, could have been considered an affiliate of the Fabian Society as a number of its prominent members, such as George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), Harley Granville-Barker (1877–1946) and Sydney Olivier (1859–1943), were also members of the Fabian Society. Furthermore, the Fabian Society itself organised the Fabian Arts Group in 1907, which unfortunately ceased its activities a few years later.<sup>9</sup> Socialist and labour movements were aware of the power of visual representations, and the visual culture of the women’s suffrage movement in the twentieth century flourished on this foundation.

Previous studies have revealed ‘the closeness of politics and art’ in the women’s suffrage movement.<sup>10</sup> If ‘the closeness of politics and art’ had not already been established in the nineteenth

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<sup>8</sup> Sheila Rowbotham, *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States* (London: Penguin, 1999 [1997]), 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ian Britain, *Fabianism and Culture: A Study in British Socialism and the Arts c. 1884-1918*, (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1982), 163-192.

<sup>10</sup> See Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907-14* (Chicago: University

century, it might have been difficult for women's suffrage societies in the twentieth century to create such a wide range of visual propaganda; it is this visual propaganda that is addressed in this thesis. A feminist approach is evident in previous studies of the visual culture of the women's suffrage movement. Those studies focused on how the movement used visual representations in an attempt to change society. However, this thesis focuses mainly on assessing the societal influences *on* the women's suffrage movement, which can be understood by observing the visual representations of the movement. In this movement, suffragists, for the first time in history, extensively used visual representations as a means of propaganda. Sociologist Erving Goffman wrote in *Gender Advertisements*: 'Gender expressions are by way of being a mere show; but a considerable amount of the substance of society is enrolled in the staging of it'.<sup>11</sup> The 'substance of society' is fundamental to revealing why the public enjoyed the displays of the women's suffrage movement during the Edwardian period.

Therefore, this thesis aims to clarify how the women's suffrage movement used a wide variety of visual propaganda and how it was affected by society while also itself affecting society. This thesis is interdisciplinary, incorporating British history, women's history and design history. Before embarking further into the purpose of this thesis, it is important to first examine the way in which the history of the women's suffrage movement has been written, including reviewing the deficiencies in historical writings on the movement in mainstream British history, women's history, design history and studies of material culture.

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of Chicago Press, 1988); Julie Holledge, *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre*, (London: Virago, 1981); Deborah Cherry, *Beyond the Frame: Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain, 1850–1900*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Erving Goffman, *Gender Advertisements* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 8.

## 1.2 The Women's Suffrage Movement, British History

In mainstream British history, historical accounts of women's suffrage have been mainly written from a misogynistic viewpoint. George Dangerfield, in *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, uses psychoanalytical methods to portray militant women as 'irrational' beings who presented a 'ludicrous appearance' to the world.<sup>12</sup> This approach can also be observed in David Mitchell's *Queen Christabel: A Biography of Christabel Pankhurst*, Andrew Rosen's *Rise Up Women*, Rupert Butler's *As They Saw Her* and Harold Champion's *The True Book about Emmeline Pankhurst*.<sup>13</sup> According to Sandra Holton, 'All these writers appear to be progressive in their political values, yet this is consistently undermined by a masculinism that emphasised the otherness, the strangeness, the difference, and ultimately the ridiculousness of women in pursuit of their own political and personal ends.'<sup>14</sup> The literature by mainstream British historians tends to focus on the militancy of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), neglect other women's suffrage organisations and belittle their achievements. In current British mainstream history, the position of the women's suffrage movement remains unstable; it is still debated today whether the 1918 Representation of the People Act resulted from the Edwardian

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<sup>12</sup> George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: Constable & Co., 1936).

<sup>13</sup> David Mitchell, *Queen Christabel: A Biography of Christabel Pankhurst* (London: Macdonald & Jane's, 1977); Andrew Rosen, *Rise up, Women!: The Militant Campaign of the Women's Social and Political Union, 1903-1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974); Rupert Butler, *As They Saw Her-Emmeline Pankhurst: Portrait of a Wife, Mother and Suffragette*, The 'as They Saw Them' Series (London: Harrap, 1970); Harold Champion, *The True Book About Emmeline Pankhurst* (London: Frederick Muller, 1963). Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst* (London: Routledge, 2002), 4.

<sup>14</sup> Sandra Holton, 'The Making of Suffrage History', *Votes for Women: Women's and Gender History*, eds. June Purvis and Sandra Stanley Holton (London: Routledge, 2000), 24.

women's suffrage movement.<sup>15</sup> Some historians claim that the increase in women entering the workforce was due to the First World War, and not the women's suffrage movement. Early writings on the women's suffrage were published in the 1960s; this may have been an outcome of changes in history at the time. An example of one such change in Britain was the foundation of the History Workshop, which was related to the emergence of the New Left movement.

In the 1950s, the anti-nuclear movement was one of the major movements led by young members of the middle classes. People were expressing their discontent in various ways, through literature, drama and the visual arts. Since 1951, under the rule of the Conservative Party, liberals had been seeking a new socialism, which led to the emergence of the New Left. The History Workshop, led by historian Raphael Samuel during the 1960s, took the idea of 'history from below' and developed further historical studies.<sup>16</sup> EP Thompson, a leader of the New Left, wrote *The Making of the English Working Class* in 1963. By introducing the theory of moral economy, Thompson revealed how food riots were the working class's subjective attempt at controlling the economy.<sup>17</sup> It was an attempt to write a 'history from below'. Women's history in Britain also emerged from this trend.

EP Thompson also stated that, 'Class consciousness was a cultural expression of men's experience of productive relations and, although it might vary from place to place, it was an identifiable

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<sup>15</sup> Sadae Kawamura, 'Jyosei Sannseikenn Unndo No Tennkai-Sennkyoken Wo Meguru Kaikyū, Jyennādā, Neishonn (Development of the Women's Suffrage Movement-Class, Gender and Nation Concerning Votes),' *Igirisu Kinngennndai Jyoseishi Nyuumonn* (Introduction to Modern British Women's History), eds. Sadae Kawamura and Imai Kei (Tokyo: Aoki Shotenn, 2006), 139. For further details on changing interpretations of the women's suffrage movement, see H L Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign, 1866-1928* (London: Longman, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> Lin Chun, *The British New Left*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> E P Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1980).

phenomenon’.<sup>18</sup> Thus, class-consciousness was now considered a cultural expression. In the New Left movement, culture became an issue to be explored.<sup>19</sup> Raymond Williams, an influential critic in the New Left, wrote that ‘[O]ur use of “culture” is to designate a central process and area of social and political struggle’.<sup>20</sup> Thus, scholars who were influenced by the New Left movement were beginning to focus on the superstructure rather than on the infrastructure of Marxist terminology.

The New Left developed the field of cultural studies, which led to the establishment of further fields of study. Cultural studies rejected elitist culture and focused on popular culture; every aspect of popular culture became the focus of study (e.g., films, pop stars, music, novels, fashion, and department stores). The study of history was also influenced by this movement, and thus the field of cultural history was developed. In addition, EP Thompson studied charivari, which later developed into performance studies. Rituals and performances from everyday life were studied as a historical theme. During the 1990s, there was a significant development in performance studies, which led to the inaugural Performance Studies International Conference in 1995 at New York University. Performance has various meanings: performance on stage, everyday performance and cultural performance. Sociologist Yuuichirou Takahashi stated that recognition of realities and every attempt to explain them can be considered performance.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Qtd. in Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 88.

<sup>19</sup> For the serious study of the New Left movement, see Chun, *The British New Left*.

<sup>20</sup> Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays* (London: Virago, 1981), 255.

<sup>21</sup> *Pafōmannsu Kennkyū No Kiwādo*, 29.



### 1.3 The Women's Suffrage Movement and Women's History

The early history of the women's suffrage movement was written by those who were there at the time. The leaders of the women's suffrage organisations, such as Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928), Christabel Pankhurst (1880–1958), Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence (1867–1954) and Millicent Garrett Fawcett (1847–1929), wrote autobiographies that included their personal accounts of the movement.<sup>22</sup> In addition, there are other types of literature that offer various versions of women's suffrage history. For example, Sylvia Pankhurst's *The Suffragette Movement* and Ray Strachey's *The Cause* greatly influenced later studies.<sup>23</sup>

*The Cause*, which has been labelled as a 'classic history' of British feminism, clarifies the domination of the women's suffrage movement by middle-class women in particular.<sup>24</sup> Following a Whiggish interpretation of history, Ray Strachey (1887–1940) claimed that women's suffrage was a

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<sup>22</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1914); Dame Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote* (London: Cresset Library, 1959); Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *What I Remember* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1924); Annie Kenney, *Memories of a Militant* (London: E. Arnold, 1924); Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part in a Changing World* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938); Helen Swanwick, *I Have Been Young* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1935); Cicely Mary Hamilton, *Life Errant* (London: J. M. Dent, 1935); Evelyn Sharp, *Unfinished Adventure* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head Ltd., 1933); Elizabeth Robins, *Ibsen and the Actress* (London: Hogarth Press, 1924); Ethel Smyth, *Female Pipings in Eden* (London: Peter Davies, 1933); Viscountess Rhondda, *This Way My World* (London: Macmillan, 1933). It is known that Emmeline Pankhurst's *My Own Story* was written by a ghost writer.

<sup>23</sup> Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1931); Ray Strachey, *'The Cause': A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain* (London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1928). Other books that later influenced the later studies of the women's suffrage movement include Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *Women's Suffrage: A Short History of a Great Movement* (London: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1912) and Helen Blackburn, *A Record of the Women's Suffrage in British Isles* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1902).

<sup>24</sup> Barbara Caine, 'Mothering Feminism/Mothering Feminists: Ray Strachey and the Cause,' *Women's History Review* 8.2 (1999): 304.

natural consequence of society's progress. *The Cause* places the beginnings of feminism in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in which, Strachey writes, 'the whole extent of the feminist ideal is set out'.<sup>25</sup> *The Cause* is an assembly of biographical accounts of middle-class women, such as Caroline Norton (1808–1877), Florence Nightingale (1820–1910), Sarah Emily Davies (1830–1921), Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (1836–1917), Barbara Bodichon (1827–1891) and Josephine Butler (1828–1906). It completely ignores the contribution of working-class women to the women's cause. According to historian Kathryn Dodd, Ray Strachey, who stood for liberal principles, viewed working-class women as 'rough, wild, unhealthy, and unclean...labouring masses' who were incapable of organising the women's suffrage movement without assistance.<sup>26</sup> She categorised women according to class and viewed women and men in the light of separate spheres.

Sylvia Pankhurst (1882–1960) wrote *The Suffragette Movement* in 1931. As she immersed herself in socialism, philosophically moving away from her mother and sister in the movement, her book was an attempt to justify her actions. Historian Jane Marcus maintains Sylvia Pankhurst portrayed herself as a 'heroine' who kept her father's 'socialist faith' while her mother and sister deviated from that faith, leading to Sylvia's expulsion from the organisation.<sup>27</sup> Numerous historians over the years have used Sylvia Pankhurst's account as a primary source. However, historian Martin Pugh points out

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<sup>25</sup> Strachey, 'The Cause': *A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain*, 5. Sandra Stanley Holton, 'The Making of Suffrage History', *Votes for Women*, 17.

<sup>26</sup> Kathryn Dodd, 'Cultural Politics and Women's Historical Writing-the Case of Ray Strachey's the Cause', *Women's Studies International Forum* 13, no. 1/2 (1990): 133.

<sup>27</sup> June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, *Women's and Gender History* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 2-3.

the biased views contained within the pages. According to Pugh, it minimised ‘the role of the earlier suffrage movement to the benefit of the militants’ and the achievements of the Pankhurst family. Furthermore, because the book criticised Christabel and Emmeline Pankhurst, it ‘antagonized the followers’ of those two leaders.<sup>28</sup> According to historian June Purvis, *The Suffragette Movement* portrayed Emmeline Pankhurst as a ‘failed leader’ as well as a ‘failed mother’. Purvis claims it also influenced George Dangerfield’s *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, which points to the women’s suffrage movement as a cause of the rapid decline of the Liberal Party.<sup>29</sup>

Serious study of the women’s suffrage movement by feminist historians began with Constance Rover’s *Women’s Suffrage and Party Politics*, published in 1967. With this book, Rover attempted to view women’s suffrage history from different political perspectives.<sup>30</sup> Rover began her enquiry into women’s suffrage in response to the political situation of the day. The 1970s saw the effects of second-wave feminism. While the first-wave feminism concentrated solely on gaining women’s suffrage, the second-wave feminism sought equality between men and women in both public and private arenas such as home and workplace. Antonia Raeburn, author of *The Militant Suffragettes*, expressed her sentiments in her book: ‘The differences between men and women really are less, and future

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<sup>28</sup> Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts* (London: Allen Lane, 2001), xv-xvi.

<sup>29</sup> June Purvis points out that inconsistencies can be found between Sylvia Pankhurst’s *The Suffragette Movement* and *The Suffragette*, which was written in 1911. June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 3-4.

<sup>30</sup> Constance Rover, *Women’s Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967). Also, see Sadae Kawamura, ‘Jyosei Sannseikenn Unndo No Tennkai-Sennkyoken Wo Meguru Kaikyū, Jyennā, Neishonn,’ 137.

achievement will certainly come through their working together as complementary equals'.<sup>31</sup>

In Britain, a 'new women's history' developed in response to second-wave feminism. Many left-wing feminists became aware that Marxism and Socialism were male dominant. In 1969, at a History Workshop event, a male historian insisted women should be protected from labour and capitalism. Sheila Rowbotham responded that to work outside the home is a form of freedom; her statement was received with laughter.<sup>32</sup> At lunchtime, she gathered a group of women and formed a women's history workshop. It was not only women historians involved in the History Workshop movement who promoted women's history. Other socialist feminists such as Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley who were connected to *New Left Review* also cultivated the field of new women's history.<sup>33</sup>

Because of their association with socialist and feminist ideas, issues such as women's labour, sexuality, and the history of women's oppression were explored. They too attempted to examine 'history from below':

Feminism not only demands a history of the family but also seeks to explain why women's work as the reproducers of labour power, and their servicing of labour power in the home, has remained invisible for so long. By bringing women into the

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<sup>31</sup> Antonia Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragette* (London: Michael Joseph, 1973), 242. The book contains interviews of ex-suffragettes, but the source is not mentioned.

<sup>32</sup> Junko Sakai, 'Jyoseishi Kara Jenndāshi He-Houhouronn To Shiryou No Tayouka (Women's History to Gender History-Diversification of Methodology and Primary Sources),' *Igirisu Kinngendai Jyoseishi Nyuumonn* (Introduction to Modern British Women's History), 315.

<sup>33</sup> Lin Chun, *The British New Left*, 168-169. Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley co-edited the book called *The Rights and Wrongs of Women*, which was one of the key texts in the women's history. *The Rights and Wrongs of Women*, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976).

foreground of historical enquiry our knowledge of production, of working class politics and culture, of class struggle, of the welfare state, will be transformed.<sup>34</sup>

Rowbotham and other authors have written numerous books on women's history, which focus on working-class women. In 1978, Jill Liddington and Jill Norris wrote one such book, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*. They used oral interviews to record the history of Lancashire working-class women involved in the suffrage movement. They also unveiled an inter-organisational relationship between the WSPU and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) at a local level, and highlighted the importance of local studies.<sup>35</sup> Marian Ramelson, in her book *Petticoat Rebellion*, also emphasised the role of working-class women in advancing the women's suffrage movement.<sup>36</sup>

Study of the women's suffrage movement flourished in the 1970s for reasons beyond the development of women's history. Half a century had passed since the enactment of the 1928 Electoral Reform Bill giving every woman aged 30 years and older the right to vote on the same terms as men. Since the 1930s, the Suffragette Fellowship, a network established by ex-suffragettes, had attempted to assemble their personal records of the movement (now held in the Museum of London).<sup>37</sup> The fellowship retained their network, publishing a newsletter and continuing to hold meetings into the

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<sup>34</sup> Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History-300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight against It* (London: Pluto Press, 1973).

<sup>35</sup> Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Virago, 1978).

<sup>36</sup> Marian Ramelson, *The Petticoat Rebellion: A Century of Struggle for Women's Rights* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1976).

<sup>37</sup> This collection is offered as a microfilm. It is a valuable source for women's suffrage historians. The Suffragette Fellowship Collection, Microfilm, Harvester Microform, Museum of London.

1970s. Those who had played important roles in the women's suffrage movement were now either dead or very elderly, and attempts were made to record and save Edwardian history.

One such attempt was a 1974 television drama series called *Shoulder to Shoulder* produced by the BBC. The series relied heavily on Sylvia Pankhurst's *The Suffragette Movement*. The book was reprinted by Virago Press in a paperback edition in 1978. Millions of people watched the television series and in the following year a book by Midge Mackenzie was published.<sup>38</sup> Figure 1-2 shows the front page of the *Radio Times*, a special-edition publication with a scene from the television drama. The tricolour of the WSPU—purple, white and green—has been used on the front page, suggesting that in the 1970s the militant WSPU had caught the public's interest.<sup>39</sup> Liddington, as a viewer of the series, wrote, '[t]his celebratory television drama coincided with a renewal of interest in women's history, inspiring many of us to look again at the suffrage past'.<sup>40</sup> Historian Brian Harrison conducted oral interviews with suffragettes, suffragists and their families and friends during the 1970s, and this collection of oral history has become a useful source for historians.<sup>41</sup>

In the 1980s, the effect of the women's liberation movement was still being felt. The slogans of radical feminists, such as 'the Personal is Political', introduced new areas for women to explore. Sexuality, pregnancy, motherhood and other personal matters became issues to be addressed. Politics began to include issues previously considered to be the domain of the private sphere. Les Garner's *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty* focuses on the various types of feminist ideas identifiable in the

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<sup>38</sup> Midge Mackenzie, *Shoulder to Shoulder* (London: A. Lane, 1975).

<sup>39</sup> 'Shoulder to Shoulder', *Radio Times*, n.d.

<sup>40</sup> Jill Liddington, *Rebel Girls: Their Fight for the Vote* (London: Virago, 2006), 311.

<sup>41</sup> Oral Evidence on the Suffragette and Suffragist Movements (1974-1981), 8 SUF, in Women's Library, London.

women's suffrage movement. He attempts to characterise suffrage organisations and major journals according to their feminist ideas on a variety of subjects, including sex, reproduction, motherhood, division of labour and marriage.<sup>42</sup> Susan Kingsley Kent's *Sex and Suffrage in Britain, 1860–1914* takes a similar approach.<sup>43</sup> However, while Garner focuses on organisations and journals, Kingsley Kent focuses on the discourse of marriage, prostitution and the sexuality of suffrage campaigners. Kingsley Kent's approach connects the consciousness of the suffragettes with the political, social and cultural conditions that dominated discourses on marriage, prostitution, the role of women and the division of labour. Kingsley Kent's approach was new, but her focus on central middle-class figures suggests it may be inappropriate to apply her explanations to local working-class activists.

In the 1980s, the value of studying the constitutional aspects of the women's suffrage movement was recognised, an area previously ignored by historians. It was an attempt to prove the validity of the women's suffrage movement, not with regard to militancy, but with regard to the legitimate methods of protest used by the NUWSS. Leslie Parker Hume's *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies 1897–1914* highlights the activities of the NUWSS, which were overshadowed by the militant WSPU.<sup>44</sup> Mainstream British historians, such as Dangerfield, had tended

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<sup>42</sup> Les Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty: Feminist Ideas in the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1900–1918* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984). The NUWSS had a journal called *The Common Cause* (1910–1920) and the WSPU had *Votes for Women* (1907–1918) and *The Suffragette* (1912–1915). The Women's Freedom League had *The Vote* (1909–1933) and there was also *The Freewoman: a weekly feminist review* (1911–1912), which was advertised as a radical feminist journal.

<sup>43</sup> Susan Kingsley Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain, 1860–1914* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).

<sup>44</sup> Leslie Parker Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, 1897–1914* (New York: Garland, 1982).

to focus on the militancy of the movement and to ignore the constitutional aspects. The focus on the NUWSS was an attempt to demonstrate the ways in which the Edwardian suffrage movement had played a large part in the enactment of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, and, at the same time, had contributed to achieving democracy in Britain. The NUWSS survived the First World War and continued until 1919 when its name was changed to the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. A historical examination of the NUWSS illustrates how women struggled for the right to vote over an extended period, starting in the Victorian era. In 1986, Sandra Stanley Holton's *Feminism and Democracy* was published. Holton asks 'whether, and if so how, to relate the demand for equal votes for women to that for a fully independent Labour Party in the House of Commons and the associated call for adult suffrage'.<sup>45</sup> She reveals the connection between the Labour Party and the NUWSS Election Fighting Fund, and identifies the existence of 'democratic suffragists' within the NUWSS who pursued adult suffrage instead of equal votes for women.<sup>46</sup>

During the 1980s and 1990s, a period when the accomplishments of non-militant organisations were reconsidered, numerous biographies of non-militants were published.<sup>47</sup> The trend of placing greater importance on the constitutional aspects of the movement still exists. Historian Martin Pugh

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<sup>45</sup> Sandra Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). According to Sandra Stanley Holton, the term 'democratic suffragist' was first used by Margaret Llewellyn Davies (1861–1944), a leader of the Women's Co-operative Guild.

<sup>46</sup> The NUWSS Election Fighting Fund was established to support pro-women's suffrage MP candidates. Many of them were the candidates of the Labour Party.

<sup>47</sup> June Hannam, *Isabella Ford* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 1990); Lis Whitelaw, *The Life and Rebellious Times of Cicely Hamilton* (Ohio State University Press, 1990); Jo Vellacott, *From Liberal to Labour with Women's Suffrage: The Story of Catherine Marshall* (Mcquill Queens University Press, 1993).



rates the efforts of the NUWSS as higher than those of the WSPU. In *The March of the Women*, he argues, 'the eventual success of the women's movement' rests on the importance of the alliance between the NUWSS and the Labour Party, and the NUWSS's endeavours to organise working-class women.<sup>48</sup>

The influence of gender history can be observed in the development of women's suffrage history in the 1990s. Historian Joan Scott defines gender as 'knowledge about sexual difference'.<sup>49</sup> From a post-structuralist approach, she further maintains, 'gender identity is compounded and internally differentiated by social and sometimes political identity'.<sup>50</sup> Many British female historians disagree with Scott's assertion, believing that it undermines the solidarity of the female identity. Women's history is closely connected with feminism; therefore, Scott's suggestion that 'women' are a social construct was not well received. In their co-edited book on the women's suffrage movement, Maroula Joannou and June Purvis present a 'new feminist perspective'. They argue that although writers' interests were diverse, they gathered with 'an interest in communities of women, the reclaiming of feminist ideas, a reassessment of the dominant representation of feminist figures, a search for forgotten and neglected women, and the desire to position the women's suffrage movement within the broader context of women's struggle to achieve justice and freedom'.<sup>51</sup> Here, they clearly declare their feminist positions, but simultaneously assert that they apply other analytical tools, including gender, class, race,

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<sup>48</sup> Pugh, *The March of the Women*, 4.

<sup>49</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 2.

<sup>50</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, 'Introduction,' *Feminism & History*, ed. Joan Wallach Scott (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1997[1996]), 7.

<sup>51</sup> *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives*, eds. Maroula Joannou and June Purvis (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 4.

sexuality, religious affiliations and nationality. Women's suffrage history was being explored from new perspectives such as class, race, occupation and religion. Women's suffrage history was no longer the history of two major organisations, the WSPU and the NUWSS; it was no longer the history of the prominent figures in the movement; and it was no longer the story of England alone. Elizabeth Crawford's useful reference guide to women's suffrage in particular shows how diverse the topic of women's suffrage history has become.<sup>52</sup>

In the 1990s, a number of important studies highlighted the roles of other suffrage societies. Claire Eustance delivered the first serious study of the Women's Freedom League (WFL), a militant organisation that separated from the WSPU in 1907. The Women's Franchise League (est. 1889), the Women's Tax Resistance League (est. 1909) and the United Suffragists (est. 1914) were also studied in detail for the first time.<sup>53</sup>

Holton's *Suffrage Days* approaches the history of suffrage by breaking down the organisational barriers between the suffrage organisations.<sup>54</sup> She often focuses on working-class women, relating women's suffrage to the daily lives of ordinary people.<sup>55</sup> Although whether such a small number of

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<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866-1928* (London: UCL Press, 1999).

<sup>53</sup> Claire Louise Eustance, "'Daring to Be Free": The Evolution of Women's Political Identities in the Women's Freedom League 1907-1930,' Ph. D thesis, University of York, (1993); Claire Louise Eustance, 'Meanings of Militancy: The Ideas and Practice of Political Resistance in the Women's Freedom League, 1907-1913,' *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives*, eds. Maroula Joannou and June Purvis (Manchester: Manchester U. P., 1998), 51-64.

<sup>54</sup> Sandra Stanley Holton, *Suffrage Days: Stories from the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>55</sup> Sandra Stanley Holton, 'Now You See It, Now You Don't: The Women's Franchise League and Its Place in Contending Narratives of the Women's Suffrage Movement,' *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives*,

working-class activists collectively represented all working-class women is questionable, Holton does attempt to rediscover the working-class women lost in suffrage history and to rewrite the history with a post-modernist slant. As Holton commented, a 'major change to women's lives has occurred outside the arena of politics, in the bedroom and the workplace. Increased control over fertility and women's entry into the labour market are perceived as providing the real dynamics of recent women's history'.<sup>56</sup>

The influence of the Edwardian suffrage movement continues to be debated among historians. Cheryl Law claims the Edwardian suffrage movement was 'an isolated political pantomime characterised by eccentric middle-class women, unrepresentative of their sex, propelling their cause with a flash onto the historical stage before disappearing into satisfied anonymity'.<sup>57</sup> Countering Law's claim, other historians place greater importance on the activities of the NUWSS, and there are those who focus on the role of militancy. Laura E. Nym Mayhall's *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Citizenship and Resistance in Britain, 1860–1930* is an example of a work that places importance on militancy. However, Mayhall's book is different from earlier studies of the WSPU in that it aims to present a continuous history of militancy from the mid-nineteenth century to the Equal Franchise Act of 1928 when women

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eds. Maroula Joannou and June Purvis (Manchester: Manchester U. P., 1998), 15-36; Krista Cowman, 'A Party between Revolution and Peaceful Persuasion': A Fresh Look at the United Suffragists,' *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives*, eds. Maroula Joannou and June Purvis (Manchester: Manchester U. P., 1998), 77-88; Hilary Frances, 'Pay the Piper, Call the Tine!': The Women's Tax Resistance League,' *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspective*, eds. Maroula Joannou and June Purvis (Manchester: Manchester U. P., 1998), 65-76.

<sup>56</sup> Sandra Stanley Holton, 'The Suffragist and The "Average Woman",' *Women's History Review* 1.1 (1992): 12.

<sup>57</sup> Amanda Vickery, *Women, Privilege, and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present, The Making of Modern Freedom* (Stanford: Stanford U. P., 2001), 38. Some historians like Cheryl Law put more importance on what happened after 1914. For example, see Angela K. Smith, *Suffrage Discourse in Britain during the First World War* (London: Ashgate, 2005).

and men shared an equal vote.<sup>58</sup> Most accounts of the women's suffrage movement tend to include the period up to 1914 when the WSPU and NUWSS postponed their suffrage agitation to help with war activities. Relatively few studies place the periodisation at 1928, as Mayhall does. In 2006, Sadae Kawamura posited a similar opinion to Mayhall's, claiming the 'study of suffragism should not be ended in the Representation of the People Act of 1918, and it should be reappraised putting the enactment of the Equal Franchise Act in 1928 in the scope of the study'.<sup>59</sup>

Recently, there have been further attempts to counter Law's claims. *Suffrage outside Suffragism*, edited by Myrian Boussahba-Bravard, encompasses the history of those who were pro-suffrage but who were not particularly focused on gaining votes for women. Boussahba-Bravard defines 'suffragism' as follows:

'Suffragism,' on the other hand was a category created by suffragists for whom suffrage was the priority and inclusion the strategy. 'Suffragism' meant to include one way or another all that was supportive of its claim. It would encompass all suffragists, and paradoxically even those outside, once they were artificially suspended from their main affiliation (parties, unions or other types of grouping).<sup>60</sup>

According to Boussahba-Bravard, suffragism was a 'public sphere', a community for

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<sup>58</sup> Laura E. Nym Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Citizenship and Resistance in Britain, 1860-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>59</sup> Kawamura, 'Jyosei Sannseikenn Unndou No Tennkai-Sennkyokenn Wo Meguru Kaikyū, Jyennidā, Neishonn (Development of the Women's Suffrage Movement-Class, Gender, and Nation Concerning Votes)', 138.

<sup>60</sup> Myrian Boussahba-Bravard, *Suffrage outside Suffragism: Women's Vote in Britain 1880-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 8 and 11.

suffragists. In the book, the writers explore suffrage from outside the suffragist community. As a sphere for 'suffrage outside suffragism', they chose political parties, such as the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party, and women's organisations whose aims were not votes for women, including the Primrose League (est. 1883), the National Union of Women Workers (est. 1889) and the Women's Co-operative Guild (est. 1883). Therefore, this book offers an alternative to the customary rendering of the history of women's suffrage, which generally depicted the women's suffrage movement within the context of the women's suffrage societies.

As gender history flourished, men's history became popular.<sup>61</sup> In women's suffrage history, the involvement of men has never been fully explored. In the book *The Men's Share*, the authors approach the women's suffrage movement by determining how men tried to contain 'the transformation of men, concepts of masculinity and male identities' during this period.<sup>62</sup> The authors explore male support via prominent figures such as Frederick Pethick-Lawrence (1871–1961), who supported the WSPU, and the socialist and labour leader Keir Hardie (1856–1915), as well as through men's pro-suffrage societies such as the Men's League for Women's Suffrage (est. 1907) and the Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage (est. 1913).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> There are studies such as George L. Mosse, *The Image of Men: The Creation of Modern Masculinities* (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1998); Michele Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity-National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1996); John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Pearson Longman, 2005).

<sup>62</sup> *The Men's Share?: Masculinities, Male Support and Women's Suffrage in Britain, 1890-1920*, eds. Angela V. John and Claire Eustance (London: Routledge, 1997), xvii.

<sup>63</sup> See Laura Ugolini, "By all means let the ladies have the chance"; *The Workman's Times*, independent labour representation and women's suffrage, 1891-4', 62-87; June Burnslaw, 'Sharing the burden: the Pethick Lawrences and women's suffrage', 135-157; Claire Eustance, 'Citizens, Scotsmen, "bairns": manly politics and women's suffrage in the

The field of study of regional histories of women's suffrage has expanded in the last 20 years. Leah Leneman, for example, focuses on the Scottish suffrage movement.<sup>64</sup> In addition, there has been an interest in international relationships and international exchanges within the worldwide women's suffrage movement.

In the early 2000s, efforts were made to commemorate the Edwardian women's suffrage movement. The WSPU centenary anniversary was celebrated in 2003. Several biographical accounts of the WSPU leaders were also published to re-evaluate the organisation's achievements. Purvis, the author of a biography on Emmeline Pankhurst, criticises Pugh's *The Pankhursts*.<sup>65</sup> Purvis claims Pugh follows the traditional misogynistic approach and notes his inference of a lesbian relationship between Emmeline Pankhurst and Ethel Smyth (1858–1944) as 'particularly prurient'. Purvis' aim in writing the biography of Emmeline Pankhurst was to write a 'modern full-length biography' incorporating Pankhurst's life before she entered the women's suffrage movement.<sup>66</sup> Purvis and Pugh's biographies are evidence of the continuing conflict among historians about how the achievements of the WSPU should be interpreted.

There have been numerous recent studies on suffrage history. Many issues have become clear in the women's suffrage movement: the variety of organisations, male involvement, local movements

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Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage, 1913-1920', 182-205, in *The Men's Share?: Masculinities, Male Support and Women's Suffrage in Britain, 1890-1920*.

<sup>64</sup> Leah Leneman, *A Guide Cause: The Women's Suffrage Movement in Scotland*, Scottish Women's Studies Series. (Mercat Press, 1995).

<sup>65</sup> See Pugh, *The Pankhursts*.

<sup>66</sup> Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 1 and 4.

and international networks. However, despite the increasing clarity of some aspects, the position of the women's suffrage movement in mainstream British history remains contentious.

#### 1.4 Women's Suffrage Movement and Visual Representations

The visual aspect of the women's suffrage movement is a field not yet fully explored. However, there are some works that deal with the political aspects of gender and representation in other areas of history. For example, in British history, Kristina Huneault studies how representations of working-class women were used to negotiate contradictions between the notions of femininity and women's labour.<sup>67</sup> In the field of design history, feminist scholars used the themes of the home and women's domestic skills to emphasise their roles as consumers and analysed how women contributed to the designs of home interiors.<sup>68</sup> It is not only the female gender that has become the subject of studies. For example, Gabriel Koureas explores the relationship between the representations of masculinity and the construction of national identity during the First World War.<sup>69</sup> The study of visual culture through gender is a flourishing field.

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<sup>67</sup> Kristina Huneault, *Difficult Subjects: Working Women and Visual Culture, Britain 1880-1914*, (London: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2002). For other examples, Louis Montrose and Margaret Homans studied how Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria created a monarchy through visual representations. Margaret Homans, *Royal Representations: Queen Victoria and British Culture, 1837-1876* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Louis Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender, and Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

<sup>68</sup> Penny Sparke, *As Long As Its Pink*; W. Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea*, (London: Heinemann, 1988); eds. Judy Attfield and Pat Kirkham, *A View from the Interior: Feminism, Women, and Design*, (London: Women's Press, 1989).

<sup>69</sup> Gabriel Koureas, *Memory, Masculinity and National Identity in British Visual Culture, 1914-1930: A Study of 'Unconquerable Manhood'*, (London: Ashgate, 2007).

Design history was one of the fields influenced by cultural studies. Design history originated in the 1960s when art historians such as Nicholas Pevsner wrote about famous historical designers who contributed to the development of Modernism.<sup>70</sup> Design history flourished during the 1970s, and in 1977, the Design History Society was founded. The development of design history in the 1970s indicated how various objects, communication media, the environment and services could all be considered visual representations. Design historian Penny Sparke analysed gender representation in interior design in the 1990s.<sup>71</sup> This thesis draws on all of these fields in historical studies, which have developed since the 1960s.

The first book to explore the women's suffrage movement from a visual perspective was Lisa Tickner's *The Spectacle of Women*. Tickner defines culture as 'the arena in which a society produces those representations that make sense of its world'.<sup>72</sup> This definition is the same as that used by the scholars of cultural studies. As stated earlier, the discipline of cultural studies was established in the 1960s at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies but it did not come into prominence until the 1980s. Stuart Hall, a director of the centre from 1968 to 1979, states:

Culture, it is argued, is not so much a set of things—novels and paintings or TV programmes or comics—as a process, a set of practices. Primarily, culture is concerned

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<sup>70</sup> Nicholas Pevsner, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement from William Morris to Walter Gropius* (London: Penguin, 1991[1936]).

<sup>71</sup> See Penny Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink: The Sexual Politics of Taste* (London: Pandora, 1995). Yasuko Suga, *Igirisu No Shakai To Dezainn: Morisu To Modanizumu No Seijigaku (British Society and Design: The Politics of Representing Morris and Modernism)* (Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 2005), 18-19.

<sup>72</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907-14*, xi.



with the production and exchange of meanings—the ‘giving and taking of meaning’—between the members of a society or group...Thus culture depends on its participants interpreting meaningfully what is around them, and ‘making sense’ of the world, in broadly similar ways.<sup>73</sup>

Hall and other academics allowed for a wide variety of materials to be studied, including visual materials. The concept of visual materials goes beyond two-dimensional materials such as posters and paintings. The field of design history also introduced object studies. Based on these developments, the cultural activities of the suffrage movement were further explored in the 1990s. Poetry, drama and novels about the suffrage movement were the first historical pieces studied by literary scholars and art historians. The study of the suffrage subculture, for example suffrage jewellery and other commodities of the suffrage movement, is becoming more widespread.<sup>74</sup>

Museum exhibitions can also provide evidence of how society evaluates the women’s suffrage movement. It was not until 1992 that the women’s suffrage movement was given some measure of public recognition. That year, the Museum of London included women’s suffrage ephemera in its

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<sup>73</sup> Stuart Hall, ‘Introduction’, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: Sage, 1997), 2.

<sup>74</sup> John Mercer, ‘Buying Votes: Purchasable Propaganda in the Twentieth-Century Women’s Suffrage Movement,’ Ph.D. Thesis University of Portsmouth, (2005); Sowon S. Park, ‘Doing Justice to the Real Girl’: The Women’s Writers’ Suffrage League,’ *A Suffrage Reader: Charting New Directions in Suffrage History* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2000); Elizabeth Goring, *Suffragette Jewellery in Britain, Decorative Arts Society 1850 to the Present: Omnium Gatherum, a Collection of Papers* (2002); Maria Diczynski, ‘Militant Distribution: Votes for Women and the Public Sphere,’ *Media History* 6.2. (2000); John Mercer, ‘Media and Militancy: Propaganda in the Women’s Social and Political Union’s Campaign,’ *Women’s History Review* 14.3 (2005); John Mercer, ‘Shopping for Suffrage: The Campaign Shops of the Women’s Social and Political Union,’ *Women’s History Review* 18.2. (2009).

permanent collection. However, the accomplishments of the movement were not the focus. The function of the Museum of London is to show London's history—the suffrage ephemera were displayed merely to illustrate an aspect of the Edwardian era.

In 2002, the Women's Library exhibited 'Cooks and Campaigners' and, in 2004, 'Art for Vote's Sake: Visual Culture and the Women's Suffrage Campaign'. The exhibition programme of 2004 claims that the exhibition reveals 'the power of art in the suffrage campaigns, 75 years on from equal enfranchisement. Determined to fire the public imagination, suffrage artists exploited everything from traditional embroidery to the latest printing technologies'.<sup>75</sup> This exhibition attempted to show how the suffrage movement used visual representations to persuade the public. According to journalist Emily Flynn, the suffragists 'walked a cautious line between tradition and revolution, femininity and strength'.<sup>76</sup>

In 2003, the public's memory of the women's suffrage movement, especially its militant side, was re-evoked during the WSPU centenary. Several commemorations were held in London and in Manchester where the WSPU was first established. In London, the Imperial War Museum held an exhibition called 'Women in War', which placed suffragettes as the antecedent to women's participation in the war effort. In Manchester, the BBC broadcast a special programme on women's suffrage. On 10 October 2003, at the Pankhurst Centre on Nelson Street, Manchester, the WSPU Centenary Celebration

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<sup>75</sup> "'Art for Vote Sake": Visual Culture and the Woman's Suffrage Campaign', curated by Bethan Stevens; Women's Library programme. Qtd. in Jill Liddington, 'Era of Commemoration: Celebrating the Suffrage Centenary,' *History Workshop Journal*, 59.1 (2005): 201.

<sup>76</sup> Emily Flynn, 'The Art of Suffrage; Celebrating How British Women Won the Right to Vote,' *Newsweek*, 3 Nov 2003.

was held. This was an informal occasion with talks by Purvis (biographer of Emmeline Pankhurst), Fran Abrams (author of *Freedom's Cause: Lives of the Suffragettes*) and Beverley Cook (of the Museum of London).<sup>77</sup> Liddington stated, '[a]ll this made Votes for Women accessible to the wider community-based audience'.<sup>78</sup>

On 6 October 2003, the National Archives opened an exhibition of documents relating to women's suffrage called 'The March of the Women: Suffragettes and the State 1906–1918'. This exhibition showed clandestine photographs of the suffragettes in prison and revealed how individual privacy was easily abused by the state. Liddington writes:

The National Archives' exhibition was haunting indeed, providing powerfully compelling photographic evidence of how the Edwardian Liberal government secretly spied on women imprisoned merely for demanding the basic democratic right to vote. Somehow this new evidence of Home Office terrorism-prevention subterfuge tactics has a greater power to shock than, say, the more familiar suffragettes 'chained to the railings'.<sup>79</sup>

In 2008, the British Library opened the exhibition 'Taking Liberties'.<sup>80</sup> Although the exhibition did not fully illustrate the effectiveness of militancy in acquiring the vote, it presented the women's suffrage movement as achieving liberty within the British system. The continuation of the liberal

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<sup>77</sup> Fran Abrams, *Freedom's Cause: Lives of the Suffragettes*, (London: Profile, 2003).

<sup>78</sup> Liddington, 'Era of Commemoration: Celebrating the Suffrage Centenary', 199.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 203 and 209.

<sup>80</sup> In this exhibition, ephemerals from the women's suffrage movement were exhibited. Suffrage ephemeras exhibited in this exhibition are listed in Linda Colley, *Taking Stock of Taking Liberties* (London: British Library, 2008), 45.

principle could be observed in the exhibition.

In the 1990s and 2000s, various suffrage exhibitions were held in a range of venues. In these exhibitions, suffragists and suffragettes were exhibited in different contexts according to the themes of the exhibitions, but an abundance of material relating to the movement (e.g., banners, badges, postcards and photos) revealed a richly woven subculture waiting to be explored. The banners, badges, postcards and photos were designed by women. Women's cultural activities supported and propagated the women's suffrage movement. It was becoming apparent that, like the women's liberation movement in the second half of the twentieth century, the women's suffrage movement at the beginning of the twentieth century used cultural media to promote its cause. This thesis will investigate how suffragists used cultural media and the accompanying representations.

### 1.5 Methodology

Visual representation is a medium where 'the production and exchange of meanings' take form.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, sociologists George Fyfe and John Law once described image stating that 'a depiction is never just an illustration...it is the site for the construction and depiction of social difference.'<sup>82</sup> They suggest that in visual representations we can see societal influences as well as their effects toward society.

Gender is one of the elements represented in visual images. Goffman, who analysed various

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<sup>81</sup> Stuart Hall, 'Introduction to Part III,' *Visual Culture: The Reader*, eds. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London: Sage Publication, 1999), 310.

<sup>82</sup> George Fyfe and John Low, eds., *Picturing Power: Visual Depiction and Social Relations*, (London: Routledge, 1988). Qtd. in Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 7.

advertisements, wrote in *Gender Advertisements* that 'Gender expressions are by way of being a mere show; but a considerable amount of the substance of society is enrolled in the staging of it'.<sup>83</sup> Goffman also states gender to be represented as 'the substance of society' in those advertisements. His statement can be paralleled with Fyfe and Law's claim that a visual image is a 'depiction of social differences'. As mentioned earlier, this thesis will explore the societal influences on the visual representations of the women's suffrage movement.

Goffman further claims that the gender representations contained in those advertisements also appear in performances and rituals. Judith Butler expands on this, claiming identity is constructed through performance: 'My suggestion is that the body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time'. She then explains, '[G]ender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all'.<sup>84</sup> Butler focuses on the performative side of gender showing that the relationship between gender and acts of performances is like an endless circle. Butler also considers gender to be created by the repetition of visual representations, in which performance is included. In other words, the relationship between society and visual representations is not one directional, but like an endless circle. When looking at the societal influences of the women's suffrage movement, we have to look at the interaction between society and the visual images of the movement. This perspective was ignored in Lisa Tickner's previous study of the visual representation of the women's suffrage movement. Therefore, it is one of

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<sup>83</sup> Goffman, *Gender Advertisements*, 8.

<sup>84</sup> Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,' *Theatre Journal* 40. 4, (1988): 522-23.

the aspects that will be developed in this thesis.

Tickner instead focuses on how the women's suffrage movement, as a feminist movement, was able to present a new image of women during the Edwardian period. Although she points out that the visual representations of the women's suffrage movement could not escape the dominant ideology of that period, her views are rather influenced by her feminist beliefs. However, in this thesis, we will explore the ways in which the dominant ideology was integrated with the visual representations of the women's suffrage movement, and, at the same time, it was repeated through the various visual representations that there was essentially no alteration of gender norms.

According to art critic and historian Hal Foster, when we think about the construction of visual representations, we must bear in mind 'how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein'.<sup>85</sup> How people interpret visual representations are influenced not only by the creator's will but by other aspects such as gender norms and class consciousness of the period. It is important to examine how the women's suffrage societies created the visual images of the women's suffrage movement and how they attempted to apply the dominant ideology to pacify the public.

During the British women's suffrage movement in the twentieth century, processions were used as visual representations to persuade the public to support the cause. The public were not interested in women's suffrage for the most part, and they were not a collective entity; therefore, the visual representations used in processions varied to attract the differentiated public. However, Goffman's

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<sup>85</sup> *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster (WA: Bay Press, 1988), ix.

theory that the dominant gender can be observed as a performance in visual representations is worth considering. In terms of the various visual representations used in the women's suffrage movement, the dominant gendered notion of women was evident, and it was reinterpreted according to the purpose of suffragists and suffragettes.

With regard to the women's suffrage representations, the supposed audience of the visual image included suffrage supporters as well as those members of the public who opposed the vote for women. The producers of the visual representations must have been aware they were aiming the representations at both groups—the representations should also be attractive to those opposing women's suffrage. In addition, they needed to consider to which women's suffrage societies the images belonged and where they would be presented. Visual representations varied to suit both militant and constitutional suffrage societies.

Recent studies of the women's suffrage movement have attempted to overcome organisational barriers. This study focuses on the visual representations of the movement; therefore, the WSPU, the NUWSS and the WFL are the main organisations examined in this thesis. In addition, as providers of suffrage propaganda, the Actresses' Franchise League (AFL), the Artists' Suffrage League, the Suffrage Atelier and the Women Writers' Suffrage League (WWSL) will also be discussed.

In Chapter 2, the overall history of the women's suffrage movement is explored, and the differences between the movement in the nineteenth century and the movement in the twentieth century are detailed. Subsequent chapters focus on the visual representations of the women's suffrage movement.

Chapter 3 identifies the processions used in the women's suffrage movement. The two central

societies, the WSPU and the NUWSS, held large-scale processions in London. The NUWSS, the constitutional society established in 1894, first planned the Mud March in 1907.<sup>86</sup> Following suit, in 1908, the militant WSPU began holding processions. When creating a visual representation, such as a street procession, the gaze of the audience holds the power to prevent the representations or performance from becoming too radical. It was a struggle for the suffragettes to find a balance between what they wanted to present and what the audience would accept. Tickner, in her study of women's suffrage representations, argues the essential purpose of suffrage propaganda was 'to demythologise the dominant ideology of Edwardian femininity',<sup>87</sup> but this thesis focuses on the extent to which those suffrage representations symbolised Edwardian femininity. This thesis examines the conservative aspect of the visual representations in the women's suffrage movement. It also argues that, by displaying femininity, the women's suffrage societies' processions helped to create and consolidate the notions of gender in that period.

Chapter 4 focuses on the activities of the AFL, which provided entertainment to both the militant and constitutional women's suffrage societies. The AFL engaged in annual West End performances. By analysing programmes, it is possible to determine what kind of visual propaganda the AFL used. The activities of the AFL enabled the women's suffrage movement to provide similar visual representations to the public. The repetition of AFL performances created a fixed identity for the women's suffrage movement.

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<sup>86</sup> The Mud March was conducted on 7 February 1907 by the NUWSS. Around 3,000 women gathered together and walked from Hyde Park to Exeter Hall. It rained that day, and the streets were muddy. Hence, the procession was called the Mud March.

<sup>87</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907-14*, 152.



Chapter 5 discusses the bazaars and exhibitions of the three main women's suffrage societies, the NUWSS, the WFL and the WSPU. The bazaars (also called 'exhibitions') comprised three elements: shopping, entertainment and exhibition. The hall decorations, the goods for sale, the entertainment and the exhibitions are examples of the visual propaganda used by the NUWSS, the WFL and the WSPU. Such visual propaganda can reveal the gender the suffrage societies were attempting to create as well as indicate the gender changes.

Chapter 6 explores the representation of working-class women. The women's suffrage societies, particularly the WSPU and the NUWSS, appear to have used stereotyped images of working-class women. In plays and novels, working-class women were depicted as hard-working low-wage earners who were tired and worn out. These images were repeated in the plays, novels, posters and processions of the suffrage movement. However, later in the movement, the images of working-class women changed somewhat, with the image becoming more realistic and positive immediately prior to the First World War.

This thesis highlights the visual representations used in the women's suffrage movement during the first two decades of the twentieth century as very much influenced by the dominant ideologies of gender and class of that time. Although suffrage activists were presenting new ideals for women through their activities (at the least with their visual representations), they still felt bound to conform to the traditional dominant ideologies of gender and class to persuade the public. By doing so, the women's suffrage movement repeated the dominant ideals of gender and class that were preventing women from obtaining the vote. This seems to support the commonly held idea that that the sphere of women expanded because of the women's war effort during the First World War and not because of the

women's suffrage movement. However, this was not the case. Prior to the war, a new type of femininity appeared in the visual representations of the women's suffrage movement, namely the modern relationship between work and women. The wartime image of women at work did not suddenly appear during the war. The visual representations of the women's suffrage movement used in this thesis will present women's rational attitudes toward work and the widening of women's active sphere.

Visual representations of the movement will also show both traditional, conservative femininity and a newer, more modern type of femininity. By looking closely at the images used in the movement, the thesis will reveal that the women's suffrage movement combined both regressive and progressive traits, providing mixed and changing messages to the public.

## Chapter 2: History of the Women's Suffrage Movement

### 2.1 Nineteenth-Century Women's Suffrage Movement

#### 2.1.1 Early Stages

It is widely accepted by historians that the history of women's suffrage in Britain began when John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) introduced to parliament a petition signed by 1,498 women on 7 June 1866. However, this event was not the first demand for women's suffrage. During the 1830s, several people demanded the vote for women, and, in the 1840s, a Chartist woman, Anne Knight (1785–1862), established the first women's suffrage society in Britain, which happened to be in Sheffield. Nevertheless, it was not until John Stuart Mill's actions that the quest for the vote for women became a national movement (previously, the movement had been on a very small scale).<sup>1</sup>

In 1865, John Stuart Mill was invited to be the candidate for Westminster, and he made certain to include the issue of women's suffrage in his election address. When a feminist discussion group, the Kensington Society, learnt of this, they decided to support Mill's election campaign.

The Kensington Society, which later became known as the Langham Place Circle, began with a friendship between two women: Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and Bessie Rayner Parkes (1829–1925). In 1857, the two women published the *Englishwoman's Journal*, a feminist journal aiming to improve the position of women. The journal used propaganda to address a variety of women's issues and was a medium for people with similar opinions on women's education, occupations, abilities and roles in society. Supporters of the two women established the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women in 1859, an organisation dedicated to helping women find employment, which also provided a variety of other services to women.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sandra Stanley Holton, 'Women and the Vote', *Women's History: Britain, 1850-1945*, ed. June Purvis (London: Routledge, 2000[1995]), 278.

