

Women's History MAGAZINE



Issue 67
Autumn 2011
Issn 1476-6760

Victoria L. Harrison on
*Adolescent Angst and Wartime
Woes in WW2 France*

Lulu Hansen on *Women's
Social Transgression in
German-occupied Denmark*

Amanda Jane Jones on *Noel
Streatfeild's Wartime Diary*

Ruth Easingwood on *Women
at Work in the British Zone of
Occupied Germany, 1945-49*

Alex Melero on *The Lesbian
Monster in Spanish Fantaterror
Films*

Deborah Simonton on *the
Women's History Magazine,
Ten Years On*

Plus

*Six book reviews
2011 Conference reports
Getting to know each other
Committee news
Prize reports*

women's
HISTORY
NETWORK



www.womenshistorynetwork.org



21st Women's History Network Conference

Women, State and Nation: Creating Gendered Identities

Cardiff University, 7-9 September 2012

Call for papers

Our 2012 conference will focus on the relationship between women and the state, look at the processes of nation-building and consider the extent to which national identities have been gendered. Papers will consider the role of women and the impact of gender across all time-spans, regions and nations and must have a historical focus. Speakers are invited to present papers relevant to the theme of the conference which should ideally fit into one or more of the following strands.

- Women and patriotism
- Citizenship
- Political activism
- Families and nations
- Divided loyalties: women, religion and the state
- Imagining the nation
- Gender and late nationalisms
- The stateless: refugees and displaced people
- The supranational state
- Globalisation and the end of the nation

Please send abstracts of 250 words to Fiona Reid freid1@glam.ac.uk and Stephanie Ward WardSJ2@cardiff.ac.uk by 29 February 2012.

Welcome to the Autumn 2011 issue of the *Women's History Magazine*. We hope those that attended enjoyed the twentieth Women's History Network conference 'Looking Back – Looking Forward'. For those who were unable to attend this landmark event, we hope in future issues to be able to bring you some of the research presented. Meanwhile, reports on the conference and steering committee meetings can be found in this issue, along with book reviews and reports on the award of the two WHN prizes.

This issue focuses on post-1940 Europe and begins with Victoria Harrison's examination of teenage French girls' experiences during the Nazi occupation. Added to the usual difficulties associated with adolescence, these young women were growing up during a time of war and used their diaries as confidantes. Harrison examines their isolation, strained familial relationships and their friendships with German soldiers which, as archival sources make evident, could have far-reaching consequences at the Liberation.

Such relationships, whether sexual or not, were considered a form of collaboration and were harshly punished. Another form of collaboration which has been considered specific to women was denunciation. Lulu Hansen's article examines three cases in which Danish women made accusations to the German occupiers denouncing their compatriots. Hansen analyses these case studies using the framework of social transgression.

As France and Denmark experienced occupation in 1940, Britain was seemingly also on the brink of being invaded. The London Blitz, when the capital was bombed on 76 consecutive nights, was meant to act as a precursor to the German landing. The author of the best-selling novel *Ballet Shoes*, Noel Streatfeild, kept a diary during this tumultuous period. Amanda Jane Jones' reclamation piece uses excerpts from the diaries to rescue this overlooked source.

While much of the literature on women and war ends in 1945, Ruth Easingwood's article on British women working in Occupied Germany takes this as the starting date. Many of her interviewees regarded their clerical work as an extension of their wartime patriotic duty, while others displayed displeasure at the patriarchal work cultures.

Our final piece differs in both time and methodology from the previous articles. Rather than relying on personal testimonies or archival sources in order to reconstruct women's experiences, Alejandro Melero examines the depiction of the lesbian monster in Spanish horror films of the 1970s. Foucauldian theory is utilised to analyse the representation of lesbian characters such as the vampire in the work of Jesús Franco.