<sup>2</sup> The members of the Kensington Society, Jessie Boucheret (1825–1905) taught arithmetic and bookkeeping, and Emily Faithful (1835–1895) set up the Victoria Press at the headquarters and published the *Englishwoman's Journal*. In 1859,

In 1866, Bodichon asked Mill to introduce a women's suffrage petition to parliament. However, feminists' opinions were not always homogenous. Among the feminists who worked on the petition, there was disagreement about whether they would petition for women's suffrage for householders only or whether they would include single women. If the vote for women were granted on the same terms as the vote for men, women householders (there was ongoing debate that whether women householders included married women whose husbands owned property) would gain the vote. However, some feminists believed single women and widows, who had no males on whom to depend, needed the vote more. Despite the issue remaining unresolved, 1,498 women signed the petition.<sup>3</sup>

Feminists not only promoted the petition; they also supported other legislation put before parliament that would assist their cause. In 1867, Mill introduced to parliament his amendment to the Reform Bill (a Bill to expand the electorate of the House of Commons). Mill attempted to have the word 'man' replaced by the word 'people' in the Second Reform Bill. The matter was argued in parliament and, had Mill's amendment been passed, women property owners would have been granted the vote. Although no concrete outcome was achieved, the women's suffrage movement was further strengthened.

The first women's suffrage society, the Manchester Committee for the Enfranchisement of Women (est. 1867), was established in Manchester, four months before Mill introduced his amendment to parliament. Jacob Bright (1821–1899), the younger brother of John Bright (1811–1889) (a major force behind the repeal of the Corn Law), and his wife Ursula Bright (1835–1915) supported the society, which later changed its name to Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage. The first secretary of the society, Lydia Becker (1827–1890), led both the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage as well as the National Society for Women's Suffrage (an united organization of Manchester, London and Edinburgh societies).<sup>4</sup>

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they moved to 19 Langham Place, and renamed the society the Langham Place Circle. See Kawamura Sadae, *Igirisu Kinndai Feminizumu Unndo No Jyoseizō (Women in Modern British Feminist Movement)*, (Tokyo: Akashi Shotenn, 2001), 58-59; Barbara Caine, *English Feminism 1780-1980*), 93-102.

<sup>3</sup> Strachey, *'The Cause': A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain*, 104-105.

<sup>4</sup> Lydia Becker led the nineteenth-century women's suffrage movement for almost twenty years. In both the anti-slavery and Anti-corn Law movements, middle-class women provided background support. Lydia Becker was an example of

Victorian ideology about how women should behave made it difficult for suffragists to promote their movement. Strachey, an observer of the movement, wrote, ‘drawing room meetings were alarming enough’.<sup>5</sup> In particular, public meetings proved to be rather challenging for the middle-class feminists. In April 1868, the Manchester National Society for Women’s Suffrage held a public meeting at the Free Trade Hall in central Manchester. It was said to be the first women’s suffrage meeting in Britain. Strachey described how even the ‘intrepid’ Becker felt nervous, because it was not common for women to speak in public.<sup>6</sup>

The movement was soon to reach London, the capital. A public meeting was held in London the following year at the Gallery of the Architectural Society in Conduit Street, attended by Mill, Henry Fawcett (1833–1884), Charles Kingsley (1819–1875) and Millicent Garrett Fawcett (see Figure 2-1), who spoke in front of the audience for the first time and who would later become one of the leaders of the twentieth-century women’s suffrage movement. Mrs Peter Taylor (1810–1908), wife of the Liberal MP for Leicester, chaired the meeting. Because a woman chaired the meeting, it was ‘another startling novelty’ at that time. In addition, it was extremely unusual for both men and women to give speeches at a mixed-gender meeting. Historians Liddington and Norris claim, that from this moment, it became the norm for women to speak at public meetings.<sup>7</sup>

Liddington and Norris also comment, ‘[T]he early suffragists were possibly too respectable’. They did not organise mass demonstrations or processions. Liddington and Norris say ‘more discreet methods’ were taken.<sup>8</sup> Their methods were largely limited to the organisation of petitions, drawing-room meetings at the homes of local prominent people, and build support for the women’s suffrage. In a letter to John Bright in 1869, Becker wrote, ‘We cannot hope for immediate, perhaps not even for speedy, success. ...

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such a woman; she organised lectures and drawing-room meetings, she wrote to newspapers and wrote articles for journals and published leaflets and tracts. See Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 63-70. The Manchester Committee for the Enfranchisement of Women joined the National Society for Women’s Suffrage on 6 Nov 1867, and changed its name.

<sup>5</sup> Ray Strachey, *The Cause: A Short History of the Women’s Movement in Great Britain*, 118.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>7</sup> Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 67-68 and 118.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 67.

We have to tread the path that the other causes of progress have done before us—the Anti-Corn Law League, the Reform Movement’.<sup>9</sup> In both movements, women worked behind the scenes, for example, organising fund raising bazaars and lobbying MPs. Becker seemed to have wondered those subtle actions might not be effective for the cause; however, at the same time, she was not willing to adopt more radical methods. From this excerpt, it is apparent that notions of acceptable women’s behaviour were clearly gendered ideals.

### 2.1.2 Towards the Fin de Siècle

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the women’s movement came to deal with a new social problem, which was discussed in women’s journals as well as in national papers—the problem of ‘surplus women’. Women outnumbered men, which meant there would be women who would not marry. Therefore, suitable professions for middle-class women were also discussed. During these years, women’s suffrage was not the only issue addressed by the Langham Place Circle. A founder of Girton College (est. 1869), which later became part of the University of Cambridge, Emily Davies worked to promote women’s education with Barbara Bodichon, who was the co-founder of the college, and one of the earliest woman doctors, Elizabeth Garrett (1836–1917), who worked to obtain qualifications for women doctors in the 1870s and 1880s.

The first division among suffrage activists occurred in 1871. This was associated with another social problem of concern to women: the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act. Those feminists who supported the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act tried to insist that women’s physical bodies were the concern of women. In 1869, the municipal franchise was extended to women, and, in 1870, women were able to serve on local school boards. Thus, women were given the opportunity to venture into the political sphere.<sup>10</sup> In the 1870s, the Manchester National Society for Women’s Suffrage was not the only women’s suffrage society, but it was probably the most active. Radical–Liberal suffragists (supporters of the vote for married women) living in the Manchester region supported the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act,

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<sup>9</sup> Letter from Lydia Becker to Jacob Bright written in 1869. Qtd. in *Ibid.*, 67–68.

<sup>10</sup> Holton, ‘Women and the Vote,’ 280–81.

enacted in the 1860s to help prevent venereal disease.<sup>11</sup> While the Radical–Liberal suffragists in the Manchester area (supporters of Josephine Butler, a leading force in the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act) sought to repeal the Contagious Diseases Act, Mill and some women’s suffrage supporters in London thought it unwise to link women’s suffrage to the repeal. The conflict within the London Society of the National Society for Women’s Suffrage escalated, with supporters of the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act forming a Central Committee of the National Society for Women’s Suffrage (Becker went on to work at the Central Committee from 1881).

The nineteenth-century women’s suffrage movement then faced another crisis. Jacob Bright, who had supported the Central Committee of the National Society for Women’s Suffrage and the Manchester National Society for Women’s Suffrage, lost his seat in the 1874 election, and William Forsyth (1812–1899), a Conservative Party MP, presented an amendment to the Women’s Suffrage Bill. His proposal was to add a clause which excluded married woman to vote in a parliamentary election. It was a proposal to add ‘a statutory disability to the existing common law disability’.<sup>12</sup> Initially, Becker did not agree with Forsyth: ‘I earnestly hope Mr. Forsyth does not wish to alter the wording of our Bill. ... We should limit ourselves strictly to the disabilities of *sex* and leave the marriage question alone’.<sup>13</sup> However, eventually she complied. The Radical–Liberal suffragists were outraged by her decision, which created conflict within the Manchester National Society for Women’s Suffrage.

Consequently, in 1879, the society decided to organise all the women who had votes in municipal elections to claim the same right in national elections, the area in which Lydia Becker was involved. Organisers initially thought that most women were satisfied with the votes for municipal elections, but to the surprise of society members, national elections appeared to be a more important issue to working

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<sup>11</sup> The law was applied to naval ports and garrison towns. Women who lived in certain areas could be labelled and registered as a ‘prostitute’, as decided by the police. The ‘prostitute’ would then be subjected to inspections by doctors, and if they refused, they were sent to prison.

<sup>12</sup> Constance Rover, *Women’s Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain, 1866-1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), 21.

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Lydia Becker to Mr. Eastwick, 4 March 1874. Qtd. in *Ibid.*, 21. Even though married women were barred from the national election, Becker thought that it was ‘unwise’ to put it into words.

women. When the society organised a public meeting about the issue, the Free Trade Hall in Manchester was filled to capacity. The secretary to the London National Society for Women's Suffrage attended the meeting and described the event: 'The largest hall in the city, packed from floor to ceiling with women of all ranks and occupations, working women in very large proportions. Men were only present as spectators, and that in the galleries by payment of half-a crown'.<sup>14</sup>

The earlier confusion in Manchester was typical of the whole women's suffrage movement at the time. There were too many causes for feminists to support, from women's education, women's work, legislation of Married Women's Property Act to the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act. By the 1880s, the women's suffrage movement had lost the support of those women who had chosen to move on to supporting various political parties. With the enactment of the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act in 1883, which prohibited payment to political campaigners, political parties enlisted the help of women as volunteers. Subsidiary societies to the political parties were also established. In 1885, the Conservative Party organised the Primrose League, a subsidiary society of women, and in 1887, the Liberal Party established the Women's Liberal Federation. '[T]o help our husbands' was the justification.<sup>15</sup> Women with a desire to be involved in politics were able to satisfy that desire in these organisations, and women's suffrage lost its appeal to a degree. Consequently, the women's suffrage movement dwindled.

At the same time, the women's suffrage movement sought links externally and made connections with supporters of women's suffrage in the socialist movement. The socialist movement underwent a period of expansion in Britain during the 1880s and 1890s. The Social Democratic Federation (est. 1881), the Fabian Society (est. 1884) and the Independent Labour Party (ILP) (est. 1893) accepted women's membership, and individuals such as Keir Hardie, a founder of the ILP, and Fabian dramatist George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) faithfully supported the women's suffrage movement into the twentieth century. Many socialist and labour women gained experience of public speaking and organising demonstrations by involving themselves with the movement, and some of them went into the women's suffrage movement in the twentieth century. In 1884, the Women's Co-operative Guild, an organisation in

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<sup>14</sup> Qtd. in Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 66-67.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.



favour of the cause, was established with an exclusive focus on the issues affecting working-class women. In 1886, the Women's Protective and Provident League (est. 1874) changed its name to the Women's Trade Union League. They were concerned with the working conditions of working-class women, in particular, the protective legislation concerning labour.<sup>16</sup>

Historians have suggested the existence of a division between those middle-class women interested in politics, according to which political party they supported. Similarly, feminists who supported women's suffrage were divided. In 1884, the Reform Bill was again discussed in parliament. William Ewart Gladstone (1809–1898), the Liberal prime minister at the time, opposed women's suffrage in any form, albeit the women's suffrage movement were demanding the vote for unmarried women and widows only. At that time, Irish home rule was a major political issue, and the Liberal Party was divided on the issue. Suffragists were also experiencing division, and in the late 1880s, this led to a split within the Central Committee of National Society for Women's Suffrage; the Central National Society for Women's Suffrage (est. 1888) was formed by Liberal women who wanted to change the rules of the National Society for Women's Suffrage and affiliate with the Liberal Party. In contrast, Liberal Unionists such as Millicent Garrett Fawcett, continued to favour the Conservatives and remained in the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage.<sup>17</sup>

Re-organisation of the women's suffrage movement continued. In 1889, Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy (1833–1918) established a new suffrage group called the Women's Franchise League (est. 1889), which aimed to include married women in the right to vote. Emmeline Pankhurst (see Figure 2-2), who later became the leader of the WSPU (est. 1903), joined the society with her husband, Richard Pankhurst (1834–1898). Ursula Bright, an early supporter of Becker, also joined. In Manchester, inclusion of

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<sup>16</sup> Protective legislation was thought to prevent women from competing in the labour market, and Liberal women also believed it encroached on individual liberty. Thus, there was much opposition to the legislation. June Hannam, 'Women and Politics', *Women's History: Britain, 1850-1945*, ed. June Purvis (London: Routledge, 2000[1995]), 223-24.

<sup>17</sup> Unlike the Liberal women, the Conservative women were able to separate women's suffrage and party politics. The Primrose League, an organisation whose aims were to promote Conservative principles, stated in their constitution that affiliation with other organisations was prohibited. See Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866–1928*, 102.

working-class women into the women's suffrage movement began in earnest.<sup>18</sup>

During the 1890s, Esther Roper (1868–1938) and Eva Gore Booth (1870–1926) began to include working-class women in their promotion of the suffrage movement. The former Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage became a society called the North of England Society of Women's Suffrage (est. 1897), which worked with the NUWSS (est. 1897) during the later stage of the twentieth-century movement.<sup>19</sup>

Overall, the late nineteenth century was a period of confusion within and re-organisation of the women's suffrage movement. The key organisations were established in this period. Although there were conflicts, particularly among those who placed precedence on issues other than women's suffrage, the re-networking with other social movements enriched the movement and created a foundation for the women's suffrage movement to flourish in the twentieth century.

## 2.2 Twentieth-Century Women's Suffrage Movement: The NUWSS, WSPU and WFL

### 2.2.1 Development of Visual Propaganda: 1903–1911

The crucial difference between the nineteenth- and twentieth-century women's suffrage movements was the scale of the movements. In addition, the fight for women's suffrage was the only cause for feminists in the early twentieth century, while in the nineteenth century there had been many causes for which to fight. Moreover, in the twentieth century, the women's suffrage movement took on a new, crucial aspect that had not been part of the nineteenth-century movement: violence.

The women's suffrage movement of the early twentieth century was notorious because of its militancy (the violent acts of women suffrage activists in their bid to gain the right to vote). Militant

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<sup>18</sup> See Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us* for the involvement of the working-class women in the movement.

<sup>19</sup> The NUWSS was another central suffrage society which was active in the twentieth-century women's suffrage movement. In 1897 a number of long-established nineteenth-century women's suffrage societies, two London societies and 18 local branches, merged to form the NUWSS—Millicent Garrett Fawcett was the elected president. She had been involved with the women's suffrage movement from its inception. Between 1907 and 1910, NUWSS membership increased to more than 50,000. Leslie Parker Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, 1897-1914* (New York: Garland, 1982), 161.

activities were first used by the WSPU, established in Manchester in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst, the widow of Richard Pankhurst, a Liberal MP and a founder of the National Society for Women's Suffrage and the Women's Franchise League.

The WSPU's aim was focused solely on gaining the vote for women. In its earliest days, WSPU enjoyed an alliance with the ILP because the WSPU founders, Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst (see Figure 2-3), were members of the Manchester ILP.<sup>20</sup> The ILP supported the WSPU and appeared to have a close relationship with and attract working-class women such as Annie Kenney (1879–1953) and Hannah Mitchell (1871–1956).<sup>21</sup> Soon Christabel Pankhurst became sceptical of the ILP and in 1903 commented, '[S]omeday when they are in power, and have nothing better to do, they will give women votes as a finishing touch to their arrangements'. She continued, '[W]orking men are as unjust to women as are those of other classes'.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the WSPU began to move away from the labour movement and began to develop its own policy of militancy.

This stance continued, even after the ILP became part of the newly formed Labour Party (est. 1906). Their militant tactics, with attacks on both Liberal and Labour Party candidates, drove the Labour Party away from the WSPU. The ideology of the WSPU appeared to be so strongly connected with militancy that they were more concentrated on performance rather than on developing a line of argument against women's oppression.<sup>23</sup> Christabel Pankhurst wanted to concentrate on the cause that

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<sup>20</sup> Prior to the WSPU's notoriety for their militancy, the union had connections with the labour movement. The very first WSPU members were also members of the ILP in Manchester (where many working-class women were actively involved in local politics).

<sup>21</sup> From around 1906 the goals of the WSPU and the ILP gradually drew apart. The ILP sought adult suffrage, but the WSPU wanted to concentrate on women's suffrage alone. Women were their only concern because the exclusion on the grounds of sex could never be altered by individual efforts, while the property-based exclusion could be overcome by gaining property. Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty*, 44.

<sup>22</sup> Qtd. in Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty*, 45.

<sup>23</sup> The WSPU's aim was to achieve 'votes for women on the same terms as they are possessed by men' through militancy. Because the organisation concentrated on women's enfranchisement, the issue of class division was considered unimportant by the WSPU. Emmeline Pankhurst suggested that the vote was better fought by 'the fortunate ones', indicating the WSPU's 'elitist policy'. Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty*, 46 and 53.

‘constitution-making, conference-holding, and committee-electing’ struck her as ‘incongruous’.<sup>24</sup> Emmeline and Christabel were often described as ‘autocrats’ leading the organisation like an army asking the members to just follow their lead.

How did militancy start? Initially, the militancy was not extreme. Christabel Pankhurst and Kenney carried out the first militant act in 1905. They interrupted a meeting attended by Liberal politician Edward Grey (1862–1933) in Manchester by asking the famous question, ‘Will the Liberal government give women the vote?’, and were duly arrested. Because the two women would not agree to pay the fine, they were imprisoned. It attracted the attention of the press. This incident established a pattern for the WSPU, with many WSPU activists attempting to be arrested by interrupting political meetings.<sup>25</sup> The *Daily Mirror*, the largest selling national newspaper of the time, coined the term ‘suffragette’ in reference to the activists who promoted militancy, and the term has been used ever since.<sup>26</sup>

Did this new focus on militancy create a new vision of women as powerful women? This was not particularly so. Militancy certainly did influence changes in the notion of femininity, because it broadened the understanding of women’s physical capabilities.<sup>27</sup> Women were observed to endure imprisonment, hunger strikes and forcible feeding. The public witnessed these activities and the delegations, processions, literature and public speaking, all of which ‘enable[d] [women] to enter the male

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<sup>24</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 81.

<sup>25</sup> In 1909, Marion Wallace Dunlop, a member of the WSPU and painter, started hunger strike while she was in a prison. The government responded by forcible feeding, a treatment which often physically harmed suffragettes. As a result, militancy escalated. Suffragettes started window smashing campaign around 1910. On 18 November 1910, the WSPU sent about 300 delegates to the House of Commons, and about 200 women were assaulted by the police. The press criticised the government, and it was later called the Black Friday. In 1911, the WSPU called for a truce hoping that the Conciliation Bill would be passed into a law. When the Bill failed, the WSPU resumed the militancy. On 15 December 1911, the first pillar box was fired by Emily Wilding Davison. On 1 March 1912, 150 suffragettes smashed windows in the West End. The amount of damage totalled £6,600. The militancy reached its peak in 1913. On February, Lloyd George’s house at Walton Heath was bombed, and Mrs Pankhurst was arrested for the crime and sentenced to three year’s penal servitude. From January 1914 to the outbreak of the First World War, there were 107 arsons and eleven mutilations of works of art by the suffragettes. Sophia A. van Wingerden, *The Women’s Suffrage Movement in Britain, 1866-1928*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), X-XIX.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Suffragette’, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933).

<sup>27</sup> Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women’s Liberty*, 49.

political world'.<sup>28</sup> Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence (see Figure 2-4), treasurer of the WSPU, Christabel Pankhurst and other contributors to *Votes for Women*, such as poet Laurence Housman (1865–1959), explained the need for women to have the vote in connection with the justification of women's 'pre-dominant roles'.<sup>29</sup> Housman agreed women's natural roles were in the domestic sphere, but militant women were forced to abandon their womanliness to fight for the right to vote, because this fight would not be easy to accomplish:

Many women are hugging to their hearts a domestic peace which they have not earned, and it is sometimes, I think, as a salve to their uneasy consciences that they blame as 'unwomanly' those who have renounced their peace and the comfortable conventions which are so pleasant and easy to observe, because in no other way can this great battle for the fulfilment of womanhood be won.<sup>30</sup>

The traditional notions of womanhood continued to be applied to those militant women of the WSPU.

Similarly, the WSPU approved of women's 'natural' roles, but according to historian Les Garner, the WSPU emphasised sex inequalities. The vote was an answer to the oppression of women. Therefore, the WSPU put their efforts into activities rather than into the development of an argument. Holton claims the journal *Votes for Women* was essentially 'a campaign bulletin'.<sup>31</sup> Eva Slawson, a lower-middle-class girl, comments in her diary, 'I notice the militant suffragettes so seldom discuss the fundamentals of

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<sup>28</sup> June Purvis, 'The Prison Experiences of the Suffragettes in Edwardian Britain,' *Women's History Review* 4.1 (1995): 105. Imprisonment was considered a part of the WSPU activities, and suffragettes did not hesitate to go to prison. Purvis suggests that imprisonment was not only an individual experience but also a collective experience for suffragettes. The fact that they had suffered imprisonment together formed and united the suffragettes under the cause. Andrew Rosen claims, 'the majority of suffragette prisoners were single rather than married women', though, according to Purvis, 'it is difficult to quantify the number'. Andrew Rosen, *Rise up, Women! : The Militant Campaign of the Women's Social and Political Union, 1903-1914* (London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 122; Purvis, 'The Prison Experiences of the Suffragettes in Edwardian Britain,' 114.

<sup>29</sup> Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty*, 50.

<sup>30</sup> Laurence Housman, 'What is Womanly?', *Votes for Women*, 31 December 1908: 229.

<sup>31</sup> Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 43.

progress amongst women—it is always “the vote””.<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, defining the identity of women did not progress any further within the WSPU because its efforts were concentrated on its activities. However, visual representations, the focus of this thesis, did show the changing nature of women’s identity, as explored in the following chapters.

Meanwhile, the WSPU was moving towards a dictatorial society. On 10 September 1907, Emmeline Pankhurst asserted her dictatorial stance by cancelling the WSPU annual conference, proceeding with the election of a new committee and drawing up a new constitution.<sup>33</sup> This triggered the formation of another organisation that used violence as a tool: the WFL, which was formed in 1907. The WFL was formed by WSPU members who could not accept the dictatorial manner of the WSPU leaders. The WFL, like the WSPU, promoted militancy, but the WFL allowed its members to choose their own method of protest. Scotland-born philanthropist, Charlotte Despard (1844–1939) became the president of the WFL.

The WFL was a more democratic organisation than Emmeline Pankhurst’s autocratic WSPU. Unlike the WSPU, the aims of the WFL were not concentrated solely on the vote for women. This is indicated by the name of the organisation itself, as they chose the ‘Women’s Freedom League’ rather than the ‘Women’s Franchise League’, which had existed in the nineteenth century. In *The Vote*, an organ of the WFL, the maternal role was accepted as a woman’s ‘natural’ domestic role. In a series of articles titled ‘Suffragette at Home’, the WFL’s activists, such as Edith How-Martyn (1875–1954), Alison Neilans (1884–1942), Lillian Martha Hicks (1853–1924) and Agnes Leonard, were depicted as women who made jam, cleaned the stove, bathed the baby and made dresses.<sup>34</sup> However, this did not mean all WFL members accepted the maternal role as the ‘natural’ role.<sup>35</sup> For example, WFL member Cicely Mary Hamilton (1872–1952) in *Marriage as a Trade* described marriage as a ‘choice out of economic necessity’. She considered ‘that the women were in the desperate position of selling themselves in a manner akin to

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<sup>32</sup> *Dear Girl: the Diaries and Letters of Two Working Women 1897-1917*, ed. Tierl Thompson, 174.

<sup>33</sup> Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 97.

<sup>34</sup> ‘Suffragette At Home’, series of pictures in *The Vote*, March-May, 1910.

<sup>35</sup> Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women’s Liberty*, 31.

prostitution'.<sup>36</sup> She promoted the cause against women's subjection in marriage, which, she argued, occurred when women were economically dependent on their husbands. Despard suggested a solution to the problems associated with motherhood, wifehood and economic dependence: to consider motherhood and wifehood as paid work for women.

There was confusion about gender ideals at the organisational level within the WFL. The WFL emphasised women's domesticity while claiming economic dependence on husbands within marriage was a cause of women's subordination. As with the ideology of the NUWSS, the WFL took women's domesticity for granted, but the role of wife and mother appeared to be less sacred. Despard's quest for women's household work to be paid work influenced the WFL to promote the concept of domestic work as paid work inside the home. The WFL calculated an hourly rate for domestic work based on the hourly rate for similar work performed outside the home. This move by the WFL represented a loss of sacredness. However, the rational way of thinking motherhood and domestic work had been incorporated. The feminine emotions connected to being a wife and mother, such as affection and tenderness, were less likely to be experienced when women were engaged in paid practical work. Thus, the WFL questioned the general ideology behind domestic labour: was it the most suitable work for women? For the WFL, the answer was mostly 'Yes'. Like the WSPU, the WFL did not challenge the gender role allotted to women.

The turning point of the women's suffrage movement in the early twentieth society occurred in 1906 when the headquarters of the WSPU moved to London. Christabel Pankhurst and Emmeline Pankhurst had asked Annie Kenney, a working-class woman, to 'rouse' London, and advanced her two pounds. Kenney went to the Canning Town branch in the East End of London where Minnie Baldock (1864–1954), a member of the ILP, had organised a weekly meeting for working-class women. When the WSPU decided to launch their campaign in London, they fully used their socialist connection which the Pankhursts had established during their Manchester years.<sup>37</sup> Kenney and Sylvia Pankhurst (the daughter of

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<sup>36</sup> Cicely Mary Hamilton, *Marriage as a Trade* (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1912[1909]). Claire Louise Eustance, "Daring to Be Free": The Evolution of Women's Political Identities in the Women's Freedom League 1907-1930,' Ph. D thesis, University of York, (1993), 216.

<sup>37</sup> According to Krista Cowman, in the early years, the connection between the ILP and the WSPU had played a

Emmeline Pankhurst), who was studying arts in London, scheduled a meeting and booked Caxton Hall, with a capacity of 700 people. Emmeline Pankhurst was concerned that the meeting would be a disaster with only a handful of people in the gigantic hall. However, the meeting gathered a procession of 3,000 people, including 300 women from the East End.<sup>38</sup> As the labour movement had already established the know-how of organising large audience, it was useful for the WSPU at the beginning.<sup>39</sup> Spurred on by this success, the WSPU moved its headquarters to London. Keir Hardie provided a great deal of help. He raised £300 and introduced Emmeline Pankhurst to Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, who, along with her husband, Frederick Pethick-Lawrence, provided significant financial help as well as expertise to the WSPU.<sup>40</sup>

In 1908, HH Asquith (1852–1928) succeeded Henry Campbell-Bannerman (1830–1908) as prime minister, and HY Stranger's Women's Suffrage Bill received majority of 179 votes on its second reading.<sup>41</sup> It was a remarkable progress because the previous Women's Suffrage Bill of 1907 was talked out at its second reading. The women's suffrage societies, both militant and constitutional, considered this an indication they would soon gain the vote for women. On 28 February 1908, Herbert Gladstone (1854–1930), then home secretary, referred 'to the power of the masses to convince the government of the need for women's suffrage. He said, 'Of course it cannot be expected that women can assemble in such masses, but power belongs to the masses, and through this power a Government can be influenced into more effective action than a Government will be likely to take under present conditions'.<sup>42</sup>

Around the same time, the women's suffrage societies developed a new method of propagating their ideas to the public: visual representations. The women's suffrage societies decided to show the

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crucial role in expanding the movement. However, it is a period in the history of the WSPU which has not been fully explored yet. See Krista Cowman, 'Incipient Toryism'? The Women's Social and Political Union and the Independent Labour Party, 1903–14' *History Workshop Journal*, 53 (1), 128–148.

<sup>38</sup> Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 79.

<sup>39</sup> Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 66–67.

<sup>40</sup> Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 80.

<sup>41</sup> Stranger's Women's Suffrage Bill passed its second reading, but it was referred to a committee of the whole House. See Tickner, *The Spectacle for Women*, 79.

<sup>42</sup> Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideas*, 278.



government and the public that women ‘can assemble in such masses’ (in 1907, the NUWSS had organised the Mud March, a procession of 700 women from Hyde Park Corner to Exeter Hall), with the WSPU and NUWSS holding large-scale processions (see Chapter 3 for further discussion). Visual methods were used in processions, which encouraged other visual aspects. In December 1908, the AFL was founded (see Chapter 4). Thus, the women’s suffrage movement in the twentieth century expanded their range of methods to involve the masses and continued to use these new methods until the First World War. Aspects of the visual propaganda used in the women’s suffrage movement will be discussed in the following chapters.

### 2.2.2 Before the War: 1912–1914

After the third Conciliation Bill was defeated in March 1912, the atmosphere seemed to change. The NUWSS began to seek a political alliance with the Labour Party. Some of the NUWSS leaders loyal to the Liberals were anxious, while others feared this alliance would harm the non-political status of the NUWSS.<sup>43</sup>

While the NUWSS was consolidating its alliance with the Labour Party, the WSPU, in October 1912, declared they would focus their attack on Labour Party candidates. Emmeline Pankhurst claimed this focus did not mean the WSPU opposed socialism: ‘We are not going to oppose Socialism. We are not out against Labour and Socialist ideals. It is the [Labour] [P]arty we are going to fight’.<sup>44</sup> As if to prove her statement, the WSPU started campaigning in the East End to recruit working-class women and to include representations of working-class women in the organisation’s propaganda (see Chapter 6).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The Election Fighting Fund was created, and a Labour Party executive subcommittee and NUWSS officers met on 30 April to discuss the terms of the alliance. It was agreed that the Labour Party would adopt women’s suffrage as a party policy while also maintaining their policy of adult suffrage. Even though there was some tension within the NUWSS as well as the Labour Party, the activities of the Election Fighting Fund flourished.

<sup>44</sup> Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 202.

<sup>45</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst was the major force behind the East End campaign. Despite her writing that ‘[t]he East End campaign began modestly,’ by October, the WSPU had rented a shop in Bow Road and actively promoted the cause. In November 1912, Labour MP and journalist George Lansbury resigned from parliament to once again be re-elected as a

The year 1913 saw militancy at its height, duly supported by visual effects. In April 1913, the Prisoners' Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health Act, the so-called Cat and Mouse Act, was enacted. The Act resulted in the release of suffrage prisoners who had become too ill to remain in prison for them only to be returned to prison once they had recovered. The WSPU leaders who were released under the Act tried to escape or hide from the police. In June 1913, the most famous of the WSPU's militant acts occurred. Emily Wilding Davison (1872–1913) threw herself in front of the King's horse, Anmar, at the Epsom Derby. She died a few days later, and a magnificent funeral procession portraying her as a martyr was held in London (see Chapter 3).

At the beginning of the First World War in 1914, the WSPU somewhat surprisingly abandoned their militant activities to concentrate on supporting the war effort (the WSPU announced a truce with the government). The nation was more important to them than the vote for women. As the war progressed, those left in England became more involved in the war effort. The women, left to protect their homes while their husbands were away, were given greater responsibility. As more soldiers went to battle, women were expected to replace their men in the workforce. The practical need for female labour introduced new possibilities for women in the public sphere. Not only the Pankhursts but also the NUWSS and WFL advocated for women to contribute to the war effort and to be 'worthy of citizenship'.<sup>46</sup> '[T]he woman's place, by universal consensus of opinion, is no longer the Home. It is the battlefield, the farm, the factory, the shop'.<sup>47</sup> The entire nation concentrated on the war; any expression of pacifism was considered controversial because pacifism was in opposition both with the government's policy and with popular

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women's suffrage candidate. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals*, 416. On 10 November 1912, the WSPU conducted a demonstration at Victoria Park, rallying East End women. Sylvia Pankhurst noted in *The Suffragette Movement* that 'the East End was the greatest homogeneous working-class area accessible to the House of Commons by popular demonstrations'. Qtd. in Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866–1928*, 182.

<sup>46</sup> Millicent Garrett Fawcett. Qtd. in Sheila Rowbotham, *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States* (London: Penguin, 1999[1997]), 68.

<sup>47</sup> Nina Boyle. Qtd. in Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: the Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 35.

opinion. At the beginning of the war, suffragettes and suffragists found it natural to support the government, which had previously been their enemy. They chose to put popular appeal first.

To attract the public, the women's suffrage movement at this time used visual representations. One particular form of visual representation they often used was the procession. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3: Processions and the Women's Suffrage Movement

### 3.1 Functions of Suffrage Processions

As explained in the previous chapter, the crucial difference between the women's suffrage movements of the nineteenth-century and twentieth-century was the latter's consciousness of the presence of the masses. In the nineteenth-century movement, the leaders wanted to attract the interest of only certain people within certain classes. However, the Third Reform Act of 1884 extended the franchise to the working-class male, and the political arena was no longer dominated by a handful of people. Accordingly, the women's suffrage movement in the twentieth century had to respond to the emergence of politics for the masses: the procession was a practical medium to connect the women's suffrage societies with the public.

Since the nineteenth century, the procession has been a standard tool used in protests.<sup>1</sup> Whether planned or unplanned, processions can be an effective means of appealing to the public. Men had utilised this form of protest most effectively. For example, Chartists often used processions in the 1830s and 1840s when they marched through the streets to demonstrate their political stance. In 1855, in Hyde Park, a demonstration protested the regulation of shopping and drinking hours. Again in Hyde Park, a labour demonstration in support of the Reform Bill was held in the 1860s, and in the 1880s, socialist demonstrations were held at Trafalgar Square. Based on these demonstrations, which appealed for the rights of men, by the mid-Victorian period, the word 'demonstration' had begun to mean 'collective action that came about as groups sought to apply pressure to the body politic in socially accepted, nonriotous ways'.<sup>2</sup> Procession was one form of those 'socially accepted, nonriotous' political demonstrations developed in the nineteenth century.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthias Reiss, 'Introduction,' *The Street as Stage: Protest Marches and Public Rallies since the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Matthias Reiss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Phillip Thurmond Smith, 'Riots and Demonstrations' in *The London Encyclopedia*, eds. Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hilbert (London: Macmillan, 1983), 671.

Additionally, another type of procession appeared during the nineteenth century: the prestigious procession organised by the state. These processions have social or cultural aims in addition to political aims, for example the Queen Victoria's jubilee processions, which were rituals celebrating the British monarchy and the British Empire. Historian David Cannadine relates these processions as an 'ornament' of the Empire, and historian Eric Hobsbawm explains them as the 'invention of tradition'.<sup>3</sup> With such characteristics, Jubilee parades helped to construct the framework of the British monarchy and the British Empire for the people.

Women's suffrage processions borrowed from the Labour demonstrations, using banners and brass bands. In the 1830s, when the Chartists demonstrated their demands on the streets, women participated in the processions alongside men. However, the women who walked in the Chartists' processions were not middle class. Therefore, for middle-class women, the women's suffrage processions provided their first opportunity to present themselves in the public sphere. To walk in the women's suffrage processions represented a deviation from the gender norm.

Significantly, the women's suffrage movement used pageants in their processions. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a pageant is a 'commemorative play depicting scenes from history (esp. local history), usually performed outdoors in the form of a procession in elaborate, colourful costumes', which appeared at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> The modern pageant, which became popular in the early twentieth century, was a type of historical folk play. Many of the famous pageants were organised by actors, actor-managers and sometimes artists. Although most pageants were charitable events, sometimes they were commercialised by manufacturers and retailers using the events to advertise their goods. The first modern pageant was the Sherborne Pageant of 1905 in which the local people wore historical costumes and performed scenes from history at a historical site. Historian Paul Readman states the pageant

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<sup>3</sup> David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*, (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 141; *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1992[1983]).

<sup>4</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://oed.com>, Web. Access 22 Dec 2010.

emphasised 'the continuities of past and present, a time of great change'.<sup>5</sup> According to Readman, the Edwardian pageants often focused on the past and celebrated the continuities of English history from medieval times to the Edwardian era. The same characteristics were apparent in women's suffrage processions as women wore historical costumes and played the roles of historical figures.<sup>6</sup>

As mentioned, the women's suffrage processions were demonstrations of 'collective action that came about as groups [that] sought to apply pressure to the body politic in socially accepted, nonriotous ways'.<sup>7</sup> However, they arguably had another function that carried socially and culturally conservative connotations. The processions were tools to communicate to the public not only the politics of the protesters but also their womanliness: the handmade banners, designs, dresses and flowers represented gentle femininity. This chapter will look at how the tie-in propaganda of the cause and femininity worked in the women's suffrage processions.

Both the WSPU and the NUWSS held processions in London at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>8</sup> It is widely accepted that the NUWSS Mud March in February 1907 was the first procession conducted by a women's suffrage society.<sup>9</sup>

Much of the early literature on the women's suffrage movement focuses on the societies or

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<sup>5</sup> Deborah Sugg Ryan, 'Spectacle, the Public, and the Crowd: Exhibitions and Pageants in 1908,' *The Edwardian Sense: Art, Design, and Performance in Britain, 1901-1910*, eds. Morna O'Neill and Michael Hatt (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 53. For further studies on the Edwardian pageant, see Ayako Yoshino, *Pageant Fever: Local History and Consumerism in Edwardian Era* (Tokyo: Waseda University Press, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907-14* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 56-58.

<sup>7</sup> Phillip Thurmond Smith, 'Riots and Demonstrations' in *The London Encyclopedia*, 671.

<sup>8</sup> Millicent Garrett Fawcett was the President of the NUWSS. The NUWSS conducted suffrage activities by lobbying MPs and publishing their official organ *The Common Cause*. They were impartial to any political party, but from 1912, the NUWSS formed an alliance with the Labour Party. Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866-1928*, 436-42.

<sup>9</sup> According to Sylvia Pankhurst, the WSPU organised a procession by East End women before 1906. However, it is generally considered that the Mud March of the NUWSS was the first women's suffrage procession. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1931), 252; Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866-1928*, 74.

famous figures in the movement.<sup>10</sup> Lisa Tickner's work on representations of the women's suffrage movement was published in 1987, but not until the end of the 1990s did research into the women's suffrage movement incorporate activities of an entertaining nature, that is, cultural suffrage activities such as processions, bazaars, plays and novels.<sup>11</sup>

Lisa Tickner writes there were two purposes to the suffrage societies' large-scale processions conducted in London. The first was to show the public woman from every class supported the cause, and the second was to show suffragettes were not the type of women illustrated and caricatured in the press. Tickner says the suffrage societies' use of representations aimed 'to demythologise the dominant ideology of Edwardian femininity'.<sup>12</sup> She notes *Sesame and Lilies*, written by leading English art critic John Ruskin (1819–1900) and considered an influential text during the Edwardian period, purported a woman's role was primarily in the domestic sphere. An Edwardian woman should be seen to be 'pursuing her legitimate feminine interests unscathed into the arena of public affairs'.<sup>13</sup> Ruskin believed women should be 'incorruptibly good,' and 'wise ... with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable' and, at the same time, 'she may [not] set herself above her husband'.<sup>14</sup>

Did the WSPU and NUWSS processions demythologise femininity as defined by Ruskin? By celebrating the women who entered the public sphere, the women's suffrage societies attempted 'to demythologise the dominant ideology of Edwardian femininity', according to Tickner. However, to counter the public's criticisms of their acts of militancy, the WSPU and NUWSS also needed to place the suffragettes within the gender norms of Edwardian femininity. The aim of the women's suffrage movement was to gain the vote for women; therefore, the movement attempted to integrate women into the dominant polity. There was friction between the established gender norms and the public image of suffragettes as 'unsexed harridan[s]'.<sup>15</sup> Tickner's study does not fully explain how the WSPU and

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<sup>10</sup> There are extensive studies on women's suffrage history. See Chapter 1 of this thesis.

<sup>11</sup> See Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 151–52.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 151 and 225–26.

<sup>14</sup> John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (London: Smith Elder, 1865). Qtd in Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 215.

<sup>15</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 151–52.

NUWSS attempted to overcome these conflicts through visual means. The WSPU and NUWSS representations derived from their need to counteract the negative images of suffragettes; therefore, this chapter focuses on the visual presentations they adopted using gender norms to do so. It appears the WSPU and NUWSS may not have ‘demythologise[d] the dominant ideology of Edwardian femininity’.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.2 Anti-Suffrage Imagery: Processions as a Tool to Fight against ‘Unfemininity’

Before detailing the visual representations of the WSPU and NUWSS, this section outlines the public’s perceptions at the beginning of the twentieth century of women suffragists.

Anti-suffrage imagery that spread in society during the Edwardian period was similar to the imagery of ‘new woman’ in the late nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Since the Victorian period, the magazine *Punch* had been publishing anti-feminist imagery portraying women’s suffrage activists in the nineteenth century as old, unattractive women (magazines were an influential media source of stereotyped images of feminists).

Feminist women were often depicted as ugly, old and unnatural. Figure 3-1 shows an illustration published in *Punch* of Mill escorting two women’s suffrage supporters. The two women have pointed noses and long faces, features similar to those of Mill. By portraying the suffrage activists and Mill as similar in appearance, the image emphasises the maleness of the two women. Figure 3-2 contrasts the feminists with ‘normal’ middle-class women. The illustration shows a group of ugly women banging the door that Mr Bull, an allegorical representation of Britain, is protecting. On the right, a beautiful woman with a child is looking at the activists. In illustrations, women’s suffrage activists were often depicted in contrast with feminine Victorian woman. Along with the pointed noses and long faces, spectacles and short skirts were also used to symbolise suffrage activists.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 151-52.

<sup>17</sup> ‘New woman’ is the term which appeared in the literary and journalistic scene in the middle of 1890s. Writer Sarah Grand (1854–1943) coined the term in 1894. It was used to describe women who deviated from the Victorian ideals of marriage and womanliness. New woman was intelligent, self-supporting, educated, and emancipated. In magazines, new woman was often portrayed as a mannish woman who enjoyed smoking, riding bicycle, and reading books. These acts were considered unsuitable for women.



The portrayal of feminist women as figures devoid of womanliness continued well into the twentieth century. Figure 3-3 shows an anti-suffrage postcard from 1910 promoting the stereotype of the unattractive activist. In this postcard, a suffrage activist is wearing a white hat decorated in purple, green and white, the symbolic colours of the WSPU. Her face is long, and she is wearing a short skirt of drab colours. The only colourful item in the postcard is the tricolour badge, which emphasises the lack of colour. Her figure, which lacks womanly curves, also implies her unwomanliness. *Punch* also maintained this tradition. Figure 3-4 is an illustration from *Punch* printed in June 1910. Two women, one anti-suffrage, the other pro-suffrage, are facing each other on a horse. Prime Minister Asquith is between the two. The anti-suffrage woman wears an elaborate feather-adorned hat showing her femininity whereas the pro-suffrage woman is devoid of any decoration and wears a masculine hat. Here, the pro-suffrage woman is not depicted as old. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, women's suffrage activists were depicted as devoid of womanliness and femininity.

The tradition of representing suffrage activists as ugly and old continued from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. They were continually stereotyped by images showing them to be unfeminine. When the WSPU began its militant campaign, its unwomanly image was strengthened. The Liberal government introduced forcible feeding in response to suffragettes who had begun hunger strikes in September 1909. Forcible feeding was a violent treatment. Doctors and wardresses would hold down the suffragette prisoner, and force a tube up her nostrils or down her throat. Figure 3-5 shows a postcard depicting forcible feeding with the message the public were '[f]ed-up' with suffragettes. In the postcard image, the suffragette being forcibly fed is depicted as ugly and old. She wears a blue dress with purple decorations, possibly implying one of the WSPU tricolours. The women's suffrage movement in the twentieth century had no choice but to counter this popular stereotype of 'unfemininity'.

### 3.3 Practical Reasons: Fundraising and Publicity

Table 3-1 shows various processions held by the two suffrage societies, the WSPU and NUWSS, from 1907 to 1914. Processions usually began from a particular location in London and finished at a goal site such as Exeter Hall, Albert Hall or Hyde Park. When the processions reached the end site, a meeting

was usually held. Each procession was witnessed by tens of thousands of people, either in person or via the press.

Although the great processions were merely one type of a number of activities planned by the suffrage organisations, they were the most accessible by the public because they could be watched in the streets, and people could hear a recount of the event from an eyewitness or read about them in all manners of local and national newspapers, women's magazines, and political publications especially of socialist and labour movements.

Who participated? Generally, members from diverse suffrage societies and other groups sympathetic to the suffrage cause participated in the processions. Before a demonstration was planned, organisers would circulate notices throughout the country to advertise their plans and urge people to go to London and participate in the procession. Advertisements for a London procession would begin months before the actual day. After the London procession, similar processions were performed in smaller cities. Thus, a consistency in visual representation was achieved at various locations.

To reach the wider public, suffrage organisations used newspapers and magazines to publicise processions. The suffrage magazines, such as *Votes for Women*, *The Common Cause* and *The Vote*, included articles suggesting people participate in the procession, not only by marching but also by donating money, by creating banners and flags and by helping to organise the procession. The WSPU processions included marshals who led the marchers. Meetings held in different cities to advertise the London processions were almost as important as the processions, because the meetings ensured the women's suffrage movement reached everyone, including at local levels.

The women's suffrage societies organised processions both to fundraise and to publicise their cause. The exact value of donations related to processions is not clear. However, comparing the cash statement of March 1907 to February 1908 with the cash statement of March 1908 to February 1909, the 'sale of Tickets for Meetings' of the WSPU increased from £630 18s 7d to £2,612 15s 7d. 'Collections' increased from £408 4s 9d to £2,099 0s 9d. In addition, for the Women's Sunday, the WSPU received the

‘sale of railway tickets’ amounting to £920 17s 6d.<sup>18</sup> It seems Women’s Sunday was very successful for the WSPU’s in terms of boosting funds. The processions were successful as a means of advertising the cause and collecting donations.

In the following sections, the visual characteristics of WSPU and NUWSS processions are analysed. First, let us examine the processions organised by the WSPU.

### 3.4 WSPU Processions

#### 3.4.1 Characteristics of the Processions

In 1908, the WSPU planned their first procession with those characteristics mentioned above. Asquith, who was to become a vigorous opponent of women’s suffrage, had become prime minister, replacing the Liberal Campbell-Bannerman. A women’s suffrage procession was organised because Asquith had demanded evidence most women supported the cause.<sup>19</sup>

The procession on 21 June 1908 was called Women’s Sunday and, according to *The Times*, more than 250,000 people gathered to see the procession.<sup>20</sup> Although it drew a large audience and persuaded the Liberal government of the strength of the movement, the procession failed to achieve women’s suffrage. However, this did not mean Women’s Sunday was a failure. The event gave significant exposure to the WSPU, which resulted in a considerable increase in the number of meetings held that year. According to annual reports, from March 1907 to February 1908, WSPU organised 5,000 meetings. In addition, from March 1908 to February 1909, more than 10,000 WSPU meetings were held.<sup>21</sup> Further, WSPU collected

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<sup>18</sup> ‘The National Women’s Social and Political Union Cash Statement’, Mar 1907-Feb 1908 in *The Second Annual Report of the WSPU*; ‘The National Women’s Social and Political Union Cash Statement’, Mar 1908-Feb 1909 in *The Third Annual Report of the WSPU*. The value of £1 in 1909 is about £81.30 in 2012, 1s is about £4.07, and 1d is about £0.34. See Measuring Worth Com. <http://measuringworth.com/index.php>. Web. Access 13 Oct 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 95.

<sup>20</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 96.

<sup>21</sup> Women’s Social and Political Union, *Second Annual Report of the Women’s Social and Political Union* (1908), 4; Women’s Social and Political Union, *Third Annual Report of the Women’s Social and Political Union* (1909), 9.

£20,000 between March 1908 and February 1909, more than double the sum collected the previous year.<sup>22</sup>

The processions generally concluded with a large meeting, and the WSPU was financially dependent on the donations collected during these meetings.<sup>23</sup>

When organising women's suffrage processions, the WSPU cooperated with the London police. In 1908, WSPU donated to both the Police Orphanage and the Police Relief Fund as tokens of appreciation for police cooperation.<sup>24</sup> In photographs of the procession, police can be seen standing to the side, ready to protect the suffragette marchers from spectators. Although the police and the WSPU appeared to be at odds over acts of militancy, on these occasions they worked with each other.

The WSPU held five women's suffrage processions: one in 1908, two in 1910, and one in each of 1911 and 1913. The WSPU did not hold a large-scale procession in 1909, but instead held the Women's Exhibition at the Prince's Skating Rink in Knightsbridge, London. In May, 1911, the Women's Suffrage Bill, drafted by the Conciliation Committee, a committee of members of parliament from various political parties who supported the cause, passed its second reading, and women's suffrage seemed suddenly closer to becoming reality. When this measure failed, the WSPU intensified its militancy. In 1913, the police raided the WSPU's headquarters and, in response, militancy escalated until the outbreak of the First World War, when the WSPU interrupted their activities to support the government's war efforts.

#### 3.4.1.1 Visual Characteristic 1: Femininity Symbolised by Colours

The strategic use of colours was significant in WSPU processions. The organisation used colour and flowers to represent femininity in its processions, a touch praised by major newspapers such as *The Times*, even though they continued to criticise the WSPU's militancy. As its militancy escalated, the WSPU's processions became more organised and standardised. *The Times* described the colourfulness of the Women's Sunday procession in 1908:

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<sup>22</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals*, 222.

<sup>23</sup> Ethel Smyth, *Female Pipings in Eden* (London: Peter Davies, 1933), 199.

<sup>24</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 95.

At the head of each procession was carried a flag of purple, white, and green—the colours of the National Women’s Social and Political Union—and after that ‘the regimental colours,’ so to speak—a beautiful silk banner, also in purple, white, and green with artistic embroidery and symbolical devices. Each group again marched under a banner of its own, and every woman walking in the procession wore the purple, white, and green, either in favours pinned to breast, or in trimmings of the hat, in belt ribbons, or in shoulder sashes. Many of the ladies’ costumes were designed in an arrangement of purple, white, and green, white frocks being the general wear.<sup>25</sup>

The WSPU’s colours were not only attractive but also conveyed meaning: purple symbolised dignity, white purity, and green hope.<sup>26</sup> In Western nations, purple often meant justice, and sometimes wisdom. The colour white was connected to women’s purity, chastity and temperance, and green symbolised youth or joy, as well as hope. Green was also considered a womanly colour.<sup>27</sup> The tricolour of the WSPU conveyed Edwardian femininity in terms of purity, chastity, temperance and wisdom. The meanings conveyed by the colours were also intended to defend the suffragettes’ militancy by representing suffragettes as youthful, pure and chaste, who conducted their militancy with dignity, justice and hope.

The tricolour of purple, white and green was used extensively in banners, badges, belts, ribbons and dresses. Seven hundred banners were prepared for this occasion, and the tricolour was promoted in advertisements as the ‘colour schemes’ of the event. From that moment, purple, white and green were used at every WSPU activity and thus became the signature of the WSPU that almost everyone recognized. For instance, Annie Kenney, who was a working-class organiser in the WSPU, published her memoirs with the WSPU tricolour reproduced on the front cover (see Figure 3-6).<sup>28</sup> The WSPU had already disbanded by the time Kenney’s book was published, but the power of the tricolour was still evident—it was firmly established as a symbol of the WSPU. Images of the tricolour created a powerful connection to the WSPU

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<sup>25</sup> *The Times*, 22 June 1908: 9.

<sup>26</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 265.

<sup>27</sup> Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1974).

<sup>28</sup> Annie Kenney, *Memories of a Militant* (London: E. Arnold, 1924).

in people's minds. A WSPU annual report declared the use of colours 'proved a very attractive means of stimulating the "esprit" of members and of propagating the movement'.<sup>29</sup> By 1910, a march called 'Chorus of the Purple, White, and Green March' was composed and used in the processions.<sup>30</sup> The colours helped to establish the identity of the WSPU.<sup>31</sup>

Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, treasurer for WSPU, proposed the tricolour idea. She chose those particular colours to rival the NUWSS tricolour of red, white and green, which had been promoted in a procession held a week before.<sup>32</sup> It is possible the colour red—often associated with blood, war and revolution—was considered unsuitable by the WSPU who wanted colours that would offset its militant public image.<sup>33</sup>

Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence with her lawyer husband Frederick Pethick-Lawrence contributed funds and time to the WSPU until their separation from the organisation in 1912. The couple was responsible for the organisation of the Women's Sunday procession in 1908, and Emmeline organised the WSPU's entertainment activities, which were separate from the militant actions.<sup>34</sup> In her memoirs, Kenney wrote of Emmeline, 'Her love of pageantry, her passion for colour and music introduced into the Movement a lighter, freer, and gayer side'.<sup>35</sup>

Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence was raised to be a typical Victorian woman, educated at a day school and then later at a finishing school.<sup>36</sup> Emmeline herself wrote, 'I wish I could impress on every mind as deeply as I feel myself the importance of *popularizing the colours* in every way open to us. If every

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<sup>29</sup> The National Women's Social and Political Union, *Third Annual Report of the Women's Social and Political Union*, 1908-1909, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Anon., 'Chorus of the Purple, White, and Green March', *Votes for Women*, 3 June 1910: 585.

<sup>31</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 93.

<sup>32</sup> Jill Liddington, *Rebel Girls: Their Fight for the Vote* (London: Virago, 2006), 187.

<sup>33</sup> Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery. The Common Cause*, the official organ of the NUWSS, announced that the colours of the NUWSS were the same as the colours of Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882) who contributed to the unification of Italy. Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 264.

<sup>34</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 95.

<sup>35</sup> Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 76.

<sup>36</sup> Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, *My Part in a Changing World* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938), 58.

individual woman in this union would do her part, the colours would become the reigning fashion. And strange as it may seem, nothing would so help to popularize the Women's Social and Political Union,' and as she predicted, the tricolour became the embodiment of the WSPU.<sup>37</sup>

Bodily adornment, such as necklaces and brooches, were also made in colours. The famous jeweller Mappin & Webb (est. 1774), who was granted a Royal Warrant in 1897, advertised its suffragette jewellery in *Votes for Women* (see Figure 3-7). The brooches were apparently for affluent upper-middle-class women because they were made of gold, emeralds, pearls and amethysts. Upper-middle-class supporters of the WSPU could fashionably display their allegiance to the cause. For Mappin & Webb, promoting the WSPU was not likely their concern. As a commercial enterprise, the way they represented the WSPU in their jewellery designs was very subtle.

However, private designers such as Ernestine Mills (1870–c.1940), ex-student of the Slade School of Fine Art and a member of the Fabian Women's Group, crafted suffrage jewellery whose designs more blatantly represent the cause.<sup>38</sup> She used not only the symbol colours, but also symbolic motifs of the women's suffrage organisations in her designs. Figure 3-8 shows a shield-shaped brooch in WSPU colours. Mills, who joined the WSPU in 1907, also supported the NUWSS and designed a brooch incorporating the NUWSS symbol of a red rose (see Figure 3-9). Her designs were apparently influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement. Women wore such jewellery to identify themselves as members of the WSPU or other suffrage societies.<sup>39</sup>

The tricolours of the WSPU were promoted through goods produced by the organisation. Various tricoloured items were prepared and sold at shops and bazaars. The tricolour ribbon could be purchased at the Women's Press, a shop managed by the WSPU. There were two types of ribbon of different widths,

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<sup>37</sup> *Votes for Women*, 18 June 1908: 249. Italics are used in the original text.

<sup>38</sup> John Paul Copper (1869–1933), arts and crafts designer, is also known to have made jewellery in the WSPU colours. Irene Cockcroft and Susan Croft, *Art, Theatre and Women's Suffrage* (Twickenham: Aurora Metro Publications Ltd., 2010), 94.

<sup>39</sup> For the study of suffrage jewellery, see Elizabeth Goring, *Suffragette Jewellery in Britain*, Decorative Arts Society 1850 to the Present: Omnium Gatherum, a Collection of Papers (2002).

and badges with ribbons attached could be purchased for 1d.<sup>40</sup> In 1908, when *Votes for Women* announced tricolour scarves would be on sale at popular retailers, they were sold out before the procession had begun. The tricolours of purple, white and green, along with the slogan, 'Votes for Women', were printed on scarves made from Japanese silk (see Figure 3-10).<sup>41</sup> In 1909, *Votes for Women* announced fashionable tricolour dresses and hats could be purchased at prominent retailers, such as William Owen in Westbourne Grove, and urged women when buying new clothes and hats to 'buy them in purple, white, or green'.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the tricolour of the WSPU was firmly established as a symbol of the organisation within a year of the Women's Sunday event. The alliance between the WSPU and prominent retailers continued, further consolidating the WSPU identity (see Figure 3-11).<sup>43</sup>

The tricolour of the WSPU was later adopted by the Women's Political Union (est.1910), suffrage organisation in New York. Harriet Stanton Blatch (1856–1940), a daughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) and a founder of the organisation, had been active in the women's suffrage movement in England since 1887, and was also a member of the Fabian Society. Coming to England with her English husband, she was close to the Pankhursts. Even though she returned to the US in 1902, she supported them, and later in 1910, organised the first women's suffrage procession in New York, which was greatly influenced by the representations of the WSPU.<sup>44</sup>

In *What 80 Million Women Want*, an American film produced in 1913 with the help of the Women's Political Union, it is possible to see the closeness and the similarities between the visual images used by the WSPU and the Women's Political Union. In the film, both Emmeline Pankhurst and Blatch appear (see Figure 3-12). The main character, Mabel West, a suffragette, has a fiancée, a young lawyer called Travers. He is opposed to her suffrage activities. One day, Boss Kelly, a political leader and an opponent of the women's suffrage, asked Travers to be on his payroll. He refuses, but when he defences a

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<sup>40</sup> *Votes for Women*, 4 June 1908: 210.

<sup>41</sup> *Votes for Women*, 11 June 1908: 228.

<sup>42</sup> *Votes for Women*, 23 April 1909: 588.

<sup>43</sup> *Votes for Women*, 9 June 1911: 604.

<sup>44</sup> Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866-1928*, 63-64.



young man called Arthur, who is hit by Boss Kelly's car, they lose the case because Boss Kelly has bought off the district attorney. Realised of his power, Travers agrees to follow Boss Kelly, but soon, Mabel finds out. Found out by Mabel, he decides to tell Kelly that he is no longer available. After Travers leaves the room, Arthur comes and shoots Kelly. Mistakenly, Travers is arrested. Mabel and Boss Kelly's secretary, who is a spy sent from the Women's Political Union, accumulate some evidence and prove his innocence. Within the story, there were several scenes of suffrage activities inserted in the film such as open-air meeting and suffrage procession. Inside the office of the Women's Political Union, there is a tricoloured banner with 'Votes for Women' inscription, which is almost a copy of the banners of the WSPU.<sup>45</sup>

There were also scenes of suffrage procession in NY. Banners are used, which are also tricoloured, and its orderliness and militaristic aspect of the procession reminds us of the procession of the WSPU (see Figure 3-14), which will be covered later in the chapter. Despite these similarities, WSPU banners are more artistic compared to the banners used by the Women's Political Union. Banners by the Women's Political Union are rather simple with only letters like 'Justice' on them.<sup>46</sup> This difference occurred probably because of the existence of artists and designers influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain and a lack of them in the US. In Britain, names of the designers and artists involved in the Arts and Crafts movement were often listed as patrons or the members of the advisory board of the bazaars conducted by the women's suffrage societies (see Chapter 5).

As mentioned above, the tricolour was also used in banners. Several WSPU banners remain intact today, unlike the NUWSS banners. A banner originating from the Hammersmith branch and used in 1910 is coloured purple, white and green, and is appliquéd with images of a hammer and a horseshoe, symbols of blacksmithing (see Figure 3-15). The name of the suburb, Hammersmith, is clearly printed on the banner, and purple is used to effect. Irises, which appear on both sides, not only add feminine characteristics to the banner but also connect the WSPU with wisdom and faith. Through their skill with handcrafts, the women projected their femininity to the spectators.

SJ Stephenson, a member of the WSPU, acted as chief marshal in the procession of 1910. She

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<sup>45</sup> 'What 80 Million Women Want' Telavista, DVD, 25 April 2006[1913].

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

participated in the procession from Paddington to Hyde Park and noted the experience in her unpublished autobiography:

We were all very beautifully garbed that day in purple, white and green. . . . A white lacy muslin dress, white shoes and stockings and gloves, and, like an order, across the breast, the broad band in purple, white and green emblazoned 'Votes for Women', a white shady hat trimmed with white May. <sup>47</sup>

Stephenson's attire was probably a fashion ideal for suffragettes as determined by Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence. It is apparent from Stephenson's account, she purchased her clothes from a milliner. Of the remaining photographs documenting the processions, many show the fashionable suffragettes dressed in white. Suffragette in white dress was an image typically used in advertisements and posters by the movement. Figure 3-16 shows a poster designed in 1909 by Hilda Dallas (1878–1958), a member of the WSPU who was educated at the Slade School of Fine Art from 1910 to 1911 and later at the New Art School in Logan Place, Kensington.<sup>48</sup> The poster displays a suffragette wearing a white dress, purple belt and green bonnet and carrying the WSPU's official slogan, *Votes for Women*. The WSPU tricolour is used in the background (see Figure 3-16); the white dress as well as the tricolour signified a suffragette. The young woman is placed in a natural setting.

The *Daily Mail* reported the Women's Sunday procession of 18 June 1908 would be an 'Army of White Frocks'.<sup>49</sup> The colour white, introduced in the procession, was to play an important role later in the movement. During the processions of 1910 and 1911, the colour white came to have further meaning: innocence and purity. In the 1910 procession, Pageant of Prisoners, a march of the suffragette prisoners

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<sup>47</sup> S.J. Stephenson, Manuscripts Autobiography of S. J. Stephenson in the Suffragette Fellowship Collection, reel 4, 62.179, Museum of London.

<sup>48</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 244. According to the *International Studio*, the New Art School, which was directed by Mr John Hassall, R.I. (1868–1948), gave special attention 'to the training of students as designers of posters and in black-and-white work for the press and advertising purposes.' *International Studio: An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art*, Vol.34, (New York: New York Offices of the International Studio, 1908): 259.

<sup>49</sup> 'Suffrage Sunday', *Daily Mail*, 16 June 1908.

was included in the procession.<sup>50</sup> Hunger strikes had been adopted by the WPSU as a means of agitation in 1909, and the Liberal government introduced the practice of forcible feeding in September 1909. The WSPU led protest meetings denouncing forcible feeding and referring to the practice as torture. The WSPU accelerated its militancy and, perhaps in response to the rise of the women's suffrage movement, the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage formed in 1910. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, *Punch* published an illustration of Prime Minister Asquith moving in confusion between pro-suffrage and anti-suffrage women (see Figure 3-4).

Public resentment towards suffragettes was rife. *The Times* printed a letter from a 'woman' who wrote, 'Is it not a pity to describe the suffragists who are from time to time summoned for disorderly conduct, obstructing the police, &c., as "political prisoners"? . . . They have no right to be called "political prisoners"'.<sup>51</sup> Such criticism of the militancy of suffragettes grew stronger during this period. People judged suffragettes who overstepped boundaries of femininity by conducting militant acts much harsher than they judged men who overstepped boundaries of manliness. In February 1910, when the Conciliation Committee of members of parliament representing all parties was formed to propose a woman's suffrage Bill, the WSPU officially postponed its programme of militancy while the Bill was drafted. Instead, it organised two large demonstrations that year in London.

The WSPU had high expectations for the two 1910 processions. It needed both to rouse the public to support the Conciliation Bill and to alleviate public censure of its militancy. It wanted to convey the femininity of the suffragettes and persuade the public that suffragettes were not so different from 'ordinary' women. To achieve these purposes, the Pageant of Prisoners was included in the procession of 1910.

The colour white played an important role in the Pageant of Prisoners. White represented purity 'in public as well as private life'.<sup>52</sup> Figure 3-17 shows a procession with suffragettes dressed in white,

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<sup>50</sup> In *Votes for Women*, 'the Pageant of Prisoners' was also mentioned as 'Prisoners' Pageant'. *Votes for Women*, 6 May 1910: 513; 17 June 1910: 606.

<sup>51</sup> *The Times*, n.d., newspaper cuttings in Maude Arncliffe Sennett Collection, Volume 3, 54, British Library.

<sup>52</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 294.

under a banner declaring 'From Prison to Citizenship'. A woman in a Grecian costume steps out through a doorway of a prison cell, which might symbolise women's freedom. The banner was designed by Laurence Housman, poet, illustrator and founder of the Suffrage Atelier (est. 1908), a suffrage organisation interested in the Arts and Crafts movement. The colour white symbolised the purity of their femininity, which could not be tarnished, even in prison. Aside from wearing white dresses, the suffragettes decorated their hats with colourful flowers. In addition, the colour white reproduced well in monochrome photographs. The images of suffragette prisoners published in newspapers and periodicals might have failed to negate readers' assumptions of suffragettes as 'unwomanly', but they certainly entertained and fascinated the readers.

The colour white, the light summery fabrics, the flowers adorning hats, and the bouquets held by the suffragettes were all considered visualisations of femininity. As quoted earlier, SJ Stephenson, who participated in the procession of 1910, commented, 'My milliner and dressmaker took endless pains with my attire'.<sup>53</sup>

Many newspaper articles reported of suffragette processions displaying various colours. Henry Nevinston (1856–1941), a journalist and WSPU supporter, described the university graduates dressed in bright red gowns as 'gay with every variety of colour and design'.<sup>54</sup> A Japanese journalist Nyoze Kann Hasegawa (1875–1969) travelled to London in 1910 and witnessed the procession on 18 June 1910. He describes a group of children, from 12 to 18 years of age, wearing white dresses and yellow hats. In the middle of the group, was a carriage covered with white and led by two horses. A woman wearing a blue prison dress sat on the carriage, surrounded by children in Grecian costume.<sup>55</sup> With no corsets to confine the women's bodies, the Grecian costumes allowed freedom of movement, symbolising women's freedom.

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<sup>53</sup> S. J. Stephenson, Manuscripts Autobiography of S. J. Stephenson in the Suffragette Fellowship Collection, reel 4, 62.179, Museum of London.

<sup>54</sup> H. W. Nevinston, 'An Impression', *Votes for Women*, 24 June 1910: 629.

<sup>55</sup> Nyoze Kann Hasegawa, *London! London?* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shotenn, 1996), 388.

### 3.4.1.2 Visual Characteristic 2: Femininity through Militant Order

The beauty of the WSPU procession not only derived from femininity, but was also due largely to the organised visual appearances reminiscent of military marches. Newspaper articles published in *The Times* praised the orderliness and the skilfulness with which the processions were ‘organize[d]’.<sup>56</sup> Christabel Pankhurst writes in her autobiography, ‘The WSPU was organised and led in much the same way as the Salvation Army under General Booth’.<sup>57</sup> She goes on to describe how Flora Drummond (1878–1949), a ‘general’ in the army of suffragettes, led a procession in her olive-green costume as if she were leading an army.<sup>58</sup> Figure 3-18 shows a photo of Drummond wearing a militaristic costume. The costume is in the WSPU tricolour, and the horsewhip she is holding suggests strength and control. In the Women’s Coronation Procession of 1911, a woman dressed as the warrior Joan of Arc, with armour and lance, led the procession astride a white horse (see Figure 3-19). The WSPU wanted to visually emphasise its militancy as disciplined and restrained. It was not barbaric, but civilised and beautiful. The beauty of the procession was created by the ultimate in order.

Militaristic aspects were not incorporated into the earliest processions. It was a gradual process. As can be observed in the photograph in 1908 shown in Figure 3-20, the women’s costumes were not unified, and the procession lines were not straight. It does not appear to have been as well organised as claimed in *The Times*, particularly when compared with photographs from the June 1910 procession. Figure 3-21 shows suffragette prisoners and the WSPU Drum and Fife Band composed of WSPU members. The band, which was established in 1909, led the Pageant of Prisoners in the procession of 1910. The band members, who wore purple, white and green costumes (again their symbolic colours), were trained by military non-commissioned officers.<sup>59</sup>

Other than the WSPU Drum and Fife Band, a further 40 bands participated on 18 June 1910. Japanese journalist Hasegawa, who worked for Osaka Asahi Newspaper Co. from 1908, observed the

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<sup>56</sup> *The Times*, 22 June 1908: 9.

<sup>57</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 83.

<sup>58</sup> *Daily Express*, 25 July 1910, newspaper cutting in Maude Arncliffe Sennett Collection, Vol.11, 33, British Library,

<sup>59</sup> *Votes for Women*, 21 May 1909.

procession. He claimed that the Drum and Fife Band was positioned between the women's groups to 'adhere to army regulations'. He said when the music could not be heard, the lines of the procession tended to be rather disorderly. Music was important for infusing the processions with a militaristic style.<sup>60</sup>

The instructions to the members were also militaristic. The 23 July processions began in East and West London and ended in Hyde Park. Housman and the actress and stage producer, Edith Craig (1861–1947), designed the West London procession, while painter Marion Wallace Dunlop (1864–1942) and sculptor Edith Elizabeth Downing (1857–1931) designed the East London procession.<sup>61</sup> The Pageant of Prisoners was a focal point in the West London procession. Instructions for participants, 'Hints for the Procession: To every Member of the W.S.P.U.' was published in an article in *Votes for Women*. The introduction of regulations indicates the WSPU's intention to control not only the visual representations of the processions but also the members themselves. There were 10 instructions listed under 'Don't!' and 11 instructions under 'Do!':

Don't!

Don't wear gowns that have to be held up.

Don't wear enormous hats that block the view.

Don't be later than 3 o'clock in joining the Procession.

Don't leave the ranks once you have taken your place.

Don't look behind once the Procession has started.

Don't wave handkerchiefs.

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<sup>60</sup> Hasegawa, *London! London?*, 385–86. La Marseillaise, music related to the French Revolution, was often played in the WSPU processions. Florence Macaulay (1862–1945) wrote new lyrics to the song, and it was called 'The Women's Marseillaise'. Another popular music was 'The March of the Women', a marching song, composed by Ethel Smyth in 1911. It was played at the Women's Coronation Procession by the bands of the NUWSS. Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866–1928*, 363 and 640–42.

<sup>61</sup> Marion Wallace Dunlop was born in Scotland and studied at the Slade School of Fine Art. She exhibited her painting at the Royal Academy in 1903. She was a member of the Fabian Women's Group from 1906 to 1913 and became involved in the WSPU around 1908. Edith Elizabeth Downing was born in Cardiff and studied at the South Kensington School and the Slade School of Fine Art. She first exhibited her work at the Royal Academy in 1892. She joined the Central Society for Women's Suffrage in 1903, but later became involved in the activities of the WSPU. See *Ibid.*, 171–72, 178–79.

Don't break lines.

Don't break step.

Don't forget that you are out to be seen, not to see.

Don't try therefore to see the Procession.

Don't think of yourself but of the Union.

Do!

Do wear white if possible.

Do in any case keep to the colours.

Do let your gown clear the ground.

Do wear a small hat.

Do come early. Take up your place five abreast in the Procession and remain in it, thus assisting the Marshals.

Do keep line. Remember the outside left marcher is responsible for keeping pace, and everyone must see that left shoulder is in line with the right shoulder of the neighbour on the left.

Do keep step with the marcher on the left.

Do march eyes front, like a soldier in the ranks.

Do remember that you are just a unit in a great whole.

Do realise that upon each individual rests the responsibility of securing the complete perfection of the entire pageant.<sup>62</sup>

The instructions covered everything from one's dress to one's thoughts. Each individual was asked to behave in the procession as part of a whole. The instructions reveal the intention of the WSPU to

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<sup>62</sup> *Votes for Women*, 15 July 1910: 681. 'Hints for the Procession' was printed on the AFL's leaflet which instructs the members how to prepare for the Women's Coronation Procession in 1911. It also instructs the members to wear the ALF colours, pink and green, and purchase scout poles with 'a large bunch of "Dorothy Perkins" roses' on top. See AFL leaflet, 'Great Procession of Women, Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1911', (1911) in Maude Arncliffe Sennett Collection, British Library.

control both the visual characteristics and the mindset of the marchers.

The control of the visual characteristics reached its zenith at the procession for Davison's funeral in 1913. Davison, a university graduate and WSPU member, threw herself in front of the King's horse Anmar at the Epsom Derby. This incident is often referred to as the representative militant act of the WSPU. Davison's death produced a negative response to the cause. Few people considered Davison's action as 'a rational expression of women's political aspirations'.<sup>63</sup> To counter the negative responses, the WSPU organised a funeral procession, planned to the smallest detail: the visual representations were an attempt to manipulate the public.

The funeral procession was divided into 11 sections: A to K. Section A consisted of two women leading the procession; a person carrying a cross; a clergyman; three lines of girls wearing white dresses, each holding a wreath; a purple banner; and 12 lines of girls wearing white dresses, again holding wreaths. Section B consisted of London members of the WSPU wearing black dresses and carrying purple irises. Section C comprised women wearing purple dresses and carrying red peonies. Section D consisted of women wearing white dresses and carrying Madonna lilies. Section E incorporated a banner, hunger strikers, a carriage decorated in wreaths, clergymen, a second banner, personal friends of Davison, the coffin, her relatives, a third banner, further hunger-strikers, Emmeline Pankhurst, a carriage decorated with wreaths, a final banner, WSPU members, women doctors, and university graduates dressed in academic robes. Brass bands were positioned between the sections, and each woman wore a two-inch black band on her left arm.

The visual effects, particularly of the colours, were carefully devised, and the line of the procession was neatly ordered. Figure 3-22 shows how the smallest details of this procession were carefully planned and executed accordingly.

Mary Stocks (1891–1975), a NUWSS member and a witness to the procession, commented on the London audience who gathered to see the funeral procession:

[W]hat a strange thing the London audience is! It breaks up meetings and throws clods of earth at unoffending law-abiding National Unionists, and it turns out in its thousands,

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<sup>63</sup> Mary Stocks, *My Commonplace Book* (London: P. Davies, 1970), 66.



with its hat in its hand and tears in its eyes, to watch the funeral of the most destructive militant who ever milled.<sup>64</sup>

Likewise, another traveller, Japanese playwright Kaoru Osanai (1881–1928), who witnessed Davison's accident at the Derby, wrote about the visual effects of the procession: 'When I saw this beautiful funeral procession, I came to like Suffragettes—I no longer became just a bystander and I wanted to help this movement just like the poet Laurence Housman'.<sup>65</sup> Ordered beauty derived from the militant march had the power to capture the attention of the people. Here, feminine beauty and militancy were incorporated, creating a feminised version of military march.

### 3.5 NUWSS Processions

#### 3.5.1 Organising the NUWSS Processions

If orderliness and femininity were the essential characteristics of the WSPU processions, what were the characteristics of the NUWSS processions? Femininity was important in the NUWSS processions, but they differed from those of the WSPU in a major way: the visualisation of women's history.

At first, the only suffrage society not included in the NUWSS processions was the militant WSPU. The NUWSS attempted to distance itself from the WSPU because of conflicting tactics and the WSPU's increasing militancy. Therefore, when the NUWSS held its procession in 1908, the WSPU was not welcomed; its members were allowed to participate with one condition—they would not voice their support for militancy. Not until 1911, during the Women's Coronation Procession, did the NUWSS officially join a WSPU procession.<sup>66</sup>

The NUWSS established a Procession Committee within the society to organise various processions. The committee consisted of two members from the NUWSS, two from the London Society

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<sup>64</sup> Stocks, *My Commonplace Book*, 66-67.

<sup>65</sup> Osanai Kaoru, *Hokuou Tabi Nikki (Travel Journal of Northern Europe)* (Tokyo: Shunmyoudou, 1917), 236.

<sup>66</sup> Other suffrage societies, such as the Conservatives and Unionists' Women's Franchise League (est.1908) and the Women's Freedom League (WFL, est.1907), participated in the WSPU processions. Non-suffrage societies such as the Women's Co-operative Guild, the National Union of Women's Workers and the Fabian Women's Group participated in the processions as well.

for Women's Suffrage (LSWS) and two from the Artists' Suffrage League (est. 1907), a society that designed posters, postcards and other visual media to promote women's suffrage.<sup>67</sup>

The responsibility for the planning of the NUWSS's London processions fell largely on the Procession Committee and the LSWS. Special trains were booked, bands hired, and the Artists' Suffrage League gave their support by designing colourful banners for the occasion. Another major difference between the NUWSS and the WSPU was in the use of banners.

### 3.5.2 Visual Characteristics: Feminine Heroism Expressed in Banners

The constitutionalist NUWSS needed to distance itself from the militant WSPU. A tactic the NUWSS used to achieve this was the visual representation of famous women from history. This method honoured female heroism. By borrowing from heroines of the past to create visual representations, the NUWSS conveyed the similarities between the actions of historical heroines and those of the suffragists. Compared with the WSPU militaristic representations, the representations of the NUWSS were conservative.

Famous women from around the world, not only from Britain, featured in the NUWSS representations. There were women rulers from the United States and European countries, professional women (writers and scientists), pioneers of the women's movement, and female saints such as Joan of Arc. This visually presented an international spread of worthy women from past and present, the intention, perhaps, being to indicate the existence of powerful women, regardless of race or era. It also indicated that the NUWSS had a wider vision than did the WSPU. The autobiographies of these famous women were written, performed and displayed on procession banners. Suffrage activists attempted to link the public's memory of famous historical women to the suffrage movement, and processions were their means of enlightening them.

Suffrage activists produced pamphlets about some of the famous women represented in processions. Within the suffrage movement, both the NUWSS and the WFL (a splinter group of the WSPU, formed in 1907) published pamphlets with biographies of famous women. Millicent Garrett Fawcett,

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<sup>67</sup> National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, *NUWSS Executive Committee Minutes*, April and May 1908.

NUWSS president, wrote a biography of Joan of Arc, which was sold as a short pamphlet in 1912.<sup>68</sup> In addition, she wrote pamphlets on Mary Carpenter (1807–1877), a pioneer of women's education; Josephine Butler, a leader in the movement against the Contagious Diseases Acts; and Prudence Crandall (1803–1890), an American Quaker who fought for the right to education for African-Americans.<sup>69</sup> Marion Holmes (1867–1943), a WFL member, wrote about Josephine Butler and Florence Nightingale (1820–1910).<sup>70</sup> *The Vote*, the medium of the WFL, included articles on Nightingale and Wollstonecraft.<sup>71</sup> It is clear from such publications that famous women of the past, regardless of their politics, were used as a symbol by the women's suffrage movement.

Famous women of the past were useful representations that provided for various interpretations. Cicely Hamilton, a member of the NUWSS and the Women Writers' Suffrage League (est. 1908), wrote *A Pageant of Great Women*.<sup>72</sup> According to Hamilton, this pageant was tremendously popular among the women's suffrage societies.<sup>73</sup> It was first performed at the Scala Theatre in London in 1909, and the Suffrage Shop, located on the Strand, published the script.<sup>74</sup> The publication included photographs of the actresses who starred in the pageant as Saint Hilda (c. 614–680) and Nightingale, as well as a photograph of Ellen Terry (1847–1928), the most famous Edwardian actress of the time, who played Nance Oldfield (1683–1730) (see Figure 3-23).

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<sup>68</sup> Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *Joan of Arc* (London: National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, 1912).

<sup>69</sup> Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *Mary Carpenter: With Special Introduction*. (London: National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, 1912); Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *The American Abolitionist: Prudence Crandall and Lucretia Mott* (London: National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, 1913).

<sup>70</sup> Marion Holmes, *Josephine Butler: A Cameo Life-Sketch* (London: Women's Freedom League, 1913); Marion Holmes, *Florence Nightingale: A Cameo-Life Sketch* (London: Women's Freedom League, 1913).

<sup>71</sup> 'Miss Florence Nightingale', *The Vote*, 20 August 1910: 196-197; 'Mary Wollstonecraft', *The Vote*, 10 September, 1910: 232-233.

<sup>72</sup> The Women's Writers' Suffrage League was established in 1908 by Cicely Hamilton and Bessie Hatton.

<sup>73</sup> Cicely Mary Hamilton, *Life Errant* (London: J. M. Dent, 1935), 82. This pageant was not only popular among the NUWSS and the WFL. It was also performed at the WSPU meetings by the Actresses' Franchise League. See Chapter 4.

<sup>74</sup> *A Pageant of Great Women* was first performed in 1909 at the Scala Theatre as *A Pageant of Famous Women*. It changed its name in 1910.

The pageant included 42 famous women appearing in the categories of warriors, learned women, artists, saintly women, heroines and queens. Joan of Arc (1412–1431) was among the ‘warriors’, while Jane Austen (1775–1817), a novelist, was among the ‘learned women’. The ‘artists’ category included Sappho (c. BC650–570), an ancient Greek poet. Of course, Elizabeth I (1533–1603) was among the ‘queens’.

The plot of the pageant was simple. Three main characters, ‘Justice’, ‘Prejudice’, and ‘Woman’ led the play. ‘Woman’ appealed to ‘Justice’ for her freedom. ‘Prejudice’, who was a male character, countered ‘Woman’, listing reasons why women should not have the vote. Then, to refute ‘Prejudice’, ‘Woman’ invited the 45 historical women onto the stage. The many achievements of the famous women were provided as evidence that women’s achievements were equal to those of men. Finally, ‘Justice’ spoke:

I give thee judgement—and I judge thee worthy

To attain thy freedom. . .

This word of mine—That soul alone is free

Who sees around it never a soul enslaved

Go forth: the world is thine. . . Oh, use it well!

Thou hast an equal, not a master, now. . .<sup>75</sup>

At the end of the pamphlet are the ‘Biographical notes’, two or three sentences introducing the historical women in the play.<sup>76</sup>

As can be observed from *A Pageant of Great Women*, famous women from the past were used like a genealogy, connecting the past with the present. The reputations of those famous women were established and agreed on; therefore, it was easy for the women’s suffrage organisations to expand on them. Tickner comments, ‘The purpose of the “heroine” banners was to be celebratory, commemorative,

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<sup>75</sup> Cicely Hamilton, *A Pageant of Great Women* (London: The Suffrage Shop, 1909), 45 in *Women's Suffrage Literature*, eds. Katharine Cockin, Glenda Norquay and Sowon S. Park, vol. 3 (London: Routledge, 2007), 237.

<sup>76</sup> Hamilton, *A Pageant of Great Women*, 52–69.

inspirational, educational, and political all at once'.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, as Tickner indicates, the representations of famous women of the past were of great value to the women's suffrage societies.

The NUWSS included banners displaying famous historical women in their procession held on 13 June 1908. Mary Lowndes (1856–1929), a painter and stained-glass artist, and a founder of the Artists' Suffrage League, designed most of the suffrage banners for the NUWSS.<sup>78</sup> Lowndes, through her involvement with the Arts and Crafts movement, made banners with brilliant colours and amateur artisanship. Banners were often used in trade unions processions in the nineteenth century to present political messages. Walter Crane, a Fabian socialist and a leader of the Arts and Crafts movement, designed banners for trade unions.<sup>79</sup> With Crane's successful examples of using his socialist illustrations in banners, Lowndes followed in his footsteps.<sup>80</sup>

Unlike the trade-union banners, which were often crafted by professionals, NUWSS banners were crafted by the women members. Their level of artisanship was similar to that of women's domestic arts, which added a feminine touch to their banners. The motifs on the banners were simple. Mary Lowndes's

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<sup>77</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 69.

<sup>78</sup> Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866-1928*, 358-59. Mary Lowndes was a member of the NUWSS and the LSWS and a professional stained glass designer. She studied at the Slade School of Fine Art and produced more than 100 glass windows from the 1890s to 1920s. She became a relatively famous stained glass artist in the Arts and Crafts movement. In 1906, with Alfred Drury (1856–1944), she opened a studio called Lowndes and Drury, which became known as The Glass House. The place became the studio for the many famous stained glass artists such as Christopher Whall (1849–1924) and E. Liddal Armitage (1887–1967). Mary's expertise made her an ideal candidate to design suffrage banners. The majority of the NUWSS banners were designed by her, and they are now kept in the Mary Lowndes Collection at the Women's Library and Museum of London. Ann O' Donoghue, 'Mary Lowndes – a Brief Overview of Her Life and Work,' *The Journal of Stained Glass* Vol. XXIV (2000): 43. Images of banners designed by Mary Lowndes are available at AFDS Visual Arts [<http://www.vads.ac.uk>].

<sup>79</sup> See John Gorman, *Banner Bright: An Illustrated History of the Trade Union Banners* (Essex: Scorpion Pub.Ltd., 1986 [1973]).

<sup>80</sup> For example, Walter Crane's illustration of 'A Garland for May Day' (1895) was used in the banner of the Chelmsford branch, National Union of General Workers, and 'The Workers' Maypole' (1894) was used in the banner of the Kensal Green branch, National Union of General Workers. For Walter Crane's banner designs, see Gorman, *Banner Bright*, 168 and 178.

banner of Jenny Lind (1820–1887), a singer famous among the working class of Victorian England, is a prime example. Lind's appliqués of harps and swans were stitched onto a brilliant-pink background (see Figure 3-24), evoking her occupation for the audience.

The historical women who featured in *A Pageant of Great Women* adorned many of Lowndes' banners, which depicted the likes of Jane Austen, Queen Elizabeth I, Mary Sommerville (1780–1872), Florence Nightingale, and many more. Lowndes' banners also included the names of towns and cities, organisations and professions. Banners displaying the names of towns or cities, for example, Leeds or Hull, included symbols and phrases representing the particular town or city. Figure 3-25 shows a banner featuring the City of Leeds; the owl, which is included in the City Leeds' coat of arms, is a civic symbol of the city.

It was similar with banners bearing women's professions: the profession, such as 'scrivener' or 'shorthand writer', was written at the top of the banner, and a phrase or symbol appeared underneath (see Figure 3-26). The most notable characteristics of Lowndes' banners were probably the brilliance of colours and the feminine touches. These qualities added to the visual beauty of the processions, as evidenced in the many newspaper articles describing the banners.<sup>81</sup> In the *Sunday Times*, there appeared a sub-title 'Banners all the Way'. The author writes:

The new banners of the moment are wonderful. There seemed to be thousands of them, every fourth or fifth woman carrying something in the shape of an ensign. Many of these emblems of women's demand for liberty were exceedingly artistic, and put to shame those painfully gaudy devices which are used to emblazon the aims of fellowships merely masculine.<sup>82</sup>

James Douglas, a journalist from New York, also noted the banners:

On thirteenth of June, 1908, I saw a procession of women. It was more stately and more

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<sup>81</sup> See 'An Observer Impressions,' *Sunday Times*, 14 June 1908; 'Suffrage Day,' *Sunday Observer*, 14 June 1908, newspaper cuttings in Maude Arncliffe Sennett Collection, Vol.3, 65-67, British Library.

<sup>82</sup> 'An Observer Impressions,' *Sunday Times*, 14 June 1908, newspaper cuttings in Maude Arncliffe Sennett Collection, Vol.3, 67, British Library.

splendid and more beautiful than any procession I ever saw. When men march through the streets they carry huge banners with ugly paintings on their glazed surface. The colors are violently crude. The portraits are hideous. A banner is a lovely thing, but the banners borne by men are not lovely. They are grotesque. The women have done what the men have failed to do. They have revived the pomp and glory of the procession.<sup>83</sup>

It is apparent from both quotations that the feminine touch and visual beauty were firmly linked, enhancing each other.

Realising the design and artisanship of banners was important to the success of processions, Lowndes published a pamphlet outlining how to make banners. In 'On Banners and Banner-making,' she writes, 'Banners, however, of one sort and another have evidently become associated with the appearance of women in public life, and it seems likely that they will continue to be associated, to the great gain of our colourless streets and hitherto sober political gatherings'.<sup>84</sup> The banners designed by Lowndes depicted women's entrance into the public sphere and made colourful what would otherwise have been dull political meetings. In this way, the role of the banners could be compared to the role of women, who supplement men. This has been a classic role for women, as depicted by Jean Jacques Rousseau in *Emile*.<sup>85</sup>

Lowndes' banners were seen not only in processions but also in banner exhibitions in other cities such as Manchester and Birmingham.<sup>86</sup> Shortly before the procession of 1908, the banners were exhibited at Caxton Hall in London. The exhibition was a great success, and *The Times* declared, 'London will have a new experience; and if it be true that who wins the eye wins all, the Artists' Suffrage League will not have laboured in vain'.<sup>87</sup> However, there was also criticism of the use of NUWSS banners. In 1908, letters were published in *The Times*, including one from the great-niece of astronomer Caroline Herschel (1750–1848) who complained about the banners depicting her great-aunt and Somerville:

All who knew Mrs. Somerville (and I was among them) can testify to the great humility

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<sup>83</sup> James Douglas, *An Army with Banners* (New York: Men's League for Woman Suffrage of New York, n.d.).

<sup>84</sup> Lowndes, *On Banners and Banner Making*. Qtd in Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 262-63.

<sup>85</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Émile: or On Education*, (London: Penguin, 1991[1762]).

<sup>86</sup> *Women's Franchise*, 9 July 1908: 16; 6 August 1908: 65; 10 September 1910: 118; 26 November 1908: 254.

<sup>87</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 80.

and simplicity of mind which were her characteristics. Her work was done for work's sake, not for any wish to show what a woman could do. Such a thought would be utterly distasteful to her.<sup>88</sup>

She goes on to describe Herschel's role as helping her brother to concentrate on his study, 'not for any wish to show what a woman could do'. She mourns, 'To think that the names of these two noble women should be marched through the streets of London in such a cause as woman's suffrage is very bitter to all of us who love and revere their memories'.<sup>89</sup> The sender of this letter was clearly worried Herschel and Sommerville would be connected with the women's suffrage movement. This incident shows how the visual representations of banners could evoke concern that a misleading message might be conveyed.

What did the NUWSS expect from the representations of notable women in history? By linking women from history with women's suffrage activists, suffrage societies were presenting a visual historical representation of women. Both the NUWSS and WFL sold pamphlets that depicted famous women. Thus, the public imagined a continuous link between the famous women of the past and the women's suffrage activists, as presented in *The Illustrated London News* on 20 June 1908 in which photographs of banners designed by Lowndes and of the leaders of the women's suffrage societies were juxtaposed on the front page (see Figure 3-27).

Banners of heroines could also represent city, nation, and profession. The first of Lowndes' banners appeared in the procession on 13 June 1908 in which banners bearing the names of cities were waved above a woman representative of that city. Banners displaying the names of a university accompanied female graduates, and banners declaring a profession were held by groups of women who worked in that industry. For example, Nightingale's banner accompanied a nurse dressed in a nurse's uniform, and Austen's banner was carried by writers.

The banners of heroines also showed the international alliance among the women's suffrage societies. For instance, the banner featuring French chemist Marie Curie (1867–1934) led the French women. As Millicent Garrett Fawcett was one of the founders of the International Woman Suffrage

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<sup>88</sup> Caroline E. M. H. Gordon, 'To the Editor of The Times,' *The Times*, 13 June 1908: 9

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.



Alliance (est. 1904), the headquarters were in London. The purpose of this organisation was to construct an international society which would stimulate each other's country to achieve women's suffrage. By 1904, delegates from the US, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Denmark attended the conference.<sup>90</sup> Naturally, the NUWSS actively participated in the alliance, and the banners of the NUWSS showed its international networks. The banners of heroines offered variable representations, their symbolism dependent on the occasion.

How then, did the audience respond to those banners? An interesting letter, which was published in *The Times* in 1908, complained about foreign women, such as American and French women, being represented on banners in the NUWSS procession:

A few days ago I found a youthful adherent of the suffragist cause, industriously embroidering a woman's name on a small bannerette intended for the great occasion. Neither she nor I had ever heard of this lady before, but my devoted young friend was quite satisfied with her task, and informed me that it was the name of an 'American pioneer, now dead.'<sup>91</sup>

This implies spectators in the streets of London, as well as the suffrage activists, did not always recognise the famous women featured on the banners and did not always readily accept them. In contrast, the *Sunday Times* suggested the women in the banners were courageous women warriors by describing the use of historical women as 'an attempt to represent pictorially the Valhalla of womanhood'.<sup>92</sup> A lower-middle-class woman described her experience of seeing a banner featuring Charlotte Bronte (1816–1855) carried in the streets of London in the NUWSS procession in 1908. She enjoyed the procession greatly as a form of entertainment and wrote in her diary: 'Took bus to Charing Cross—saw "Votes for Women" procession—a really marvellous sight. Thousands upon thousands of women, carrying small

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<sup>90</sup> Crawford, *The Women's Movement: A Reference Guide 1866-1928*, 301.

<sup>91</sup> E. M. Thompson, 'To the Editor of The Times,' *The Times*, 13 June 1908: 9.

<sup>92</sup> 'An Observer's Impressions,' *Sunday Times*, 14 June 1908 in Maude Arncliffe Sennett Collection, Vol.3, 67, British Library. Valhalla appears in Scandinavian Mythology. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English*, it is 'a palace which heroes killed in battle were believed to feast with Odin for eternity.' *Oxford Dictionary of English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

banners and large—some exceedingly beautiful’.<sup>93</sup> It seemed that the women’s suffrage banners enhanced the entertaining aspect of the processions.

### 3.6 The Women’s Coronation Procession

According to Christabel Pankhurst, 1911 ‘beg[a]n in so much hope’.<sup>94</sup> A private member’s Bill, which was introduced by Sir George Kemp (1866–1945), a Liberal member of parliament and a member of the Conciliation Committee, was awaiting the second reading in May. Women’s suffrage societies decided to focus their efforts on promoting the Bill. Therefore, when the WSPU announced ‘the most imposing peaceful demonstration’ would be held,<sup>95</sup> almost every women’s suffrage society joined in the scheme, including the NUWSS. ‘Let us forget all that divides the two great societies and let us think only of the cause which unites us’, one woman wrote in the NUWSS publication *The Common Cause*.<sup>96</sup> The event was unprecedented in that visual representations of both the WSPU and the NUWSS were presented together in the Women’s Coronation Procession in 1911.

The WSPU conducted the Women’s Coronation Procession in coordination with the NUWSS. In the procession, the WSPU and NUWSS each conducted their own procession. In the WSPU contingent, every visual characteristic used in previous women’s suffrage processions was evident. ‘Order’ was represented by Drummond dressed in a militaristic costume and by Joan of Arc leading the procession astride a white horse. The Pageant of Prisoners was again replicated, emphasising the whiteness of suffragette prisoners. It was supported by the West End retailers, such as William Owen, which advertised ‘White Attire for Processional Wear’ in *Votes for Women* listing items from ‘daintily white blouses’ to ‘smart coat & skirt’.<sup>97</sup> After the Pageant of Prisoners came a historical pageant, which was ‘artistic’ as

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<sup>93</sup> *Dear Girl: the Diaries and Letters of Two Working Women 1897-1917*, ed. Tierl Thompson (London: The Women's Press, 1987), 118.

<sup>94</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 171.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>96</sup> I. O. Ford, *The Common Cause*, 27 Apr 1911: 47.

<sup>97</sup> *Votes for Women*, 9 June 1911: 595.

well as 'instructive'.<sup>98</sup>

The historical pageant, which had previously been a major characteristic of the NUWSS procession, was incorporated into the WSPU contingent. However, it differed slightly from the NUWSS pageant in that the WSPU focused on England alone. It was the NUWSS which held a cosmopolitan outlook. It was displayed in the choice of women for the NUWSS banners such as Saint Teresa of Spain (1515–1582), Saint Catherine of Siena (1347–1380) and Susan B. Anthony of America (1829–1906).

According to the paper *Votes for Women*, the WSPU tried to present a 'modern point of view' by suggesting there were modern women, who 's[a]t upon boards and committees and t[ook] an active interest in public affairs', during the early Middle Ages and the Reformation. There was Abbess Hilda, who founded a monastery at Whitby in 664, with her seven blue nuns, and there were 'women governors, custodians of castles, high sheriffs, and justices of the peace'.<sup>99</sup> The early Middle Ages and the Reformation were considered 'the Golden Age of English history'.<sup>100</sup> Downing, the sculptor who also designed the WSPU procession in 1908, was responsible for organising the procession. The procession included another historical pageant, Pageant of the Queens, conducted by the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise League, a society established in 1908 by the Conservative and Unionist members of the NUWSS.

The various pageants, banners and costumes used in the Women's Coronation Procession brought an array of colours to the procession, emphasising the feminine character of the procession. In addition, suffrage societies other than the WSPU and the NUWSS participated, flying their own colours and banners.<sup>101</sup> The Women's Coronation Procession was combined efforts of different women's suffrage organisations, and women's labour and socialist groups such as the National Industrial and Professional Women's Suffrage Society, the Lancashire and Cheshire Women's Worker's Representation Committee,

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<sup>98</sup> 'The Women's Coronation Procession,' *Votes for Women*, 2 June 1911: 581.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> *Votes for Women* states that the early Middle Ages and the Reformation was a period that 'women gain[ed] power'. Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> The colours of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies were red, white and green. The Women's Freedom League's colours were green, white and yellow. Other assorted suffrage societies kept their own colours.

the Manchester and Salford and District Women's Trade Council, and the Fabian Women's Group.<sup>102</sup> The use of flowers and greenery, and the dresses worn by the marchers added more colour to the procession.

Another visual characteristic was prominent in the Women's Coronation Procession: representations of the British Empire. Subtle imperialist attitudes were exhibited by women contingents from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, South Africa and India, all to represent the Empire.<sup>103</sup> Figure 3-28 shows a photograph of the representatives from India wearing saris and carrying a banner with a picture of an elephant. Figure 3-29 shows a photograph of the Car Empire carrying several women. At the top of the car, two children with green bush over their heads are seated who represented East and West, while the women underneath their feet represented 'the King's dominions overseas'.<sup>104</sup> While each woman wore a garland and represented a feminised version of the Empire, they also represented England's domination over other subjects. Garlands of roses indicated England. The idea of British imperialism held by the women's suffrage societies was visually displayed in the Car Empire. Thus, representations of the Empire were brought to the fore, as were the diverse roles of women within the Empire represented visually by women from Wales, Scotland and Ireland. In addition, there were contingents of women by profession such as musicians, clerks, florists, businesswomen, teachers, gymnastic teachers, nurses and midwives, and sanitary inspectors. These were representations of the modern woman. However, these diverse professions were of the middle-class. Despite the presence of several working-class contingents, the WSPU procession lacked strong attendance by working-class women.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Organisations which participated in the Women's Coronation Procession were: CUWFA, Women's Franchise Association, New Constitutional Society for Women's Suffrage, Hastings and St. Leonards Women's Suffrage Propaganda League, Church League for Women's Suffrage, Free Church League for Women's Suffrage, Catholic Women's Suffrage Societies, Women's Writers' Suffrage League, Artists' Suffrage League, Suffrage Atelier, Women's Tax Resistance League, West Essex Women's Franchise Society, Hampstead Garden Suburb, Gymnastic Teachers' Suffrage Society, Men's Political Union for Women's Enfranchisement, Men's League for Women's Suffrage, and Men's Committee for Justice to Women.

<sup>103</sup> *Votes for Women*, 19 May 1911: 549.

<sup>104</sup> Diane Atkinson, *The Suffragettes in Pictures* (Stroud: Sutton, 1996), 114; Elizabeth Robins, *Ways Stations* (London: Hodder and Soughton, 1913), 249-51.

<sup>105</sup> *Votes for Women*, 16 June 1911: 64; 'National Demonstration in London', *Manchester Guardian*, 19 Jun 1911: 7; Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 122-33. *The Star* comments that 'the weakness of the procession' is the small number of

King George V Coronation Procession, a purely masculine procession, was conducted a few days after the Women's Coronation Procession. There were many people came 'from all the ends of the Empire' to see the King's Coronation Procession.<sup>106</sup> Compared with the masculine representations of the Empire displayed in George V's Coronation Procession, the Women's Coronation Procession was extremely feminine. Representations of the Empire and femininity were representations that the public accepted without reservation.

The procession was even filmed. The newsreel was shown at the several cinematograph theatres around the country. *Votes for Women* advertised that it was available at Camberwell Green, and on 20, 21, and 22 July at Romilly Hill, Barry. In addition to that, Oswald Stoll (1866–1942), a British theatre manager and the co-founder of the Stoll Moss Theatre Group, decided to show it at the Coliseum because of 'a very large number of requests'.<sup>107</sup> The representations of the procession were repeatedly propagated not only through newspapers but also through newsreels.

Unlike newsreels, newspapers relied more on words to describe the procession. Various national newspapers praised the visual effect of the procession. *The Times*, the *Daily Chronicle*, the *Daily Graphic*, and the *Daily News*, all major national newspapers, praised the beauty and the size of the procession. The *Daily Mail* reported the procession as having the power to change the public image of suffragettes and suffragists:

No Suffragette Procession has ever approached this in picturesqueness, variety, size, and significance. The views of Londoners about votes for women may or may not have

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working-class women, and to appeal more to the public, 'this serious flaw' should be fixed. 'What We Think', *The Star*, 19 June 1911. Presence of working-class women in the processions will be dealt in Chapter 5.

<sup>106</sup> 'Women's Suffrage: National Demonstration in London', *Manchester Guardian*, 19 June 1911:7.

<sup>107</sup> 'Pictures of the Procession', *Votes for Women*, 7 July 1911, 662; 'At the Cinematograph Theatres', *Votes for Women*, 14 July 1911, 673. It was even suggested in the *Common Cause* that the cinematograph of the procession was shown at the following theatres of the Electric Palaces Co: Marble Arch, Thornton Heath, Clapham Common, Notting Hill Gate, Lewisham, Cricklewood, Stoke Newington, King Street Hammersmith Highgate and Rye Lane Peckham. The magazine even suggested applying for the show as the Electric Palaces Limited would show the cinematograph 'in any town'. 'Cinematograph of the Procession', *The Common Cause*, 29 June 1911: 213.

changed, but it is certain that their attitude towards the women who demand the franchise has undergone alteration.<sup>108</sup>

Various local newspapers such as the *Birmingham Daily Mail*, the *Liverpool Courier* and the *Yorkshire Post* also acknowledged the effort of the women's suffrage societies.<sup>109</sup> However, *The New Age*, edited by Alfred Orage (1873–1934) and partly funded by Shaw, criticised the weakening of the movement:

The only obvious respect in which the annual function of the Women's procession through the streets of London differed this year from last year was in size. ... As a demonstration of the money and leisure at the disposal of women the exhibition was impressive; but we are bound to add that, in our opinion, the spirit both of the processional women and of the crowds of spectators through whom they passed was distinctly feebler than last year.<sup>110</sup>

The article even criticised that the 'lowering fighting tone' of the movement: 'The Suffrage movement, whatever may be said of the Suffrage itself, is dying of dullness'. To *The New Age*, which was familiar with the new artistic movement in Europe, the Women's Coronation Procession may have seemed rather uninspiring and anachronistic, for the paper claimed the diminishing spirit could be seen in 'the sameness, not to say the monotony, of the methods and phrases now employed'.<sup>111</sup> There was nothing new in the visual characteristics of the procession.