This issue sees the departure of one of the original editors and current leader of the editorial team, Debbi Simonton, after involvement with all twenty-eight editions of the *Magazine*, as well as a few issues of its predecessor, the *Notebooks*. It seems nicely ironic as we say goodbye that we should feature her as the subject of 'Getting to

know each other'. To mark her 'retirement', Debbi has contributed a personal reflection on the occasion of the *Magazine's* tenth birthday. The rest of the editorial team would like to thank Debbi on behalf of the Network for all that she has done to make the *Magazine* such a success.

Editorial Team: Katie Barclay, Sue Hawkins, Ann Kettle, Anne Logan, Juliette Pattinson, Emma Robertson and Debbi Simonton.

Contents

Little women: adolescent angst and wartime woes in World War II France	4
Female denouncers: Women's social transgression during the German occupation of Denmark, 1940-45	11
'I was merely a shorthand typist': British women at work in the British Zone of occupied Germany, 1945-1949.....	20
The lesbian monster in Spanish <i>fantaterror</i> films	28
Ten years on: reflections on the <i>Women's History Magazine</i>	36
Prize reports	40
Book reviews	41
Getting to know each other	47
The twentieth annual conference of the Women's History Network:	48
Committee news.....	50



Cover:
Danish woman with
German friend
(With the permission of
the Danish Resistance
Museum)

Little women: adolescent angst and wartime woes in World War II France

Victoria L. Harrison

University of Birmingham

The Second World War saw France defeated and subsequently occupied by the Germans. Young girls' literary responses to the period – their diaries and memoirs – serve a dual purpose: they convey their own personal story whilst providing a historical account of the period. However, their accounts reveal that these two aspects were not mutually exclusive, as the circumstances of this specific historical period had a profound influence on their adolescence. Their writings disclose how, to a certain extent, they were just ordinary young girls who experienced typical teenage angst about their relationships with friends and family members. However, spending their formative years in an occupied country meant that they faced different challenges to teenagers growing up in peacetime.

Using the diaries and memoirs of eight girls who were aged between twelve and twenty when the occupation began in 1940, this article assesses how adolescent angst manifests itself in the theme of isolation before considering how being attracted to a man for the first time caused personal emotional conflict. It also uses archival documents relating to the Charente region to establish how this attraction could have serious consequences during wartime. By using a combination of personal narratives and official documents, we get very different viewpoints about adolescent behaviour during wartime. Whereas personal narratives allow the adolescent to explain and justify their feelings and behaviour, official documents concentrate on how this behaviour could be perceived by others in the cold light of day. Although the source language of the primary material is French, I have translated quotations taken from these documents into English. I have also anonymised the girls cited in archival documents due to the sensitive nature of the information.

Young girls' emotional and physical isolation

In his study of youth culture from the nineteenth century to 1945, Jon Savage states that the term 'teenager' was initially used as a marketing term by advertisers. He writes:

During 1944, Americans began to use the word 'teenager' to describe the category of young people from fourteen to eighteen ... The fact that, for the first time, youth had become its own target market also meant that it had become a discrete age group with its own rituals, rights and demands.¹

Categorised as a specific period in a young person's development, usually between the ages of twelve and twenty-one, adolescence is when both physical and emotional changes take place. It defines the transition

from childhood to adulthood and during this time the adolescent has a tendency to feel a sense of isolation as they struggle to come to terms with these changes. A study conducted by Gisela Konopka of adolescent girls who committed crimes in the 1960s found that their delinquency began during early adolescence. This was attributed to a conflict whereby they sought to assert their independence by rebelling whilst at the same time they yearned for the dependency that they once had on adults.²

Adolescents feel that these changes affect them and them alone. However, the opposite is true as every generation of adolescents experiences this crisis. A study of young bourgeois girls who kept diaries during the nineteenth century, conducted by Philippe Lejeune, found that they began writing after finishing their education at the age of fourteen or fifteen and stopped writing on the eve of their impending marriage at the age of twenty. He concluded, 'Between the ages of fifteen and twenty, they are at a crossroads in their life, asking themselves which path they should follow, deciding whether to accept marriage or to go down a different route which would lead to a more personal existence'.³ Another study conducted by Lejeune in 1988 focused on the age that a person begins their diary, their reasons for doing so and the subjects that they tended to write about. He found that girls were twice as likely to keep a diary as boys and they wrote the most between the ages of twelve and eighteen. He also found that, 'People write to get through a crisis ... To steer their life in a particular direction ... They also sometimes write for the sake of writing, to try out their ideas, to play around with words or with their emotions'.⁴