The Women's Coronation Procession was not considered a failure by most newspapers at the time who praised the efforts, but neither was it considered a success. One of the reasons may be the lack of novelty that Orage pointed out. Using the representations of the nostalgic past in the processions became a strength as well as a weakness for the women's suffrage societies. Also, the Women's Suffrage Bill pass the second reading in 1911, but the government decided against giving facilities for the Bill, so the procession was not able to achieve the goal. At the Women's Coronation Procession, by emphasising the

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<sup>108</sup> Qtd. in *Votes for Women*, 23 June 1911: 632.

<sup>109</sup> *Votes for Women*, 30 June 1911: 641.

<sup>110</sup> *The New Age*, 22 June 1911: 170-71.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

British Empire and using historical women of the past, the women's suffrage movement added a conservative image to the cause while emphasising traditional gender norms. As far as the WPSU was concerned, the only remaining option available was militancy. The organisation escalated its degree of violence, and in 1913, Emily Wilding Davison threw herself in front of the King's horse at Derby.

Processions led by the WSPU prior to the outbreak of the First World War were a means of communications between the suffrage societies and the public. The public experienced the women's suffrage movement as a form of entertainment. In the processions, the WSPU used the dresses adorning the women's bodies and flowers and colours to represent femininity visually. It took advantage of visual gender differences; in other words, visual representations were chosen based on the premise that the public gaze was the masculine gaze. As the militancy of the women's suffrage movement escalated, it became increasingly difficult to justify to the public the movement's use of violence. Therefore, the WSPU adopted orderliness, a militaristic framework, into the processions and stage-managed the events to incorporate femininity within that framework.

In so doing, the WSPU gave the public a plausible explanation for their acts of militancy. By presenting femininity within a framework of orderliness, the WSPU provided a way for the public to understand militancy from a militaristic framework familiar throughout society prior to the outbreak of the First World War. The NUWSS attempted to represent, visually, a continuance of the past into the present, a method described by Hobsbawm as 'the invention of tradition'. According to Hobsbawm, the purpose of the invention of tradition is to integrate the public, to justify authority and to convey a value system.<sup>112</sup> In other words, the invention of tradition has a conservative element, which maintains and justifies the present system. This conservative element was not in conflict with the policies of the NUWSS, as it had previously attempted to fight for the cause using a method established by the political protesters of the nineteenth century.

In the Women's Coronation Procession, visual representations of the WSPU and the NUWSS were combined. However, their propaganda was not sufficiently persuasive to convince the government.

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<sup>112</sup> Eric Hobsbawm 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', 10-11 in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger.

As *The New Age* criticised, visual propaganda of the suffrage societies were a little out-of-date and timeworn as visual representations; that is, they were not in accordance with the trends in Europe such as the Russian avant-garde. Therefore, although the Women's Coronation Procession entertained the public, its propaganda was perhaps not as effective as they wished.

In the women's suffrage movement processions, pageants were used to provide certain theatrical images. Those theatrical elements were repeatedly used in the annual processions, and through repetition, they constructed an identity for the women's suffrage societies. It was not only in the processions that the visual propaganda was conveyed but also in plays performed in theatres.

The following chapter addresses AFL, a women's suffrage organisation founded by famous actresses of the time, who lent their services to various women's suffrage societies. By providing performances to various suffrage societies in London and in the provinces, the same propaganda was communicated repeatedly, constructing and propagating certain ideas.



## Chapter 4: Actresses in Action: The Actresses' Franchise League

### 4.1 Founding of the Actresses' Franchise League (AFL)

In December 1908, the Actresses' Franchise League was launched at the Criterion Restaurant in Piccadilly Circus, London, marked by a gathering of people involved with the theatre. It attracted much attention from the theatrical world with famous figures, such as author Jerome K. Jerome (1859–1927), playwright Arthur W. Pinero (1855–1934), and actor-manager George Alexander (1858–1918), sending telegrams for the occasion.<sup>1</sup> The aims of the AFL were:

- (1) to convince members of the theatrical profession of the necessity of extending the vote to women;
- (2) to work for women's enfranchisement using educational methods; and
- (3) to assist all other Leagues whenever possible.<sup>2</sup>

Actress Gertrude Elliot (1868–1940), the wife of the famous Shakespearian actor John Forbes-Robertson (1853–1937), was a founder of the league (see Figure 4-1) along with Winifred Mayo (c.1870–1967), Sime Seruya (c.1876–1955), and Adeline Bourne (1873–1965).<sup>3</sup> The first president was Mrs Kendall (1848–1935)<sup>4</sup>; however, she soon resigned from the position. Elliot became the second president, and the AFL flourished under her guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> According to *Votes for Women*, there were 300 to 400 actors, actresses and dramatists were present. 'The Actresses' Franchise League', *Votes for Women*, 24 Dec 1908: 211.

<sup>2</sup> *The Suffrage Annual and Women's Who's Who*, ed. A. J. R. (London: Stanley Paul, 1913), 11.

<sup>3</sup> John Forbes Robertson supported women's suffrage movement even attending a meeting held by the WSPU. He insisted that 'the vote would mean the opening of the horizon for the minds of women'. *The Era*, 10 April 1909: 16.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs Kendall's stage name was Madge Robertson. According to actress Lillie Langtry (1853–1929), she was 'not only the most accomplished actress of the day, but a model of all the virtues, and the only actress at that time received in the "inner circle" of Society.' Lillie Langtry, *The Days I Knew*, (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1925), 41.

There were various women's suffrage societies active during the Edwardian period. While three major societies, the militant WSPU, the constitutional NUWSS, and the WFL (a splinter group that separated from the WSPU in 1907), led the movement, there were numerous smaller societies. Political allegiance, religious faith and women's professional lives were the basis of those societies.<sup>5</sup> Actresses and musicians, whose professions were related to the theatrical world, joined the AFL, including the famous actress Ellen Terry, whom the poet, novelist and playwright Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) once described as the 'Lady of the Lyceum'. The AFL, with its glamorous actresses, played an important role in propaganda activities.

Julia Holledge and Sheila Stowell conducted early studies on the AFL, followed by Kerry Powell and Susan Carlson, who highlighted the activities of the previously ignored women dramatists and redefined the position of women's suffrage drama in the Edwardian theatre. In Japan, scholar of English literature Hiroko Yamamoto was the first to discuss various AFL productions and argued AFL's role in the noticeable increase in women dramatists during that period. These previous studies have mainly focused on analysis of AFL dramas.<sup>6</sup> However, this chapter focuses on the contribution of AFL's activities to the suffrage cause. Due to the AFL, various women's suffrage societies were able to provide propaganda collectively. Despite the various tactics used by the suffrage societies, their propaganda activities, aided by the AFL, presented similar characteristics.

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<sup>5</sup> Women who supported the Conservative Party formed the Conservative Unionists' Franchise League, and who supported Liberal Party formed the Liberal Women's Suffrage Union (est.1913). The Church League for Women's Suffrage (est.1909) was formed by Anglican women, and Jewish women formed the Jewish League for Women's Suffrage (est.1912). There were numerous women's suffrage societies. For further details, see *The Suffrage Annual and Women's Who's Who*.

<sup>6</sup> Previous studies of the AFL is introduced in Hiroko Yamamoto, 'Igirisu Jyosei Sannseikenn Unndo To Enngeki - Jyoyuu Sannseikenn Doumei No Kessei To Katsudou (The British Women's Suffrage Movement and Plays - Formation and Activities of the Actresses' Franchise League)' *Kokugakuinn Daigaku Tochigi Tannkidaigaku Kiyou* 42 (2007): 1-4. See Julie Holledge, *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre* (London: Virago, 1981), 237-56; Vivien Gardner and Susan Rutherford, *The New Woman and Her Sisters: Feminism and Theatre 1850-1914* (New York ; London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992); Susan Carlson and Kerry Powell, 'Reimagining the Theatre: Women Playwrights of the Victorian and Edwardian Period,' *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*, ed. Kerry Powell (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2004); Katharine Cockin, *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage: The Pioneer Players, 1911-1925* (London: Palgrave, 2001).

## 4.2 Art and Propaganda

Compared with two national organisations—the militant WSPU and the constitutional NUWSS—the AFL was rather small. The 1908–1909 AFL annual report boasted 360 members. The following year, membership had increased to 550, and to 700 the year after. In two years, the AFL had doubled its membership. Supposedly, its active propaganda had produced results. The AFL had local branches in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool and Eastbourne.<sup>7</sup> Although not a major organisation, it was well known, at least in theatrical circles. When interviewed by Holledge, Jane Comfort (d.1979), an actress, said, ‘[t]he League grew and grew until nearly every actress in the business joined’.<sup>8</sup>

The AFL held performances not only at the grand West End theatres but also in public halls and private homes commissioned by the women’s suffrage societies. One of the aims of the AFL was ‘to work for women’s enfranchisement using educational methods’.<sup>9</sup> For the AFL, ‘educational methods’ and providing performances were one and the same.

According to the records held at the Women’s Library<sup>10</sup>, the AFL held annual meetings at the Criterion Restaurant (est. 1874), which was located next to the Criterion Theatre, in Piccadilly Circus and regular meetings in the East End. They gave performances when requested to do so by the local branches of the NUWSS, WSPU and WFL, as well as annual grand performances in the West End theatres.

To extend their propagandist activities, the AFL established a play department, headed by Australian-born actress Inez Bensusan (1871–1967). The play department’s role was to provide performances to various suffrage societies. According to the *AFL Annual Report of 1913 to 1914*, the AFL

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<sup>7</sup> Actresses’ Franchise League, *The AFL Annual Report*, June 1909 to June 1910 and June 1910 to June 1911 in Papers of the Actreeses’ Franchise League, 2AFL/A1/2, Women’s Library.

<sup>8</sup> Holledge, *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre*, 50.

<sup>9</sup> *The Suffrage Annual and Women’s Who’s Who*, ed. A. J. R., 11.

<sup>10</sup> The Women’s Library in London holds the annual reports of the AFL from 1908 to 1914. Papers of the Actresses’ Franchise League, 2AFL, Women’s Library.

held as many as 47 performances.<sup>11</sup> These figures indicate the AFL was dedicated to providing plays, suggesting the organisation valued the educational component of plays.

Was the AFL's perception of plays as an educational method a popular concept at the beginning of the twentieth century? Historian Raphael Samuel claims that socialism in the latter part of the nineteenth century accepted art as a means to educate and enlighten the public. However, the plays were aimed at a section of the bourgeois class who were already committed to art. Thus, the left-wing plays were not particularly concerned with politics, but rather with social consciousness.<sup>12</sup>

Leo Tolstoy's (1844–1930) *What is Art?* was an influential theory of art during that period. He explains:

Art begins when one person, with the object of joining another or others to himself in one and the same feeling, expresses that feeling by certain external indications. ... [I]t is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress towards well-being of individuals and of humanity.<sup>13</sup>

Further, Tolstoy states:

People viewing art in this way (in contradiction to the prevalent view of to-day, which regards any art as good if only it affords pleasure) considered, and consider, that art (as contrasted with speech, which need not be listened to) is so highly dangerous in its power to infect people against their wills, that mankind will lose far less by banishing all art than by tolerating each and every art.<sup>14</sup>

Tolstoy recognises the power that art has over people. This comment contains the bud of the argument that art can be used as propaganda.

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<sup>11</sup> Actresses' Franchise League, *The Secretary's Report of the Play Department, June 1913 to June 1914*, 12 in Papers of the Actresses' Franchise League, 2 AFL/A3/2, Women's Library.

<sup>12</sup> Raphael Samuel, 'Introduction: Theatre and Politics,' *Theatres of the Left 1880-1935: Workers' Theatre Movements in Britain and America*, eds. Raphael Samuel, Ewan MacColl and Stuart Cosgrove (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), xvi-xvii.

<sup>13</sup> Leo Tolstoy, *What Is Art?* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1904), 48-52.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Shaw, a Fabian socialist and a leading writer of left-wing plays, was involved in the activities of the AFL. In *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, Shaw states that Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's (1828–1906) plays represent 'conduct ... which does not conform to current ideals' and emphasised that people's behaviour could not be restricted by the ideals of the time.<sup>15</sup> Shaw must have expected that the educational effects of the plays would refute the widely held claim that Ibsen's plays were immoral.

However, the notion of art as propaganda remained unpopular during that period. On 18 July 1908, *The New Age*, whose editor, Alfred Richard Orage, was a devotee of Guild Socialism, included letters from readers regarding art and propaganda. One letter writer, Anthony Oldpate, wrote that he could not contain his 'burst of merriment' when hearing a remark that Shaw's play was propaganda.<sup>16</sup> Oldpate's letter was the beginning of a controversy that continued between readers and the magazine that continued for ten weeks. One reader claimed art could be considered one of the virtues while also containing various ideas. However, Anthony Oldpate insisted '[d]rama is, in fact, not the right medium for teaching a philosophy, not because it has never been used before, but simply because it cannot be so used at all'.<sup>17</sup> Thus, he denied even the smallest possibility that art could be used as propaganda. Another reader argued that although there may be an educational aspect to a play, using art as propaganda must not be allowed. In evaluating these various opinions, the use of art as a means of propaganda was not generally popular in 1908, when the AFL was formed.

The AFL used plays and their inherent propaganda as an educational method, prompting the critic EF Spence (1860–1932), author of *Our Stage and Its Critics*, to write in 1910, '[I]t is the woman rather than the men dramatists who appreciates the utility of the stage as a means for seeking reform'.<sup>18</sup>

The AFL was influenced by the likes of Shaw who sought New Drama. In the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, a new movement in the theatre world was emerging. It marked a shift from the familiar melodramatic plays of the period to plays such as Ibsen's *A Doll's House*,

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<sup>15</sup> George Bernard Shaw, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1994[1904]), 67.

<sup>16</sup> Anthony Oldpate, 'Art and Propaganda,' *The New Age*, 18 Jul 1908: 238.

<sup>17</sup> Anthony Oldpate, 'Art and Propaganda,' *The New Age*, 15 Aug 1908: 319.

<sup>18</sup> Edward Fordham Spence, *Our Stage and Its Critics* (La Vergne: Bibliobazaar, 2010[1910]), 110.

which presented realism. These new plays, termed 'New Drama' depicted the inequality between classes, women's issues and the rights of workers.<sup>19</sup> H Granville Barker (1877–1946) and JE Vedrenne (1867–1930) used their Court Theatre to host these new works. They abhorred any system of censorship and criticised the commercialisation of plays. The famous *Votes for Women* by Elizabeth Robins (1862–1952) was first performed at the Court Theatre in 1907. AFL members moved in the same theatrical circles as people involved with the New Drama.

Further, the actresses who performed in Shaw's plays were AFL members, and Shaw's wife Charlotte Payne-Townshend (1857–1943) was involved in the AFL.<sup>20</sup> Some actresses were married to men involved in the theatre. Actress Lila McCarthy (1875–1960) was married to Barker, and actress Sybil Thorndike (1882–1976) later married Lewis Casson (1875–1969), an actor and Fabian socialist. Thorndike clearly stated her decision to become involved in the AFL was greatly influenced by Casson. She emphasised that Casson's socialism had led him to the women's suffrage movement, and if it were not for him, she would have never have become involved in the movement.<sup>21</sup> It appears that the actresses were not unfamiliar with Fabian socialism. The great actress Terry exchanged numerous letters with Shaw, and those letters were later published in a book.<sup>22</sup> From these letters, it is clear Terry and Shaw were good friends. On one occasion, Shaw invited the actress Lena Ashwell (1872–1957) to speak at a Fabian meeting on the subject of 'The Stage as a Career for Women'.<sup>23</sup> Thus, famous Edwardian actresses had various connections with people who embraced the New Drama.

However, AFL membership went beyond famous actresses. From the unpublished autobiography

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<sup>19</sup> Cary M. Mazer, 'New Theatres for New Drama,' *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*, ed. Kerry Powell (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2008), 208.

<sup>20</sup> Actresses' Franchise League, *The Secretary's Report, June 1909 to June 1910*, 2 in Actresses' Franchise League Papers, 2/AFL/1a, Women's Library.

<sup>21</sup> Sybil Thorndike, Interview tape in 'Oral Evidence on the Suffragette and Suffragist Movements, The Brian Harrison Interviews, 1974-1981,' 8SUF/B/063, Women's Library.

<sup>22</sup> *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence*, ed. Christopher St. John (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1931).

<sup>23</sup> Lena Ashwell, *Myself a Player* (London: Michael Joseph, 1936), 184.

of the German-born actress Kitty Marion (1871–1944), it is unclear whether she associated with people such as Shaw. She appears not to have been interested in the New Drama movement followed by the theatrical world at that time. Rather, Marion was interested in the financial inequalities between men and women and in improving the working conditions of actresses.<sup>24</sup> Unlike Irene Vanbrugh (1872–1949) or Ashwell, Marion performed largely in music halls. Her sphere of performance differed from that of the famous actresses who performed in the West End theatres. Although Jane Comfort, an unknown actress when the AFL began, stressed ‘[t]he League grew and grew until nearly every actress in the business joined’<sup>25</sup>, the circumstances of Marion and the famous actresses listed as AFL vice-presidents were quite different.

#### 4.3 Request for Plays by Women's Suffrage Societies

The AFL not only gave annual performances in the West End theatres but also performed for the provincial branches of the WSPU, NUWSS and WFL. The items performed at the bazaars were often overlapped at WSPU and NUWSS bazaars (See Appendix 1). Although not all of the plays were the same, several were routinely performed. It was common to see the same actresses perform at different events. No matter whether they went to a gathering of a constitutional society or a militant society, the audience would see a similar performance.

The West End performances of the AFL attracted a range of audiences (the actual content of the performances will be discussed later in this chapter). An aim of the AFL was ‘to assist all other Leagues’, and there was often a great gathering of suffrage activists watching an AFL performance. Newspapers such as *The Times* described the displays of ‘earnestness’ from inside the West End theatres.<sup>26</sup>

What were the AFL performances like? Holledge points out that the AFL chose their programme according to which society had requested the performance. It would carefully determine the needs of that

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<sup>24</sup> Kitty Marion was a stage name. She was Katherina Maria Schafer who was born in Westphalia, Germany in 1871. She was a member of the WSPU as well as the AFL. Papers of Kitty Marion, 7KIM, Women's Library; Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866-1928*, 376.

<sup>25</sup> Holledge, *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre*, 50.

<sup>26</sup> *The Times*, 13 Nov 1909: 12.

particular suffrage society. When the WSPU requested a performance, the AFL would perform plays that justified the use of militancy, while requests from the NUWSS were met with a performance suited to its motto of suffrage for women ‘on the same terms as it was granted to men’.<sup>27</sup>

Tables 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3 show the performances requested by women’s suffrage societies, and the number of performances held in those years. Table 4-1 shows data sourced from the *AFL Annual Report of June 1909 to June 1910*. Tables 4-2 and 4-3 show information from the *Half Yearly Report of the AFL Play Department of January to June 1911* and the *AFL Annual Report of the Play Department from June 1913 to June 1914*, respectively. When comparing Tables 4-1 and 4-3, it is apparent that the performances held in 1909 to 1910 and 1913 to 1914 differed greatly. The play, *How the Vote was Won*, written by Hamilton and Christopher St John, whose real name was Christabel Marshall (1871–1960), was the most popular play of the period.

The play *How the Vote was Won* was set in the home of a lower-middle-class clerk, Horace Cole. Horace had always believed women should stay at home and the responsibility of providing for the family rested on men. One day, a woman’s suffrage society organises a strike of working women, urging them to quit their work and to go to their nearest male relative’s house to be supported by them. At the Coles’ house, the maids quit their jobs. Horace’s sister, niece, aunt and female cousin, having left their jobs, all came to Horace’s house to ask for his support. Realising it is financially impossible for him to support all these female relatives, Horace panics and is transformed into a pro-suffrage man: ‘You may depend on me—all of you—to see justice done. When you want anything done, get a man to do it! Votes for Women!’<sup>28</sup> In this play, man has a leading role, and women let a man to achieve change while controlling him behind the scene. This mild propaganda was the reason that this play was popular among suffrage societies.

The play *How the Vote was Won* was performed at the WFL Green, White and Gold Fair, held on 15 April 1909 (see Figure 4-2) and again at the WSPU Women’s Exhibition, held at Prince’s Skating Rink

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<sup>27</sup> Holledge, *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre*, 64.

<sup>28</sup> Cicely Hamilton and Christopher St. John, ‘How the Vote Was Won,’ *How the Vote Was Won and Other Suffragette Plays*, eds. Dale Spender and Carole Hayman (London: A Methuen Theatrefile, 1985), 26.



from 13 to 26 May 1909. Figure 4-2 shows a photograph published in the *Daily Mirror* of a performance of *How the Vote was Won* at the Green, White and Gold Fair. It was introduced in the advertisement that a number of well-known actor and actresses would appear.<sup>29</sup> Evidently, this play was intended to attract the public. It was also performed at the request of the NUWSS Seven Oaks branch and the London Society for Women's Suffrage.<sup>30</sup> Both constitutionalist and militant societies requested the play, which suggests its popularity.

Why was *How the Vote was Won* particularly so popular among the women's suffrage societies? The play offers only mild criticism against militancy. Horace's wife Ethel remarks, 'Horace says you'll never frighten the Government into giving you the vote. He says every broken window is a fresh nail in the coffin of women's suffrage. It is quite true. Englishmen can't be bullied.'<sup>31</sup> However, Ethel's words are the only example of criticism of militancy in the play. Ethel's sister Winifred, a suffragette, appears in the play but she is not a central character. Women's suffrage societies were aware of the mildness of the propaganda in this play, and they utilised *How the Vote was Won* because of this.

*How the Vote was Won* is an amusing comedy showing Horace's frantic worry when his many female relatives suddenly come to his house asking for his support. The attraction of the play was in its comedy, as evidenced by the *Daily Mirror*'s description of the play as 'a prophetic humorous sketch'.<sup>32</sup> In addition, the fact that criticism of militancy is minimal made it popular among suffragists and suffragettes. Holledge stated that as the AFL 'concentrated on the generalized sexual inequalities of Edwardian society',

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<sup>29</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 15 April 1909: 11

<sup>30</sup> *How the Vote was Won* was performed by the request of WFL branches in Sunderland on 10 Oct 1910, Sheffield on 15 Oct 1910, Ipswich on 20 Oct 1910, and WSPU branch in Bristol on 5 Nov 1910. See 'A Pageant of Great Women Programmes' in The Ellen Terry and Edith Craig Archive, EC-PION, D181/1/D188, British Library. The London Society for Women's Suffrage was originally called the Central Society for Women's Suffrage, and it affiliated with the NUWSS. It changed its name in 1907.

<sup>31</sup> Cicely Hamilton and Christopher St. John, *How the Vote Was Won: A Play in One Act* (London: Edith Craig, 1913), 13.

<sup>32</sup> "'How the Vote was Won': Prophetic Sketch To Be Played at Suffragette Old World Fair', *The Daily Mirror*, 15 April 1909: 11. *The Daily Mirror* commented on the play when it was performed at the WFL's Green, White, Gold Fair in 1909.

the league did not have to side with one particular group.<sup>33</sup> *How the Vote was Won* was a useful play to perform at bazaars and fairs when there was no prior knowledge of the audience and their views.

There were several other plays performed for both militant and constitutional women's suffrage societies. During 1911, the play *An Englishwoman's Home*, written by Henry Arncliffe-Sennett (c.1863–1944), enjoyed a level of popularity matching *How the Vote was Won*.<sup>34</sup> *An Englishwoman's Home* addresses the division of women's and men's work. The play is set in a cottage described as 'dingy and poor-looking'. Maria, Mrs Jenkins, is earning money by taking a lodger, Bates, into her home. She does not have time to take care of her child as well as Bates. Maria is married to John who cannot find work. Although he relies on his wife's earnings and depends on her, he thinks of women's work as 'casual labour':

YOUNG WOMAN. What does your wife think?

JOHN. Nothin'! She aint got not time to amuse 'erself wi' thinkin'.

YOUNG WOMAN. But is her work never done?

JOHN. No, never. Well, yer see, that's just it with women's work. It's what you might call casual labour, and goes on all the time.

YOUNG WOMAN. I see. Man's work is of man's life a thing apart.

JOHN. That's it! That's the difference. Men 'ave time to think imperially – women 'avent.<sup>35</sup>

The young woman had come to their house to invite Mary to a suffrage meeting. Mary goes to the meeting, leaving her home and washing. John is annoyed and leaves home to go after her. Mary comments about the home: 'Oh, of course, I am the Royal Prisoner. As this is my prison, I'd be glad for

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<sup>33</sup> Holledge, *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre*, 65.

<sup>34</sup> Henry Arncliffe-Sennett married Maud Arncliffe-Sennett in 1898. Maud was a committee member of the AFL. See Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866-1928*, 623-626.

<sup>35</sup> Henry Arncliffe-Sennett, 'An Englishwoman's Home: A Play in One Act', (London: Actresses' Franchise League, 1911) in *Literature of the Women's Suffrage Campaign in England*, ed. Carolyn Christensen Nelson (London: Broadview Press, 2004), 238-39.

you to look in sometimes. What prisoner wouldn't like to 'ear o' a league o' liberty.'<sup>36</sup>

*An Englishwoman's Home* was performed free of charge at the Bow Baths Hall in East End on 30 March 1911.<sup>37</sup> The AFL may have believed this play would be acceptable for working-class women, because it is a story of a working-class woman dealing with the hardships of everyday life. When it was performed previously in front of the East End audience, they were 'most enthusiastic all through the Programme'.<sup>38</sup> Thanks to the AFL repeatedly performing the same plays, the women's suffrage movement was able to consistently present similar propaganda. Further, the messages conveyed were not too radical. As the plays were aimed to audiences with a variety of ideas about women's suffrage, the entertaining nature of the plays was invaluable.

In 1911, it seemed that Inez Bensusan tried to show the plight of working-class women even in the film, a new source of entertainment appeared at the turn of century. There is a record that *True Womanhood*, a play written by Bensusan, was made into a film and was shown at several cinematograph theatres around the country. Bensusan herself plays the main character, a sweated worker who has to go to the workhouse because of a worthless husband. She is saved by a suffragette played by Decima Moore. It is not just about the working-class women's story. In the film, there is a scene of poster parade in which suffrage women are advertising the coming Women's Coronation Procession on 17 June 1911.<sup>39</sup> The AFL might have understood the potential of film as a medium to show exactly the same propaganda and reach the wider public. However, the stage had not completely been replaced by the film as a mass entertainment.

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<sup>36</sup> Henry Arncliffe-Sennett, 'An Englishwoman's Home: A Play in One Act' in *Literature of the Women's Suffrage Campaign in England*, 245.

<sup>37</sup> The Actresses' Franchise League, *The Half Yearly Report of Play Department, January to June 1911*, 2 in Papers of the Actresses' Franchise League, 2/AFL/A2/1, Women's Library.

<sup>38</sup> The Actresses' Franchise League, *The Secretary's Report, June 1910 to June 1911*, 5 in Papers of the Actresses' Franchise League, 2/AFL/A2/1b, Women's Library.

<sup>39</sup> The film was produced by Barker's Motion Photography and shown at cinematograph theatre in Wood Green (North London), Barry (Wales), Redhill (Surrey), and Kingston-on-Thames (South London). The WSPU kept seats for their members in the theatres and encouraged them to watch the film. The WFL also strongly encouraged the members to go to the theatres. *The Vote*, 11 June, 1911: 79; *Votes for Women*, 7 July 1911: 662; 14 July 1911: 673; 21 July 1911: 698; 'A Suffrage Play for the Cinematograph', *The Common Cause*, 15 June 1911: 178.

There is no evidence that the AFL or Bensusan promoted to make further suffrage films.

#### 4.4 Activities in the East End

A strength of the AFL was its mobility. Because of the nature of the profession, actresses could easily move to and fro, from London to country. The *AFL Annual Report of 1911 to 1912* details how AFL members were advised to create a tour list before travelling so the AFL could notify the secretaries of local branches an actress would be in their area. Actresses were asked to contact AFL local branches when they toured the countryside, which enabled them to repeat their performances for the provinces.<sup>40</sup>

The AFL's attitude was 'to assist all other Leagues'; however, maintaining this attitude proved difficult, according to Vanbrugh's autobiography, *To Tell My Story*. A popular Edwardian actress, Vanbrugh joined the AFL (and later became vice-president) assured by the secretary that 'our League was going to fight on the non-militant side'.<sup>41</sup> Vanbrugh appeared on the stage at an AFL meeting held in 1913 at the Drury Lane Theatre. Vanbrugh describes the energetic atmosphere in the auditorium, which was filled to capacity:

The meeting opened more or less quietly when, to my consternation, two speakers with militant leanings stirred up a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and shouting from an audience which I gathered must have been almost entirely composed of those in favour of any form of attack. When my turn came to speak I knew that I was bound to encounter opposition, but I had made up my mind to make my position clear and also felt in honour bound to our guests who had obviously come, as I had, under false pretences.<sup>42</sup>

As soon as she voiced her opinion on the stage, people from the audience cried, 'Why did she come?' Ashwell then appeared on the stage and stated that the AFL would continue to support the WSPU. As a result, Vanbrugh withdrew from the AFL in 1910 because she was opposed to the militancy of the WSPU.

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<sup>40</sup> The Actresses' Franchise League, *The Secretary's Report of the Actresses' Franchise League, June 1911-June 1912*, 4 in Papers of the Actresses' Franchise League, 2/AFL/A2/1, Women's Library.

<sup>41</sup> Irene Vanbrugh, *To Tell My Story* (London: Hutchinson, 1948), 83.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid..

In her autobiography, Vanbrugh writes that she was asked to form another society and lead women who opposed the WSPU.<sup>43</sup> This incident reveals that although the AFL attempted to support all suffrage societies, there were AFL members who did not approve of the AFL's support for the WSPU.

As WSPU militancy escalated, the AFL realised that the less radical propaganda, such as *How the Vote was Won*, did not correspond with reality. Therefore, performances which were popular before and after 1913 differed, as shown in Tables 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3. The AFL chose to change the direction of its activities.

From 1910, the AFL had attempted to organise and educate working-class women. As stated above, the AFL gave a free performance at the Bow Baths Hall on 30 March 1911, and sent representatives to the mass meetings held at Victoria Park on 10 November 1912 and 25 May 1913.<sup>44</sup> However, as they became absorbed in the East End work, they also started to feel the difficulty of organising working-class women. In the annual report from June 1911 to 1912, the secretary wrote, 'Latterly we have found the question of working them up a difficulty, as we must necessarily get in touch with Women's Clubs, Settlements, Doctors or Clergymen working in the East End, who are interested in this question and would help to make these Meetings known.'<sup>45</sup>

As the AFL worked in the East End, they began performing a popular duologue, *A Chat with Mrs Chicky* when they were asked to perform a play by other suffrage societies. In this duologue, Mrs Chicky, a working-class widow is the main character. The play is essentially a conversation between the charwoman Mrs Chicky and Mrs Holbrock, the sister of Mrs Chicky's master and an anti-suffragist. Mrs Holbrock is collecting signatures for an anti-suffrage petition and she has asked Mrs Chicky to sign the petition. Mrs Chicky tries to refute the claim by Mrs Holbrock that anti-suffrage is right by revealing the harsh conditions of working-class women's lives. She argues that ladies may have always got on very well

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> The Actresses' Franchise League, *The Half Yearly Report of Play Department, January 1911 to June 1911*, 2 in Papers of the Actresses' Franchise League, 2/AFL/A2/1, Women's Library; *The Secretary's Report of the Actresses' Franchise League, 1913-1914*, 7 in Papers of the Actresses' Franchise League, 2/AFL/A3/1, Women's Library.

<sup>45</sup> The Actresses' Franchise League, *The Secretary's Report of the Actresses' Franchise League, June 1911-June 1912*, 2 in Papers of the Actresses' Franchise League, 2/AFL/A/1c, Women's Library.

without the vote but 'what price us?' She continues:

[W]ith some of us makin' blouses at one an' a penny a dozen an' ackcherly managing' to earn six shillns a week for a fourteen hours day! We all keep our kerridges! ... but there's a woman there ... oo's got the sense to see that if 'er sex 'as got a vote what's useful to the men they're more likely to listen to 'er than if it 'and't!<sup>46</sup>

This duologue was performed largely from June 1913 to June 1914, and is an indication that the AFL was attempting to educate and organise working-class women, or, at the very least, it was interested in the conditions of the working-class woman. The *AFL Annual Report of the Play Department from June 1913 to June 1914* records that the AFL provided a total of 47 performances to the NUWSS, the Ipswich Women's Suffrage Society, the Women's Clerk and Secretary Society, the WSPU, the London Society for Women's Suffrage, the East London League, the Irish League and the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise League.<sup>47</sup> Bazaars such as the WSPU Women's Exhibition and the WFL Green, White and Gold Fair of 1908 were unlikely to be repeated after the NUWSS Woman's Kingdom on 11 April 1914 because the First World War had begun, and the women's suffrage societies refrained from engaging in any further entertainment-based propaganda. The Woman's Kingdom hosted several AFL performances, but their content differed from those performed in 1909. The AFL began to tackle artistically challenging pieces, such as Shaw's *Press Cuttings*, Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, and the French dramatist Eugene Brieux's (1858–1932) *A Woman on Her Own*.<sup>48</sup> Yamamoto, a scholar of English literature, claims the AFL helped to promote the works of women dramatists by performing their plays.<sup>49</sup> However, as the AFL began to develop progressive and highly professional performances, it also began to

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<sup>46</sup> Evelyn Glover, *A Chat with Mrs Chicky: a duologue* (London: Actresses' Franchise League, 1911) in *Literature of the Women's Suffrage Campaign in England*, 75.

<sup>47</sup> The Actresses' Franchise League, *The Secretary's Report of the Play Department*, June 1913 to June 1914, 12 in Papers of the Actresses' Franchise League, 2/AFL/A3/2, Women's Library.

<sup>48</sup> 'Brochure of Women's Kingdom,' 17 in Women's Suffrage Collection, M50/2/13/10 from Manchester Central Library, Microfilm, Adam Matthews Publications.

<sup>49</sup> Yamamoto, 'Igirisu Jyosei Sannseikenn Unndo To Enngeki - Jyoyuu Sannseikenn Doumei No Kessei To Katsudou (The British Women's Suffrage Movement and Plays - Formation and Activities of the Actresses' Franchise League)'.

use the works of male dramatists. In 1913, Bensusan opened the Women's Theatre at the Coronet Theatre. It was intended that women would take on every function and role in the Women's Theatre—director, producer and other positions were to be occupied by women only. However, the plays performed by the Women's Theatre were written by men. It can be assumed that the women, in attempting to create the Women's Theatre, were attempting to develop their amateur performances to a more professional level. However, gendered notions were at work: plays written by women were considered less professional than those written by men.

#### 4.5 Annual Performances at the West End Theatres

The AFL, founded by various famous actresses of the time, held a number of performances for other suffrage societies and also performances in London theatres from 1909 to 1913 (see Table 4-4 and Appendix 2).<sup>50</sup> Although the women's suffrage movement in Britain presented new representations of women to the public, it also used and strengthened traditional gender norms, particularly the connection between women and visual beauty.<sup>51</sup> Suffrage societies needed to fight for the public acceptance of women who extended themselves beyond the existing norms of femininity. They had to pacify public outrage against the suffragettes, and visual beauty was a useful political tool to win over the public.<sup>52</sup> They tried to present various types of women in their attempts to persuade the public that women needed

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<sup>50</sup> The AFL performances were picked out from J. P. Wearing, *The London Stage 1900-1909: A Calendar of Plays and Players*. There were probably other performances held by the AFL which were not listed in this book. For the locations of the theatres in London, see Appendix 2.

<sup>51</sup> Tickner mentions that 'the Victorian and Edwardian public expected to see the virtues and vices of femininity written on the body'. The public apparently enjoyed seeing femininity on display. On one hand, the women's suffrage societies tried 'to demythologise the dominant ideology of Edwardian femininity, to fill out its absences and exploit its contradictions' as Tickner states, but on the other hand, the suffrage societies before the Great War continuously used the dominant ideology of the Edwardian femininity in their propaganda. By doing so, suffrage movement before the Great War constantly reproduced their Edwardian femininity which they fought to demythologise. Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 151-152.

<sup>52</sup> The word 'visual beauty' is used here to indicate 'feminine' beauty. For example, when you take a look at the women's suffrage banners, they are quite different from the banners of the trade unions. Banners of the trade unions can be described as manly.

the vote, but it was not an easy task.

The struggle to provide the public with a constructive representation of women can be observed in the compositions of their performances in London theatres. There were two kinds of performances. One involved realistic dramas portraying the conditions of ordinary women's lives. The other involved pageants or plays that can be defined as *tableaux-vivants* with dialogue. These were lavishly designed with beautiful costumes and beautiful actresses. These two performance types were usually performed together on the West End stages. From press reviews, it is apparent that the pageants, which were produced with men's help, held more visual appeal for the audience than the realistic dramas.

However, in the same way that the entertainment value relied on the visual beauty of the performances, the AFL fundamentally relied on, and used, the gender norms that connected visual beauty with women. Suffragettes and suffragists were viewed as women who deviated from the socially acceptable notion of how women should be. Suffrage societies were faced with a dilemma—they were presenting new types of women, but the public found them too radical. Therefore, to persuade the public, they inhibited their promotion of these 'new' women. The compromises made by the societies are evidenced in the performances of the AFL.

The AFL performances in London theatres included plays, tableaux, songs and recitations. From 1909 to 1913, the AFL, sometimes with the WWSL, held six performances in the West End theatres: the Scala, Lyceum and Aldwych (see Appendix 2). In addition, the AFL usually held their monthly meetings at the Criterion Restaurant, and sometimes used the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane for mass meetings.

The London performances were of great financial help to the AFL. The cash accounts for 1910 to 1911 show the receipts from the sales of tickets, which included matinees and teas, accounted for 10 per cent of the total receipts; receipts from the 'Joint Matinee' came to £115 10s 2d, close to 18 per cent of the total receipts.<sup>53</sup> However, in 1912, the proceeds from a matinee held at the Lyceum Theatre raised only

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<sup>53</sup> Actresses' Franchise League, Cash Account 1910 to 1911 in *the AFL Annual Report June 1910 to June 1911*, Cash Account 1911-1912 in *AFL Annual Report June 1911 to June 1912*. The value of £115 10s 2d is £9,170 in 2012. The worth is calculated based on the Retail Price Index. See Measuring Worth Com. <http://www.measuringworth.com/indicator.php>. Web. Access 13 Oct 2012.



£62 10s 9d, indicating that the profitability of performances began to decrease after 1911.<sup>54</sup>

However, the value of the performances on the West End stage was not only financial. The performances were also an opportunity to raise support for women's suffrage, and for the suffrage supporters to come together to enjoy themselves. Newspaper reports described the 'enthusiasm' displayed inside the theatres, confirming that the suffragettes did enjoy the shows. In November 1911, *The Era* reported, 'Banners with the names of leading actresses inscribed upon them hung all round the first circle, and enthusiasm prevailed throughout the generous and interesting programme, embracing the names of an overwhelming number of prominent actresses, mere man being decidedly in the minority, both amongst the entertainers and entertained.'<sup>55</sup>

What kind of entertainment did the AFL provide? How did they perform? The performance programmes can provide answers to these questions. The AFL adopted a repertory style, which involves performing two or three short plays on the same day. This was to avoid the censorship introduced by Lord Chamberlain.<sup>56</sup> Most performances (not the performance at the Coronet Theatre in 1913) included the same elements: realistic renderings of women's lives via short one-act plays with only a few characters, and the artistic renderings of women in pageants and tableaux.

During the Edwardian period, pageants depicting historical incidents and presenting the suffragettes' understanding of the past were popular throughout the country. In 1907, *Punch* claimed there was an 'astute outbreak of pageant mania'.<sup>57</sup> Suffrage pageants, such as *A Pageant of Great Women*, *The*

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<sup>54</sup> Actresses' Franchise League, Cash Account 1912 to 1913 in *the AFL Annual Report June 1912 to June 1913* in *AFL Annual Report, June 1912 to 1913*. The value of £62 10s 9d is £77.20 in 2012. See Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> 'Actresses' Franchise League Matinee,' *The Era*, 4 Nov 1911: 13.

<sup>56</sup> To avoid the censorship of Lord Chamberlain, sometimes promoters held performance at public halls. Not showing full-length play was also one of the ways to elude censorship.

<sup>57</sup> Charles L. Graves, *Mr Punch's History of Modern England*, Vol. 4 (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1922). Deborah Sugg Ryan, 'Spectacle, the Public, and the Crowd: Exhibitions and Pageants in 1908,' in *The Edwardian Sense: Art, Design, and Performance in Britain, 1901-1910*, eds. Morna O'Neill and Michael Hatt (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 53.

*Awakening*, and *A Shakespeare's Dream*, all performed by the AFL, resulted from this 'pageant mania'.<sup>58</sup> Through these suffrage pageants, the AFL attempted to compose and reinterpret history to suit their objective, which was to present a positive image of the women who engaged in suffragist activities.

Figure 4-3 shows the front page of a pamphlet for a performance at the Scala Theatre in 1909.<sup>59</sup> A list of performances (taken from the pamphlet) at the Scala Theatre is shown in Table 4-5. First, there was a recitation of a prologue written by Housman, followed by an 'artistic posing' of a WH Margetson postcard (see Figure 4-4).<sup>60</sup> William Henry Margetson (1861–1940) was a painter and illustrator, famous for painting beautiful women. He studied at the South Kensington School, and later at the Royal Academy. He was married to a sister of Bessie Hatton, one of the founders of WWSL. Figure 4-5 shows his illustration for the front page of Housman's *Prologue*. It shows a clear Pre-Raphaelite influence with flowers and a woman in medieval dress.

Representations of the women's suffrage movement were not abundantly created. Some images were repeatedly used and duplicated via various media such as postcards, processions, banners, and plays. For example, in the WH Margetson postcard, the eyes of 'Justice' are covered—'covered eyes' represented objectivity—and this image of 'Justice' was used in various suffrage illustrations (see Figures 4-6 & 4-7). Figure 4-6 shows a poster 'Justice at the Door' designed by Lowndes in 1912. 'Justice', holds her sword and scale in one hand, while her other rests on the doorknob of the House of Commons. A further example of the repetition of representations is the performance of three one-act plays, followed by *A Pageant of Famous Women*, which was performed throughout the country—such was the show's popularity.<sup>61</sup> When the WFL performed at Sheffield, it was stated in a pamphlet, 'The Pageant has been described as a

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<sup>58</sup> *A Shakespeare's Dream* was performed on 2 Feb 1912 at New Prince's Theatre by the WWSL. It was supported by the AFL. *The Era*, 17 Feb 1912: 16.

<sup>59</sup> The front page was designed by Hester Margetson, who was probably a daughter of William Henry Margetson. She was an illustrator of children's books. *Programme of the Actresses' Franchise League and the Women's Writers' Suffrage League Matinée*, 12 Nov 1909, 7 in Papers of the Actresses' Franchise League, 2 AFL, Women's Library.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid..

<sup>61</sup> Holledge, *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre*, 71.

“Suffragist” Pageant, but it does not mention the vote, and is in no way controversial’.<sup>62</sup> The pageant was so useful for the women’s suffrage societies that its propaganda was not blatantly displayed.

*A Pageant of Famous Women* was written by Hamilton and Craig, daughter of Terry. Figure 4-8 shows pictures from the pageant published on the front page of the *Daily Mirror*. ‘Justice’ is on the stage. Then ‘Woman’ enters, followed by ‘Prejudice’. The costumes, designed by Craig, were an important part of the performance.

Among the AFL performances in 1911, there was a tableau called *The Awakening*, arranged by the sculptor Sir George Frampton (1860–1928). Frampton, who studied at the Slade School of Fine Art, became famous for his sculpture *Peter Pan* (1912) in Kensington Gardens, London.<sup>63</sup> He was involved in the Art Workers’ Guild (est. 1884), one of the guilds that led the Arts and Crafts movement, and one of his works is held in the Victoria and Albert Museum (see Figure 4-9). In Figure 4-9, the decoration on the hem of the child’s clothes especially reveals the intricate designs of the Arts and Crafts movement.<sup>64</sup> Frampton’s reputation has been described ‘rest[ing] on his symbolist works, particularly of women suggestive of reverie and mystery.’<sup>65</sup>

The ‘strikingly lovely picture’ of *The Awakening* was performed by Lily Brayton (1876–1953), Eve Balfour (born 1895), Muriel Beaumont (1881–1957), and a number of other actresses.<sup>66</sup> It depicted

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<sup>62</sup> ‘Pamphlet of the Pageant of Great Women by Miss Edith Craig & Miss Cicely Hamilton’, 15 Oct 1910 in Ellen Terry and Edith Craig Archive, EC-PION, D185/6, British Library.

<sup>63</sup> See Gillian Beer, ‘George Frampton’s *Peter Pan* in Kensington Gardens,’ *The Edwardian Sense: Art, Design, and Performance in Britain, 1901-1910*, eds. Morna O’Neill and Michael Hatt (New Haven: Yale U. P., 2010), 205-11.

<sup>64</sup> *Seikatsu To Geijyutsutenn: Ātsu Anndo Kurafutsu Tenn-Wiriamu Morisu Kara Minngei Made* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinnbunsha, 2008), 45.

<sup>65</sup> Sue Malvern states that ‘George Frampton’s reputation rests on his symbolist works, particularly of women suggestive of reverie and mystery. . . These qualities could be transferred to the public monuments to women Frampton made in the 1890s, such as the Jubilee monuments to Queen Victoria for Calcutta, 1898-1902, and the Dame Alice Owen statue for Owen’s School, Potters Bar, 1896-1897. Both have highly decorative surfaces, folds and pleats of cloth, embroidery and textures of fabric are emphasized with what Susan Beattie calls “hypnotically clear and precise handling of detail”.’ Sue Malvern, “‘For King and Country’: Frampton’s Edith Cavell (1915-20) and the Writing of Gender in Memorials to the Great War,’ *Sculpture and the Pursuit of a Modern Ideal in Britain C.1880-1930*, ed. David J. Getsy (London: Ashgate, 2004), 232.

<sup>66</sup> ‘Actresses’ Franchise League Matinee’, *The Era*, 4 Nov 1911: 13. Other actresses who participated in this

women waking from a long sleep and giving homage to ‘Freedom’. It was accompanied by a song written by American poet Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850–1919):

They are waking, they are waking.  
In the East and in the West,  
They are throwing wide their windows to the sun,  
And they see the dawn is breaking,  
And they quiver with unrest;  
For they know their work is waiting to be done ...<sup>67</sup>

The poem was accompanied by music composed by Teresa del Riego (1876–1968), a famous female composer. The theatrical magazine, *The Era*, listed the names of all 18 actresses from the tableau and *The Times* stated, ‘we heartily wished we could have been allowed to contemplate the beautiful tableaux in silence’.<sup>68</sup>

Although this artistic tableau was praised, Housman’s *Alice in Ganderland* (see Figure 4-10), which was performed on the same day, was not. A critic from *The Stage* described it as ‘very feeble stuff, quite unworthy of Laurence Housman’s reputation, and ineffectual either as drama or for purposes of propaganda’. *The Stage* continued, ‘Much more interesting than this sorry skit was the well arranged *A Pageant of the Leagues* capitally “produced” by Mr H. Tripp Edgar.’<sup>69</sup>

*Alice in Ganderland* was a parody of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. It was also a parody of the controversies between the women’s suffrage societies and other political parties. Each character and their costume represented a political party: the March Hare wore a rough workman’s blouse and a red cap of liberty representing the Labour Party; the Dormouse wore a ‘sporting costume like a fox-hunter’ and on top of that ‘Peer’s robes and a paper cocked hat labelled “Army and Navy”’ representing the Conservative

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performance were Amy Branson-Thomas, Alice Crawford, Maud Cressall, Phyllis Dare, Maud Hoffman, Mabel Love, Gladys Mason, Hilda Moore, Edyth Olive, Nancy Price, Anna Stannard, Olive Terry, Ethel Warwick, Evelyn Weedon, and Mrs Saba Raleigh.

<sup>67</sup> Ella Wheeler Wilcox, ‘The Awakening,’ *The Common Cause*, 2 Feb 1911: 703.

<sup>68</sup> ‘The Actresses’ Franchise League Matinee’, *The Era*, 4 Nov 1911: 13, *The Times*, 28 Oct 1911: 10

<sup>69</sup> *The Stage*, 2 November 1911: 20.

Party; the Mad Hatter wore a 'Scotch-plaid waistcoat and a frock coat with a Celtic fringe' representing the Liberal Party; and the lizard Bill wore green representing the Irish Nationalist League. Alice wore the colours of the WSPU: purple, white and green.<sup>70</sup>

At the end of the play, Alice declares, 'These are my jewels' and calls forth the members of the women's suffrage societies to the stage. Society members would march onto the stage with their banners. It was similar to the great processions organised by the WSPU and the NUWSS. This scene was duplicated on both the stage and in the street.

The play *The First Actress*, written by St John, was first performed at the Kingsway Theatre on 8 May 1911 by the Pioneer Players, a dramatic society established by Edith Craig.<sup>71</sup> The AFL performed it on 29 November 1912 at the Lyceum. *The First Actress* is set in the seventeenth century and relates the story of an actress about to debut on the stage in an era when women were not allowed to perform on stage. She is not received well by the audience and laments, 'I ought never to have attempted it—I have made it impossible for the others—perhaps there never will be—any others—I am sorry for that—very sorry'.<sup>72</sup> She falls asleep, and future actresses, such as Nell Gwynn (1650–1687) and Sara Siddons (1755–1831), appear on the stage. At the end of the play, a modern-day actress appears and claims:

When I was born, dear Peg, people will have quite forgotten that the stage was ever barred to us. They will laugh at the idea that acting was once considered a man's affair—they will be incredulous that the pioneer actress were bitterly resented. ... Brave Hughes—forgotten pioneer—your comrades offer you a crown.<sup>73</sup>

On 9 February 1912, the members of the AFL assisted a performance of the WWSL at the New Prince's Theatre. A tableau (pageant) was included in the programme. The setting of *A Shakespeare's Dream* is a garden. The Swan of Avon, William Shakespeare (1564–1616), is asleep on the 'mossy bank',

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<sup>70</sup> Laurence Housman, *Alice in Ganderland – a One-Act Play* (London: The Women's Press, 1911), 3–4.

<sup>71</sup> For the study of Pioneer Players (est. 1911), see Katharine Cockin, *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage: The Pioneer Players 1911–1925* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

<sup>72</sup> Christopher St. John, *The First Actress*, privately printed. n.d., *Women's Suffrage Literature*, eds. Katharine Cockin, Glenda Norquay and Sowon S. Park, Vol. 3 (London: Routledge, 2007), 15.

<sup>73</sup> Christopher St. John, *The First Actress*, *Women's Suffrage Literature*, 21.

and Puck leads Shakespeare's heroines onto the stage. Not including the sprites, 35 of Shakespeare's characters appear and recite short lines from Shakespeare's plays deemed appropriate to the suffrage movement. Again, *The Stage* mentions the names of all the actresses who performed in *A Shakespeare's Dream*. This tableau may have been influenced by Terry's lecture (according to St John, Terry presented a series of lectures) on Shakespeare, which introduced Shakespeare as a suffragist:

Wonderful women! Have you ever thought how much we all, and women especially, owe to Shakespeare for his vindication of woman in these fearless, high spirited, resolute and intelligent heroines? Don't believe the anti-feminists if they tell you, as I was once told, that Shakespeare had to endow his women with virile qualities because in his theatre they were always impersonated by men!<sup>74</sup>

The tactic of using Shakespeare's heroines was similar to Hamilton's tactic with *A Pageant of Great Women*. It was also similar to the use of historical women in the NUWSS banners.<sup>75</sup> Using famous characters brought the issue of women's suffrage closer to the audience.

These performances, *A Pageant of Great Women*, *The Awakening*, *The First Actress* and *A Shakespeare's Dream*, were all useful media with which to highlight the attractive and famous actresses included among the AFL members. There were a few spoken lines in these pageants and tableaux; the strength of the performances relied on the visual presentations of the actresses. Most of the critiques published in newspapers and magazines listed the names of the actresses in the performances. Sometimes, they also listed the names of the actresses selling publications in the auditorium. Clearly, the famous actresses were effective publicity.

Further, female characters, such as historical figures (e.g. Florence Nightingale) or literary figures (e.g. Shakespeare's heroines), were used to reinterpret and retell narratives to suit the women's suffrage supporters. Suffrage societies such as the AFL needed to win over a public who was certain that suffragists were unwomanly creatures.

How did the audience respond? Most of the audience, it seems, were sympathisers of the women's

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<sup>74</sup> *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence*, 81.

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter 3.

suffrage movement. *The Stage* wrote of a performance at the Scala Theatre in 1909, ‘Naturally there were about twenty women to every man in the auditorium and thus in every respect the so-called Weaker Sex had its own way.’<sup>76</sup> The following year, after a performance at the Aldwych Theatre, the weekly theatre magazine *The Era* mentioned that the audience was ‘most enthusiastic’.<sup>77</sup> When those sympathetic to the cause gathered, their enthusiasm could not be contained. Additionally, the auditorium was decorated with suffrage banners to enhance the atmosphere.

It has been suggested that ‘the use in suffrage imagery of an allegorical female figure derived from Pre-Raphaelite and art nouveau paintings for example, may have absolved [suffragists] from the sin of ‘unwomanliness’ at the cost of blunting the analysis of the ideological construct of “womanliness” itself’.<sup>78</sup> It appears that this is true, at least with regard to the performances in the West End theatres. In fact, allegorical women in suffrage tableaux and pageants expressed femininity, but at the same time, as the AFL was using those representations for their propaganda, they were not questioning the traditional gender norms.

Although the visual effects in the dramas were weaker than in the pageants, the dramas were useful to promote visually the suffragists’ arguments about why women needed the vote. Drama was a useful media, because it could be used to describe the lives of real women. It could portray the conditions of a range of women: working-class women, women who were interested in business and middle-class women. In addition, the dramas could present the problems women faced. The use of drama to effect social reform became a topic of discussion at the turn of the century. Plays representing social reform, such as those written by Shaw, were still viewed with suspicion by most. However, New Drama, as it was called, was intended to enlighten the audience.

The plays *Pot and the Kettle*, *Master* and *The Outcast*, were performed in 1909 at the Scala. *Pot and the Kettle* was based on an actual incident, which occurred earlier that year in an anti-suffrage meeting. In the play, Marjorie Brewster, an anti-suffragist, attacks suffragette Lady Susan Pengowan at an

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<sup>76</sup> *The Stage*, 18 Nov 1909: 20.

<sup>77</sup> *The Era*, 26 Nov 1910: 21.

<sup>78</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 152.

anti-suffrage meeting, and is arrested. The roles of the anti-suffragist and suffragette are reversed in this play.

*Master* and *The Outcast* both address the issue of marriage. *Master* contrasts 'the sloth and uselessness of men with the activity and business ability of women' through the hardships of a working-class married couple. *The Outcast* is also a story of a married couple, Thomas and Volumnia Webster who are contemplating separating after 35 years of marriage. 'A wretched-looking ragged fiddler' visits their house, and he reveals the truth regarding a tragedy involving their son. The couple realise that they are 'bound together by a common sorrow'.<sup>79</sup> *The Outcast* supports the sanctity of marriage.

*The Stuffing* is the story of a working-class man, Mr Pully, who attempts to give his wife a present he can share. *The Home Coming* is the story of a middle-class daughter, Mary Fraser, coming home to her mother to tell her of her suffering in loving a man who is not her husband.<sup>80</sup> Both plays were performed on 18 November 1910 at the Aldwych Theatre.

*A Chat with Mrs Chicky*, as mentioned earlier, depicts the hardships accompanying the life of working-class women. Mrs Chicky, a charwoman, counters anti-suffrage arguments by referring to the reality of working-class life.

There were many other suffrage dramas written by women, which were performed not only in the West End theatres but also in public halls, at bazaars and in private homes of women's suffrage supporters. Compared with artistic renderings, these more realistic plays were designed to be performed anywhere. No special stages or settings were required. Nor was there need for a large number of actors. However, as discussed in magazine and newspaper reviews, the disadvantage with these plays was that they lacked the splendour and magnificence of the pageants and tableaux.

The tableaux and pageants were not achieved by women alone. It is interesting to note that men were in charge of the tableaux and pageants. Margetson arranged the tableau *Justice, Prejudice and Woman*. Frampton arranged *The Awakening*, while Guyton Heath, probably an actor from New Zealand,

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<sup>79</sup> 'The Scala Theatre', *The Era*, 20 Nov 1909: 15.

<sup>80</sup> *The Stage*, 24 Nov 1910: 18; *The Era*, 26 Nov 1910: 21.



arranged *A Shakespeare's Dream*.<sup>81</sup> Of course, men also participated as actors, playing the male roles. On occasion, the producers of the plays were men: Arthur Chesney (1882–1949), who produced *The Stuffing* for the performance on 18 November 1910, was an actor; Albert Wainwright (1898–1943), who produced *Edith* at the New Prince on 9 February 1912, was probably a painter and theatre-costume illustrator born in Castleford in 1898. At a performance in 1909 at the Scala Theatre, Mr F. Llewellyn was the stage manager, Mr Herald Chapin his assistant, Lewis Casson (the actor) was the acting manager and James Arving the business manager.<sup>82</sup> The critic Spence writes in *Our Stage and Its Critics*, '[I]t is the woman rather than the man dramatists who appreciate the utility of the stage as a means for seeking reform'.<sup>83</sup> However, at least for the AFL, it was impossible to organise performances without the help of men—performances were a collaboration between women and men.

#### 4.6. From 1913

The combination of pageant and dramas ended prior to the First World War. In 1913, Bensusan developed a new scheme to establish an all-women theatre troupe, with female producers and stage managers. Initially, the AFL hoped that it would be a start for 'a permanent Woman's Theatre'.<sup>84</sup> Unlike the previous performances in the West End theatres, the Women's Theatre organised and presented full-length plays at the Coronet Theatre (see Figure 4-11). Shaw and William Archer (1856–1924), a famous critic who supported Shaw, were listed as the patrons of this scheme, indicating how seriously they were aiming for high artistic quality.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> There was an Australia born actor whose stage name was Guyton Heath, and he was married to actress Bessie Rignold. *Southland Times* reported in 1902: 'Mrs Russell, otherwise Bessie Rignold, has been divorced from her husband on the ground of adultery with Edmund Gurney, an actor. Mrs Russell is a daughter of William Rignold, and Russell, whose stage name is Guyton Heath, is a New Zealander.' See *Southland Times*, 20 Mar 1902: 3.

<sup>82</sup> 'The Scala Theatre', *The Era*, 20 Nov 1909: 15. F. Llewellyn seems to be an actor because the name 'F. Llewellyn' is in *The Stage Year Book* in 1910. *The Stage Year Book*, (London: Carson & Comerford, 1910), 32.

<sup>83</sup> Spence, *Our Stage and Its Critics*, 224.

<sup>84</sup> 'The Woman's Theatre', *Manchester Guardian*, 18 Oct 1913: 10.

<sup>85</sup> Actresses' Franchise League, *Souvenir Programme for the Women's Theatre Week*, 1913.

Figure 4-11 shows the front page of a souvenir programme of the Women's Theatre.<sup>86</sup> A woman dressed in a classical costume with wings on her head is carrying a torch in her right hand and a mirror in her left. The classical style of the front page suggests an authoritarian attitude by the AFL in organising this scheme. This authoritarian character was emphasised by the performance selection. Bensusan chose French dramatist Brieux's *A Woman on Her Own* and the Norwegian writer and the Nobel Prize winner Bjornstjerne Bjornson's (1832–1910) *A Gauntlet*. Both playwrights already had established fame.

Financially, the Women's Theatre was a great success; however, artistically, it was criticised, even by the women's suffrage newspaper, *The Suffragette*:

With all M. Brieux's earnestness and high ideals, I cannot look upon such a false and pessimistic presentment of women in the labour-market as desirable propaganda for the Feminist cause. ... It is very good of M. Brieux and others to champion the women's cause, but I wish they would do it in a more optimistic spirit, and be a little less lavish of their pity. ... I wish some woman would write a play showing the real spirit of the Suffragette. It has never been done yet, and I do not believe that a male dramatist will ever do it.<sup>87</sup>

The serious nature of the AFL performances was not well received. Audiences wanted a more light-hearted depiction of women—in other words, they desired tableaux and pageants, in which feminine allegorical women appeared.<sup>88</sup>

Visual beauty was used to bridge the gap between the image of women in Edwardian England and

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<sup>86</sup> Exploring 20<sup>th</sup> Century London, Museum of London. [<http://www.20thcenturylondon.org.uk>] ID number: MoL\_26099/4.

<sup>87</sup> *The Suffragette*, 12 Dec 1913. Qtd. in Holledge, *Innocent Flowers*, 96.

<sup>88</sup> A critic of the *Manchester Guardian* criticized 'Woman on Her Own': 'It is ... very wordy, very full of discussion, entirely without individual characterization. It is judicially impartial, and the women are not by any means allowed to have all the best of it.' Also, the paper criticized the acting: 'It was not, however, acted in the right way, though much of the acting is good. ... The actor and actresses of tonight played it as though it were a play not of talk but subdued emotion which needed careful emphasis. It was over-acted, and over-acted very slowly.' See P. C., 'The Woman's Theatre', *Manchester Guardian*, 9 Dec 1913: 10.

the ‘unwomanly’ suffragists. Through the use of beautiful actresses in their pageants, the AFL fundamentally relied on the gender norms that connected visual beauty with women. While the pageants romanticised and beautified women, the one-act plays, which showed women addressing real issues, were a call for a new ‘womanliness’. The historical–allegorical women who were repeatedly represented in pageants and tableaux were useful devices to show suffragists of the past. They attempted to present their own version of history, but the conventional visual beauty of the pageants concealed the radical nature of the messages.

When the First World War began, the AFL’s performances were no longer needed. Its 1916 *Annual Report* states, ‘there is no demand for propaganda plays any more’.<sup>89</sup> The AFL provided plays for the exhibitions and fairs held by the various suffrage societies such as the NUWSS, the WSPU and the WFL. The following chapter discusses the visual representations contained in the societies’ exhibitions and bazaars.

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<sup>89</sup> *The Annual Report of the Play Department of the Actresses’ Franchise League*, 20 Oct 1916 in the Actresses’ Franchise League papers, 2/AFL/A2/2, Women’s Library.

## Chapter 5: Exhibitions, Bazaars and Entertainment

### 5.1 Functions of Exhibitions, Bazaars and Entertainment

Historian John Mercer, who studies the commercial activities of the women's suffrage movement, claims that the movement placed women in a position of potential 'consumers'. He focuses on the publications, merchandise, shops and propaganda posters of the women's suffrage societies, and establishes how those suffrage-related goods were produced and distributed among the public.<sup>1</sup> However, Mercer does not analyse in detail the kind of consumers the women's suffrage societies were attempting to attract. Despite his claims that the women's suffrage bazaars were aimed at middle-class women, Mercer does not investigate the consumers further. In this chapter, to determine the intended consumers of the women's suffrage societies, the focus is on the bazaars and exhibitions held by the women's suffrage societies. A study of the visual representations of the bazaars and exhibitions, such as designs, costumes, goods and entertainment, should reveal the intended consumers.

This chapter focuses on three women's suffrage societies: the WSPU, the WFL and the NUWSS. Women's suffrage societies, particularly these three major organisations, produced events that combined elements of shopping, exhibition and entertainment. These events were called 'bazaars' and 'exhibitions'. The women that attended the suffrage bazaars or exhibitions could shop at stalls, view suffrage exhibitions, watch plays and listen to music, all within the same location.

A particular visual characteristic of the bazaars and exhibitions was the presentation of the colours of each society. As stated in Chapter 3, the women's suffrage societies each carried their own colours, and those colours were first presented in processions. To establish their visual identities and to establish their colours within the public's mind, the women's suffrage societies repeatedly displayed their colours at bazaars and exhibitions.

*The Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word 'bazaar' as 'a fancy fair in imitation of the

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<sup>1</sup> See John Mercer, 'Buying Votes: Purchasable Propaganda in the Twentieth-Century Women's Suffrage Movement,' Ph D. Thesis, University of Portsmouth, (2005).

Eastern bazaar; esp[ecially] a sale of useful and ornamental articles, on behalf of some charitable or religious object'. The term was first used by poet Robert Southey (1774–1843) in his *Letter from England* in 1807.<sup>2</sup> However, bazaars have been used for causes other than charitable or religious reasons. Political movements have hosted bazaars to raise funds. For the Anti–Corn Law movement, women supported their male family members by organising bazaars. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, as a mass consumer society developed, department stores used the term 'bazaar' to describe special sales. For example, in 1893, the department store, Peter Robinson's on Oxford Street, London, held a Grand Christmas Bazaar selling 'presents, toys, games, dolls, books &c in Great Variety'.<sup>3</sup> Thus, by the turn of the twentieth century, the bazaar had come to show one aspect of the development of a consumer culture.

Exhibitions were large-scale visual presentations of goods and were particularly popular in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In Britain, the first major exhibition was the Great Exhibition in 1851. Sociologist Shunya Yoshimi clarifies the three functions of these popular exhibitions of the nineteenth century: an instrument of propaganda, an advertisement of the consumer culture and a show of mass entertainment.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, design historian Deborah Sugg Ryan states that 'commercial exhibitions' in the beginning of the twentieth century 'were part of a modern mass culture of popular entertainments and consumer experiences'.<sup>5</sup>

The development of the railways made it possible for people from all over the country to visit the Great Exhibition in 1851. Since that time, major international exhibitions have always been held in London. London was a metropolis possessing various features that made international exhibitions a success. International exhibitions flourished, and in 1908, there were 'twenty-five great shows' such as the

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<sup>2</sup> 'Bazaar' section in *Oxford English Dictionary* [<http://dictionary.oed.com/>], Web. Access 31 Aug 2010.

<sup>3</sup> 'Advertisements & Notices,' *Pall Mall Gazette*, 20 Dec 1893: n.p. in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers, Web. Access 20 Dec 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Shunya Yoshimi, *Hakurankai No Seijigaku (Politics of Exhibitions)* (Tokyo: Chuoō Kōron-sha, 1992), 259.

<sup>5</sup> Deborah Sugg Ryan, 'Spectacle, the Public, and the Crowd: Exhibitions and Pageants in 1908,' *The Edwardian Sense: Art, Design, and Performance in Britain, 1901-1910*, eds. Morna O'Neill and Michael Hatt (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 43.

Franco-British Exhibition and the Ideal Home Exhibition.<sup>6</sup> *The Daily Mail* remarked that the term 'Exhibition Year' should be applied to 1908 instead of 1851.<sup>7</sup> The same year, the WFL held the first Great Suffrage Bazaar.

The concept of bazaars and exhibitions were established on the consumer culture. A bazaar was a site where goods could be bought and sold and, according to Yoshimi, an exhibition was, 'an advertisement of the consumer culture'.<sup>8</sup> It was natural for the women's suffrage societies, which perceived women as consumers, to combine bazaars and exhibitions into a single format. *Votes for Women* described the merger, '[t]he Bazaar was not only a bazaar but also an exhibition'.<sup>9</sup> Both media were showcases for the consumer culture.

In a society based on mass consumerism, women had the role of consumers, the ones who buy for their families. The task of shopping was associated with women as the caretakers of the home. For middle-class and upper-class women, shopping was also considered a feminine pastime. Historian Erika Rappaport states that shopping allowed women to venture into London in the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> It was an opportunity for women to expand their choice of activities.

The Langham Place Circle, which promoted the women's movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century, included within their premises a library, the Victoria Press and an employment bureau. Situated in the West End, it was surrounded by the women's clubs that had become popular by the end of the nineteenth century. Women who ventured into London could enter a club and take a rest, have lunch, meet friends, attend lectures and even stay overnight. The increasing range of activities of the women's movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century can be explained in part by this inviting environment that enabled women to be active.

The physical environment enabled women to visit London, but there were also a number of

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Yoshimi, *Hakurannkai No Seijigaku (Politics of Exhibitions)*, 259.

<sup>9</sup> 'Close of the Woman's Exhibition', *Votes for Women*, 28 May 1909: 722.

<sup>10</sup> See Erika Diane Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

delights to attract them. Department stores such as Whiteleys (est. 1863), Liberty's (est. 1875) and Harrods (est.1849) had been established, and the West End became the place to shop. In addition, the West End offered visual pleasures. Millie Brown (1881–1960s/70s), who became involved in the suffrage movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, at the age of 16 years planned a visit to London with her sister. An itinerary was planned by the husband of her mother's friend:

We were to stay at a Temperance Hotel near St. Paul's which he could guarantee. We were to take a horse bus from St. Paul's to Westminster, walk down Birdcage Walk, (an easy name to remember), visit the National Gallery and the Raphael cartoons in South Kensington Museum, see *The Silver King* at Irving's Theatre the Lyceum (the understudy for the leading actress who did not play, was I remember Lillah Macarthy) go to a concert at Covent Garden (gallery seat), explore St. Paul's, the Tower of London, the Strand, and incidentally cast our eyes upon the Savoy Theatre, scene of our father's vocal successes.<sup>11</sup>

London could clearly offer many attractions: museums, theatres and concerts. For those who had never visited London, it was more than enough to simply visit the Strand, with its shops, and tourist sites such as St Paul's Cathedral and the Tower of London. London itself was a site of mass consumerism and mass entertainment. It was natural for the women's suffrage societies, which aimed to develop into as large a movement as possible, to attempt to attract the women who visited London to shop, sightsee and be entertained.

If shopping, entertainment and sightseeing drew numbers of women to London, the women's suffrage societies needed to plan events that included those elements to attract the women. The bazaars and exhibitions of the women's suffrage societies provided an opportunity for women to enjoy some shopping and entertainment, and to experience something different. Women's suffrage societies designed their stalls at suffrage bazaars and exhibitions to appeal to women; therefore, examining those designs can show us how the societies perceived those women.

The bazaars and exhibitions were an ideal venue for the societies to display visual propaganda,

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<sup>11</sup> Millie Price (Brown), *The World's Festival-an autobiographical effort*, 51 in *Papers of Millie Price*, 7MPR, Women's Library.

collect funds and gain new members. Annual reports of the women's suffrage organisations show that the funds collected from the bazaars represented a significant proportion of their total annual income. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, the treasurer of the WSPU, reported that the public spent £5,000 at the 1909 WSPU Women's Exhibition at the Prince's Skating Rink.<sup>12</sup>

Bazaar proceeds were also sourced from the small fee the public paid to enter the premises. Tickets were sold as daily or season tickets. The price varied according to the bazaar or exhibition. For example, at the Women's Exhibition in 1909, on the opening day the admission was 2s 6d until six o'clock.<sup>13</sup> However, after six o'clock the admission was reduced to 1s. This reduced fee also applied for the following day. A season ticket was 5s, enabling attendees to visit throughout the exhibition season.<sup>14</sup> Ticket sales for the Women's Exhibition amounted to £919, 2s and 6d. This meant that the total revenue gained from the Women's Exhibition comprised about 17 per cent of the total income of the WSPU.<sup>15</sup> The prices for admission appear to be reasonable when compared with the admission prices for contemporary international exhibitions such as the 1910 Japanese–British Exhibition of £1 1s for adults, and 10s 6d for children. Although it can be assumed that bazaars organised by the women's suffrage societies would have been accessible to middle-class women, working-class women would have found it difficult to attend because of the ticket price. Mercer points out that the WSPU Women's Exhibition was held in Knightsbridge to attract affluent middle-class women who would often shop in the West End.<sup>16</sup> These exhibitions were clearly for the enjoyment of middle-class women.

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<sup>12</sup> The Women's Freedom League, *Annual Report for 1908*, (1908): 22. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part in a Changing World* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938), 227. According to the Cash Account of the WSPU, the organisation collected £4,578, 11s and 6d from subscriptions and stall sales at the Women's Exhibition. *The Cash Statement, 1 March 1909 to 28 February 1910* in *Fourth Annual Report, 1909 to 1910*, The Suffragette Fellowship Collection, Museum of London.

<sup>13</sup> To evaluate the value of the admission fee, the following data would be useful: In 1911, Sainsbury's sold dozen eggs at 1s 6d; 1 pound of butter at 1s 5d; Sainsbury's Red Label Tea 125g at 4s and 1/2d. See Sainsbury's Archive Virtual Museum. <http://sainsburys.lgfl.org.uk/museum.htm>. Web. Access 14 Oct 2012.

<sup>14</sup> 'Woman's Exhibition and Sale of Work', Leaflet of advertising Woman's Exhibition in Mary Gawthorpe Collection, Series 3, Box 3, Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labour Archives, New York University.

<sup>15</sup> *The Cash Statement, 1 March 1909 to 28 February 1910* in *Fourth Annual Report, 1909 to 1910*, The Suffragette Fellowship Collection, Museum of London.

<sup>16</sup> Mercer, 'Buying Votes: Purchasable Propaganda in the Twentieth-Century Women's Suffrage Movement.'



The pleasant atmosphere of the bazaars would have encouraged donations from patrons of the women's suffrage societies. During the WFL Yule-Tide Festival, organised to collect funds to fight the 1910 general election campaign, Lady Cook (1845–1923) contributed £1,000, Mrs Arncliffe-Sennett (1862–1936) donated her diamond ring and Miss Seruya offered £50.<sup>17</sup> By its end, the festival had raised £1,500. In addition, subtle reminders were often given to the members of the suffrage organisations about 'How People are Helping' and to induce others to help.<sup>18</sup>

The actual cost of running a bazaar could be quite small—a further reason for the profitability of bazaars. The members provided most of the goods for sale in the bazaars. In the NUWSS paper, *The Common Cause*, various advertisements appealed for funds and goods for the bazaar:

Miss Margaret Ashton, M.A. appeals for Goods or Funds for the Manchester and District Federation Women's Suffrage Bazaar, to be held at the Midland Hall, on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup>, 1912. China, Pictures, White Elephants, New Books, Sweets, and Flowers are acceptable. Contributions may be sent to Miss Darlington, 85 Deansgate Arcade, Manchester, who will acknowledge them.<sup>19</sup>

As can be observed from this advertisement, the Manchester and District Federation of Women's Suffrage collected a wide range of goods. Because the women's suffrage societies acquired free merchandise and volunteers staffed the bazaars, they were able to achieve healthy profits. However, it would appear from the WSPU cash accounts, quite a substantial amount of funds were used in the preparation of bazaars. As evidenced from the announcement in *The Common Cause* (above), local suffrage societies also organised bazaars and exhibitions in the smaller cities. As was the case with the London processions and plays, bazaars and exhibitions were replicated in local cities.

The annual reports of the women's suffrage societies record that exhibitions were an opportunity to acquire new members. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence mentions that at the Women's Exhibition in 1909,

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<sup>17</sup> 'Suffragist Festival', *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 Dec 1909, newspaper cuttings in Maude Arncliffe Sennett Collection, British Library.

<sup>18</sup> 'How People are Helping', *The Suffragette*, 6 Dec 1912: 112.

<sup>19</sup> *The Common Cause*, 23 Nov 1911: 583.

‘Hundreds of new members were made.’<sup>20</sup> Although this remark may be an exaggeration (*Votes for Women* reported 200 new members were recruited<sup>21</sup>), a photograph of the crowded Women’s Exhibition (see Figure 5-1) supports the claim that the bazaar attracted a lot of women, many of them beautifully dressed with elaborate hats decorated with artificial flowers. In addition, the money raised by the Women’s Exhibition is proof that large numbers of people visited the bazaar.

The WSPU were quick to recognise the potential of propaganda via consumerism. In May 1907, the WSPU held a stall at the Earl’s Court Exhibition, selling pamphlets. According to a WSPU annual report, ‘This has proved a marked success. Each week several thousand people have been brought into touch with the movement and several hundred pamphlets have been sold.’<sup>22</sup> This success led to the first major women’s suffrage bazaar, the Women’s Exhibition, organised by WSPU in May 1909 at Prince’s Skating Rink in Knightsbridge. In the same year, the WFL held the White, Gold and Green Fair at Caxton Hall. In contrast, the NUWSS was slow to appreciate the effectiveness of bazaars. Although local NUWSS branches held bazaars in their districts, it was not until 1912 that the NUWSS held its first major bazaar at the Empress Room in Kensington, called the Oriental Fête and Bazaar. Table 5-1 lists the bazaars organised by the WSPU, the WFL and the NUWSS from 1908 to 1914.

Local branches of the WSPU, the WFL and the NUWSS also planned bazaars, as did other women’s suffrage societies (e.g. the Conservative and Unionist Women’s Franchise League). However, the local bazaars were much smaller and their ability to attract attendees was not as great as for the larger bazaars held in London.

Bazaars were planned not only to attract the public but also to propagate the cause. Particularly for the WFL and the WSPU—the militant suffrage societies—bazaars were opportunities to visually show the femininity of the suffragettes. Margaret Wynne Nevinson (1858–1932), a WFL organiser, plainly declared the purpose of a bazaar in 1908:

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<sup>20</sup> Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part in a Changing World*, 227.

<sup>21</sup> *Votes for Women*, 28 May 1909: 722.

<sup>22</sup> WSPU, *The Second Annual Report, 1907-1908*, 5 in The Suffragette Fellowship Collection, 50.82/151S, Museum of London.

Our bazaar is no ordinary bazaar, a mere money-making speculation, it is also to be an object lesson to the world that Suffragists are the true womanly women, that if they can use their tongues they can also use their fingers, and are thoroughly skilled in the arts of Minerva—in cooking, sewing, dress-making, embroidery, and handicraft generally.<sup>23</sup>

Here, Nevinson is clearly stating that the bazaar is an opportunity to challenge the image of suffragists as ‘unwomanly’, an image held by the public. For the WPSU, the bazaar was equally important, for it also had to convince the public that suffragettes were not unwomanly. However, for the NUWSS, a society that did not adopt militancy, emphasising femininity was not as important as it was for the militant suffrage societies. Rather, the NUWSS focused its efforts on making bazaars attractive by adopting unusual themes, such as the oriental theme for the bazaar in 1912.

## 5.2 Shopping at Bazaars

Shopping was a lure to attract women; the act of buying something was seen as an enjoyable pastime. In *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, American economist Thorstein Veblen introduces the theory of conspicuous consumption: people of the leisure classes purchase goods to show their status and wealth.<sup>24</sup> However, the act of purchasing an item could also show political allegiance. The famous Wedgwood anti-slavery badge is one example.<sup>25</sup> The stalls prepared for the women’s suffrage bazaars provided goods that would enable women to show their political allegiance, as well as goods that would indicate their status and wealth. Historian Amanda Vickery points out consumption is gendered: ‘women were expected to consume different items and in different ways’.<sup>26</sup> This can be applied to the goods sold at the bazaar stalls. The organisers of women’s suffrage bazaars expected the women attendees to purchase particular goods. In this section, the gendered notions held by the women’s suffrage societies are explored.

Many of the suffrage-related goods sold at suffrage stalls were produced and purchased by the

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<sup>23</sup> M. W. Nevinson, ‘The Suffragists’ Bazaar’, *Women’s Franchise*, 20 Mar 1908: 456.

<sup>24</sup> Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Macmillan, 1899).

<sup>25</sup> The badge was designed by Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795) for the Society for the Abolition of Slavery in 1787.

<sup>26</sup> Amanda Vickery, *Women, Privilege, and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present, The Making of Modern Freedom* (Stanford: Stanford U. P., 2001), 167.

women who supported the cause. The goods with the colours of the women's suffrage societies were original souvenirs as well as propaganda items for women's suffrage. The practice of selling original souvenir goods with wide variety of items was observed at the Queen Victoria's Jubilees. Even though souvenirs and commemorative items had been sold at Royal events before Queen Victoria, it was in her Jubilees that the items became varied and easily-available to the general public.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the goods sold at the suffrage societies' stalls, the decorations displayed at the venues are also be analysed. Sparke comments that designs connect goods and ideologies. Design reveals ideological values.<sup>28</sup> The ideologies held by the women's suffrage societies can be revealed by examining the designs of the suffrage-related goods and the hall decorations.

### 5.2.1 WFL Bazaars

The WFL recognised early the usefulness of the bazaar to advance their cause, and organised a bazaar called the Great Suffrage Bazaar. The event was opened by Lady Grove (1863–1926), a writer and a member of both the NUWSS and the WSPU.

The Suffrage Atelier, an organisation of professional and amateur artists involved in the Arts and Crafts movement, was responsible for the decorations at the Great Suffrage Bazaar in 1908, the Green, White and Gold Fair and the Yule-Tide Festival in 1909. Suffrage Atelier members included Laurence Housman and Clemence Housman (1861–1955) who designed the WSPU procession in 1910. Many of the Suffrage Atelier artists were trained in crafts. Very few records of the Suffrage Atelier survive, but according to a leaflet held by the Women's Library, the Atelier contributed to the movement:

1. By sending in designs for Cartoons, suitable for the general press, or for those papers especially devoted to the woman's movement, also by submitting designs for Post Cards, Posters, etc. for publication by the Suffrage Atelier.
2. By undertaking to send pictures, statuary, Black and White work, craft work to any

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<sup>27</sup> For example, tea pots, butter dishes, mirrors, handkerchiefs, wall papers, and pipes with Queen Victoria's portrait were sold at the Golden Jubilee in 1887.

<sup>28</sup> Penny Sparke, *As Long As Its Pink: Sexual Politics of Taste*, (London: Pandora Press, 1995).

exhibition held by the Suffrage Atelier.

3. By volunteering to be responsible for a certain amount of recreational work. This may be carried on at home and will be quite acceptable even if only of temporary assistance. Such as the recreational work in connection with any Exhibition to be undertaken by the Society.

4. By helping to place our post cards and other publications by (a) selling them privately (b) introducing them to some shop or local branch of the Suffrage Society (c) volunteering to sell them at any Suffrage meeting. Post cards are supplied to members at wholesale rates.

5. By taking part in any decorative scheme undertaken by the Suffrage Atelier, such as a Pageant, or the decoration of a Hall.

6. By collecting funds for the Society.

7. By obtaining members for the Society.

8. By forming Local Branches.

9. By sending suitable suggestions for cartoons, cuttings from the press, quotations from books, etc. It would be particularly valuable if members would undertake to read certain papers and to forward all cuttings from the same of interest to the woman's movement.

10. By volunteering press notices for the Society.

11. By introducing our cartoons to the notice of Editors, with a view to getting them published in the press.

12. By sending pictorial political illustrations, photographs, and cartoons appearing in papers or elsewhere for reference.

13. By lending Drawing-room or Studio for meetings or Exhibitions, & by acting [as] Hostess or volunteering for musical entertainment or recitals on these occasions.

14. By sending any artistic work suitable for selling at the Art stall on the occasion of the Exhibition to be held May 13<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> by the W.S.P.U. These contributions should be sent to the Hon. Secretary of the Suffrage Atelier at least a week before May 13<sup>th</sup>.

15. By sending any original written matter suitable for pictorial illustrations, intended for publications in the form of cartoons, pamphlets, verses, dialogues, magazine articles – only MSS intended for illustration are invited.

16. By supplying the Society with hand printed publications – made from wood blocks, etchings, stencil plates etc.

17. By organizing Local meetings for the encouragement of Stencilling, wood engraving, etc, in order that members may learn or improve themselves in the art of printing by hand.<sup>29</sup>

As detailed in the list above, the Suffrage Atelier provided help with visual aspects of the movement. It helped to decorate the stalls, and on some occasions it had its own stalls (and sometimes exhibitions) selling members' artwork.

The Green, White and Gold Fair was opened on 15 April 1909 at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, by the great actress Ellen Terry. Her presence was so noteworthy that the *Daily Chronicle* included her photograph in an article about the fair (see Figure 5-2). Terry wore the costume of a fifteenth-century lady of rank: 'a sweeping robe of pale green, enriched with much gold embroidery and half-veiled by a long cloak of a dull gold colour'.<sup>30</sup> In Figure 5-2, Eve Balfour, wife of famous Australian portrait painter James Lawson Balfour (1870–1966), is dressed as mother of King Alfred the Great, and Muriel Matters (1877–1969), an Australian actress, is dressed as Joan of Arc, indicating the popularity of historical representations of women.<sup>31</sup> Here, women in their traditional role as mothers and militant woman are depicted alongside each other. The WFL was placing equal value on the representations of mothers and militant women, suggesting both were suffragists.

Not only were the costumes in the WFL colours of green, white and gold but also the hall

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<sup>29</sup> 'Suffrage Atelier Constitution', Suffrage Atelier Papers, 2/LSWE/12/4, Women's Library.

<sup>30</sup> 'The Suffragette Bazaar at the Caxton Hall', *The Daily Chronicle*, 16 April 1909. While the *Daily Chronicle* reports that the decorative scheme of the Green, White, and Gold Fair was the fifteenth century, *Manchester Guardian* states the idea was 'to represent a street fair of the twelfth century, the period being chosen on the assumption that women enjoyed more political freedom then than now'. 'Our London Correspondence', *Manchester Guardian*, 13 Feb 1909: 8.

<sup>31</sup> 'The Suffragette Bazaar at the Caxton Hall', *The Daily Chronicle*, 16 April 1909.

decorations. Many women's suffrage societies in this period had tried to establish their own visual identities by promoting their colours in various ways.<sup>32</sup> *The Times* reports, 'the hall was tastefully decorated with the colours of the league, and suspended from the ceiling were the fifty-seven banners for those members who have been imprisoned in Holloway'.<sup>33</sup> The hall was decorated as 'a daffodil paradise', indicating the presence of various flowers in WFL colours.<sup>34</sup> All the volunteers at the stalls and the waitresses were dressed in fifteenth-century costumes, and according to the *Daily Chronicle*, that period was a 'golden age' when a 'woman in England is believed to have enjoyed a far more dignified and powerful position than at the present time'.<sup>35</sup> The 57 banners representing the Holloway prisoners resembled the banners of the knights and gave the hall a medieval atmosphere. The stalls were also decorated with wreaths of white, gold and green flowers, symbolising the WFL.

Edith Craig designed decorations with the colours of the WFL (see Figure 5-3). She was the daughter of Ellen Terry and Edward William Godwin (1833–1886), a famous architect. Craig was a member of the AFL and the Suffrage Atelier, as well as a theatre director, producer, actress and costume designer.<sup>36</sup> She often made costumes for AFL performances. Godwin was a leading figure in the Arts and Crafts movement who also designed theatrical costumes and sceneries. Holledge describes Godwin as an established architect and a leader of the aesthetic movement. After the age of three years, Craig never saw her father again, but she recalled that Godwin refused to give her 'rubbishy picture books' and mechanical toys, which were 'realistic and common'. Later, Henry Irving (1838–1905), an actor–manager at the Lyceum and Terry's lover, came to influence Craig artistically and provided her with some schooling in the production of plays.<sup>37</sup>

Craig directed and designed the costumes for *A Pageant of Great Women*, one of the most popular

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<sup>32</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>33</sup> 'Woman Suffrage', *The Times*, 16 April 1909: 7.

<sup>34</sup> 'The Suffragette Bazaar at the Caxton Hall', *The Daily Chronicle*, 16 April 1909, newspaper cuttings in Maude Arncliffe Sennett Collection.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Edith Craig was involved in the production of the AFL. See Chapter 4 of this thesis.

<sup>37</sup> Holledge, *Innocent Flowers*, 106.

pageants performed for the women's suffrage movement. Her contribution to the visual images of the suffrage movement was invaluable. Because of her expertise in producing plays, her skill at presenting visual representations was extremely useful. The theme of the Green, White and Gold Fair, which Craig decorated, was a fifteenth-century setting. Incorporating her costumes from *A Pageant of Great Women*, Craig provided the suffrage movement with a nostalgic and historical image of women, creating an atmosphere from the old world. As a member of the Suffrage Atelier, Craig was influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement. Historical decorations were also used in the 1911 WSPU Christmas Fair and Fête, which is discussed later in this chapter. Both the WSPU and the WFL attempted to create bazaars and exhibitions with an atmosphere of old-world charm, where the influences of a modern industrial society could not be seen.

As stated earlier, the development of an industrial society and the lack of women's suffrage appeared to be linked in the consciousness of WSPU and WFL supporters. Many women's suffrage supporters considered the 1832 Reform Act, in which the term 'male persons' was used, instead of 'persons', to be a clear statement that women had no place in politics.

Stalls selling food and children's toys were commonplace at the Yule-Tide Festival and the Green, White and Gold Fair. By selling children's toys, the societies tried to cater to the needs of mothers. Food stalls were used to highlight the culinary skills of suffragettes and to counter the unfeminine images promoted by newspapers and magazines such as *Punch*. In 1909, the WFL held 'Votes for Cooking' competitions, selling cakes, jams, breads and sweets made by suffragettes. Not only sweet stalls held competitions. There was also a competition for vegetarian dishes. Competitors cooked vegetarian dishes, and the public were invited to pay 6d each to sample the dish and cast a vote. At the WFL White, Green and Gold Fair in 1909, there were competitions for cooking, blouse-making, household and table linens, fancy-goods and laces.<sup>38</sup> The prize was one guinea for the American-style blouse, shirt blouse, fringed blouse, children's frock, baby's frock and baby bonnet, and a half guinea for the cushion cover in WFL

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<sup>38</sup> *Programme of the Green, White, and Gold Fair*, 7-9 in Maude Arncliffe Sennett Collection, The British Library.



colours, table centrepiece with embroidery, and white afternoon-tea cloth.<sup>39</sup>

To attract consumers, the WFL also invited famous authors to provide their autographs. As with the WFL Green, White, and Gold Fair of 1909, a number of famous authors signed and donated their books at the WSPU's Christmas Fair in 1912. One of them was William de Morgan (1839–1917), potter and designer of the Arts and Crafts movement, donating three of his novels.<sup>40</sup> Both the WSPU and the WFL succeeded in providing something special, something that could be purchased only at the suffrage bazaars.

In November 1912, the WFL was able to organise an event which differed slightly from the previous WFL bazaars. It was called the International Suffrage Fair, and it sold goods from 34 countries all over the world.<sup>41</sup> It was an attempt to show that women from all over the world banded together by 'good fellowship and common understanding'.<sup>42</sup> However, it also displayed Britain's position as the master of the British Empire as there were stalls by countries such as India and Burma. While the previous WFL bazaars tried to focus on showing nostalgic Britain, the International Suffrage Fair focused on presenting Britain in the context of the internationalisation. By doing so, it appealed to the public that woman suffrage was the international issue and Britain was one of the countries leading other unenfranchised countries to gain suffrage.

Even though the scheme had changed, the way the WFL decorated and organised the bazaar did not. The hall was decorated in the colours of the WFL, and there were flags of different countries hung from the stalls (See Figure 5-4). The international character was displayed not only by goods and

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<sup>39</sup> Leaflet 'Votes for Women Prize Competition in Connection with the Green, White and Gold Fair', 1909 in Mary Gawthorpe Collection, Series 3, Box 6, Folder 10, Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labour Archives, New York University.

<sup>40</sup> 'Where to Buy Your Yuletide Gifts,' *The Suffragette*, 6 Dec 1912: 112.

<sup>41</sup> 'The International Suffrage Fair', *The Vote*, 16 Nov 1912: 40. Among those nations, there were of course countries related to the British Empire such as India, Burma, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Canada. Asian countries were represented by Japan and China. There were also many European countries and countries from the Middle East such as Egypt and Persia.

<sup>42</sup> C Despard, *The Vote*, 16 Nov 1912: 46.

decorations but also by costumes worn by the staffs. According to *The Vote*, more than 200 costumes were prepared, which had ‘characteristic of the twenty or thirty nations’.<sup>43</sup> Women represented Turkey, Persia and Egypt were half-veiled. There were ‘rough riders of New Zealand, the independent Australians, the Canadian skaters, and South African darkies’, and Japan, India and China ‘emphasized the oriental note’. In addition, the stall holders wore ‘green embroidered jibbabs, with gold and white vests’.<sup>44</sup> This may have added an oriental flavour to the atmosphere.<sup>45</sup> *The Vote* also reports that some WFL members wearing those international costumes haunted the wake of Lord Mayor’s Show on 9 November 1912 which attracted huge public attention.<sup>46</sup> As it is clear from this incident, publicity was one of the major aims of the bazaar. But Despard, the president of the WFL, also announced that one of the aims of the bazaar was to bring ‘the joy’ that was ‘the heart of the suffrage movement’ back.<sup>47</sup> By organising bazaars, the WFL was entertaining the public as well as enjoying themselves.

### 5.2.2 WSPU Bazaars

The central aim of women’s suffrage societies in their visual strategy was to establish their own visual identities. The colours of the WSPU were green, white and purple. These colours were promoted extensively in their impressive processions and bazaars.<sup>48</sup>

For the 1909 Women’s Exhibition, Sylvia Pankhurst was responsible for the decoration of the halls (see Figure 5-5). Trained at the Royal College of Art, her contributions to the WSPU through her designs and artwork are acknowledged by historians as bestowing a ‘coherent visual identity’ to the

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<sup>43</sup> JE Snow, ‘The Organiser: An Impression’, *The Vote*, 9 Nov 1912: 12.

<sup>44</sup> ‘The International Suffrage Fair: A Retrospect’, *The Vote*, 23 Nov 1912: 59. According to *The Vote*, all the costumes were designed by Miss Ellen Watson. There is no information on her, except her name.

<sup>45</sup> In December 1912, the NUWSS held the Oriental Fête and Bazaar. The NUWSS also prepared oriental costumes. See Figure 5-20.

<sup>46</sup> ‘The International Suffrage Fair’, *The Vote*, 16 Nov 1912: 38.

<sup>47</sup> C Despard, *The Vote*, 16 Nov 1912: 46.

<sup>48</sup> See Chapter 3.

WSPU.<sup>49</sup> She decorated the halls with murals drawn on mobile panels. Because of their portability, the panels were used repeatedly for other occasions. Figure 5-6 is a photograph of the 1911 Christmas Fair and Fête held at Portman Rooms in Baker Street. In the background, Pankhurst's murals are visible, once again being used as decoration. Her murals were used to create a consistent atmosphere at various WSPU bazaars. They were used on several occasions and were able to convey a coherent message.

On one mural, Pankhurst drew two angelic figures and a woman carrying a sheaf of grain (see Figure 5-7). The decorative use of grapes and vines to surround the three female figures reflected the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement, which considered nature beautiful. Opposite the three female figures, a woman can be observed sowing the seeds of women's suffrage (see Figure 5-8(a)). The woman in Figure 5-7 reaps the fruit that sprung from the seeds. It was beautifully drawn and stencilled in the colours of the WSPU.<sup>50</sup> The female sowing the seeds is 'stepping forward and looking into the unknown future',<sup>51</sup> symbolising the position of the WSPU. The design for this woman was used in other WSPU suffrage products (see Figure 5-8 (b)).

The other image that appeared in the Women's Exhibition and later used in various other WSPU-related goods was an image of an angel blowing a trumpet. This image appeared on the Women's Exhibition programme (see Figure 5-9). Badges and china items with this image were sold at WSPU bazaars and stores.

According to Tickner, Sylvia Pankhurst's illustrations were very much influenced by Walter Crane, and his influence was most evident in the WSPU visual designs. Crane was a leading figure in the Arts and Crafts movement, and his work was a combination of 'elements from Pre-Raphaelitism, medieval illumination and Japanese prints'.<sup>52</sup> Crane was also a Fabian socialist who provided various socialist iconographies. According to Kristina Huneault, Crane often depicted labour using female figures as the

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<sup>49</sup> Atkinson, *The Suffragettes in Pictures*, 19.

<sup>50</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 32.

<sup>51</sup> *Programme of the Women's Exhibition*, 33 in The Suffragette Fellowship Collection, Museum of London.

<sup>52</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 32.

‘vernacular of allegorical types’,<sup>53</sup> whereas Hobsbawm believes that man ‘represents industrial labour’ in other socialist representations.<sup>54</sup> The cover illustration of *Cartoons for the Cause* in 1896 shows a Crane wood engraving of ‘Liberty’ holding a spear and sowing seeds of socialism (see Figure 5-10). Here, ‘Liberty’ is wearing a Phrygian cap, a political symbol of freedom, which was first used during the French Revolution.

When Sylvia Pankhurst designed a membership card for the WSPU early in the movement, she drew working-class women with strong arms and virile bodies (see Figure 5-11). However, as the movement progress, her design for the WSPU changed to depicting allegorical women as she gradually adopted Crane’s style of using attractive women in designs.<sup>55</sup>

Sylvia Pankhurst adapted these images of women sowing seeds for use in suffrage imagery (see Figure 5-8 (b)).<sup>56</sup> Comparing Crane’s and Pankhurst’s imagery, Pankhurst’s women appear more feminine than Crane’s ‘Liberty’. Perhaps this is because Crane used bolder lines in his wood engraving to characterise the boldness of ‘Liberty’. Pankhurst used curved and fine lines. Pankhurst’s depiction is more allegorical; the woman is surrounded by green leaves, three pigeons and two almond trees, which creates an ethereal atmosphere emphasised by the ‘subdued tones of the Union’s colours’.<sup>57</sup> While Crane’s influence can be observed in Pankhurst’s work, her designs are more feminine.

Even with regard to refreshments, all equipment, including tea sets used when serving tea to guests displayed the colours of the WSPU. According to *Votes for Women*, the Irish linen tablecloths were also in WSPU colours.<sup>58</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst’s image of an angel blowing a trumpet (this image was also

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<sup>53</sup> Kristina Huneault, *Difficult Subjects: Working Women and Visual Culture, Britain 1880-1914* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate Pub. Co, 2002), 157.

<sup>54</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Man and Woman in Socialist Iconography,’ *History Workshop Journal* 6.1 (1978): 126.

<sup>55</sup> For Walter Crane’s designs for socialism, see Yasuko Suga, ‘Shakai Ha Dezainn De Kawarunoka- Worutā Kureinn Saikō’, 226-246 in *Bikutoriachou No Bunngai To Shakaikairyō*, Hidetada Mukai, Ariyuki Konndou eds., (Tokyo: Otowashoboutsurumi Shotenn, 2011).

<sup>56</sup> See Figures. 4-5 and 4-7.

<sup>57</sup> ‘At the Woman’s Exhibition, Knightsbridge,’ *Votes for Women*, 14 May 1909: 657.

<sup>58</sup> ‘The Woman’s Exhibition, 1909’ *Votes for Women*, 16 April 1909: 550.

used in socialist imagery) decorated the china. Figure 5-12 shows the tea set used in the refreshments section of the bazaar, which were to be sold at the end of the exhibition. *Votes for Women* announced: 'We want this department to be one of the chief features of attraction at the Exhibition'. To make it attractive, the WSPU ensured the 'tea girls' who served tea at the refreshments section were in the WSPU colours wearing 'pretty green dresses, with white muslin aprons and a touch of purple.'<sup>59</sup>

Sylvia Pankhurst also designed 'Fashions of the Fair'. In 1911, the WSPU organised the Christmas Fair and Fête; the design was to be a replication of an English village at the turn of the nineteenth century. Sylvia Pankhurst explained that this period was chosen because '[i]t was the time of the French Revolution; it was the time of Mary Wollstonecraft, Johanna Baillie, Fanny Burney, Maria Edgeworth, Elizabeth Fry, and Hannah More, all belong to this period. Jane Austen's first novel was published in 1811'.<sup>60</sup> All these historical women had featured in NUWSS processions and in the popular suffrage play *A Pageant of Great Women*.<sup>61</sup> Thus, both militant and non-militant women's suffrage societies used representations of historical women.

For the Christmas Fair and Fête, an old English village was created using costumes and signboards above the stalls (see Figure 5-13). Since the nineteenth century, a love of the countryside had emerged, and it was connected with Englishness.<sup>62</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, William Morris often expressed his love of nature, particularly his love for the medieval countryside as described in his book *News from Nowhere*.<sup>63</sup> The Arts and Crafts movement, which was influenced by Morris, also interpreted the countryside as a place of beauty.<sup>64</sup>

In *Votes for Women*, Sylvia Pankhurst explained that this was not only the era when 'the great

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<sup>59</sup> 'The Woman's Exhibition', *Votes for Women*, 2 April 1909: 499.

<sup>60</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, 'Fashions of the Fair', *Votes for Women*, 6 Oct 1911: 4.

<sup>61</sup> A popular suffrage play *A Pageant of Great Women* was called *A Pageant of Famous Women* when it was first performed by the AFL in 1909. See Chapter 3 of this thesis.

<sup>62</sup> Yasuko Suga, *Igirisu No Shakai To Dezainn: Morisu To Modanizumu No Seijigaku (British Society and Design: The Politics of Representing Morris and Modernism)*, (Tokyo: Sairyuusha, 2005), 105-108.

<sup>63</sup> William Morris, *News from Nowhere* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1995[1890]).

<sup>64</sup> Yasuko Suga, *Igirisu No Shakai To Dezainn: Morisu To Modanizumu No Seijigaku*, 105-108

ideals for social and economic freedom [were] born, but this was the era also of dress reform. ... English ladies of the period discarded their wigs, hair powder, tight-lacing, hoops, and other deformities, and sought instead simple and graceful lines.’<sup>65</sup> Pankhurst’s comments are reminiscent of the Aesthetic movement, which was influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites. Pre-Raphaelite artists such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882) used ‘simple and graceful lines’ when drawing women, emphasising femininity.<sup>66</sup> In the nineteenth century, there was a revival of classicism. Greek forms were popular in art in the 1860s and 70s.<sup>67</sup> The Aesthetic movement promoted Grecian clothing, which was greatly influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites. Grecian clothing was worn with no corsets, which guaranteed freedom of movement, and emphasised the natural shape and beauty of women.<sup>68</sup> It was not only the Aesthetic movement that promoted Grecian clothing. Rational dress reformers also fostered Greek style clothing as both healthy and beautiful.<sup>69</sup> In the WSPU Christmas Fair and Fête, simple and graceful lines of dress helped to convey women’s freedom and to emphasise feminine beauty.

Figure 5-14 shows five designs of dress worn in the WSPU Christmas Fair and Fête. According to Sylvia Pankhurst, the dresses were in ‘less artificial and more beautiful and healthful style’.<sup>70</sup> Here, the Arts and Crafts movement’s abhorrence for machine-made objects can be observed. Less artificial meant handmade and more natural, which was more beautiful, a belief held by Morris, the ideological godfather of the Arts and Crafts movement. The costumes for the fair were handmade by women.