The anxiety these girls felt about their present circumstances and future direction also manifests itself in girls growing up in World War II France. Whereas the conclusions drawn by Lejeune's two studies are based on young girls isolating themselves by choosing to confide in a diary rather than another person, other factors contributed to the sense of isolation felt by young girls in the Second World War. In addition to coping with the usual physical and emotional changes that take place in adolescence, they also had to cope with their families being separated. The nature of the period meant that fathers and brothers were absent from the family home for extended periods of time. This meant that mothers became single parents, had to work longer hours and were solely responsible for finding enough food to feed their families during a time of severe shortages and restrictions. This change of family circumstances resulted in mothers having less time to spend with their daughters and being short-tempered due to the added pressures of living in an occupied country. Parents also sought to protect their children and improve their quality of life by sending them to stay with relatives in the countryside where food was more abundant but the

German presence was much less concentrated than in urban areas. These factors led to girls feeling both a real and a metaphorical sense of isolation which intensified the experience.

A significant factor in this real sense of isolation was the mobilisation of the father or brother, which resulted in a matriarchal rather than a patriarchal household. This absence was exacerbated and prolonged if the male relative was taken prisoner of war. Around 1.5 million men were thought to have been captured in France alone.⁵ The French National Archives contain a collection of letters which were written to Frenchmen working in Germany during the winter of 1942-1943 and submitted by their children or siblings as part of a competition to find the best letter. These letters unsurprisingly emphasise how much the relative is missed and reveal the emotional consequences of having an absent father or brother. Thirteen-year-old Geneviève G. wrote to her father and stated how she often ate her meals alone as her mother did not return from work until 9 p.m. and her brother had now started work.⁶ Anne-Marie R., also thirteen, wrote to her brother and revealed how much she missed him as it was always he who dried her tears, protected her and in whom she confided. She added that she thought about him on her daily walk to school, especially when the weather was bad as he would carry her to stop her feet getting wet.⁷ In her study of the effects of absence on the families of male prisoners of war, Sarah Fishman describes how the absence of the father was considered particularly detrimental to adolescents as it was the father who provided structure and discipline, whereas the mother provided emotional support.⁸ As the father had such a vital role to fulfil within the family unit, his absence had a profound effect on those left behind.

This was the case for Micheline Bood, a fourteen-year-old Catholic schoolgirl who had to cope with both her father and brother being mobilised, leaving her in a totally female household. Her opening diary entry in 1940 reveals her state of mind as it reads: 'This time, it's decided! I mean it, I'm going to write my diary as I have nobody else to confide in'.⁹ This sentiment is echoed by Denise Domenach-Lallich, a fifteen-year-old Catholic schoolgirl, who had been forced to leave Lyon with her mother and sisters to stay with her grandparents in the countryside. Her first entry in November 1939 reads:

Today, the 10th November, I am beginning my diary. It does seem a bit stupid when I think that I am doing exactly the same thing as young girls in the past. But I am isolated at the moment because of the war and I need to confide in somebody about my sorrow, and that somebody will be my exercise book.¹⁰

When interviewed at the age of eighty, Denise revealed that, 'My exercise book was my confidant, my safety valve. I needed to write in order to distance myself from events, from my emotion'.¹¹

Having an absent relative often resulted in more pressure being felt by those left behind which compounded the sense of isolation felt by young girls when their remaining parent seemingly vented their frustration on the

adolescent. This had detrimental consequences on the mother-daughter relationship, which is typically fraught during adolescence under normal circumstances but was compounded by the fact that households were now predominantly female. Micheline Bood recounted how she often heard her mother question what she had done to deserve such a daughter. She also commented on how her relationship with her mother had evolved to the extent that she used to confide in her about everything but this was no longer the case. Her one consolation was writing her diary.¹² Similarly, Denise Domenach-Lallich felt that her mother was distant towards her as she failed to live up to her expectations: 'She spends her time telling me off; I think she is disappointed because she wanted me to be like her, for me to become a good housewife. It's no good expecting me to spend my life waiting on the men of the house. I have more interesting things to do'.¹³ Flora Groult, a sixteen-year-old Catholic schoolgirl in 1940, found that staying with her grandparents was not the same as being in her own home. She disapproved of the formal language used by her grandmother to address her and her sister, the renowned feminist author Benoîte Groult, and felt that she always kept a certain distance from them, verging on coldness. She states: 'Apart from the term "mesdemoiselles" which she always uses to approach us, as if to maintain a certain distance even from her close relatives, she often uses the most awful words to describe a situation which ends up making it sound even worse than it is'.¹⁴ This, of course, could simply be attributable to the fact that different generations use different terminology to express their views and prefer to address others in a formal manner rather than an inherent desire to keep her grandchildren at arm's length.

A feeling of powerlessness, of not being in charge of one's own destiny, also contributed to the feeling of isolation. After France was defeated, many people were fearful about how the German army were going to behave and fled their homes. As this decision was primarily made by parents or guardians, some young girls resented not being involved in the decision-making process. This was the case for Benoîte Groult, who was twenty in 1940. She writes: 'They [her parents] are talking about dispatching us to Concarneau as if we are delicate plants that you put in a greenhouse where they are sheltered from [German] boots'.¹⁵ She appears to have felt overprotected and powerless as her parents, with the best of intentions, were excluding her from decisions which directly affected her. Elisabeth Sevier, who was twelve in 1940, reveals in her memoir that she was full of anguish and resentment when her mother took the decision not to leave due to Elisabeth's sister's serious illness. After hearing from her aunt that the Germans were intent on destroying Paris, she states: 'I was more frightened than ever and felt a real resentment toward my sister, Annick, for being so sick that we could not leave with Uncle Armand and Aunt Celine. I also blamed Maman for placing the interests of Annick above those of the rest of the family'.¹⁶

In these examples, adolescent angst manifests itself in the young girl feeling alone, isolated and resentful. Rather than gaining freedom as they grew up, they found themselves having more constraints placed on them due to

the circumstances of war. However, these examples also support Konopka's argument, as there is conflict between them wanting more independence but also wanting more attention from the adults around them. The absence of male relatives, combined with the friction caused by the added pressure exerted on those left behind, meant that family life was often far from harmonious and rather than uniting the remaining family members it often further divided them. However, the reasons given by young girls for starting to keep a diary, combined with the tone of the letters they wrote to the missing father or brother, demonstrate a yearning for the closeness that the war had caused them to lose. Although adolescence is usually a time when teenagers gain more control over their life, the war meant that this was not possible as parents sought to keep their remaining family members together. This resulted in parents making decisions which they believed were best for all concerned without taking their children's views into account. The tone of young girls' diaries reveals that they resented this attitude and felt that they should have had more control over their own destiny or at least have had the opportunity to discuss these decisions with their parents.

Attraction to the Germans

The absence of male relatives did not just leave a void in the family home – it also impacted upon French society. Although this sentimental void remained within the home environment until the missing relative returned, the physical void in French society was subsequently filled by the occupation army. Richard Vinen suggests that this was a contributing factor to relationships taking place between the occupiers and the occupied: 'The French population during the occupation was predominantly female (because so many men had died in the First World War or been captured in 1940), whilst the German occupying forces were overwhelmingly male'.¹⁷ According to H.R. Kedward, public opinion towards the occupation in France centred on three stages: 'First, it was the consequence of French defeat and French failures; second, it was the heavy presence of Germans with all their national characteristics; and third, it was an ideological domination by a tyrannical Nazism'.¹⁸ Although these suggested stages imply that public opinion was profoundly negative, Dominique Veillon suggests the situation was actually more complex: the French were understandably stunned by the defeat and initially struggled to comprehend what had happened but, in time, were pleasantly surprised to find that the Germans generally behaved well and, at least in the beginning, were trying to make a good impression on the French.¹⁹