The WSPU colours were used most effectively in the five costumes which were designed by Sylvia (see Figure 5-14). For the pannier costume,<sup>71</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst stated:

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<sup>65</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, ‘Fashions of the Fair’, *Votes for Women*, 6 Oct 1911: 4.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Debbie Challis, ‘Fashioning Archaeology into Art: Greek Sculpture, Dress Reform and Health in the 1880s,’ *Journal of Literature and Science*, 5. 1. (2012): 57.

<sup>68</sup> Riina Toya, *Shitaghi No Tannjyō (The Birth of Underwear)*, (Tokyo: Koudansha, 2000), 132-133, 136-137. See also Edwina Ehrman, ‘Women’s Dress’ in *The Cult of Beauty: The Victorian Avant-Garde 1860-1900*, Stephen Calloway, Lynn Federle Orr eds. (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 2012), 206-207.

<sup>69</sup> Challis, ‘Fashioning Archaeology into Art: Greek Sculpture, Dress Reform and Health in the 1880s,’ 61-62.

<sup>70</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, ‘Fashions of the Fair’, *Votes for Women*, 6 Oct 1911: 4.

<sup>71</sup> One of the major characteristics of the pannier costume is that materials of the overskirt are bunched around

In choosing the materials for their dresses, stall holders should always include some purple, white and green, though these colours should not be too adhered to, as the admixture of other colours increases the brilliancy of the general effect and enhances the beauty of the Union's three chosen colours. The lady in Illustration 2 is supposed to be wearing a straw hat with purple ribbon of rather crimson tinge, a purple skirt, white stockings, a green bodice and overskirt, a white apron, a fold of white linen finishing the sleeves, and a fichu which might either be purple or of some figured material. The same costume would look well if the bodice and overskirt were of brilliantly patterned chintz, with a skirt of plain material below. The neckerchief might be either of white or light coloured material.<sup>72</sup>

The decorative theme of an old English village was chosen for the Christmas Fair and Fête; at the Garden Fair the theme focused on nature. *The Suffragette* described the Garden Fair and noted how 'the visitor is made to feel the old world atmosphere of some bedecked garden'.<sup>73</sup>

The WSPU colours were again used in the 1912 WSPU Garden Fair, according to a country member of the society:

The whole place is gaily decorated with evergreens, while at the first glance the prevailing colour on the crowded stalls seems to be purple; these against the background of white walls and pillars immediately suggest that the whole is a beautiful scheme of purple, white and green.<sup>74</sup>

The trees represented the WSPU green, the walls and pillars the WSPU white and the stalls were coloured WSPU purple. As the name suggests, the Garden Fair was full of flowers, which created an atmosphere of 'brightness and gaiety'.<sup>75</sup> Each stall had its own floral emblem, for example, the emblem of the antique

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women's hips. See illustrations 2 and 3 in Fig. 5-14.

<sup>72</sup> Pankhurst, 'Fashions of the Fair', *Votes for Women*, 6 October 1911: 4.

<sup>73</sup> 'Suffragette Summer Festival,' *The Suffragette*, 6 June 1913: 560.

<sup>74</sup> 'A Country Member's Impressions of the Fair,' *The Suffragette*, 20 Dec 1912: 144.

<sup>75</sup> 'Suffragette Summer Festival,' *The Suffragette*, 6 June 1913: 560.

stall was a periwinkle.<sup>76</sup> The interior of the Empress Room at the Royal Palace Hotel and the streets outside were decorated with flowers. Great effort was made to re-create the atmosphere of an old English village. An authentic June hay cart decorated with a wreath of red roses on its side was driven along Holborn, Oxford and Regent Streets, Piccadilly, and Park Lane. The cart then travelled back to Oxford and Regent Streets, passed Charing Cross via the Strand to Kingsway and finally arrived at Lincoln's Inn House. Atop the cart, showering roses on the spectators were 'four bonny village maidens in linen gowns and sun-bonnets'.<sup>77</sup>

The aim of the promotional methods used by the WSPU in their bazaars and exhibitions was to create a spectacle. Such methods included the hay cart ride of the 1913 Garden Fair, maypole dancing and the Drum and Fife Band that marched the streets of London during the 1909 Women's Exhibition (see Figures 5-15 & 5-16). The maypole dance is a traditional dance conducted around a May pole during May-time celebrations.<sup>78</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, the socialist movement utilised the May Day, '[t]he ancient symbolism of spring', to celebrate labour.<sup>79</sup> The WSPU borrowed from this to use the maypole dance to celebrate women. The dance expressed gaiety, softness and femininity, and was a visual representation used repeatedly by the women's suffrage movement.<sup>80</sup> In Figure 5-15, young girls wear white dresses and the Votes for Women silk scarves of green, white and purple, creating an atmosphere of nostalgia for the old days. In contrast, the Drum and Fife Band of Figure 5-16 suggests the militancy of the WSPU, with militaristic costumes in WSPU colours. The band was intended to demonstrate visually the seriousness, the control, the rationality and the modernity of the WSPU. The use of these two promotional

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<sup>76</sup> 'All in a Garden Fair', *The Suffragette*, 30 May 1913: 545. For example, periwinkle was the emblem for antique stall, cornflower for 'Yankee Notions' stall, pansy for book stall, nasturtium for basket stall, kingcup for children's clothing and underlinen stall. Every stall has floral emblem, and side shows had leaf emblem.

<sup>77</sup> 'Roses, Roses, All the Way,' *The Suffragette*, 6 June 1913: 561.

<sup>78</sup> 'May pole dance', *Oxford English Dictionary* [<http://dictionary.oed.com/>].

<sup>79</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, 'Mass-producing Traditions – Europe, 1870-1914', 284-285 in *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2012[1983]).

<sup>80</sup> On 2 May 1914, the WSPU organised Grand May Day Procession to advertise the suffrage magazine, *The Suffragette*. The May Pole was one of the main attractions of the procession. *The Suffragette*, 8 May 1914: 82.



methods highlights the visual conflict in promoting feminine women and militant women, which were contradictory representations of women.

With its decorative schemes, the WSPU attempted to create an atmosphere suggesting a bygone era and nostalgia for the old days. In contrast, the goods for sale appealed to the needs of the modern woman. At the Garden Fair in 1913, the WSPU boasted, 'None of the usual "bazaar" articles are to be seen, but from cotton frocks and summer hats, to hairpins and note-paper, all that a modern woman wants is to be found'.<sup>81</sup> Although nothing other than the colours of the WSPU seemed to suggest militancy at the Garden Fair, a statue of Joan of Arc was placed in the centre of the garden. According to Christabel Pankhurst, she was the 'militant women's ideal'.<sup>82</sup>

The stalls at the Garden Fair sold various items: antiques, 'Yankee notions', books, baskets, children's clothing, underlinens, hats, practical items, summer frocks, blouses, sweets, toys, farm produce and flowers.<sup>83</sup> A parcel and information stall was established to organise deliveries. At the antique stall, 'fine old Chinese embroideries', 'old china', a necklace of Venetian beads and brooches of blue-green South American beetles were sold. The 'Yankee notions' stall sold 'superior bodkins', but its main attraction was its stock of every kind of pincushion. The Women's Press stall sold suffrage goods such as jewellery with amethysts, pearls and chrysoprase (symbolising WSPU colours), china, cigarettes and Joan of Arc crested paper.<sup>84</sup> The Women's Press always prepared various suffrage-related souvenirs. According to an advertisement in *Votes for Women*, there were numerous suffrage goods available at the Women's Press Christmas Bazaar in 1910: dainty dolls dressed in WSPU colours; suffragette crackers; brooches; green, white and purple buckles and buttons; WSPU calendars; daintily packed chocolates accompanied by a photo of Mrs or Miss Pankhurst; and homemade sweets decorated with the WSPU medallion. The medallions, photos and goods bearing WSPU colours were obviously propaganda items made to promote

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<sup>81</sup> 'Suffragette Summer Festival', *The Suffragette*, 6 June 1913: 560.

<sup>82</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, 'Joan of Arc', *The Suffragette*, n.d. May 1913.

<sup>83</sup> 'All in Garden Fair', *The Suffragette*, 30 May 1913: 540. 'Yankee notions' means goods from the United States.

<sup>84</sup> 'The Suffragette Summer Festival', *The Suffragette*, 6 June 1913: 560. The Women's Press was the WSPU merchandise shop and hosted the 1910 Christmas Bazaar.

the WSPU.<sup>85</sup> However, goods not containing such obvious visual messages were also propagandist.

The stalls selling ladies' and children's clothing, sweets, books, children's toys and household linens were almost always organised by the women's suffrage organisations (see Figure 5-17). Sweets sold at the sweet stalls were usually made by the members of that particular organisation. To encourage sweet making, the organisations held competitions and volunteers were awarded prizes for their efforts.<sup>86</sup>

At the toy stall at the WSPU Christmas Fair and Fête in 1911, four prizes were offered for the best-dressed doll and the most charming toy. The first prize was a bound volume of *Votes for Women* and second prize was a volume of *The Suffragette* written by Sylvia Pankhurst.<sup>87</sup> The prizes, which had little monetary value, were not highly sought; instead, the inducement for competitors to provide sweets or toys was the honour and praise associated with winning. The praise was recognition both of their feminine accomplishments in cooking and sewing and of their contribution to the cause.

The quality of the goods gathered from the members was carefully examined. In the WSPU especially, second-hand books were not acceptable. As such, Miss Evelyn Sharp (1869–1955), the woman responsible for the bookstall at the 1911 Christmas Fair and Fête, suggested that booksellers and publishers be approached for the donation of books. A number of publishers, such as Mr William Heinemann, Messrs. Putnam's Sons and Messrs. Curtis and Davison, agreed to her request.<sup>88</sup>

It was quite common for suffrage societies to approach business firms for donations. For businesses, donating to the cause provided an opportunity to advertise, while for the suffrage societies it was a way to acquire goods they could sell. Famous London stores such as Liberty, Derry & Toms, Peter Robinson's, and fashionable milliners, such as Elizabeth of South Molton Street and Rose of Bond Street, donated hats, which were sold at the Women's Exhibition in May 1909 (see Figure 5-18).<sup>89</sup> Figure 5-18 shows, immediately behind Mrs Pankhurst, the fashionable hats that were likely to have appeared in the

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<sup>85</sup> 'The Women's Press Christmas Bazaar', *Votes for Women*, 18 Nov 1910: 116.

<sup>86</sup> 'Christmas Fair and Fête, Dec. 4 to 9', *Votes for Women*, 3 Nov 1911: 75.

<sup>87</sup> *Votes for Women*, 3 Nov 1911: 75.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Diane Atkinson, *Suffragettes in the Purple White & Green: London 1906-14* (London: Museum of London, 1992),

fashion plates of women's journals such as *The Queen*. Other items were donated by various businesses. For example, in 1912, *The Suffragette* publicised the donation of cigarettes by Abdulla and Co. and of gingerbread by Messrs Lyons.<sup>90</sup>

WFL and WSPU bazaars were often held immediately prior to the Christmas season to encourage women to purchase Christmas presents at the bazaars. In both *Votes for Women* and *The Suffragette*, there were often articles encouraging women to buy Christmas presents at bazaars. Suffrage Christmas cards were also sold at the bazaars. Figure 5-19 shows one such Christmas card, with Santa Claus, also known as Saint Nicholas, in white, green and purple, the colours of the WSPU. The WSPU did not provide eccentric commodities as you can see from the Santa Claus Christmas card. There were only a touch of suffrage colours attached. Even the practice of exchanging Christmas cards could be a way to propagate the cause.

Stalls selling children's food and children's clothing had a special propagandist role at bazaars: they highlighted suffragettes as mothers who cared for their children.

*The Suffragette* announced in 1912:

The special attention that has been paid to the wants of the children must give food for reflection to the visitor who has drawn his or her ideas of Suffragettes from imaginative accounts in the daily Press. The stall for children's clothing has been doing a fine trade in tiny frocks, under-garments, and little warm, cosy woollies, made with loving care by members, many of them not 'disappointed spinsters', but young mothers with little families of their own.<sup>91</sup>

Stalls selling children's clothing and toys, sweets, ladies' fashions, and household linens were nearly always included at suffrage bazaars, an indication of how successfully they were managing the event. The inclusion of these stalls promoted a particular image of women as responsible for the food, clothing and furnishings of the household. In other words, the funding of women's suffrage societies,

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<sup>90</sup> 'Where to Buy Your Yuletide Gifts,' *The Suffragette*, 6 Dec 1912: 112. At the Garden Fair of 1913, the WSPU put the list of the milliners which donated their goods on *The Suffragette*. 'Suffragette Summer Festival', *The Suffragette*, 6 July 1913: 560.

<sup>91</sup> 'Come to Our Christmas Fair', *The Suffragette*, 13 Dec 1912: 128.

especially the two militant societies—the WSPU and the WFL—was based on the purchases of female consumers who were responsible for shopping for household goods. In a sense, women's suffrage organisations did not challenge the Victorian gender roles. By depending on the patronage of those women, the organisations emphasised the traditional roles of women as mothers and wives and accepted those roles as essentially inherent to women.

The decorations of the bazaars and exhibitions were greatly influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and, therefore, a yearning and respect for the old days, for a pre-industrial society, were strongly represented. The WSPU appeared to be critical of the modern industrial society, a society where women's suffrage was not welcome. However, as evidenced by the types of stalls at its bazaars, we can infer that the WSPU perceived the typical middle-class woman of the period as a mother, a caretaker of her home, and a fashionable woman who enjoyed shopping.

### 5.2.3 NUWSS Bazaars

The first major NUWSS bazaar was the Oriental Fête and Bazaar, held 5–7 December 1912, in the Empress Room at the Royal Palace Hotel, Kensington. It was a lavish event as numerous prestigious names were listed as patronesses such as the Duchess of Marlborough, Princess Catherine Duleep Singh, and Countess De La Warr.<sup>92</sup> The *Souvenir Programme of the Oriental Fête and Bazaar* shows a gate with

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<sup>92</sup> Other patronesses were Princess Mele-Barese, the Lady Frances Balfour, the Countess of Meath, the Countess of Fingall, Countess of Arran, Countess of Malmesbury, the Countess of Selborne, the Countess of Lytton, the Countess of Brassey, the Lady Hermione Blackwood, the Lady Laura Ridding, the Viscountess Dillon, the Lady Betty Balfour, the Lady Maud Parry, the Lady Emily Wyndham Quin, the Lady Robert Cecil, the Lady Aberconway, the Lady Courtney of Penwith, the Lady Cowdray, Catherine Lady Decies, the Lady Emmott, the Lady Farrer, the Lady Ilkeston, Ellen Lady Inchiquin, the Lady Knightley of Fawsley, the Dowager Lady O'Hagan, the Lady Rayleigh, the Lady St. Helier, the Hon. Lady Grey-Egerton, the Hon. Lady Johnston, the Hon. Lady Ponsonby, the Hon. Lady Shelley, the Hon. Mrs. Bertrand Russell, the Hon. Mrs. Tollemache, the Hon. Mrs George Wilkinson, Lady Arnott, Emily Lady Lawrence, Lady Pollock, Lady Barlow, Lady Cotton-Jodrell, Lady Scott Moncrieff, Lady Roberts, Lady Strachey, Lady Turner, Lady Wilson, Mrs. Anstruther, Miss Margaret Ashton, Mrs John Boyd-Carpenter, Miss Emily Davies, Mrs Henry Fawcett, Mrs H. Fetherstonhaugh Frampton, Mrs Fox-Strangways, Mrs Freeman, Mrs Kendal, Mrs Massy-Leech, Mrs Ronald McNeill, Mrs Rowaland Prothero, Mrs Runciman and Mrs G. F. Watts. Many of them were popular philanthropists. Some of them were social reformers such as Mrs G. F. Watts (1849-1938), a social reformer,

a man inviting women to the other world of the Orient (See Figure 5-20). The London Society for Women's Suffrage was responsible for organising the bazaar.<sup>93</sup> Painter Emmeline Deane (c.1858–1944) wrote to Philippa Strachey (1872–1968), 'I do not know if it is—an original idea. Anyhow I have not heard of it before.'<sup>94</sup> In search for originality, the NUWSS used the theme Orient to attract the public.

Interest in the Orient could be observed in the paintings, architecture, product designs, music and plays of the period. Famous painters, such as Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema (1836–1912), used oriental settings in their paintings, as did many Pre-Raphaelite painters. It was not only in high-art that an oriental influence could be observed. Historian JM MacKenzie comments that popular orientalism flourished at exhibitions, theatres and in recreational and educational venues in the nineteenth century.<sup>95</sup> The Oriental style was applied in the mass entertainment venues such as the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly (est. 1812), Royal Panopticon at Leicester Square (est. 1854), and interior designs of the Drury Lane Theatre and the Adelphi. According to MacKenzie, by the twentieth century, the Orientalism became the term to represent leisure and entertainment.<sup>96</sup> The NUWSS chose this trend to attract middle-class affluent women.

In her letter to Philippa Strachey, the secretary of the London Society for Women's Suffrage, Deane revealed her passion to create 'as near as possible', the streets of the Orient inside the Empress Room:

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craftswoman and a second wife of painter George Frederick Watts (1817–1904). *Souvenir Programme of the Oriental Fête and Bazaar*, 7 in Artists' Suffrage League Papers, 2ASL/08/01, Women's Library.

<sup>93</sup> Mrs Clive Bell (1879–1961), Roger Fry (1866–1934), and Duncan Grant, who were the members of the Bloomsbury Group, were named in the list of people who had 'kindly consented to assist in the various Sub-Committees' of the Oriental Fête and Bazaar. However, it is unclear how they assisted the event. Other people who were listed were as follows: Miss Lena Ashwell, Princess Bariatinsky, Mrs Granville Barker, Goldfinch Bate, Esq., RE Eddison, Esq., JT Grein, Esq., Miss Cicely Hamilton, J Killick, Esq., Miss Eva Moore, Mrs Jopling Rowe, Miss Marie Tempest, Mrs Fisher White and Miss Alice Woodward. *Leaflet of the Oriental Fête and Bazaar*, October 1912 in Artists' Suffrage League Papers, 2ASL/08/01, Women's Library.

<sup>94</sup> Letter from Emmeline Deane to Philippa Strachey, 3 May 1912, External Correspondence, LSW/D/4/08/5, Women's Library.

<sup>95</sup> John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, (Manchester: Manchester U. P., 1995), 89-90.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

I should further suggest that the public should be interested and urged to attend in fancy dress so that the crowd should have something of the effect of a crowd in the East. Those who would not care to dress up, would add the last touch of realistic effect! I think that would interest people—and would be a great ‘Draw.’ It would be easier to invite ‘Anti’ suffrage friends, and the many people who avoid the usual Bazaar as an unsightly congestion of draperies and children’s clothes and various indiscriminate knick knacks. ... I think it would be possible to organize a Bazaar to be as effective as a Pageant.<sup>97</sup>

To achieve such an effect, the NUWSS even prepared ‘Bazaar police’ staff costumes with an Oriental influence (see Figure 5-21). A sketch of the design shows a woman wearing a white headdress with ribbons of red and green, the colours of the NUWSS. Complete with blue kaftans, these costumes created an exotic atmosphere. The women’s costumes were very like men’s costumes, but on this occasion, it was acceptable because they were dressed in the theme of the Orient. In addition, women dressed as men hinted at eroticism—notions of exoticism and eroticism were complementary.

In his book *Orientalism*, literary theorist Edward Said claims that the West made false assumptions and created their own collective discourse of the Orient. Those false assumptions, which were founded on the idea that the East was significantly different from the West and could not be understood, influenced the attitudes of the Western world towards the East. The fascination with the East as exotic derived from these false assumptions.<sup>98</sup> The NUWSS Oriental Fête and Bazaar certainly resulted from this orientalism. As with the fifteenth- and seventeenth-century English decorations used at WFL and WSPU bazaars, the oriental theme created an atmosphere of the old world, and it was a useful representation because it was almost entirely born of imagination.

The stalls prepared for the Oriental Fête and Bazaar are listed in Table 5-2. Various branches of the London Society (a society under the NUWSS umbrella) prepared most of the stalls. Goods sold at the Oriental Fête and Bazaar were similar to those prepared by the WSPU and the WFL for their bazaars.

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<sup>97</sup> Letter from Emmeline Deane to Philippa Strachey, 3 May 1912, External Correspondence, LSW/D/4/08/5, Women’s Library.

<sup>98</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003[1978]).

There were clothes and toys for children, sweets and food, and household decorations. However, for the Oriental Bazaar, items for sale came from all over the world, as the name of the bazaar inferred. There were toys from Russia, Burma, China, Japan and France; North American Indian dolls, Russian embroidery, Hungarian jewellery, Italian marqueteries, preserved fruits from South Africa, and Chinese ginger. These selections of goods from all over the world indicate the diversity and the imperial character of women's consumption. Deane shared her thoughts on the bazaar with Philippa Strachey, when she wrote, 'usual things could be sold' but it should be 'arranged better'.<sup>99</sup>

It seems that from 1912, the WFL and the NUWSS started to display international characters in their bazaars. The reason for this can be found in the situation which the country was in. Just a year before, King George's Coronation was celebrated in June, and the Agadir Crisis occurred in July. The year 1911 made the British to reflect on the British Empire and its position in the world. It was natural for the NUWSS and the WFL to swim with the tide.

The characteristics of the bazaars changed significantly with the Woman's Kingdom event in 1914. The Woman's Kingdom was part of the Children's Welfare Exhibition held at the Olympia, 11–30 April 1914, and promoted by the *Daily News and Leader*.<sup>100</sup> The Woman's Kingdom programme states:

Woman's Kingdom has been organised by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies because the constitutional suffragists felt that the time had come to give the public an object lesson in the real tendencies of the women's movement—which is constructive, and not, as many people imagine who have not studied the Movement, but who have studied the sensational placards and headlines of the daily press, a destructive movement.<sup>101</sup>

It is apparent from this statement that the public's outrage about the militancy of the movement

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<sup>99</sup> Letter from Emmeline Deane to Philippa Strachey, 3 May 1912, External Correspondence, LSW/D/4/08/5, Women's Library.

<sup>100</sup> Leaflet advertising Woman's Kingdom, Women's Suffrage Collection, Part 2, M50/2/13/10, Manchester Central Library.

<sup>101</sup> *Programme of the Woman's Kingdom* in Women's Suffrage Collection, Part 2, M50/2/13/11, Manchester Central Library.

was quite strong.

Previous WSPU and WFL bazaars and exhibitions had been held over a few days—this three-week exhibition was considered a huge undertaking for the NUWSS. The General Advisory Council of the Woman's Kingdom had 113 members, including famous actresses such as Ellen Terry, Irene Vanbrugh, and Eva Moore, wives of well-known social reformers such as Mrs B. Seebohm Rowntree, Mrs George Cadbury (1858–1951), and both male and female suffrage supporters, and socialists such as William de Morgan and Philip Snowden (1864–1937).<sup>102</sup> The Woman's Kingdom was a highly commercialised venture and many well-known shops had stalls there. For example, Messrs. Burberry, a drapery store founded in 1856 by Thomas Burberry (1835–1926), prepared a stall for the 'Exhibition of Outdoor Costumes'. The exhibition was attractive because of its international theme. In some instances, this international theme was combined with charitable sentiments, such as Stand 39, which represented South Indian Village Industries and sold 'lace made by Indian girls'.<sup>103</sup>

Unlike previous WSPU and WFL bazaars, the Woman's Kingdom displayed modernity. Even the WSPU proclaimed their merchandise to be items all 'modern women need'; they were selling their usual goods, but repackaged as 'modern'. As society developed, based on mass consumerism, people began to enjoy the fruits of advances in technology, and rationality became a guiding principle. In women's daily lives, especially regarding household chores, rationality was represented via labour-saving ideas. Using technically advanced household tools and devices, women were able to reduce their labours, yet still achieve the same outcomes.

The Woman's Kingdom, unlike WSPU and WFL bazaars, was organised on the idea of rationality. The Woman's Kingdom envisaged women who appreciated modernity in everyday life. A major term of the exhibition was 'labour-saving'. The event was divided into housing, furnishing and labour-saving sections. Labour-saving kitchen utensils were sold at Stand 2. The Harris Gas Stove Company at Stand 4 featured the 'Gorilla' cooker; TW Thompson & Company, Ltd. sold 'furniture and labour saving devices for the home'; and Frank Staines, kitchen fitter and engineer, sold 'kitchen utensils, trays, cleaning powder,

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 27.



gripping handles, labour-saving appliances for kitchen and scullery' at Stand 125.<sup>104</sup> Even Mrs Lucy's preserved flowers, ferns and foliage at Stand 7 could be considered labour-saving home furnishings.

Rationality could also be observed in the facilities the NUWSS provided for their exhibition visitors. To encourage mothers to visit the exhibition, the NUWSS prepared a mothers' restroom, a babies' playroom and a model kindergarten.<sup>105</sup> Encouraging women to place their babies and children in the hands of professionals, that is, accepting professional help in childrearing, represented a very modern way of thinking.

Rationality was applicable not only in the home but also in the office. While WSPU exhibitions generally portrayed women within the home, the Woman's Kingdom also supported women who worked outside of their homes. Stand 30 showed a model office organised by Mrs Hoster. The programme announced, 'At this Stand will be shown "The Office at Work", in complete working order, with the most up-to-date equipment, including the newest Files, Card Indexing, Duplicating Machines, etc.'. These modern tools were designed to simplify and streamline office work.

From the selection of the stands to their installation at the Woman's Kingdom, the NUWSS consistently projected the act of shopping in their representations of women. The NUWSS was greatly influenced by the Victorian ideology of women. However, the society attempted to redefine the Victorian women into the modern women by introducing the commodities they need to become modern. The NUWSS targeted women who were the caretakers of their home and those who worked outside the home. Both groups of women ventured beyond the private sphere, and both groups were urged to enjoy the benefits of the modern world.

### 5.3 Exhibitions

The element of exhibition was central in women's suffrage bazaars—bazaars were also events

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>105</sup> While the children played and waited in the Model Kindergarten in Stand 97, mothers were able to take rests at 'A Rest Room for Mothers' in Stand 91. These facilities were available for women who had the free admission coupon from *The Common Cause*. There was also 'Babies' Play-room' in Stand 96, where mothers could leave their children for maximum two hours. *Programme of the Woman's Kingdom*, 55-56.

enabling the viewing of exhibitions. Through the exhibition of various ideas and objects, the women's suffrage societies could propagate the theories of women's suffrage directly or indirectly. This section deals with the various exhibitions planned by the WFL, the WSPU and the NUWSS.

### 5.3.1 The WFL

The WFL was the first to replicate a prison cell with an inmate. In 1908, the WFL produced an exhibition showing a Holloway Prison cell with ex-prisoners modelling inside (see Figure 5-22). *Home Chat*, a magazine for lower-middle-class women, described the exhibit:

[It is] an exact reproduction of the cell in Holloway Prison where Miss Ada Mocatta, one of the Suffragette 'martyrs' was imprisoned. ... Miss Mocatta herself occupied this novel stall, clad in a replica of her prison clothes. In the corner is seen the mattress which had to be shaken and rolled up every morning, and on the top of it the neatly folded blanket and sheets. The pots and pans on the floor also had to be scoured clean, and the cell scrubbed out—all before breakfast.<sup>106</sup>

This account in *Home Chat* suggests that prison cell exhibits were of interest, even to their lower-middle-class readers who might not be the supporters for the cause. In addition, there were exhibitions showing Chinese and Japanese antiques, and 'suffragists at work' at the Great Suffrage Bazaar in 1908.<sup>107</sup>

The Holloway Prison cell exhibit was reassembled for the Green, White and Gold Fair. Admission was 6d. Other sideshows were provided. A pamphlet advertising the fair announced, 'Miss Cicely Hamilton's Waxworks, Tableaux, Gypsy Tent, Craftsman at Work, etc., etc.'<sup>108</sup> In the Handicraft Section, women could be observed at work on their crafts. In this period, the Arts and Crafts movement was sustained and supported mainly by amateur women such as housewives. Various handicraft magazines for semi-professional women, such as *Needle* (1903–1910), *Ladies Fancy Work Magazine* (1907) and *Home*

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<sup>106</sup> *Home Chat*, 9 May 1908: 378.

<sup>107</sup> *The Times*, 2 April 1908: 14.

<sup>108</sup> Leaflet of the Green, White, and Gold Fair, Maude Arncliffe Sennett Collection, Vol.7, British Library.

*Handicrafts* (1907–1917), were published during this period.<sup>109</sup> These magazines show that the Arts and Crafts movement had infiltrated the market place and that the movement was affected by commercialization. In such a way, handicrafts as popular recreations and femininity were linked.

In Rooms No. 1 and No. 8 in the Handicraft Section, for an admission price of 6 d, various artists could be viewed at work. Room No. 1 housed the following crafts and their practitioners: enamels by Mrs Whipple, regalia filigree by Miss Reinhardt, artistic jewellery by Mrs Fredk Palotta, weaving by Miss Tita Brand, embroideries by Madame Tate, floral mosaics by Miss Ada Kilgour, leather work by Miss Matilda E Graham and filigree by Mrs Leake-Coleman. In Room No. 8, the following were displayed: miniature paintings by Miss Ada H Hines, hand-wrought leathers designed in green, white and gold by Miss MR Mill, artistic metalwork by Mrs FA Jonas and artistic flower arrangements by Miss FA Petrie.<sup>110</sup> At the Yule-Tide Festival, art works such as metal works, tapestries, statues, plaster casts were again presented by both professional and amateur artists. Lawrence Housman exhibited black and white work, and Crane exhibited few sketches.<sup>111</sup> There was also a poster competition. Posters related to the suffrage movement were gathered, and Crane, who was known for his socialist representations, and Mrs Jopling Rowe (1843–1933), a painter, were the judges.<sup>112</sup> Miss Isobel Pocock, a member of the Suffrage Atelier, won the prize.<sup>113</sup> Those exhibitions gave these women, most of them likely to be amateurs, the chance to display their skills.

### 5.3.2 The WSPU

The exhibitions at the bazaars and fairs of the WSPU aimed to represent visually the WSPU leaders or well-known members, and to create and present their version of their fight against the Liberal

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<sup>109</sup> S. K. Tillyard, *The Impact of Modernism 1900-1920*, (London: Routledge, 1988), 6

<sup>110</sup> *Programme of the Green, White, and Gold Fair*, 11 in Maude Arncliffe Sennett Collection, British Library, Vol.7.

<sup>111</sup> 'Yule-tide Festival', *The Vote*, 16 Dec 1909: 86.

<sup>112</sup> Women's Freedom League, *Report of the Women's Freedom League for the Year 1909 and of the Fifth Annual Conference*, (1910), 18.

<sup>113</sup> 'Yule-tide Festival', *The Vote*, 16 Dec 1909: 86. Isobel Pocock designed several Suffrage Atelier postcards, but she was probably an amateur artist. Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 247.

government.

The Women's Exhibition of 1909 consisted of three main exhibits. The first was 'a unique collection of photographs belonging to one of its members'.<sup>114</sup> *Votes for Women* reported of more than 800 photographs recording the activities of the WSPU from 1906.<sup>115</sup> An exhibition advertisement described the exhibit as a 'Pictorial History of the W.S.P.U.'.<sup>116</sup> The history and the activities of the WSPU were displayed through these photographs. *Votes for Women* reported the first photograph was of the 1906 procession to the House of Commons, a procession Sylvia Pankhurst described in her book as the very first suffrage procession. Further photographs showed other processions held in London, the release of prisoners from Holloway Prison, and Mrs Pankhurst and Keir Hardie speaking at the foot of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square.<sup>117</sup>

The second exhibit was called 'Political Cartoons in Model'. This was '[a] completely novel idea' by the WSPU—to exhibit wax models of the cartoons printed on the *Votes for Women* covers.<sup>118</sup> *Votes for Women* reported, 'the favourite model was that in which three Cabinet Ministers are shown flying from a group of women carrying banners with "Votes for Women", while a big fatherly policeman is protecting them from the terrible onslaught' (see Figure 5-23(a)).<sup>119</sup> The three Cabinet ministers were Prime Minister Asquith, Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd George (1863–1945), and Home Secretary Herbert Gladstone. This cartoon was almost certainly drawn by the cartoonist 'A Patriot', whose real name was Alfred Pearce (1856–1933) (see Figure 5-23(b)). He was a famous cartoonist for *Punch* and *Illustrated London News* and often published cartoons ridiculing Prime Minister Asquith. The Political Cartoons in Model exhibit also included an element ridiculing the Liberal government. In *Votes for Women*, a member wrote:

Gay laughter comes from that part of the Rink exactly opposite where I am sitting and I

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<sup>114</sup> *Votes for Women*, 30 April 1909: 598.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Votes for Women*, 7 May 1909: 619.

<sup>117</sup> *Votes for Women*, 30 April 1909: 598.

<sup>118</sup> 'Close of the Woman's Exhibition', *Votes for Women*, 28 May 1909: 722.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

know, without looking up, that it is caused by—Cabinet Ministers! Not in the flesh, I hasten to explain, but in wax. There they are—Asquith, Gladstone, Lloyd George, and the rest—to the very life, and if they have not come to see themselves in miniature. I am almost sure they have sent some of those ‘relatives’... to spy out the land!<sup>120</sup>

The third exhibit featured a replica of the Second Division cell. As the government refused to acknowledge WSPU members as political offenders, they, and other suffrage protestors, were contained in the Second Division cell (the First Division cell held political prisoners).<sup>121</sup> It was shocking to see ordinary women clothed in prison uniforms and housed in poorly maintained and filthy prison cells. The aim of the exhibit was to show prison conditions in sharp contrast with women’s femininity, and to offer the audience a visual representation of the Liberal government’s outrageous acts against proper and ordinary women. Members of the WSPU took turns to act as wardresses and prisoners to explain how suffragettes spent their time in prison.

### 5.3.3 The NUWSS

In the *Programme of the Woman’s Kingdom*, the NUWSS clearly states the purpose of holding the event:

In Woman’s Kingdom the organizers will endeavor to place before the public, in concrete form, evidence showing the wide interests of women, their attainments in different walks of life and branches of knowledge (not forgetting local self-government), their expert knowledge of child culture and child welfare, together with the fruits of their experience in home management and household arts and crafts.<sup>122</sup>

Thus, the Woman’s Kingdom held various exhibitions to showcase women’s wide-ranging accomplishments.

Housing and furnishings were special features of the 1914 Woman’s Kingdom exhibitions. The

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<sup>120</sup> ‘At the Woman’s Exhibition, Knightsbridge’, *Votes for Women*, 14 May 1908: 657.

<sup>121</sup> ‘Close of the Woman’s Exhibition’, *Votes for Women*, 28 May 1909: 722.

<sup>122</sup> *Programme of the Woman’s Kingdom*, 1.

programme states: ‘Among the special features of this exhibition within an exhibition will be a series of rooms’: a ‘comfortably and artistically’ furnished working woman’s household, a sitting room for ‘a poor single working woman’ with furnishings and utensils purchased with a five pound note, a bedroom for factory girls and the suffragists’ ideal cottage with ‘the decoration and furniture of a home suitable for a family of the professional or business class’.<sup>123</sup>

The idea to exhibit an ideal home was not new. The first *Daily Mail* Ideal Home Exhibition was held in 1908 at the Olympia. Ryan explains, ‘the Ideal Home Exhibition presented an Edwardian sense of stable femininity and peaceful domesticity that harnessed the latest modern developments yet respected the traditions of the past [while linking] consumer desires, retailing, manufacturing, and leisure’.<sup>124</sup> When suffragettes chose to demonstrate at this venue of ‘Edwardian sense of stable femininity and peaceful domesticity’, it may have seemed to the public the suffragettes were protesting against those values, but they were not. According to the *Daily Mail*, suffragettes ambushed the 1908 Ideal Home Exhibition:

A party of suffragettes put in an appearance at the exhibition during the afternoon. Ascending to the second floor, they stood bareheaded, and spoke to the large crowd that quickly assembled on the lawn below. The two speakers...explained that they came to the exhibition because many women had no homes and because elementary rights were denied to women who made the homes. After a certain amount of oratory the ladies consented to retire.<sup>125</sup>

To include a display of an ideal cottage at the Woman’s Kingdom was to assert elementary rights and to show the ideal woman reflected in the design of the model cottage. The model cottage (see Figure 5-24) also linked ‘consumer desires, retailing, manufacturing, and leisure’.<sup>126</sup> The cottage was displayed to ‘solve a pressing problem’, being the need to ‘produce a decent home for the small outlay that will permit of a cottage being let at a rent the agricultural labourer can afford to pay’. The cottage was ‘a

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>124</sup> Ryan, ‘Spectacle, the Public, and the Crowd: Exhibitions and Pageants in 1908,’ 51.

<sup>125</sup> Qtd. in Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> *Programme of the Woman’s Kingdom*, 19.

practical attempt to provide home for half-a-crown a week'.<sup>127</sup> In addition, the cottage was designed with sanitation in mind. In the cottage washhouse, a copper boiler by E.C. Coal Store was assembled, and the house was claimed to be suitable for a family of two adults and five children, the first floor containing three bedrooms (see Figure 5-24).<sup>128</sup> The Five Pound Room, for a working girl, displayed a combination stove from the Rashonal Stove Company. Compared with the previous WPSU and WFL bazaars, commercial goods and professional artworks were featured more prominently at the Woman's Kingdom. In addition, the NUWSS praised the benefits of household machines and attempted to make them a part of women's everyday lives. The NUWSS presented women who embraced modernity.

Stand 57 was a photographic studio where numerous works by women photographers were exhibited. Professional photographers, such as Florence Vandamm (1883–1996) who had studied at the Royal Academy, displayed their works.<sup>129</sup> Stand 59 was a fine arts gallery where oils, watercolours, miniatures, drawings and sculptures by women artists were displayed. Artworks were provided by 63 women, including members of the Artists' Suffrage League such as Dora Meeson Coates (1869–1955), M Sargent Florence (1857–1954) and Emily Ford (1851–1930). Stand 60 was an arts and crafts exhibition gallery: wood engravings, book illustrations, etchings, jewellery, pottery and stained-glass designs by women were displayed and sold. The works of some of the women (e.g. Miss M Hindshaw's potteries) are now held in the Victoria and Albert Museum Collection. Exhibits from Suffrage Atelier were held in the same section. Lithographs by Louie Jacobs (Exhib. 1910–1938), banners by Clemence Housman, watercolour paintings by Jessie Walters (Exhib. 1905–1939) and hand-painted prints by Hope Joseph (Exhib. 1907–1936) and by Honorary Organiser of the Suffrage Atelier EB Willis were displayed.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Mrs WN Shaw of 10 Moreton Gardens was the Hon. Secretary for this photographic salon. Mrs Shaw was a member of the Royal Photographic Society, and exhibited her own works at the Fifty-five and Fifty-ninth Annual Exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain. *Exhibition Catalogue of 1910 Fifty-fifth Annual Exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain* (London: Royal Photographic Society, 1910), 18; *Exhibition Catalogue of 1914 Fifty-ninth Annual Exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain* (London: Royal Photographic Society, 1914), 30.

<sup>130</sup> For further information of these artists, see Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 243–249.

## 5.4 Entertainment

Entertainment was a significant feature of the women's suffrage societies' bazaars and exhibitions. Generally, to enjoy the performances, one was required to pay an admission fee. For example, to enter the theatre at the 1909 WSPU Women's Exhibition cost an admission fee of one shilling.<sup>131</sup> The AFL provided most of the entertainment, especially the plays, whether performing at a WSPU, WFL or NUWSS bazaar. As mentioned previously in Chapter 4, the AFL played an important role in providing similar entertainment to various suffrage societies.

### 5.4.1 The WFL

The AFL organised the entertainment for the Yule-Tide Festival on 11 December 1909 at Royal Albert Hall. It began with a reception hosted by the society president, which included an organ recital by Mrs Layton, the Woman's Pageant arranged by Craig, and a famous opera singer Madame Marie Brema (1856–1925) singing traditional Christmas songs with organ accompaniment. However, the main entertainment was Shaw's *Press Cuttings*. It was first performed in London.<sup>132</sup> It appears Shaw granted the London Society for Women's Suffrage the right to perform this play in London and to receive 10 per cent of the show's profits (or £2 2s, whichever was the greater amount).<sup>133</sup>

General Mitchener and Balsquith are the main characters in *Press Cuttings*. General Mitchener is an obvious parody of Lord Kitchener (1850–1916), who was the war secretary during the First World War, and Balsquith is a parody of Prime Minister Asquith, an opponent of women's suffrage. The play's opening scene is interesting: a 'Suffragete', who had chained herself to the doorscraper of the War Office, is brought into Mitchener's office. She turns out to be Balsquith, who has disguised himself as a

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<sup>131</sup> *Programme of the Women's Exhibition*, 44.

<sup>132</sup> 'Suffragist Festival', *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 Dec 1909. The first public performance of *Press Cuttings* was at Miss Horniman's theatre, Manchester in September 1909. Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866-1928*, 557.

<sup>133</sup> Letter from Philippa Strachey to Winifred Mayo, 8 Oct 1908, Women's Library.



‘Suffragete’ to go from Downing Street to the War Office.<sup>134</sup>

Then, Mrs Banger, ‘a masculine woman of forty with a powerful voice and great physical strength’, and Lady Corinthia Fanshawe, ‘who is also over thirty’ and a ‘beautiful and romantic’ woman, visit General Mitchener. They are both from the Anti-Suffragette League.<sup>135</sup>

Shaw applied the popular images of suffragettes to the anti-suffragists in the play and applied suffragette logic to Mrs Banger and Lady Corinthia, the anti-suffragists.

MRS. BANGER. We have come to tell you plainly that the Anti-Suffragets[sic] are going to fight.

MITCHENER. [gallantly] Oh, pray leave that to the men, Mrs. Banger.

LADY CORINTHIA We can no longer trust the men.

MRS. BANGER. They have shewn neither the strength, the courage, nor the determination which are needed to combat women like the Suffragets.

She continues:

MRS. BANGER. What women need is the right to military service. Give me a well-mounted regiment of women with sabres, opposed to a regiment of men with votes. We shall see which will go down before the other. No: we have had enough of these gentle pretty creatures who merely talk and cross-examine ministers in police courts, and go to prison like sheep, and suffer and sacrifice themselves. This question must be solved by blood and iron, as was well said by Bismarck, whom I have reason to believe was a woman in disguise.<sup>136</sup>

According to Mrs Banger, an anti-suffragist, men are too effeminate. Shaw’s play, which was well written and more complex than the typical suffrage plays written by women, proved to be a challenge for professional actresses.

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<sup>134</sup> In Bernard Shaw’s play, ‘suffragette’ is spelled ‘suffragete’, and ‘anti-suffragettes’ is spelled ‘anti-suffragets’.

<sup>135</sup> Bernard Shaw, *Press Cuttings: A Topical Sketch Compiled from the Editorial and Correspondence Columns of the Daily Papers: As Performed by the Civic and Dramatic Guild at the Royal Court Theatre, London, on the 9th July 1909* (Bibliolife, 1909), 23.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

At the International Suffrage Fair in 1912, the AFL was again responsible for the entertainment. It seems that Craig and Bensusan, who arranged the program, decided to experiment with the suffrage plays written by women. The AFL performed Charlotte Perkins Gilman's (1860–1935) *Three Women*, which was 'much enjoyed', and *A Chat with Mrs Chicky*, which was 'a most welcome item' on their program. However, what pleased the audience most was 'The Dances of All Nations' which 'made the Fair memorable and filled the entertainment hall to overflowing time after time, day after day'.<sup>137</sup> Each dance was something specific to each country. For example, Russian dance was a mazurka and Indian dance was a Nautch dance.<sup>138</sup> The WFL knew that something gay, rare and exotic attracts the audience.

In addition, at the International Suffrage Fair, there were Jiu-jitsu demonstration, 'Old English Morris and country dances' by the students of the Chelsea Physical Training College, and various concerts by gifted musicians.<sup>139</sup> The WFL tried to cater to diverse women's interests.

The AFL assisted both the WSPU and the WFL in providing entertainment, generally, using music and plays. The Aeolian Ladies' Orchestra, a professional women-only orchestra led by Rosabel Watson (Figure 5-25), was often hired to perform at their exhibitions. Figure 5-25 shows elegant ladies with various string instruments. At the Yule-tide Festival, 'Ladies' Orchestra' conducted by Miss E Cattel provided entertainment. There are no list of music they played, but considering twelve first violinists, six second violinists, three cellists, two viola, one pianist and one drummer in the orchestra, the music they performed was aimed at an affluent middle-class audience.

#### 5.4.2 The WSPU

During the 1909 Women's Exhibition, the AFL provided regular daily entertainment (mostly musical) at 3.15 pm, 4.30 pm, 5.45 pm, 8.00 pm and 9.15 pm. On some occasions, it also performed plays: on 15 May 1909, *How the Vote was Won*, one of the AFL's most popular plays, was performed. On 18

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<sup>137</sup> 'The International Suffrage Fair: A Retrospect', *The Vote*, 23 Nov 1912: 59-60.

<sup>138</sup> There were dances of England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Spain, Russia, Hungary, Holland, Turkey, Italy, France, India, America and Canada. *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

May, numerous performances were given: Gertrude Jennings's (1877–1958) play *A Woman's Influence*, the sketch *Enery Brown*, *The Philosopher in the Apple Orchard*, *Colonel and Mrs. Henderson*, *Meringues*, *Kiddy* and Hamilton's 'Waxworks'. In addition, the Ellan Vannin Quartette, the Aeolian Ladies' Orchestra and the Mascottes Ladies' Band performed at the exhibition, as did Miss Mary Neal's Children's Dances.<sup>140</sup>

At the Garden Fair in 1913, the AFL again provided the daily performances. *The Suffragette* noted the actresses gave them 'splendid assistance'. The Aeolian Ladies' Orchestra was hired to entertain visitors to the gardens. In addition, there was a variety of sideshows: *Punch and Judy*, a shadow theatre, and radium for the 'scientifically minded'.<sup>141</sup> The *Punch and Judy* show was produced by Bensusan, who was responsible for the AFL Play Department. Her interpretation of *Punch and Judy* was probably very political, given that at the reception of the Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage in 1914, Bensusan presented *Punch and Judy* in which Judy represented women's suffrage and Punch the Liberal government.<sup>142</sup> The suffragettes' golf green was included, touted as 'the one absolutely safe green in England!'<sup>143</sup>

#### 5.4.3 The NUWSS

At the 1912 Oriental Fête and Bazaar, the chosen entertainments had an oriental flavour. Eastern storytellers wandered through the city, as well as fortune-tellers. The Bazaar Theatre hosted two plays and a dance performed by children. The dance, which was arranged by Mrs Pring, was performed by a Greek dance group, and the two plays were set in foreign countries.<sup>144</sup> According to *The Common Cause*, Greek, Egyptian and English dances were performed by Miss Carlyle's Group of Children.<sup>145</sup> The bazaar

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<sup>140</sup> *Programme for the Women's Exhibition*, 35.

<sup>141</sup> *The Suffragette*, 30 May 1913.

<sup>142</sup> Actresses' Franchise League, Reception to welcome the Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage, 15 Feb 1914, Leaflet, in Maude Arncliffe Sennett Collection.

<sup>143</sup> *The Suffragette*, 30 May 1913.

<sup>144</sup> *Programme of the Oriental Fête and Bazaar*, 45.

<sup>145</sup> *The Common Cause*, 13 Dec 1912: 62.

merchandise and the entertainment were selected to offer the audience an experience of otherworldliness.

On this occasion, the AFL did not perform the plays. The first play was *Harlequin Schooled by Love* by Pierre Carlet de Marivaux (1688–1763), a French dramatist.<sup>146</sup> The play is set in Arcadia, where a fairy attempts to capture the heart of Harlequin who is in love with Sylvia. The other play was *The Stolen Statue*, a one-act farce written by F Anstey (1856–1934), which was performed by the Elizabeth Bessle Comedy Company.<sup>147</sup> From the characters printed in the programme for the Oriental Fête and Bazaar, it is assumed that Anstey's play was based on the novel *The Tinted Venus* by F Anstey, published in 1885. In *The Tinted Venus*, a statue of Venus comes to life when a London hairdresser, Leander Tweddle, places a ring on her finger. Both plays deal with romance, and they are quite different from the suffrage plays usually performed by the AFL.

The Aeolian Ladies' Orchestra, the women-only orchestra that had performed at many suffrage gatherings, provided the music for the Oriental Fête and Bazaar. They performed a number of arrangements, including *The Rocky Road to Dublin* by Ellis R Ephraim, *Moonlight* by Moret, *Humoreske* by Dvorak (1841–1904), *Martinique* by Loraine and *Araby* by Johns.<sup>148</sup> Probably to match the theme of the bazaar, the selection of music was wide-ranging picked up from composers all over Europe and America.

On the opening night of the bazaar, 5 December 1909, an oriental costume ball was held. Admission to the bazaar (for 6–7 December), costume ball, and supper cost £1 1s. The supper menu was listed in the programme. The cost of admission, as well as the French menu and the waltz planned for the dance programme, indicate that the desired guests were affluent middle-class women. However, with regard to the Woman's Kingdom, a wide variety of women, including the less affluent, were targeted. At the Woman's Kingdom, the AFL was responsible for the entertainment. Bensusan and Craig, both members of the AFL, provided various suffrage plays every day. It was a great opportunity for the AFL to perform experimental productions written by women dramatists who had not achieved a reputation.

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<sup>146</sup> *Programme of the Oriental Fête and Bazaar*, 45.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 47. F Antsey was the pseudonym for Thomas Anstey Guthrie who was an English novelist and journalist.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

The Woman's Kingdom blatantly displayed its propaganda. Previous bazaars had targeted only affluent middle-class women; the Woman's Kingdom attempted to cater for all women, from working classes to the upper-middle classes.

The WSPU, the WFL and the NUWSS used bazaars to attract people. The bazaars were not only for shopping but also for propaganda, where visitors could be educated through exhibitions and entertainment. The following quotation, from the autobiography of Annie Kenney, a famous working-class WSPU organiser, indicates how the WSPU manipulated the public through their various activities:

The Albert Hall rallies, the gigantic processions, the Hyde Park demonstrations, that London will never forget, were chiefly worked up by the hundreds of voluntary speakers and workers, who knew the public, and knew what they wanted.<sup>149</sup>

Kenney continues, 'We were like one of the big stores, if one thing did not suit (and the audiences soon told us) we would take them into another department'.<sup>150</sup> Here, Kenney describes herself as one of 'the big stores', and as perceiving the public as consumers of the movement. If the movement was one of the big stores, the merchandise was the tool with which to control the public. To control the public, the suffrage societies used working-class representations; this will be explored in the following chapter.

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<sup>149</sup> Annie Kenney, *Memories of a Militant* (London: E. Arnold, 1924), 148.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter 6: Representation of Working-Class Women

### 6.1 Working-class women and the women's suffrage movement

Historian Harold Perkin states, 'Between 1880 and 1914 class society in Britain reached its zenith'.<sup>1</sup> Various social studies have been conducted by middle-class social reformers on the lives of the working class during this period. The plight of the working class became a social concern for the middle class, and at the end of the nineteenth century, feminists were also concerned with their problems. However, working-class women did not perform a central role in the nineteenth-century women's suffrage movement.

The twentieth-century women's suffrage movement in Britain is generally considered to have been a middle-class women's movement. However, this does not mean the involvement of working-class women has not been explored. As mentioned in Chapter 1, whether the women's suffrage movement in Britain was a middle-class women's movement has been argued extensively among historians. Liddington and Norris wrote *One Hand Behind Us*, which documents the involvement of working-class women in the women's suffrage movement in Lancashire. Famous working-class organisers, such as Selina Cooper (1864–1946) and Ada Neild Chew (1870–1945), were active in the Lancashire suffrage movement and later worked for the constitutional NUWSS as organisers and speakers.<sup>2</sup>

The presence of working-class organisers within the movement was revealed in Holton's studies. She identified Mary Gawthorpe (1881–1973), who worked as an organiser for the WSPU, and Hannah Mitchell (1872–1956), also a member of the WSPU and later of the WFL. However, we appear to know the names of only a handful of these prominent working-class women. It was generally considered difficult to organise working-class women. The *AFL Annual Report of 1911 to 1912* states:

We are still continuing our Meetings in the poor districts of London, as far as Stratford in

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society—England since 1880* (London: Routledge, 2001[1989]), 27.

<sup>2</sup> Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Virago, 1978).

the East and North Kensington in the West. Latterly we have found the question of working them up a difficulty, as we must necessarily get in touch with Women's Clubs, Settlements, Doctors or Clergymen working in the East End, who are interested in this question and would help to make these Meetings known.<sup>3</sup>

The AFL realised the difficulty in arousing the interest of working-class women and tried to enlist the help of other organisations and people who were connected with local working-class communities.

The twentieth-century women's suffrage movement was led by middle-class women. However, they did attempt to include working-class women. When women's suffrage societies endeavoured to appeal to working-class women, or to convince the public that working-class women were indeed involved in the movement, they used representations of working-class women. Perhaps it was because the women's suffrage movement was largely a middle-class movement that representations of working-class women had some effect among them.

Annie Kenney, a WSPU organiser, had previously worked in a mill. Historian Diane Atkinson commented on a well-known studio photograph of Kenney in which she was dressed as a typical Lancashire working-class woman, with a shawl and clogs. Atkinson claims that the photograph sent the message that 'working women should adopt Annie as a role model and join their movement'.<sup>4</sup>

The photograph of Kenney was printed on a postcard and sold to the public (see Figure 6-1). Other visual representations of working-class women were used in processions, bazaars, posters and postcards. In addition, the social conditions of working-class women were used as literary representations in suffrage magazine articles and stories. Although there were differences among the tactics of suffrage societies, the representations of working-class women were considered effective.

This chapter discusses how and why the representations of working-class women were used by militant and constitutional societies. The women's suffrage societies used the dominant views of

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<sup>3</sup> Actresses' Franchise League, *Secretary's Report of the Actresses' Franchise League, June 1911 to June 1912*, 2, Women's Library, 2AFL/A/1/c.

<sup>4</sup> Diane Atkinson, 'Six Suffragette Photographs,' *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives*, eds. Maroula Joannou and June Purvis (Manchester & New York: Manchester U. P., 1998), 91.

working-class women and, at the same time, promoted those views to the public.

## 6.2 Narratives of Working-Class Women

### 6.2.1 Narratives of Working-Class Women in Plays

Before discussing in detail the visual representations of working-class women used in the women's suffrage movement, let us first examine how working-class women were depicted in suffrage literature such as novels, short stories, articles and pamphlets.

Working-class women were portrayed in suffrage literature as they had been since the Victorian era. During the nineteenth century, various social researches were conducted by middle-class social reformers such as Charles Booth (1840–1916) and Seebohm Rowntree (1871–1954).<sup>5</sup> These studies were then used and reinterpreted to illustrate how the working classes lived.

These accounts were often supported by popular visual representations of the nineteenth century. Huneault picks up several representations of working-class professions, which were used from the end of the nineteenth century into the twentieth century in her book. Imagery depicting domestic servants was often used in advertisements for household goods such as cleaning products, tobacco, Bovril, medicines and soap. Domestic servants were perceived as 'women who toil in other women's homes, who obey other women's minds, who must think other women's thoughts until they have nothing of their own left, no health, no individuality nothing'.<sup>6</sup> The image of a flower girl was another popular working-class representation used in paintings and literature. In addition, images of women's sweated work were commonly used during the period.

The improvement of sweated labour conditions was a central issue of the women's labour movement during this period. In 1906, the *Daily News* sponsored the Sweated Industry Exhibition at Queen's Hall. This exhibition was so popular that it toured to local cities such as Birmingham and

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<sup>5</sup> Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of People in London* (London: Macmillan, 1895-1904); Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* (London: Macmillan, 1903).

<sup>6</sup> Bessie Samallman, 'The Servant Problem', *Woman Worker*, 28 Oct 1908: 555. Qtd. in Kristina Huneault, *Difficult Subjects: Working Women and Visual Culture, Britain 1880-1914* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate Pub. Co, 2002), 23.



Manchester. The interest in sweated industry led to the establishment of the National Anti-Sweating League in July 1906. Social reformists generally considered sweating as follows:

Sweating, it was seen, did not make goods cheap: it only made human life cheap. It did not benefit the consumer: it only benefited the man who set the slum to compete with the workshop, the man or more often the woman and the child to compete with the machine. It was seen that the evil lowered the whole vitality of industry. It preyed upon the defenceless and used them to depress the general industrial standard. It had no chance in a highly organised community, and found its victims in the hopeless and the broken, among the poor widows of the courts and alleys and all those who had lost heart in the battle and were sunk into the lowest depths of the social abyss.<sup>7</sup>

Such descriptions did not apply only to the sweated trades. They applied to working-class women in general. Poverty, hard labour and the defenceless woman and child were characteristics applied to images held by the women's suffrage movement of working-class women.

Women's suffrage societies published various pamphlets explaining why working-class women needed the vote. In suffrage literature, such as plays, novels and short stories, working-class women suffered from poverty and hard labour, and were defenceless against men. They were also portrayed as people who needed to be led: people who blindly followed orders while not understanding them. In the well-known play by Hamilton, *How the Vote was Won*, Lily, a domestic servant, quits her job. She tells her mistress, Ethel:

Miss Christabel—she told us. She says to us: ‘Now look ’ere, all of yer—you who’ve got no men to go to on Tuesday—yer’ve got to go to the Union,’ she says; ‘and the one who’angs back’—and she looked at me, she did—‘may be the person ’oo’s sailin’ under the ’ostile flag,’ she says; and I says, ‘That won’t be me—not much!’<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> A. G. Gagnier, ‘Introduction,’ *Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage*, ed. Clementina Black (London: Duckworth & Co., 1907), xi.

<sup>8</sup> Cicely Hamilton, ‘How the Vote Was Won’, *Literature of the Women's Suffrage Campaign in England*, ed. Carolyn Christensen Nelson (London: Broadview Press, 2001), 187.

Here, Lily blindly follows Christabel, the leader of the women's suffrage movement.

Other suffrage literature also suggested working-class women required help from middle-class women. In *A Woman's Influence* written by Gertrude Jennings, a middle-class housewife, Margaret Lawrence, is concerned with the conditions experienced by the working-class women at Hill Rise Factory. However, her husband, Herb, soothes her, 'Nothing can be done, nothing can be done. Don't worry your pretty little head—it'll all come out in the wash'. Mrs Perry, a friend of Margaret's and an anti-suffragist, believes that if you want to have things done, you should have a man to do it for you. As a bet, Mrs Perry tries to persuade Herb to help his wife, using tears and showing helplessness. When Herb learns it was a bet, Margaret tells him:

[I]t isn't really amusing if one thinks of all the sin and misery that lie underneath it all, the helplessness of Woman using her one weapon, sometimes beautifully, sometimes merely frivolously (like to-day), sometimes with degradation, but always—always the same weapon. Ah, if you men would only give us another one, the use of our intelligence, so that we could realize that we are reasonable creatures, fit to be heard equally with man, not parasites. You love and respect me, I know; I want you to love and respect Woman for my sake, to give her that place in social life which is her right. She is worthy, she will be more worthy—help her then, and some day you will be proud of what you have done.<sup>9</sup>

In this scene, Margaret is asking for the vote to enable women to use their influence appropriately. The conditions of working-class women were provided as an example of what women could change if they had the vote. In this play, working-class women are not waiting for middle-class women to help them. Factory worker Mary Ball wants to take matters into her own hands to improve their conditions. Her husband is a drunkard and even though '[h]e never raised 'is 'and', he has done nothing with his vote. She insists:

It's pretty rough life down there, and it's a rough lot that live it. But we ain't beasts though we've bin treated like 'em. I'm not saying anything against the men—they're as God made 'em—but there are some things no man can understand the way of...it's not

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<sup>9</sup> Gertrude Jennings, *A Woman's Influence - a Play in One Act* (London: Actresses' Franchise League, n.d.) 14 in *Women's Suffrage Literature*, eds. Katharine Cockin, Glenda Norquay and Sowon S. Park, Vol. 3 (London: Routledge, 2007).

men as can help us any more, its women—its ourselves, and that’s the truth.<sup>10</sup>

Suffrage literature often depicted a stereotyped image of a working-class woman: a woman who was aware of her situation and who spoke her mind. In *Votes for Women*, a popular suffrage play written by Robins, there is a scene where a working-class woman, a supporter of the cause, expresses her opinion from a platform. Below Nelson’s Column in Trafalgar Square, the working-class woman, who ‘is dressed in brown serge and looks pinched and sallow’,<sup>11</sup> addresses the audience:

P’r’aps *your* ’omes are all right. P’r’aps you aren’t livin’, old and young, married and single, in one room. I come from a plyce where many fam’lies ’ave to live like that if they’re to go on livin’ *at all*. If you don’t believe me, come and let me show you! (*She spreads out her lean arms.*) Come with me to Canning Town!—come with me to Bromley—come to Poplar and to Bow! No. You won’t even *think* about the overworked women and the underfed children and the ’ovels they live in. And you want that we shouldn’t think neither ...

W’y does any woman tyke less wyges than a man for the same work? Only because we can’t get anything better. That’s part the reason w’y we’re yere to-d’y. Do you reely think we tyke them there low wyges because we got a lykin’ for low wyges? No. We’re just like you. We want as much as ever we can get. We got a gryte deal to do with our wyges, we women has. We got the children to think about. And w’en we get our rights, a woman’s flesh and blood won’t be so much cheaper than a man’s that employers can get rich on keepin’ you out o’ work, and sweatin’ us. If you men could see it, we got the syme cause, and if you ’elped us, you’d be ’elpin yerselves.<sup>12</sup>

Examples of low wages, hard work, a need for better childcare, drunken husbands and domestic violence were often included in the narratives of the working class. *In the Workhouse*, a play written by Nevinson in 1911, contains some of these characteristics. Working-class women who, without husbands,

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<sup>10</sup> Jennings, *A Woman’s Influence—a Play in One Act*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Robins, *Votes for Women* (London: Mills & Boon, 1909), 50.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55.

bear children are put into a workhouse. There is also a married woman, Mrs Cleaver, who is put into a workhouse by her husband who is a drunkard. Penelope, a single woman with five children, is opposed to marriage. She says: 'Fact is, I was put off marriage at a very early age. I'ad a drunken beast of a father, as spent 'is time a-drinking by day and a-beating mother by night. One night 'e overdid it and killed 'er...'.<sup>13</sup>

These characteristics are repeated in various stories. Gertrude Colmore (1855–1926), a member of the WWSL, wrote a short story called *Betsy* in 1913.<sup>14</sup> It told the story of a woman whose 10 children, fathered by her worthless and drunken husband within a short space of years, had paid the debt of their father's outraged nature. Seven had died during infancy and childhood; only three grew to adulthood. For 20 years, Betsy had never worked less than 16 hours a day—hard manual labour, broken only by short intervals of bearing and burying her children.<sup>15</sup> As with Mrs Chicky in *A Chat with Mrs. Chicky*, and with Mrs Jenkins in *An Englishwoman's Home*, working-class women speak of their hardships.<sup>16</sup>

### 6.2.2. Narratives by Working-Class Activists

The working-class woman who was able to speak about her terrible conditions and appeal for the vote was not only a character in plays or novels—she existed in reality. In the same way as the terrible working conditions, drunken husbands and child-rearing issues were common narratives in plays and stories, they were also employed by actual working-class women.

Chew, who later became an organiser for the NUWSS, published a number of stories about working-class women in the NUWSS publication *The Common Cause*. Chew was involved in the labour movement as early as 1894. In 1908, she gave up her work as a trade-union organiser and in 1911 became a full-time organiser with the NUWSS (perhaps in part because of the strong relationship between the NUWSS and the Labour Party, which was cemented in 1912).

Chew had begun working as a clothes-maker in a factory in Crewe when she was 22 years old.

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<sup>13</sup> Margaret Wynne Jones Nevinson, *In the Workhouse* (London: The International Suffrage Shop, 1911), 53.

<sup>14</sup> Gertrude Baillie Weaver wrote novels using the name 'Gertrude Colmore'. Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866-1928*, 702.

<sup>15</sup> Gertrude Colmore, 'Betsy', *Votes for Women*, 19 Oct 1913: 16.

<sup>16</sup> *A Chat with Mrs Chicky* and *An Englishwoman's Home* are discussed in Chapter 4.

The factory made a variety of uniforms for soldiers, police and railway workers. In 1894, after enduring the labour conditions for two years, she launched her 'Crewe Factory Girl' campaign in the local newspaper, the *Crewe Chronicle*. Her sense of exploitation led her to express herself in the newspaper under the alias 'Crewe Factory Girl'. 'She began to wonder why so much work brought so little money,' she wrote in *The Common Cause* using the third person singular. However, these are believed to be her own experiences. Gradually, these questions developed her consciousness as the 'Crewe Factory Girl'.

At the start of her working-life, Chew demonstrated her negotiation skills by reducing the usual three-month unpaid apprenticeship to one week. From her letters to the *Crewe Chronicle* during 1894, it is possible to gain a sense of her two-layered demands: equal pay and rights for women as employees. The wages were low because workers were paid on a piecework basis—weekly wages fluctuated between 1d and 4d. In addition, employees were required to pay for the fabric they used to make the clothes, and they never received any of the so-called tea-money, supposedly used to purchase tea for the workers.<sup>17</sup>

Chew's story of the Crewe factory revealed there was solidarity among people. When she first launched the Crewe Factory Girl campaign, the other women in the factory were unsupportive because they feared they could lose their jobs. Although they complained about their conditions, they did not want to do so loudly. When Chew asked them why they did not support the Crewe Factory Girl, even though they were 'grumbling' about the working conditions, they agreed they were complaining, '[b]ut not aloud! Do we want the sack? What matters if we don't average more than 7s or 8s the year round? Half a loaf's better than no bread'.<sup>18</sup> Chew did not identify herself in the newspaper because she was afraid of losing her job. Although the women working in the Compton factory recognised their common interests, they had not yet developed the class-consciousness required to form a collective action. The birth of class-consciousness is a gradual process. By expanding the Crewe Factory Girl campaign in the newspaper, Chew gradually established her consciousness as a woman and as a member of the working class. She discovered that women were considered to have less commercial value than that of men and, as working-class, women were exploited by employers. Chew's 1894 campaign, which she started when she

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<sup>17</sup> Doris Neild Chew, *The Life and Writings of Ada Neild Chew* (London: Virago, 1982).

<sup>18</sup> Ada Neild Chew, 'Work-A-Day Women', *The Common Cause*, 9 April 1914: 9.

was only 24 years old, helped to form the basis of her identity.

After leaving her factory job, Chew became a member of the ILP. From that point, her active participation in the labour movement began. She met her future husband, George Chew, an ILP organiser, through the Crewe branch of the ILP. In 1898, Chew gave birth to their only daughter. Her daughter, Doris Nield Chew, wrote in Chew's biography that her mother was the decision-maker in the home, and the family's finances were in her hands (George did not consider them his responsibility).

When Doris was two years old, Chew was appointed organiser for the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL). She worked in this position from 1900 to 1908 and later wrote of the difficulties in organising women workers: how difficult it was to make them understand the benefits of the organisation and to encourage them to pay their union fees from their meagre wages. She always sympathised with the married working-class women who carried children and managed their households on small salaries (she too came from a similar background). While she was still young, Chew had decided she herself would only have a small family as 'Ada had had enough' of taking care, 'particularly of little boys'. She declared to her mother 'she intended to have only one child, and hoped it would be a daughter'.<sup>19</sup> Luckily, she managed to fulfil her wish. Chew was raised in a big working-class family with many boys, and she often had to adopt the role of mother because her mother was so busy.

From 1886 to 1903, the WTUL focused on supporting protective legislation and opening men's unions to women.<sup>20</sup> While Chew was travelling the country as a WTUL organiser, she became acquainted with large working-class families with many children and living in poverty, similar to that of her parents. These experiences were later expressed in her fictional stories printed in various journals.

One particular campaign of the WTUL was 'against the lead poisoning in the pottery trades'.<sup>21</sup> The *Women's Trades' Union Review* reported on the conditions of this particular trade in 1891. Chew's stories described her experiences and her learning as a WTUL organiser. She wrote a story about Mrs

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<sup>19</sup> Chew, *The Life and Writings of Ada Nield Chew*, 10.

<sup>20</sup> Gladys Boone, *The Women's Trade Union Leagues in Great Britain and the United States of America* (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 26-27.

<sup>21</sup> Sheila Lewenhak, *Women and Trade Unions: An Outline History of Women in the British Trade Union Movement* (London: Benny Haidonin, 1977), 78.

Evans, a woman who had ‘worked in one of the dangerous processes of pottery manufacture’. Mrs Evans had to support her three children, her mother and her father on her wage after her husband abandoned the family. Although she was afraid of lead poisoning, Mrs Evans could not leave her job because of her financial responsibilities. Accordingly, she became ill and had to depend on half-wage compensation. At the end of the story, Chew wrote, ‘to the end of her life she will suffer the effects of that year’s illness. But she is deeply thankful to be able in spite of her disability to earn ten shillings a week at another branch of pottery manufacture’.<sup>22</sup>

Chew’s stories portrayed women in unhappy marriages with brutal husbands and many children, as well as dreadful working conditions. In her stories, women had to endure these working conditions because they could not risk losing their jobs; nor could they strike for long periods without wages. She contributed several articles to the *Women’s Trade Union Review* about trades with terrible working conditions similar to the pottery trades, including fish-curing in Aberdeen and egg-sorting in Hartlepool.<sup>23</sup> Most workers in both trades were women, many of them widows. She claimed that the Factory Act ignored both trades, causing female workers to work overtime without pay and under unhygienic conditions. Chew emphasised the importance of legislation and its proper implementation: ‘[L]egislation is more necessary for women than men, for their peculiar circumstances render them more helpless than men, and restrictions as to hours, wages, and sanitary provisions all help women to help themselves’.<sup>24</sup>

In another of her stories, *Making It Stretch*, Chew described married women’s dominance over household duties and men’s lack of knowledge thereof.<sup>25</sup> She also described the many domestic chores women had to perform, as can be observed in the title of her story, *Women’s Work is Never Done*.<sup>26</sup> Chew

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<sup>22</sup> Ada Neild Chew, ‘The Pottery Worker’, *The Common Cause*, 4 January 1912.

<sup>23</sup> Mrs Chew, ‘Fish-curing at Aberdeen’, *The Women’s Trades’ Union Review*, No.41, April 1901: 5-6; Ada Chew, ‘Egg-sorting & Other Trades at Hartlepool’, *The Women’s Trades’ Union Review*, No.42, July 1901: 15-17.

<sup>24</sup> Ada Neild Chew, ‘The Case for The Factory Acts’, *The Women’s Trades’ Union Review*, No.43, October 1901: 14.

<sup>25</sup> Ada Neild Chew, ‘Making It Stretch’, *The Common Cause*, 5 and 12 Oct 1911.

<sup>26</sup> Ada Neild Chew, ‘A Woman’s Work is Never Done’, *The Common Cause*, 24 April, 1914. There are other stories related to the ordinary life of working class women: ‘All in Day’s Work: Mrs. Turpin’, *The Englishwoman’s Review*, July, 1912; ‘All in Day’s Work: Mrs. Bolt’, *The Englishwoman*, 1912; ‘The Mother’s Story’, *The Common Cause*, 11 April, 1913; ‘A Separation

portrayed the ordinary lives of married working-class women and showed the various realities of their conditions. Many themes were represented in these stories: inequality in wages, women's dominance in the domestic sphere, the bond between mother and child and the importance of the economic independence of women. To convey her views, she used the common narratives of working-class women.

Chew contributed several articles and stories to *The Common Cause* from 1911 to 1914. These included three stories published in *The Married Working Women* and a variety of articles: 'The Economic Position of Married Women', 'Motherhood', 'The Problem of the Married Working Women', 'A Women's Work is Never Done', 'The War and Lancashire Factory Towns' and "'Womanly' Work'. In addition, she wrote about her experiences working as a clothes-maker in *Work-a-day Women*, and she wrote a series of stories about 'Mr Stubbs', which portrays a working-class couple, a husband and a suffragist wife.

Narratives of the class experience (i.e. the hard work, low wages, drunken husbands, difficulty of raising children in poverty) were observed in the autobiographies of working-class suffragists. Although Gawthorpe and Mitchell wrote their autobiographies late in their lives, their memoirs still recount those class experiences.<sup>27</sup>

Autobiographies enable us to look at the writers' interpretations of their experiences as women. According to the Personal Narratives Group, when people write autobiographies, they 'lie sometimes, forget a lot, exaggerate, become confused and get things wrong. Yet they are revealing truths. These truths don't reveal the past "as it actually was", aspiring to a standard of objectivity. They give us instead the truths of our experiences'. The 'truth' that readers discover in autobiographies will not be 'the objective truth' but 'the links between women's perspectives and the truths they reveal'.<sup>28</sup> The importance is in how the author represents her own personal narrative by constructing her view of the historical incidents.

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Order', *The Common Cause*, 2 May, 1913; 'A Daughter's Education', *The Common Cause*, 13 June, 1913; 'Assault and Battery', *The Common Cause*, 12 September, 1913.

<sup>27</sup> See Mary Gawthorpe, *Uphill to Holloway* (Maine: Traversity Press, 1962); H. M. W. Mitchell, *Hard Way Up: The Autobiography of Hanna Mitchell, Suffragette and Rebel* (London: Virago, 1968).

<sup>28</sup> *Interpreting Women's Lives*, Personal Narrative Groups, eds., 261. Qtd. in Pauline Polkey, 'Reading History through Autobiography,' *Women's History Review* 9.3 (2000): 495.



Gagnier has indicated a further issue, that is, the working class. Class identity makes the working-class author significant, and therefore autobiography tends to be an autobiography of class experiences, 'image and status as atoms of the masses', instead of the subjective view of the individual.<sup>29</sup> Although the narrative tends to be the expression of class, it is best to consider their writings as influenced by their personal truths.

Gagnier also says that the form of the working-class autobiography is different from the form of the classic spiritual autobiography in that the working-class autobiography 'includes such elements as remembered details of childhood, a confrontation with parents, a reassessment of the subject's education, crisis, and a recovery or a discovery of a new self'.<sup>30</sup> The difference between male and female autobiography is that women include more detail on husbands, lovers and their married lives.<sup>31</sup>

The autobiography of Mary Richardson (1889–1961), a middle-class woman and a suffragette, focused only on her suffrage activities.<sup>32</sup> Her life before and after suffrage is rarely mentioned.<sup>33</sup> The suffrage movement was the central event in Richardson's life. However, the autobiographies of Gawthorpe and Mitchell include their births through to their old age. Both women say their working-class backgrounds influenced their decision to enter the women's suffrage movement. Mitchell writes about her mother, 'I never quite forgave her for my lack of education, and she never forgave me for my lack of interest in the things she considered pertinent'.<sup>34</sup> Mitchell's mother wanted her daughter to take up a dressmaking apprenticeship instead of going to school. Mitchell became involved in the women's suffrage movement because she was unsatisfied with the lot of working-class women. During Gawthorpe's

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<sup>29</sup> Regenia Gagnier, 'Social Atoms: Working-Class Autobiography, Subjectivity and Gender,' *Victorian Studies* 30.3 (1987): 340.

<sup>30</sup> The 'classic spiritual autobiography' which Gagnier mentioned here are the autobiographies written by the people with religious faiths. Gagnier, 'Social Atoms: Working-Class Autobiography, Subjectivity and Gender,' 343–44.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>32</sup> Mary Richardson, *Laugh a Defiance* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1953).

<sup>33</sup> Hilda Kean, 'Some Problems of Constructing and Reconstructing a Suffragette's Life: Mary Richardson, Suffragette, Socialist and Fascist,' *Women's History Review* 7.4 (1998): 480.

<sup>34</sup> Mitchell, *Hard Way Up*, 57.

adolescence, her family, who struggled to maintain their standard of living (including her access to education), made the best of their situation within tight economic constraints.

Mitchell and Gawthorpe's autobiographies reveal similar narratives (poverty, hard labour and worthless husbands) to those in numerous other writings by working-class women. Their autobiographies repeat the stereotypical discourse of working-class women living in poverty. The fact that typical narratives of working-class women are repeated by Mitchell and Gawthorpe illustrates that such narratives constructed the identity of working-class women and that identity was deeply embedded through the repetition of those working-class narratives.

### 6.3 Incorporating the Labour Movement for the Suffrage Cause: A Case-Study of Pit-Brow Women

Narratives describing the lives of working-class women were soundly established, at least in suffrage literature. The women's suffrage societies used those fixed narratives to advertise their cause visually. To achieve this, the suffrage movement acted to include the women's labour movement.

The women's suffrage movement in the twentieth century had to think of many ways in which to attract the public, because the movement existed within a society devoted to mass consumerism. By aligning their interests with the public's interests, the women's suffrage societies aimed to attract sympathetic people. Among the numerous labour disputes, was a cause both the WSPU and the NUWSS supported: the issue of labour restrictions against pit-brow women.

Pit-brow women worked at the coalmines. Since 1842, women had been prohibited from working inside the mines; therefore, women had been working at the surface, sorting and carrying coal in tubs. The restrictions on their work had been an issue since the 1880s. In the late nineteenth century, state intervention into employment practices grew because it was considered as the solution to diverse employment problems. Social feminists supported protective legislation because they thought it would lighten women's burdens. On the other hand, equal right feminists opposed to any legislation that would be enforced only on women. Male trade unionists claimed that protective measure was to safeguard women; however, there was a hidden intention to secure and protect male employment. Whether the work fit the

ideals of femininity and moral codes of women or not was a crucial argument in the discussions on introducing protective legislation.<sup>35</sup> Women's jobs termed 'sweated' (e.g. bartending, pottery-making, chain-making) and dangerous trades (e.g. pit-brow work) were continually under threat of legal restrictions, because the work was considered dangerous, injurious to women's health, and not at all suitable. These types of jobs for women had existed since the industrial revolution.<sup>36</sup>

Protective measures were applied only for the benefit of men, not women. The measures were gendered that the argument concerning those measures was related with the notions of what were suitable for women's work and what were not. Women suffrage organisations became involved in the repeal of those protective measures because they could prohibit women from working and therefore seriously undermine their livelihoods.

Accordingly, the suffrage societies used representations of working-class women, and working-class women—the pit-brow workers or the chain-makers—were given the opportunity to appeal directly to Home Office officials, members of parliament and the public via the suffrage movement.

In 1911, protests against the restriction of pit-brow women's work once again became a significant issue. Around this time, the WSPU was well aware of the workers' problems. As early as 1906, the leader of the WSPU, Emmeline Pankhurst, was aware that any interest in the pit-brow issue would create a connection with the trade-union movement. On a promotional visit to South Wales, Emmeline Pankhurst learnt of the pit-brow women and immediately summoned Annie Kenney. She believed it would be easier for Kenney, as a working-class woman, to sympathise with the pit-brow women and trade-unionists.<sup>37</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst was right. Kenney later wrote in her autobiography, 'The pit-brow women and I made good friends. Neither of us was afraid of the world knowing whether our grandfathers had worn clogs or no'.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Gerry Holloway, *Women and Work in Britain since 1840*, (London: Routledge, 2005), 87-91.

<sup>36</sup> See Barbara Harrison, *Not Only the 'Dangerous Trades' Women's Work and Health in Britain, 1880-1914* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1996).

<sup>37</sup> Annie Kenney, *Memories of a Militant* (London: E. Arnold, 1924), 56; Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, 77.

<sup>38</sup> Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 133.

In 1908, John Burns (1858–1943), president of the Local Government Board, announced he would support the prohibition of pit-brow work for women. When Annie Kenney heard the news, she made contact with Stephen Walsh (1859–1929), an MP from Wigan, and arranged a meeting. Wigan is an old mining city with a long history. It is not clear how many women were employed in pit-brow work, but according to historian Angela V. John, in 1890 there were 1,637 pit-brow women in West Lancashire.<sup>39</sup>

Kenney pointed out the importance for pit-brow women to speak publicly about their fight. She gathered 20 pit-brow women with reporters from the London press: ‘I wired the Press the full news of our programme. London, interested in Lancashire, especially in clogs and shawl, came to report in full force’.<sup>40</sup> From this quote, it is apparent Annie Kenney was very much aware the press would be attracted by visual representations of pit-brow women, that is, the clogs and shawls. The meeting was a great success. Kenney then planned for the pit-brow women—with their clogs and shawls—to visit parliament. She had already known the power of clogs and shawls from the previous meeting held in London. On the occasion of the first Women’s Parliament, an annual meeting of the WSPU held in February 1907, the WSPU invited factory women wearing clogs and shawls:

The idea was to get the Lancashire and Yorkshire factory women to come to London in clogs and shawls and march on Parliament. We are all interested in the thing we do not possess! Misery is always attractive. The West End is attracted by the customs of the East End, and the East End by the West End. The aristocratic delights in renting a small cottage, and the democrat in being possessed of a mansion. So clogs and shawl would attract not only the public but Parliamentarians, who, like all people, look forward to a change.<sup>41</sup>

As Kenney expected, the pit-brow women who accompanied Annie Kenney to London in 1908

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<sup>39</sup> According to Angela V. John, there were two in Yorkshire, 209 in North Staffordshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, 238 in South Staffordshire, Worcestershire, 286 in Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, and 419 in North and East Lancashire. Angela V. John, *By the Sweat of Their Brow* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 74.

<sup>40</sup> Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, 133.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

greatly enjoyed their trip. After they had ‘advertised the Suffragettes’, they returned home.<sup>42</sup> The WSPU had realised it was possible to promote women’s suffrage while supporting the pit-brow women.

The pit-brow women’s fight was brought to the fore in 1911 with discussions in parliament regarding the Coal Mines Act. The underlying reason for the proposed prohibitions was gendered notions of labour. The supporters of the Coal Mines Act insisted surface labour was not suitable for women and women should be protected from these terrible conditions. However, a secondary motive behind the legislation was to secure these jobs for men.

Not only the WSPU, but also the WFL and the NUWSS supported the pit-brow women. On 3 April 1911, 50 representatives visited the Home Office. In August that year, another visit was made, this time by the mayor and mayoress of Wigan, the vicar of Abraham, Mr John Knowles of Pearson and 45 pit-brow women. The *Manchester Guardian* reported most of the women as less than 25 years of age.<sup>43</sup>

*The Common Cause* carried a photograph on its front page (see Figure 6-2) showing the mayoress of Wigan in ordinary dress surrounded by pit-brow women wearing clogs and shawls.<sup>44</sup> The picture was first published in the *Manchester Guardian*.<sup>45</sup> The pit-brow girls’ issue was of great interest to the people of Manchester, where the labour movement was traditionally strong.

In the photograph, in contrast with the mayoress of Wigan’s clothing, the attire of the pit-brow women emphasises their ‘otherness’. Pit-brow women worked in clogs and shawls, and their faces and clothes became black and dirty. Their morals were constantly questioned, because they were working among the male miners. However, with their bodies covered with shawls, the pit-brow women in the photograph appear rather demure.

On 3 October 1911, at Albert Hall in Manchester, the Lancashire and Cheshire Women Textile and Other Workers Representation Committee, the National Professional and Industrial Women’s Suffrage societies and the Manchester and Salford Women’s Trades and Labour Council organised a meeting. On

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>43</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 4 August 1911: 5.

<sup>44</sup> *The Common Cause*, 10 August 1911.

<sup>45</sup> ‘Wigan Pit-brow Women in London’, *Manchester Guardian*, 4 Aug 1911: 5.

13 October, Annie Kenney of WSPU, visited Wigan to attend the meeting, and on 18 October, she brought together from each mine one or two pit-brow women to speak with them about their work.<sup>46</sup> At that time, the WSPU was criticised by the Miners Union, which claimed that the WSPU was aggravating the pit-brow issue to promote women's suffrage. It was obvious the WSPU was using the labour movement to promote their own cause. Although the women's suffrage societies used the labour movement for their own means, their actions did not impede the women's labour movement.

A pit-brow women's meeting was planned at the Memorial Hall in Farringdon Street, London, on 31 October 1911. The NUWSS advertised in *The Common Cause* for donations of train fares for the pit-brow women to travel to London.<sup>47</sup> Thus, although the women's suffrage societies used the pit-brow women to publicise the movement, they also used their network to support the pit-brow protest.

Prior to the London meeting, a pamphlet, *Statement of an Amateur Pitbrow Worker*, was presented to the Home Office on 26 October 1911 (see Figure 6-3).<sup>48</sup> Miss Kate King May, a gymnastics teacher and honorary treasurer of the Gymnastic Teachers' Suffrage Society (est. 1908), reported how she felt when she first wore the pit-brow clothes:

My first day's work in the pit brow began with the initial difficulty of clothes. With the assistance of Annie, my friend, I arrayed myself in the picturesque costume of the pit-brow worker—a short, dark skirt, simple, and womanlike, a dark blouse ending in the neck with a handkerchief firmly bound round to prevent the filtration of coal-dust. Over my shoulders were pinned a small plaid shawl for the same purpose, and my head was tied up in a red handkerchief, over which was fastened a padded grey plaid bonnet. The skirt was turned up in front and was covered by a 'Hardinge' apron. The wooden soled clogs that I wore for the first time caused me a little anxiety on my two miles' walk to work, but the costume was otherwise very comfortable, and I got used to the clogs in a

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<sup>46</sup> *Votes for Women*, 13 Oct 1911: 21.

<sup>47</sup> 'The Pit-Brow Girls of Fife: An Appeal', *The Common Cause*, 19 Oct 1911: 486.

<sup>48</sup> 'Statement of an Amateur Pitbrow Worker', POWE8/26/117753, Papers of the Ministry of Power, Public Record

few days.<sup>49</sup>

This description of wearing a pit-brow woman's clothes captures the surprise felt by middle-class May towards the unfamiliar attire. However, she also describes the clothing as 'picturesque' and 'womanly'. She may have intentionally used 'womanly' because, as she mentions in her report, 'the pitbrow workers [were] described in some of the more sensational newspapers as rough and uncivilized in their way of life'.<sup>50</sup> To refute those claims, May emphasises the femininity of the clothes. May also visited other mines. At the Park Lane brow, a stricter dress code was enforced: 'I brought a large shawl which I was not permitted to wear, the proper fashion being a man's coat (cast off by your male relatives). To get one of the right cut and toil-worn appearance I had to get it from a painter'. May was forced to wear men's clothes in this pit, but she concluded, 'I found it very practical to work in cold weather'.<sup>51</sup> For May, a middle-class gymnastics teacher, the clothes of the pit-brow woman were something of a novelty.

The choice of a gymnastics teacher to experience pit-brow work is evidence that pit-brow work was considered too physically strenuous for regular middle-class women. The purpose of May's report was to prove that a woman with no previous experience could safely perform pit-brow work. May mentioned, 'the work itself cannot be called anything but light'. After she had completed the day's work, one of the women invited her to go on a walk. She wrote of her feelings, 'I felt ashamed to show of my town-bred degeneracy and stepped out manfully, though the change back from clogs to boots was distinctly trying'.<sup>52</sup>

A further report was presented to the Home Office on 20 November 1911 by TM Angior of Wigan, Doctor Cooke, Miss Macintyre and TFB Twemlow, vicar. This report described the work of pit-brow women. The report contained two photographs: one showed pit-brow women working, wearing clogs and shawls, the typical pit-brow costume (see Figure 6-4), and the other (see Figure 6-5) showed respectable women wearing everyday clothes, blouses and skirts.<sup>53</sup> By presenting the two pictures together, the report emphasised the femininity of the pit-brow women. From these reports submitted to the Home Office, it is

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

apparent that the visual forms of the pit-brow women were considered to have a strong impact on people.

Historian Angela John comments in her study that images of the labour of pit-brow women were firmly established by the 1880s. These images greatly influenced the decision to restrict the labour of pit-brow women.<sup>54</sup>

On 5 December 1911, the Coal Mines Bill was discussed in the House of Commons. The members of parliament who supported the Bill and those who opposed it put forward their arguments, based on a variety of reasons. Sir A Markham, MP for Mansfield, held a gendered notion of what constituted suitable labour for women:

In other districts where coal is tipped out of a tipper on to a flat screen, clouds of dust come out with the coal, and in South Wales particular the women stand right underneath, where all the fine dust is thrown on them. Can it truly be said, where women are working under these conditions, that that is going to make for better life and higher civilization?<sup>55</sup>

Another argument put forward for restricting pit-brow women's work was that coalmine owners were exploiting the women. However, Mr Rowland Hunt claimed that it was 'a trade union's tyranny' to secure the women's jobs for men.<sup>56</sup>

Women's suffrage societies worked hard to secure jobs for pit-brow women. It is difficult to analyse the social response to the visual representations of the pit-brow women, because no evidence is available. However, the unique appearance of pit-brow women was used by the women's suffrage societies for their own gain—the unusual attire of clogs and shawls was of immense interest to the public.

## 6.4 Working-Class Women in Processions

### 6.4.1 Sweated Workers

The WSPU and NUWSS processions have been discussed in Chapter 3. Representations of working-class women were used in those processions to demonstrate that women from all classes

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<sup>54</sup> John, *By the Sweat of Their Brow*.

<sup>55</sup> 'Coal Mines Bill Report', *Hansard*, xxxii, 5 Dec 1911: 1272.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 1252.



supported women's suffrage.

Millicent Garrett Fawcett, the president of the NUWSS, wrote in *The Times* about the procession of 13 June 1908:

Thousands and thousands of women representative of every class in society, from the highest (not Royal) to factory workers and working women of all grades, including domestic servants, will march in procession at 3 o'clock from Northumberland-avenue to the Albert-hall, where a mass meeting will be held to demand the abolition of the legal disqualification which prevents women from voting in the election members of Parliament.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, many classes were present in the procession. Not only in NUWSS processions was the participation of the working class visibly confirmed. *Votes for Women* published an article urging working-class women to visit London and participate in their processions. For a major WSPU procession in London, local branches held meetings to advertise the occasion, and they worked actively to attract working-class women. In 1908, before the Women's Sunday demonstration, the WSPU held numerous meetings all over the country to advertise the suffrage procession. One week after the NUWSS procession in 1908, the WSPU held their Women's Sunday procession. Local branches of the WSPU had lobbied working-class women to walk in the procession.

The meetings were often conducted in factories and shops to attract working-class women. For example, in London, WSPU organisers went to William Whiteley and Son (est. 1863), the first department store in London, to hold a meeting of the shop assistants. *Votes for Women* reported:

Here we have scored a great success; for as I know that shop assistants detest meetings of all kinds, they must be interested indeed when they ask us to come again. We notice with pleasure that our audiences increase, and that girls who came to the first meeting brought many friends with them to the second.<sup>58</sup>

They also held meetings to promote the procession at other shops such as Messrs. William Owen

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<sup>57</sup> *The Times*, 13 June 1908: 9.

<sup>58</sup> *Votes for Women*, 28 May 1908: 198.

and Co. and Messrs. Badcock and Co. of Tottenham Court Road.<sup>59</sup> The Chiswick branch of the WSPU targeted laundry women in Acton, and the Kensington branches held a meeting at the Standard Laundry. In Cardiff, they addressed working-class men at the docks, men whose wages were high enough to send their wives to the procession in London.<sup>60</sup> In York, the WSPU planned to address the women at Rowntree's (a chocolate and cocoa manufacturer) because there were 3,000 women and girls employed at the factory.<sup>61</sup> The Lewisham branch held a meeting at the Messrs. Payne Brothers (drapers) in the shop assistants' sitting room.<sup>62</sup> *Votes for Women* reported Miss M Brackenbury and Mrs East, members of the WSPU, went to the Standard Laundry, South Acton, to address the employees: 'At first the girls treated the subject as a huge joke, but very soon became intensely interested, and promised to come to Hyde Park on the 21<sup>st</sup>. They asked them "to come again soon, and tell them some more"'.<sup>63</sup>

In Lambeth, the suffragists visited several factories and distributed bills among the women inviting them to come to the procession.<sup>64</sup> Marion Phillips (1880–1969), a member of the WSPU, hosted a dinner-hour meeting outside Selincourt's factory. Phillips reported: 'The reception the speaker had from the audience was all that could be desired, and the women workers—who were of a superior class—took the keenest interest in the Hyde Park demonstration'.<sup>65</sup> Waterlow's paper factory was also the location of a suffrage meeting.

In Blackburn, Wigan and Bolton, cities with large numbers of married working women, the suffragettes attempted to rouse the interests of married women by speaking against John Burn's Bill to restrict the labour of married women.<sup>66</sup> A report in the *Wigan Observer* illustrates how suffragettes promoted the women's cause in smaller towns. Miss Brooks and Mrs Baines held a meeting at the market

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<sup>59</sup> *Votes for Women*, 28 May 1908: 190; 11 June 1908: 228.

<sup>60</sup> *Votes for Women*, 28 May 1908: 198.

<sup>61</sup> *Votes for Women*, 4 June 1908: 213.

<sup>62</sup> *Votes for Women*, 11 June 1908: 238.

<sup>63</sup> *Votes for Women*, 18 June 1908: 230.

<sup>64</sup> *Votes for Women*, 4 June 1908: 212.

<sup>65</sup> *Votes for Women*, 4 June 1908: 212.

<sup>66</sup> *Votes for Women*, 11 June 1908: 231.

square in Wigan, where between 2,000 and 3,000 people gathered. The lively banter between the suffragettes and the local audience was recorded in the *Wigan Observer*:

They had been told of one question that one gentleman present had got ready for them, and she would tell them what it was beforehand, so that afterwards the gentleman would not be so foolish as to ask it. The question was: 'Who'll do the washing when women get the vote?' (Laughter). Well she would tell them. The same people who did it before they got the vote. Even now while they were busy trying to get the vote many of them did half-a-day's washing and then went out agitating for the vote afterwards. Now, if they were only given the vote they could stay at home, and do a full day's washing, because then there would be no need to get out to agitate. (Laughter and applause) ... A woman at the front then put several questions to the lady speakers, and these were answered. It was asked how it was that the suffragists were not going in for votes for women.

Miss Brooks said the simple reason was that if they asked for too much at the first, the men would not give it them, because there were more women than men in the world, and the women should be able to outvote the men. That being the case they could not expect the men to give every woman a vote. (Laughter) Besides every man had not a vote. They would go in for every woman having a vote later on, when every man got a vote, and they had adult suffrage. (Applause). The next question was as to what proportion of women would belong to the working classes if the franchise was granted to women on the terms laid down by the National Women's Social and Political Union?

Mrs. Baines said that at the present time there were about 7,500,000 women in the country, and 2,500,000 women would get the vote on the terms asked for, and of those 2,500,000 women 82 percent, would be working women.<sup>67</sup>

The meetings held in various cities, factories and halls advertising the Women's Sunday were great opportunities to interact with working-class men and women, who proved to be good audiences.

The WSPU tried every possible way to promote the Hyde Park demonstration and to attract

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<sup>67</sup> *The Wigan Observer and District Advertiser*, 18 June 1908: 3.

spectators for the suffrage processions.<sup>68</sup> *Votes for Women* urged WSPU members to visit every teashop in the district and distribute bills advertising the Hyde Park demonstration with the hope of attracting waitresses and teashop girls. *Votes for Women* explained:

Many women are taking one and some two meals a day in teashops. Between now and the 21<sup>st</sup> they might make a point of taking each meal in a different place. If two or three or more workers agreed, a whole thoroughfare or even district might be so covered and thousands of women thus reached. The same applies, of course, to all shops where there are women assistants, but the teashop assistants can be reached by so many without going a step out of their way.<sup>69</sup>

Annie Kenney wrote to Lancashire textile workers, via *Votes for Women*, and urged them to save their wages to travel to London to participate in the procession.<sup>70</sup> The next issue mentioned the WSPU-held meeting at the docks in Cardiff. It was anticipated that ‘to influence the men there earning exceptionally high wages, would open out the possibility of railway fares for their wives’.<sup>71</sup> By asking working-class women to participate in the procession, the WSPU were attempting to show the solidarity of women across boundaries of class. Sylvia Pankhurst later wrote, ‘As to the Suffrage Movement, it was a gathering of people of all sorts, united by one simple idea, which necessitated the surrender of no prejudice or race or class’.<sup>72</sup> An example of this solidarity was observed at the Women’s Sunday procession where working-class women walked along the streets of London beside middle-class women. *Votes for Women* reported that in the procession, which started in Euston Street, ‘[t]he “Lancashire lasses” attracted a good deal of friendly attention and good-humoured banter on the march’.<sup>73</sup> Figure 6-6 shows a photograph of the Lancashire deputation walking in the Women’s Sunday procession with a banner stating, ‘Working

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<sup>68</sup> The goal of the Women’s Sunday Procession was the Hyde Park. The WSPU held a huge demonstration there. In the Hyde Park, 20 platforms were prepared for the occasion.

<sup>69</sup> *Votes for Women*, 11 June 1908: 227.

<sup>70</sup> Annie Kenney, ‘To the Married Textile Workers’, *Votes for Women*, 21 May 1908: 182.

<sup>71</sup> *Votes for Women*, 28 May 1908: 198.

<sup>72</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals*, 631.

<sup>73</sup> *Votes for Women*, 25 June 1908: 269.

Women Demand the Vote'. In this instance, 'working women' meant textile workers, the cotton industry having flourished in Lancashire, often referred to as the 'cradle of the industry'. The representatives from Lancashire may well have been 'Lancashire lassies'. The Women's Co-operative Guild, with 80 per cent of its members married working-class women, also took part in Women's Sunday. The women's group of the Fabian Society joined the procession with a 'beautiful' banner designed by May Morris (1862–1938), a daughter of William Morris and an embroidery designer.<sup>74</sup> Women from the East End followed the procession in carts.<sup>75</sup>

Several of the working-class organisers spoke at Hyde Park during Women's Sunday. *Votes for Women* printed background notes about each speaker. For example, Minnie Baldock (1864–1954), a working-class woman, who was born in 1864 and worked in a shirt factory as a girl, was one of the first WSPU supporters in London and was described as follows:

Mrs. Baldock, as a working woman, knows the difficulties and sorrows of their lives, and has now given up all other work to fight for political power for women. She brings to her work the experience gained as a Poor Law Guardian and by work in the I.L.P., on Distress Committees, &c. Mrs. Baldock was one of the first of the militant Suffragettes in London, heckling Mr. Asquith at his Queen's Hall meeting in December, 1905, and holding up the banner at the Albert Hall meeting. In October 1906, and again in February 1908, she suffered imprisonment for her enthusiasm.<sup>76</sup>

This introduction identified Mrs Baldock according to her work and her suffrage activities.

72 speakers were chosen for the Women's Sunday event. Eleven were working-class women and the remaining 61 were of middle-class origin. The working-class speakers, such as Annie Kenney, Jennie Kenney, Mrs Baldock, Miss E Berlon, Jessie Kenney and Mrs Roe, tended to be defined in the background notes by their current or past jobs. The jobs of these women represented the hardship of their lives and consolidated their identities as working-class women.

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<sup>74</sup> Eda Berlon, 'The Great March: To Hyde Park on Women's Sunday,' *Votes for Women*, 11 June 1908: 227.

<sup>75</sup> *Votes for Women*, 18 June 1908: 248.

<sup>76</sup> *Votes for Women*, 18 June 1908: 252.

#### 6.4.2 The Pageant of Women's Trades and Professions

In April 1909, the NUWSS hosted the Fourth Conference of the International Women's Suffrage Association in London and produced the Pageant of Women's Trades and Professions to mark the occasion. The pageant involved 1,000 women from 90 professions, dressed in clothes and costumes representing their occupations. They walked from Eaton Square to Royal Albert Hall. Each group carried an emblem designed by Mary Lowndes, who also designed the banners used in NUWSS processions. Figures 6-7 and 6-8 show the emblems carried by pit-brow women and fish-curers. The designs of these emblems reveal a romantic notion of work, which may be attributed to Lowndes's connection with the Arts and Crafts movement. Some of the emblems were printed in *The Queen*, a newspaper for the middle-class women, indicating this romanticism of work was accepted by middle-class women (see Figure 6-9).<sup>77</sup>

The pageant represented middle-class professions as well as working-class jobs. However, the working-class jobs appeared to have a greater appeal to people watching the procession. One newspaper described the pageant:

Then the ranks opened, and down the long aisle came the chain makers who work at the forge, and the pit-brow women from the mines, women whose faces have been blackened by smoke and coal dust until they can never be washed white. ... To these women, the hardest workers in the land, were given the seats of honor, while behind them, gladly taking a subordinate place, were many women wearing gowns with scarlet and purple hoods, indicating their university degrees.<sup>78</sup>

Groups of sweated workers and women engaged in dangerous trades roused the support of the audience. *The Common Cause* notes, 'Perhaps the favourites in the procession were the pit-brow women, the Lancashire cotton spinners, and the chainmakers from the Black Country. As they marched in a member of the audience—she was evidently an anti-suffragist—said to her neighbour, "Are they real

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<sup>77</sup> 'The Women's Suffrage Movement', *The Queen: The Lady's Newspaper*, 1 May 1909: 759.

<sup>78</sup> Qtd. from Rhetta Childe Dorr, *What Eight Million Woman Want* (1910). (E-book, Project Gutenberg, Web. Access 2 May 2004).

people or only disguised!’”<sup>79</sup>

*The Common Cause* also included a description of the representatives of other working-class trades:

The Pit-Brow Women (emblem the winding machine at the pit-brow, the pick, shovel and sieve)—and Weavers (emblem a golden spider and web for Arachne, the first weaver, shuttles, spools and threads) wrote that they had reached home ‘very tired, but fully satisfied with all they had seen and heard.’ An old, old Buckinghamshire lace maker carried her bobbins and pillows manfully with a young suffragist on either side to pull her along the weary way.<sup>80</sup>

When they entered Royal Albert Hall, they were received with a ‘warm enthusiasm’ and the ‘foreign visitors and many of the general audience rising and waving their handkerchiefs’.<sup>81</sup> Figure 6-10 shows a photograph of pottery-workers dressed in their work clothes and carrying paints for pottery (their work clothes distinguished them from the other workers). The middle-class professionals included nurses, teachers, public servants and typists, whereas the working-class women had trade jobs such as making jam, cigars and tobacco, shirts, pottery and chains.

Why would representations of sweated work rouse the public’s sentiment? The popularity of the representations of sweated work had already been established before the Pageant of Women’s Trades and Professions. In May 1906, the *Daily News* opened the Exhibition of Sweated Industry. The exhibition attracted 30,000 visitors, including members of the Royal Family.<sup>82</sup> The exhibition highlighted real women engaged in sweated and dangerous trades, and provided examples of them at work. The *Englishwoman’s Review of Social and Industrial Questions* reported the exhibition ‘excited immense interest among all classes of society, and among people holding diverse opinions’. The article went on to describe what the public might expect to see:

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<sup>79</sup> *The Common Cause*, 6 May 1909: 60.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Kei Imai, *Igirisu Jyosei Unndoushi (History of The British Women’s Movement)* (Tokyo: Nihonn Keizai Hyouronn-sha, 1992), 246.

[T]he first impression on entering the room was surprise to see such a decent, respectable, well-dressed set of workers. The surprise was somewhat modified by a little reflection. It was evident that the workers chosen for the Exhibition must be among the better sort of the sweated, that they would be wearing their best clothes and that a certain degree of cleanliness, if not habitual, would be enforced on this occasion. But with some it was habitual, as was evident from their well kept hands. Moreover, it seemed to show that a worker, even a 'sweated' worker, is usually cleaner, tidier, more respectable than an idler. The least skilled of the industries requires a certain deftness and neat-handedness which is not commonly found among the idle, and the exercise of this quality must unconsciously affect the character.<sup>83</sup>

The anonymous writer of this article was surprised at the cleanliness of the sweated workers. From the phrase 'more respectable than an idler', it can be assumed that sweated workers were not generally considered 'respectable'.

According to the House of Lords Special Committee, a sweated labour was a trade with low wages, long hours and an unhygienic environment.<sup>84</sup> A dangerous trade was one that had a negative effect on the health of workers; for example, phosphorus poisoning in matchmaking and lead poisoning in pottery-making. The Exhibition of Sweated Industry toured smaller cities such as Oxford. Sweated labour and dangerous trades had been contentious issues since Victorian times, and images of sweated labour had the power to arouse sympathy.

These representations of working-class women, which aroused sympathy, were used in suffrage processions. *Votes for Women* reported a washerwoman from Liverpool had come to London to attend the WSPU Women's Sunday procession as a representative of the sweated workers, because her situation would appeal to the public.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> 'Home and Sweated Industries', *The Englishwoman's Review of Social and Industrial Questions*, 16 July 1906: 146 and 150.

<sup>84</sup> Imai, *Igirisu Jyosei Unndoushi (History of The British Women's Movement)*, 126.

<sup>85</sup> Eric Northwood, *The Clarion*, n.d. Qtd. In *Votes for Women*, 2 July 1908: 279.



When working-class women participated in processions, audiences were able to identify them by their clothing. In 1910, *Votes for Women* described working-class participants in a procession: ‘There were also sweated workers in poor clothes and hats that knew no fashion. They were boot-machiners, box-makers, and skirt-makers, who fight daily with starvation. They, too, had beautiful flowers to carry in their hands’.<sup>86</sup> Working-class women were perceived as women who ‘knew no fashion’, a sharp contrast to the fashionable suffragettes. However, they did hold beautiful flowers in their hands to decorate their unfashionable attires. Henry Nevinson, a journalist and WSPU supporter, described the arrival of 800 university graduates dressed in caps and gowns, followed by nurses, actresses, writers, artists and athletes, who were followed by, ‘the poor, bedraggled sweated workers from the slums’.<sup>87</sup> Working-class women were visually different from the fashionable and elegantly dressed middle-class women. WSPU and NUWSS processions were colourful occasions. Because WSPU members were required to wear white dresses in WSPU processions, members were visually contrasted with the working-class women. Reviewing the WSPU activities of 1906, Christabel Pankhurst had commented on the representations of working-class women, ‘I considered that in one sense it was too exclusively dependent for its demonstrations upon the women of the East End.’<sup>88</sup> It appears then, in the two 1910 processions, the use of working-class representations were not as effective as they had been previously. As explained in Chapter 2, the professions of middle-class women became a central feature of the processions. The 1911 Women’s Coronation Procession included some working-class representatives. However, representations of sweated labour and dangerous trades were partly inherited from the Victorian period, and they were not considered modern representations. Christabel Pankhurst recognised this shift:

Besides, critical murmurs of ‘stage army’ were being, quite unjustly, made by Members of Parliament about the East End contingents, and it was evident that the House of Commons, and even its Labour members, were more impressed by the demonstrations of

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<sup>86</sup> *Votes for Women*, 24 June 1910: 628.

<sup>87</sup> Henry W. Nevinson, ‘An Impression’, *Votes for Women*, 24 June 1910: 629.

<sup>88</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, 66.

the feminine bourgeoisie than of the feminine proletariat.<sup>89</sup>

Christabel had noticed that the visual presence of working-class women became less effective. These depictions of working class women, which evoked sympathies among the middle classes, became stale. The idealised representations of working-class women appeared to lose their appeal. Sylvia Pankhurst, a key proponent of representations of working-class women, turned her attention to proposing slightly different representations of the working-class women; the living working-class women in the East End who exuded strength.

#### 6.4.3 WSPU's East End Campaign

Around 1912, Sylvia Pankhurst and Flora Drummond began to show an interest in organising East End women:

[T]he East End campaign began modestly. I induced the local W.S.P.U.'s to assist in organising it: Kensington, Chelsea, and Paddington made themselves responsible for shops in Bethnal Green, Limehouse and Poplar respectively. ...I regarded the rousing of the East End as of utmost importance. ...The East End was the greatest homogeneous working-class area accessible to the House of Commons by popular demonstrations. The creation of a woman's movement in that great abyss of poverty would be a call and rallying cry to the rise of similar movements in all parts of the country.<sup>90</sup>

Pankhurst and Drummond planned a demonstration in Victoria Park for 10 November 1912. The procession began at Old Ford Road and travelled along Bow Road, Mile End Road and Grove Road, which were East End streets. The West End women were invited to join the procession this time.<sup>91</sup> November was also the month when George Lansbury (1859–1940), a Labour member of parliament from Bromley and Bow, resigned from parliament to fight a by-election on the issue of women's suffrage.

In December 1912, a deputation of working women to the House of Commons was planned for 17

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>90</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideal*, 416.

<sup>91</sup> *The Suffragette*, 8 November 1912.

January 1913. ‘General’ Flora Drummond made a ‘call to working women’ on the pages of *The Suffragette* (see Figure 6-11). Unlike the cartoons or allegorical figures (e.g. ‘Justice’) usually displayed on the front page of *The Suffragette*, the portrait of Drummond, who is looking straight-ahead, conveyed a realistic message. Although wearing a dress, she represented strength and conveyed a more masculine image. This image of Drummond gave notice that the suffrage movement and its claims were to be taken seriously. Drummond insisted:

Now I want to say something about this deputation. They say that working-class women are not making a demand for the vote. Perhaps they will not say that after the demand we shall make in January. Perhaps that demand will be too determined and too severe—you know, we working-women have an awkward knack of hitting out from the shoulder, and it is very uncomfortable for these gentlemen.<sup>92</sup>

According to Sylvia Pankhurst, ‘Newhaven fish-wives, Lancashire pitbrow girls, textile operatives and others, in the costumes of their trade, were gathered from up and down the country, to add to the East End majority.’<sup>93</sup> Although the visual representations of working-class women were important, a greater importance was being placed on their speeches. Beatrice Harraden (1864–1936), who accompanied the deputation, wrote:

For even politicians are said to be intermittently human where other people’s welfare is concerned—we know, of course, that they are permanently human where their own welfare is concerned—and those gentlemen were having the privilege of listening to a continuous human record, given with dignity and fearlessness, in simple, direct language, without anger, or bitterness, and without any appeal of pathos except that of the bare stern facts of life.<sup>94</sup>

Sylvia Pankhurst described the speeches as conveying ‘wretchedness and need’. *The Suffragette* presented ‘A Full Report of the Speeches’, thus confirming the WSPU had begun to place more

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<sup>92</sup> ‘Mrs. Drummond’s Call to Action’, *The Suffragette*, 6 Dec 1912: 115.

<sup>93</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals*, 427.

<sup>94</sup> Beatrice Harraden, ‘The Working Women’s Demonstration’, *The Suffragette*, 31 January, 1913: 234.

importance on the voice of working-class women.<sup>95</sup> At the end of the meeting, Drummond concluded:

Well, gentlemen, I want to be brief, but I want also to be practical. I want you to realize that this is a very practical deputation we have brought here, that it knows what it wants, and wants to know, Mr. Lloyd George, how it is going to get it.<sup>96</sup>

The use of the word ‘practical’ suggests a slight change in WSPU ideology. It seems, by being ‘practical’, the WSPU was moving away from using decorative and feminine visual representations. The East End campaign became a major campaign during 1912 and 1913.

In February 1913, Sylvia Pankhurst opened the East End headquarters of the WSPU at 321 Roman Road. Other branches were also established in the East End in the suburbs of Bow, Bromley, Stepney, Limehouse, Bethnal Green and Poplar. On 27 May 1913, the East London Federation of Suffragettes (ELFS) was founded. However, Sylvia’s support of the Dublin lockout created conflict between her and her sister Christabel. It resulted in ELFS separating from the WSPU in January 1914.

### 6.5 Illustrations and Posters

The suffrage campaigns often used representations of working women in their posters and illustrations. Sylvia Pankhurst, responsible for providing various visual WSPU representations, designed the WSPU membership card to include images of working-class women.<sup>97</sup>

A procession of working-class women is featured on the card (see Figure 5-11).<sup>98</sup> The women are clothed in skirts, aprons and sturdy shoes. The middle-aged woman on the front carries a ribbon, bearing the word ‘votes’, high in the air. To her side there is an old woman with a shawl on her head who carries a sleeping child. The old woman is taking care of the child while his mother is carrying out suffrage work. The back of the card depicts a number of women in the procession, carrying various tools used in their trades such as buckets filled with dirty water.

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<sup>95</sup> ‘The Working Women and Mr. Lloyd George’, *The Suffragette*, 31 January, 1913: 232.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> The WSPU membership card is also mentioned in Chapter 5.

<sup>98</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 28.

Sylvia Pankhurst, a socialist and sympathiser of working-class women, provided an idealised representation of working-class women in her illustrations for the membership card (See Figure 5-11). In suffrage writings and plays, working-class women were portrayed as hard-working sufferers of everyday life, responsible for children, lumped with drunken husbands and usually exhausted. These images of working-class women were the norm, and often thought to be reality. However, in Sylvia Pankhurst's drawings, the women were strong, capable and full of energy. Sylvia drew what she perceived as the true working-class woman.

There were two women's suffrage organisations responsible for providing visual designs to the women's suffrage societies: the Artists' Suffrage League and the Suffrage Atelier. Few records for the Suffrage Atelier survive; therefore, the focus in this section will be on the Artists' Suffrage League.

The president of the Artists' Suffrage League was Mary Lowndes, the key designer of most banners used in NUWSS suffrage processions.<sup>99</sup> The Artists' Suffrage League provided designs for posters and postcards to various suffrage societies. Figure 6-12 shows a poster design by Emily Ford.<sup>100</sup> Ford's poster depicts a young working-woman wearing a shawl and clogs being barred from entering a factory because of the Factory Act. The woman's expression is forlorn and solemn. She does not have the energy to utter her protest; she calmly accepts it.

In 1909, the Artists' Suffrage League held a poster design competition. The prize of £5 was shared between Duncan Grant (1885–1978) and WF Winter.<sup>101</sup> Figures 6-13 and 6-14 show their winning posters, respectively.

Duncan Grant was a painter and a member of the Bloomsbury Group, whose members included famous English writers, intellectuals, philosophers and artists of the time. He was familiar with women's suffrage. His aunt, Lady Jane Maria Strachey (1840–1928), was an active suffragist, and many of his

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<sup>99</sup> About Mary Lowndes, see Chapter 3.

<sup>100</sup> Emily Susan Ford was a landscape and figure painter. She studied at the Slade School of Fine Art from 1875. She served as a vice chairman of the Artists' Suffrage League. For further details, see Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866-1928*, 225-26.

<sup>101</sup> Artists' Suffrage League, *Annual Report of the Artists' Suffrage League*, January 1909 to January 1910, 1, 2/LSW/E/15/07, Women's Library.

cousins supported the cause.<sup>102</sup> In Grant's poster (see Figure 6-13), both a man and woman are sailing towards the houses of parliament. While the man is sailing easily in a sailboat, the woman is rowing a boat—alone and unaided. The man seems to be teasing the woman. However, the woman showing her strong arms rolling her sleeves seems to be capable of rowing on her own even though it may take some time to reach the goal.

Winter's poster design, titled 'Votes for workers', portrayed a sweated worker (see Figure 6-14). Winter lived in Amsterdam, and no further details are known.<sup>103</sup> Probably a professional artist, he designed a typical image of a sweated worker: an old woman sitting in front of a sewing machine, worn out and tired.

The poster 'Waiting for a living wage' was printed in 1912 (see Figure 6-15).<sup>104</sup> Similar to Winter's poster, it depicts an exhausted woman chain-maker. Grants' poster suggests woman who is both physically and mentally strong while working-class women in other posters are represented as tired, and lacking the energy to protest for themselves.

Like Grants' poster, a new representation of working-class women began to appear on the pages of *The Common Cause*. On 15 June 1911, *The Common Cause* included an illustration of a working-class woman and her children (see Figure 6-16). They are looking down at a women's suffrage procession of middle-class women. In this representation, the working-class woman does not look tired. She is not participating in the procession but calmly observing it.<sup>105</sup> In 1912, *The Common Cause* also began to use illustrations of working-class families (See Figure 6-17).<sup>106</sup> William Morris's influence is clearly seen in the designs of arabesque borders. The bold lines in the 1912 drawing emphasised strong family ties. Behind their backs, factories can be observed. The illustration is framed as picture and the family is

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<sup>102</sup> Jane Maria Strachey was married to Richard Strachey (1817–1908) and had ten children together. One of her children was Philippa Strachey, who was the secretary of the LSWS.

<sup>103</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 248.

<sup>104</sup> The poster was designed by Catherine Courtauld (1878-1972). She was a sister of Samuel Courtauld (1876-1947), who created the Courtauld Institute of Art. Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 244.

<sup>105</sup> *The Common Cause*, 15 June 1911: 165.

<sup>106</sup> *The Common Cause*, 16 May 1912: 81.

standing firmly on the ground. This representation showed the idealised working-class family to be the very foundation of the nation.

The trend in the militant societies appears to have been the same. *The Suffragette* included an illustration titled 'The war-chest', depicting a working-class woman carrying a bag of pennies (see Figure 6-18). She is in the centre of the illustration, and appears to be leading other women. Compared with representations of working-class women in earlier posters produced by the Artists' Suffrage League, this woman is not worn out. She supports women's suffrage by visually projecting the working-class woman's willingness to support women's suffrage.

Imagery of working-class women was used by the suffrage movement from its inception. However, the imagery changed over time from images of women as tired and worn out to images of women as strong and determined.

Representations of working-class women were used throughout the twentieth-century women's suffrage movement. Through plays and novels, working-class women were portrayed as poor and hard-working women, who were suffering and in need of help. Such images were repeatedly used in posters and processions. These visual images helped to create a working-class identity. Around 1912, after the visual propaganda of the larger processions had failed to achieve women's suffrage, working-class women became the focus once again. Although the representations of working-class women maintained the earlier characteristics, the later images visibly portrayed strength, vitality and reality, and placed a greater emphasis on women's labour.

Other than the UK, it was the US where the women's suffrage movement flourished. However, in the US, involvement of working-class women in the women's suffrage movement remained limited. In European countries such as France and Germany, working-class women were not organised enough to get involved in the women's suffrage movement. The movement was monopolised by women of aristocratic and bourgeois origins or socialist women.

When the First World War broke out in 1914, the WSPU and NUWSS temporarily ceased their suffrage actions to support the war effort. *The Suffragette* printed photographs of women working in a variety of jobs. Figure 6-19 shows 'a woman tram conductor in Glasgow'. Figure 6-20 is a photograph of

‘a newsgirl’ and a ‘milkmaid on her round’. A range of women’s jobs, whether industrial, agricultural or clerical, was presented in the papers, showing how ‘women are rendering valuable and practical aid to the nation’.<sup>107</sup>

Historians often claim that the enactment of the Representation of the People Act in 1918 was the result of the women’s war effort, not the result of the Edwardian women’s suffrage movement. It has been argued that the number of women entering the labour market due to labour shortages caused by the war was crucial. However, by examining representations of working-class women by the women’s suffrage movement, it is apparent the significance of women as a labour force did not occur suddenly. The WSPU and the NUWSS initially idealised working-class women, depicting them as women who needed to be led. However, as the movement flourished, both societies placed greater importance on women’s labour and began to recognise the agency of working women. Therefore, the pre-war image of working-class women generated by the suffrage movement can be considered a bridge or a stepping-stone to the wartime image of women at work.

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<sup>107</sup> ‘Woman Motor Van Drivers’, *The Suffragette*, 16 April 1915: 13.



## Chapter 7: Conclusion

The display of femininity in the propaganda of the Edwardian women's suffrage movement was vital in persuading the public of its validity. The women's suffrage societies, particularly the WSPU, the WFL and the NUWSS emphasised gender differences in their visual propaganda, rather than equality. Femininity was often presented using methods based on the dominant ideology of Victorian womanhood. Professional artists, actresses, writers and suffrage organisations such as the AFL, Suffrage Atelier and Artists' Suffrage League helped to create and emphasise the visual femininity of the women's suffrage movement. The people involved were often influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement. These feminine representations were repeated in women's suffrage processions, plays and bazaars, thus reinforcing traditional Victorian femininity. However, prior to the First World War, in addition to feminine visual representations, the women's suffrage organisations began to include aspects of modernity, such as rationality and organisation, as examined in Chapter 4.

When war broke out on 4 August 1914, the WSPU immediately declared a truce and abandoned their militancy. Christabel Pankhurst fervently supported her mother's stance:

Mrs. Pankhurst's greatness was never more evident than in her instant grasp of the war issue, and quickness of decision and strength of action with which, ill as she was, and after the strain of nine years' concentration upon one absorbing cause, she announced and pursued her policy. The truce she declared for the duration of the war had undoubtedly a decisive influence in securing peace at home during war abroad.<sup>1</sup>

Soon, the Executive Committee of the NUWSS followed suit. They suspended their suffrage activities on 6 August 1914, and on 4 November declared:

The Executive Committee, while realising that Women's Suffrage is the sole object of the N.U.W.S.S. also sees that the British Empire is fighting the battle of representative

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<sup>1</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 289.

government and progressive democracy all over the world, therefore that the aim of N.U. as a part of the general democratic movement is involved in it. It hereby pledges itself to continue to encourage all its members and societies by every suitable means in their power, to continue all efforts which have for their object the sustaining of the vital strength of the nation so long as such special efforts may be required.<sup>2</sup>

The WSPU's methods of supporting the war effort were a repetition of the methods it used before the war. It organised women's war work processions in 1915 and 1916. Once again, it relied on visual representations to manipulate the public.

The WSPU planned a War Service Procession for 17 July 1915, as requested by David Lloyd George. The potential influence of processions was so great, even the government chose to use this method. It was 'a procession which would express and prove women's willingness to enter munitions factories'.<sup>3</sup> At the time, Lloyd George was still experiencing opposition from the trade unions that were reluctant to hire women for the skilled jobs previously only available to men. Christabel Pankhurst mentioned in her autobiography, 'He therefore turned to Mrs. Pankhurst as the pioneer in women's new and larger war service, and as the leader and inspirer of women claiming to help in the emergency'.<sup>4</sup> The government and the WSPU united for the purpose of war propaganda.

*The Suffragette* printed a notice requesting '700 banner bearers, 300 marshals, 300 paper sellers, and 400 young women dressed in white' for the procession.<sup>5</sup> The government met the expenses of £2,000 associated with the procession.

The press had generally favourable reactions to the procession. It praised the efforts and management of the WSPU. *Weekly Dispatched* announced, 'it was a triumph', and the *Daily Chronicle* commented, 'A more remarkable demonstration has never been seen in the streets of London'. The press also praised womanhood for serving their country. *The Times* wrote, 'It reveals the spirit of our women and

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<sup>2</sup> Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 229.

<sup>3</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, 290.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>5</sup> *The Suffragette* 19 July 1915: 200.

it is a striking example of their perception that all social and political values will come to be determined by the way they have stood the test of the war.' The *Morning Post* declared 'the women of Empire have proved themselves ready for, and capable of, sacrifice'.<sup>6</sup>

The procession was two miles (3.2 km) in length and included 125 contingents. The most significant group was the Pageant of the Allies, prepared especially for this procession. Belgium was represented by 'a girl in tattered dress with the torn flag of Belgium'. A woman wearing the red cap of 'Liberty' represented France, and a woman in a peasant costume represented Serbia and Montenegro. Russia, Italy, Japan and the British Isles were also represented in the procession. In addition, 'women of all professions' participated in the procession. The *Observer* reported:

They were women of all classes—ladies of title, working women, and, in the majority, women and girls of the middle classes—all eager, as the battle cry of one of their hundred banners had it, to 'work, work, work'.<sup>7</sup>

It is apparent from the report (above) that the purpose of the procession was to encourage women to 'work'. The *Daily Express* described the range of professions as follows:

There were society women in smart-cut, tailor-made, typists in mackintoshes, girl art students in olive greens, working girls and factory girls by the hundred, and here and there gram old women, bent with work and grasping market bags, charwomen with aprons tucked away and fresh from scrubbing stars.<sup>8</sup>

From the jobs of working-class women to the work of the middle classes, the procession portrayed them as symbolic of the mass solidarity of British women. In the procession, whether the work was that of the working classes or the middle classes, every job was considered equal. Further, the work of working-class women was not visually presented in its usual context of lives portrayed as an everyday struggle.

The following year, the WSPU planned another Women's War Procession to be held on 22 July

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<sup>6</sup> Qtd. in *The Suffragette* 23 July 1914: 232-33.

<sup>7</sup> *Observer*, 18 July 1915. Qtd. in *The Suffragette* 23 July 1915: 233.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

1916. The procession started at the Victoria Embankment and marched through Bridge Street, Whitehall, Pall Mall, Hyde Park Corner, Marble Arch, Oxford Street, Regent Street and Haymarket, before arriving at Trafalgar Square.<sup>9</sup> Lloyd George and Winston Churchill (1874-1965) watched the procession from the balcony of the War Office. As with the processions before the war, the *Britannia*, a new organ for the WSPU, praised its visual aspects. This procession did differ slightly from previous processions, apparent by the greater emphasis on the needs of the nation:

Gay with colour and pageantry thousands of women marched through the streets of London to show their determination to see the war through to complete victory. ... Perhaps no more striking effect has ever been witnessed in London than the long stream of banners voicing the demand, not only of the women, but of the country generally.<sup>10</sup>

There were pageants highlighting historical and allegorical women such as Saint Michael, Joan of Arc, Britannia, and Queen Elizabeth I. However, as with the procession the year before, the '[g]reatest enthusiasm' was manifested for the war tableau, which depicted 'the work of women on the land, railways, [and] buses, in offices and in hospitals, as window-cleaners and sweeps, and in many other ways'. There were nurses and 'hundreds of women and girl munitions makers'. Some of the munitions-makers demonstrated how they worked by 'drilling shells, making cases and filling cordite bags'.<sup>11</sup> The procession displayed the efforts of the WSPU to present a realistic picture of working women as an essential part of the country's foundation.

*The Daily Telegraph* commented in 1915, 'The procession was an epitome of woman's part in the national life'.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, any kind of work was celebrated as serving the country. In the 1930s, communists in Russia used representations of workers to promote socialism. At the same time in Britain, as the economy was hit by the Great Depression, representations of workers (termed 'social realism') were

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<sup>9</sup> *Britannia*, 21 July 1916.

<sup>10</sup> *Britannia*, 28 July 1916: 224.

<sup>11</sup> *Daily Telegraph*. Qtd. in *Britannia*, 28 July 1916: 224. *The Times* also reported that 'The women munition workers, however, were everybody's favourites.' Qtd. in *Britannia*, 28 July 1916: 225.

<sup>12</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 19 July 1915. Qtd. in *The Suffragette* 23 July 1915: 233.

often used in advertisements to portray social reality.<sup>13</sup> It appears that immediately prior to the First World War, the women's suffrage movement had already begun to appreciate the effect of representing women's work.

The First World War consolidated the nation-building process in England. Women were integrated into the nation's fibre via work considered to serve the country. This is confirmed by the slogans used on the banners from 1915: 'We demand the right to serve', 'For men must fight and women must work', 'Shells made by a wife may save her husband's life', and 'Let women help to win the war'.<sup>14</sup> As the women's suffrage movement was an attempt to integrate women into the dominant polity, it was natural for most of the suffragists to serve the country.

Work was the means for women to serve their country in a time of great need. Therefore, it was important to show reality in the visual representations of the war processions. However, showing the reality of work was not a new concept—its roots were firmly established in the visual representations of the women's suffrage movement, as described in Chapter 5. Immediately prior to the war, at least in women's suffrage journals, representations of working-class women began to emphasise their strength and autonomy, and the usual narrative of sadness and romanticised visions of toil became less common. The women's suffrage societies tried to visually show various kinds of women, and Victorian gendered images were effectively used to make women's suffrage more acceptable to the public. Feminine representations were especially useful tools used by the women's suffrage societies to reach a wider public as they do not opposed to traditional gender norms.

Prior to the First World War, the women's suffrage societies started to incorporate modern images of women. Those were the images which might have jeopardized gender norms, but as we have observed, romanticised representations of the working-class women eliminated those dangers. As the war approached, representations of working-class women became more realistic with masculine tones, emphasising their strength. These representations show some level of continuity with the representations of

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<sup>13</sup> Yasuko Suga, *Modanizumu To Dezainn Senryaku (Modernism and Design Strategy)*, (Tokyo: Brucke, 2008), 188-191.

<sup>14</sup> *The Suffragette*, 23 July 1915: 233.

women during wartime.

These realistic images of women hold new meanings. They were showing their attempt at overcoming the sexual boundaries. However, women's work in reality, which expanded during the war, remained to be supplement of men fighting at the front. What to do with women workers who were employed because of dilution and substitution after the war was the main concern for the government, employers and trade unions. Trade unions were especially eager to secure male employment. In the Treasury Agreement of 1915, it was agreed that those women should leave their jobs as soon as the war ended.<sup>15</sup> Even though women seemed to have advanced into society, it was a temporal arrangement. By November 1919, 750,000 women workers were fired in various occupations. Women who refused to quit the job were criticized as 'unpatriotic' and of loose moral.<sup>16</sup> Women's suffrage representations worked as a bridge between the representations of women in the Victorian period and the modern representations of working women appeared during the First World War. They showed that the active sphere of women expanded, in spite of the fact that traditional gender norm did not undergo any radical change.

The Edwardian women's suffrage movement did not end with the First World War. After the Representation of the People Act passed, some of the women's suffrage societies continued its activities to gain full equal franchise with men. There are records that indicate they had organised processions during the 1920s. So the story continues, and I hope to pursue it at a later date.

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<sup>15</sup> Dilution means the replacement of skilled workers, who went to war, by semi-skilled or unskilled female workers. Holloway, *Women and Work in Britain since 1840*: 134-140.

<sup>16</sup> Toshiko Hayashida, *Tatakau Onnna, Tatakaenai Onnna: Daiichijisekaitaisennki No Jyendā To Sekushuaritī*, (Kyoto: Jinnbunshoin, 2013), 140-142. At the end of the book on pages 142 to 146, Hayashida writes that the Representation of the People Act only allowed votes to 'married women' who were over 30 years old. However, this is not accurate. The Representation of the People Act gave votes to women who were over 30 years old and were 'entitled to be registered as a local government elector in respect of the occupation of land or premises in the constituency, the land or premises being (unless a dwelling-house) of a yearly value of not less than £5' or married women who were over 30 years old whose husbands were entitled to be registered as a local government elector. A O Boss and F J Ogden, *A Guide to the Representation of the People Act, 1918*, (London: Shaw & Sons, 1918), 31.

## Tables

**Table 3-1 Processions organised by the NUWSS and WSPU in London**

	Year	Date	Name of Procession	Major Societies	Goal	Number of participants
1	1907	Feb 9	Mud March	NUWSS	Exeter Hall	3,000
2	1908	June 13	Procession of NUWSS	NUWSS	Albert Hall	15,000
3	1908	June 21	Women's Sunday	WSPU	Hyde Park	30,000
4	1909	April 27	Pageant of Women's Trades and Professions	NUWSS	Albert Hall	1,000
5	1910	June 18	'From Prison to Citizenship' Procession	WSPU	Albert Hall	15,000
6	1910	July 23	Women's Social and Political Union Hyde Park Demonstration	WSPU WFL	Hyde Park	12,000–20,000
7	1911	June 17	Women's Coronation Procession	WSPU NUWSS and other suffrage societies	Albert Hall	40,000
8	1913	June 14	Emily Wilding Davison's Funeral Procession	WSPU	King's Cross Station	N/A

Sources: Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *Women's Suffrage: A Short History of a Great Movement* (London: TC and EC Jack, 1912); Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1987).

**Table 4-1 Plays performed by the AFL from June 1909 to June 1910**

Play	Number of times performed	Branch and societies which undertook the performance and the date of the performance.
A Pageant for Great Women by Cicely Hamilton	2	Eastbourne, NUWSS and WFL, n.d.
		AFL and WWSL, 12 November (Scala Theatre)
The Outcast by Beatrice Harraden and Bessie Hatton	1	AFL and WWSL, 12 November (Scala Theatre)
The Pot and the Kettle by Cicely Hamilton	7	Loughton, AFL, Dec 8
		WFL Dec 11
		Essex, NUWSS and AFL, Jan 4 and 5
		Sevenoaks, NUWSS, n.d.
		Southampton and Portsmouth NUWS, n.d.
		Glasgow Exhibition, WSPU
		AFL and WWSL, 12 November (Scala Theatre)
Before Sunrise by Bessie Hatton	3	WFL(Albert Hall), n.d.
		Glasgow Exhibition, WSPU
		NUWSS and WFL, n.d.
How the Vote was Won by Cicely Hamilton and Christopher St. John	14	Croydon , NUWSS, Nov 11
		Reigate and Redhill, NUWSS, Nov 25
		Kensington, NUWSS (twice), n.d.
		WFL, Dec 11
		Essex, NUWSS and AFL, Jan 4 and 5
		Sevenoaks, NUWSS, n.d.
		Hampstead, WSPU, n.d.
		Southampton and Portsmouth NUWS, n.d.
		Glasgow Exhibition, WSPU (twice)
		Battersea, WSPU, n.d.
		Eastbourne, NUWSS and WFL, n.d.
		Chelsea, LSWS, n.d.
A Woman's Influence by Gertrude Jennings	3	Wandsworth, LSWS, Oct 22
		Reigate and Redhill, NUWSS, Nov 25
		Glasgow Exhibition, WSPU
The Master by Gertrude Mouillot	1	AFL and WWSL, 12 November (Scala Theatre)
A Junction by Arthur M Heathcote	2	Holloway, WFL, Dec 1
		Battersea, WSPU, n.d.
Perfect Ladies (author unknown)	1	Kensington, NUWSS, Dec 6
Enery Brown by Gertrude Jennings	1	Kensington, NUWSS, Dec 6
Press Cuttings by G B Shaw	2	Loughton, AFL, Dec 8
		WFL, Dec 11
At the Gates by Alice Chapin	2	WFL, Dec 11
		WFL, n.d.(Caxton Hall)
A Change of Tenant by Miss	4	Essex, NUWSS and AFL, Jan 4 and 5



Helen Margaret Nightingale		Sevenoaks, NUWSS, n.d.
		Glasgow Exhibition, WSPU
Deeds, not Words by L. Morton (pseudonym of Josephine Harvey)	2	Hampstead, WSPU, n.d.
		Glasgow Exhibition, WSPU
The Apple by Vera Wentworth	2	Southampton and Portsmouth NUWS, n.d.
		Glasgow Exhibition, WSPU
Pied Piper Hamelin by Cicely Hamilton	1	WFL (Queen's Hall), n.d.
An Englishwoman's Home by H. Arncliffe-Sennett	2	Glasgow Exhibition (twice)
		Croydon, WSPU, n.d.
Ms Cicely Hamilton's Waxworks by Cicely Hamilton	3	Reigate and Redhill, NUWSS
		Glasgow Exhibition, WSPU (twice)
Unexpected Circumstances by Louis Cowen	1	AFL, May 24.
A Matter of Moment (author unknown)	1	AFL, May 24.

(Source: *The Secretary's Report, June 1909 to June 1910*)

**Table 4-2 Plays performed by the AFL from January 1911 to June 1911**

Play	Number of times performed	Branch and societies which undertook the performance and the date of the performance.
How the Vote was Won by Cicely Hamilton and Christopher St. John	7	Fernham District Women's Suffrage Societies, Jan 16 (twice)
		Guilford, Feb 20
		Woburn Sands, NUWSS, Feb 22 (twice)
		York, WSPU, Feb 28;
		Turnbridge Wells, NUWSS, n.d.
The Junction by Arthur M Heathcote	2	AFL (Portmans Rooms), Feb 18
		Mrs Drew Anderson, Mar 8
The Woman Wins (author unknown)	1	AFL (Portmans Rooms), Feb 18
An Englishwoman's Home by H Arncliffe-Sennett	7	Guilford, Feb 20;
		Portsmouth, NUWSS, Feb 28
		Bow Baths Hall, AFL, Mar 30
		Great Missenden, NUWSS, Apr 21.
		Turnbridge Wells, NUWSS, n.d.
		Lyceum Theatre, WSPU, May 10
The Apple by Inez Bensusan	2	Poplar Town Hall, AFL, May 12
		Guilford, Feb 20
		Lyceum Theatre, WSPU, May 10
A Change of Tenant by Miss H. M. Nightingale	3	Women Sanitary Inspectors and Health Visitors Suffrage Group, Feb 27;
		Battersea Town Hall, NUWSS, n.d.
		Great Missenden, NUWSS, Apr 21.

The Maid and the Magistrate by Graham Moffat	7	Women Sanitary Inspectors and Health Visitors Suffrage Group, Feb 27
		Portsmouth, NUWSS, Feb 28
		Holborn Town Hall, WFL, n.d.
		76 Holland Park, Kensington WSPU, n.d.
		Battersea Town Hall, NUWSS, n.d.
		Limpsfield, NUWSS, May 31(twice)
The Twelve Pound Look by J M Barrie	1	York, WSPU, Feb 28
Restitution by John Kidd	1	Rehearsal Theatre, Mar 7
Her Wild Oats by Harold Rubinstein	2	Rehearsal Theatre, Mar 7
		76 Holland Park, Kensington WSPU, n.d.
An Allegory by Vera Wentworth	1	Rehearsal Theatre, Apr 25.
The Eclectics Club by J. Maurice Hunter	1	Rehearsal Theatre, Apr 25.
Trimmings by M. Slieve McGowan	1	Rehearsal Theatre, Apr 25.
A Woman's Influence by Gertrude Jennings	1	Turnbridge Wells, NUWSS, n.d.

(Source: *The Half Yearly Report of Play Department, January to June 1911*)

**Table 4-3 Plays performed by the AFL from June 1913 to June 1914**

Play	Number of times performed
The Iron Law (author unknown)	2
Two of the Odd boys (author unknown)	1
Ten shillings (author unknown)	1
Mr Wilkinson's Widow (author unknown)	1
A Chat with Mrs Chicky by Evelyn Glover	7
Kindly Flames (author unknown)	2
Maid and the Magistrate by Graham Moffat	1
Overheard at *	1
Miss Appleyard's Awakening by Evelyn Glover	1
How the Vote was Won by Cicely Hamilton and Christopher St. John	4
The Better Half by Alison Garland	1
An Englishwoman's Home by H Arncliffe-Sennett	1
Which? (author unknown)	2
The Suffragette (author unknown)	1
Press Cuttings by G B Shaw	1
The Twelve Pound Look by J M Barrie	1
Restitution by John Kidd	1

\* The title was difficult to decipher from the original text.

(Source: *The Secretary's Report of the Play Department, June 1913 to 30 June 1914*)

**Table 4-4 Annual performances held or aided by the AFL**

	Theatre	Date	Year	Organisation holding the performance
1	Scala Theatre	12 Nov	1909	AFL and WWSL
2	Aldwych Theatre	18 Nov	1910	AFL
3	Lyceum Theatre	27 Oct	1911	AFL
4	New Prince's Theatre	2 Feb	1912	WWSL
5	Lyceum Theatre	29 Nov	1912	AFL

(Source: J P Wearing, *The London Stage 1900–1909: A Calendar of Plays and Players*)

**Table 4-5 Programme content from a performance at the Scala Theatre, 12 November 1909**

	Programme (The Scala Theatre, 12 November 1909)
1	Overture
2	Prologue written by Lawrence Housman
3	Tableau from the Suffrage Cartoon
4	'The Pot and the Kettle' (one-act play)
5	Piano
6	'Master' (one-act play)
7	Songs- 'Care Felve', 'American Coon Song', 'Prince Charming'
8	'The Outcast' (one-act play)
9	Songs- 'Songs at the Piano'
10	'American Stories'
11	Dance- 'Pas de Fascination'
12	'A Pageant of Famous Women'

(Source: Programme of the Actresses' Franchise League and the Women Writers' Suffrage League Matinee, 12 November 1909, Women's Library).

**Table 5-1 Bazaars and fairs held by the NUWSS, WSPU and WFL, 1908–1914**

	Name of Bazaar	Organisation	Place	Year	Dates
1	Great Suffrage Bazaar	WFL	Caxton Hall	1908	3 Mar. –1 Apr.
2	White, Gold and Green Fair	WFL	Caxton Hall	1909	15–17 Apr.
3	Women's Exhibition	WSPU	Prince's Skating Rink	1909	13–26 May
4	Yule-Tide Festival	WFL	Royal Albert Hall	1909	11–13 Dec.
5	Christmas Fair and Fête	WSPU	Portman's Room, 58 Baker Street	1911	4–9 Dec.
6	International Suffrage Fair	WFL	Chelsea Town Hall	1912	13–16 Nov.
7	Christmas Fair	WSPU	Lincoln's Inn	1912	Dec.
8	Oriental Fête and Bazaar	NUWSS	Empress Room	1912	5–7 Dec.
9	Garden Fair	WSPU	Empress Room	1913	3–13 June
10	Woman's Kingdom	NUWSS	Olympia Exhibition Centre	1914	11–30 Apr.

**Table 5-2 List of goods sold on the stalls at the Oriental Fête and Bazaar**

Stall No.	Goods Sold in the Stall	Branches Responsible for the Stall
1	China and Glass, Children's Clothing, Cushions, Russian Toys, &c.	London Society's Surrey Branches
2	Goods in the colours of National Union	-
3	Baskets, Cutlery, Indian goods, Necklaces	Blackheath, Brixton, Camberwell, Deptford, and Lambeth Committees of the London Society
4	Burmese, Chinese, Japanese, and French toys	-
5	Change and Information Bureau	-
6	Suffrage Propaganda	London Society of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
7	Hats, Blouses, Petticoats, Handkerchiefs	-
8	Various	Hampstead and Highgate Committees of the London Society
9	Leather Work, Etchings, Articles made for the Shilling	Hackney, Holborn, Islington and St Pancras Committees of the London Society
10	Various	Muswell Hill Committee of the London Society
11	Russian Embroideries, Hungarian Jewellery, Italian Marqueteries, Articles de Paris, Plain Clothing	Marylebone and Paddington Committees of the London Society
12	Christmas Presents for Men, North American Indian Dolls and Baskets, Children's Clothing and Various	Wimbledon Branch of the London Society

Stall No.	Goods Sold in the Stall	Branches Responsible for the Stall
13	Invalid Comforts	Women Medical Students
14	Old Curiosity Shop	-
15	Books, Photographs, Autographs	The Younger Suffragists
16	Lavender and Miss Jekyll's Pot-pourri	-
17	Home and Country Produce, Special Displays of Work, &c.	Fulham and Kensington Committees of the London Society
18	Pottery, Lucchese Embroidery, Children's Djibbahs and Smocks, Toys, Dolls	Battersea, Chelsea, St. George's Hanover Square, and Westminster Committees of the London Society
19	The Lucky Well	Battersea Committee of the London Society
20	Various Sweets, Preserved Fruits from South Africa, Chinese Ginger, Chutnees, Jellies, &c.	Willesden Committee of the London Society
21	Flowers	Patronesses' Stall
22	Sketches, Sculptures, Etchings, Handicrafts	The Artists' Stall
23	The Parcel Stall	Balham and St. George's Hanover Square Committees of the London Society

(Sources: *Programme of the Oriental Fête and Bazaar*, 21–37 in Women's Library)

## Appendix 1

List of entertainments performed at the WSPU, WFL, and NUWSS bazaars

### 1. Women's Exhibition (WSPU), Prince's Skating Rink, 13 May 1909-26 May 1909

List of Entertainments	Date
How the Vote was Won (play) A Suffrage Episode by Miss Rita Millman The Apple (play in one-act) Morris Dance by Espérance Club	May 22th
Lady Geraldine's Speech, a play in one-act Love in a Railway Train How the Vote was Won (play) La Suffragetta	May 24th
Concert A Woman's Influence (play in one-act) Miss Cicely Hamilton's Waxworks	May 25th
A Suffrage Episode by Miss Rita Millman Miss Forbes Robertson's play How the Vote was Won (play)	May 26th
Suffragette Jiu-jitsu by Mme Garrud	

(From *Votes for Women*, 21 May 1909: 691)

### 2. White, Gold and Green Fair(WFL), Caxton Hall, 5 Apr 1909-17 Apr 1909.

List of Programmes	Date	Room No.
Musical Sketch by Miss Esther Palliser, Miss Esmé Hubbard and her Pierrots, Mr Dawson Millward, Miss Sara Brooke, Max Darewski and others.	April 15th	Room 13
Duologues by Miss Marie Lloyd, Mr Harcourt Williams, Miss Jean Mackinley Sketch by Miss Scaife and Miss J. Dilla Opereta 'Suffragetta' by Miss Esmé Hubbard Miss Marie Shedlock's Fairy Tales	April 16th	Room 13
Entertainment by Miss Eva Moore, Mr Charles Fry and Mrs Navette and other well-known artists	April 17th	Room 13
Miss Cicely Hamilton's Waxworks How the Vote was Won (play)	April 15th	Room 18
Ju-Jitsu Exhibition by Mrs Garrud How the Vote was Won (play) Tableaux 'Brave Women in History'	April 16th	Room 18

How the Vote was Won (play) Miss Cicely Hamilton's Waxworks Ju-Jitsu Exhibition by Mrs Garrud Tableaux 'Brave Women in History'	April 17th	Room 18
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List of Exhibitions	Date	Room No.
Handicraft Section Enamels by Mrs Whipple Reglia Filigree Work by Miss Reinhardt Artistic Jewellery by Mrs Fredk Palotta Weaving by the Brema Looms Embroideries by Madame Tate Floral Mosaicon by Miss Ada Kilgour Leather Work by Miss Matilda E. Graham Filigree(Working Exhibit) by Mrs Leake-Coleman	April 15, 16, 17	Room 1
Handicraft Section Miniature Painting by Miss Ada F Hines Hand-wrought Leather by Miss M R Mills Artistic Metal Works by Mrs F A Jonas Artistic Flower Modelling by Miss F A Petrie	April 15, 16, 17	Room 8
Holloway Cell (a replica of cells in Holloway Gaol)	April 15, 16, 18	Room 17

( From *Official Catalogue of Green, White and Gold Fair*, 11-18)

### 3. Yule-tide Festival (WFL), Royal Albert Hall, 11 Dec 1909 to 13 Dec 1909..

Organ Recital by Mrs Layton, A. R.C. O.
Speeches by Mr Israel Zangwill, Mrs Despard, Mrs Billington-Greig, Mrs Arncliffe Sennett (Chair by Tennessee Lady Cook)
Woman's Pageant. Arranged by Edith Craig
Old Christmas Songs by Madame Marie Brema
AFL Plays The Pot and the Kettle Before Sunrise How the Vote was Won Press Cuttings At the Gates
Christmas Tree. Distribution of presents and 'Talk to the Children' by Mrs Despard
Special Attractions Athene Gallery by Suffrage Atelier Ladies' Orchestra Poster Competition

(From *Programme of the Yule-tide Festival*, 4-17)



## 4. Christmas Fair and Fête (WSPU), Portmans Room, 4 to 9 Dec 1911.

Programmes in the Theatre	Date
Song by Edith Parson, Miss Grace Kemp Gée, Miss Evangeline Florence	Dec 6th Afternoon
Recitation by Miss Nellie Sergent	
Piano Solo by Auriol Jones	
Concertina Solo by Miss Christine Hawks	
Recital by Miss Grace Jean Crocker	
Twelve Pound Look (play in one-act)	
Irish folk song by Miss May Coleman	
Recitation by Miss Ethel Humphreys and Grace Jean Crocker	Dec 6th Evening
Scena by Ainée Parkerson	
Duets by Miss Lillian Berger and Miss Flora Mann	
Songs by Miss Caroline Hatchard	
Violin Solo by Miss Sema Sacke	
Trimnings (play in one-act)	
Solo harpsichord by Mrs Gordon Woodhouse	Dec 7th Afternoon
Songs by Mme Bertha Moore, Miss Granger Kerr, Mr Hubert Curling, Miss Alice Baxter	
Solo Violoncello by Miss Beatrice Eveline	
Before Sunrise (play in one-act)	
Songs by Grainger Kerr and Mr Hubert Curling	Dec 7th Evening
Trio by Majorie Hayward (violin), Rosaline Milman (violoncello) and Mrs Gordon Woodhouse (harpsichord)	
Solo Violin by Majorie Hayward	
Englishwoman's Home (play in one-act)	
Songs by Miss Hugolin Haweis, Miss Vera Coburn, Mme Alice Esty, Miss Martha Cunningham	Dec 8th Afternoon
Viola by Miss Maud Aldis	
Aria by Mr Guy Pertwee	
Sketch by Mr Arthur Helmore	
Recital by Miss Gwendolen Logan, Miss Beatrice Pattenden, Miss Grace Kemp Gée.	
Physical Force, one-act comedy written by Cecil Armstrong. Included Jiu-jitsu displays by Mrs and Miss Sylvia Garrud	
Songs by Miss Winifred Carey, Miss Gertrend Inglis, Miss Daphne Everett, Ainée Parkerson	Dec 8th Evening
Violin Solo by Miss Dussmann	
Recitation by Miss Sydney Keith (Olive Shreiner's 'Dreams')	
Recitation by Mr Frank Witty (Anti-suffrage verses)	
Recitation by Mr Ernest Pertwee	

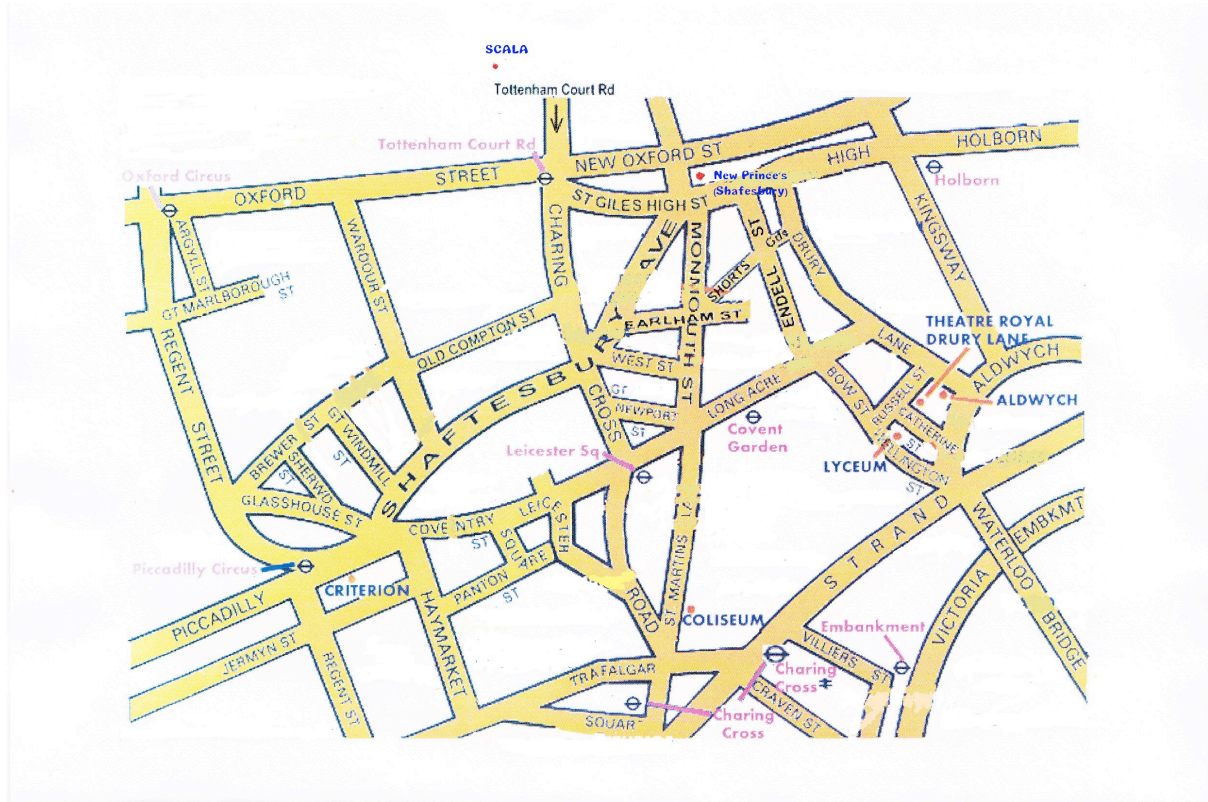
Hungarian dance by Miss Dorothea Bean and Master Sidney Sherwood	
Sketch by Miss Gertrude Vaughan ("The Making of a Suffragette")	
Recitations by Miss Molly Verdon	
Songs by Miss Williamson, Mme Natalia Di Mexia, Miss Palgrave Turner, and Mme Holma	
Violin Solo by Miss Marjorie Hayward	Dec 9th Afternoon
A selection repertoire by Miss Fanny Wentworth	
Jiu-jitsu displays by Mrs Garrud, her son, and four of her pupils	
Twelve Pound Look (play in one-act)	
Songs by Miss Nollie Addison, Miss Eva Mooore, Mr Guy Pertwee	
Recitations by Miss Janette Steer	Dec 9th Evening
Piano Solo by Miss Agnes Fennings	
Taal folk songs by Miss Florien Florean	
The Woman with the Pack, one-act play	

Admission to the theatre was 1s.

(From 'Entertainments at the Fete', *Votes for Women*, 15 Dec 1911: 174; 'Plays at Portmans Rooms', *Votes for Women*, 15 Dec 1911: 177.)

## Appendix 2

Locations of the Theatres in London which were used by the AFL



Adapted from the map taken from <http://www.londontheatre.co.uk>. Web. Access 8 August 2013

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