Specifically where the sight of the Germans on French soil was concerned, Eric Alary suggests that attitudes were far more complex than many would care to admit: 'Their presence was obsessive both in terms of their impact on the landscape and on people's minds. They were read, seen, heard, felt and feared ... However some were more curious or interested than others and did not hesitate to go and meet the Germans'.²⁰ This implies that

on a conscious level the French attempted to maintain a sustained anti-German stance but in reality it was easy to become preoccupied by this presence on a subconscious, almost involuntary level. The apparent conflict between antagonism and curiosity is evident in girls' diaries and memoirs of the period.

An important element of adolescence is personal relationships and being attracted to someone for the first time. This development takes on a new dimension when the young girl finds herself attracted to the enemy, the German soldier in the case of occupied France, as it raises questions about her allegiance to France. Richard Cobb states:

Indeed, some of the well-educated young [German] men in their late twenties and early thirties who all at once found themselves in positions of limitless authority in July 1940 were often sought out by French teenagers of both sexes, not because they were powerful and could exercise patronage, but because they were good-looking, fair and charming.²¹

Of course, there were a variety of reasons why a young girl or woman should choose to forge a friendship with a German or even enter into a relationship with him:

There were those who genuinely loved men they should not have loved but whose feelings were not inspired by Nazi ideology. Other women were motivated by self-interest and duplicity, rather than political opinions or racial prejudice and would have easily slept with American soldiers a few days later simply because this was their 'profession or way of life'.²²

In his analysis of diaries written by adult males under the occupation, David Boal claims that this type of source is particularly revealing because the author inadvertently discloses more information than they would have initially intended: 'There is a certain involuntary tendency, inherent in the act of writing, which can lead a document into the realms of indiscretion or revelation'.²³ Young girls' autobiographical writings support Boal's suggestion as they reveal that their relationships with the Germans were much more complex than the terms 'occupied' and 'occupiers' would suggest.

Philippe Burrin notes that the French had to make decisions on an individual basis about how they were going to react to the Germans and that this conduct was often based on their instincts.²⁴ Young girls' reactions to the German presence support his assertion as they were surprised when they found themselves attracted to these uniformed officers. Attraction to the Germans could take place on different levels, from admiration at a distance to more sustained friendships. On a very superficial level, Veillon notes how young schoolgirls sometimes summoned up enough courage to smile at the victors.²⁵

Maroussia Naïtchenko, who was sixteen when the occupation began, was so surprised at the youthfulness of the Germans that she struggled to imagine how they

had managed to defeat France; in fact if she had not seen it with her own eyes she would not have believed it.²⁶ The description given by Antonia Hunt, who was fourteen when the occupation began, suggests that the Germans were so handsome that she was almost in awe of them. In referring to the sight of German tanks, she described how she saw 'devastatingly good-looking, suntanned, blue-eyed soldiers standing up in them'.²⁷ Even young girls who later joined the Resistance commented on the fact that they found the Germans handsome: Geneviève de Gaulle, the niece of Charles de Gaulle, described the first time she saw the Germans by using the phrase 'young war gods' to refer to them²⁸ and Benoîte Groult noted that, when admiring them from afar, the Germans in a state of undress made her feel like a young girl. She wrote, 'And yet I can't seem to forget that they are men and that I am a woman. When they are in their underwear, I have to hold myself back so that I don't smile at them'.²⁹ It appears that the Germans made her aware of her own sexuality which took her by surprise. Patrick Buisson notes that this admiration is a recurrent feature of young girls' writings about the period and suggests that, by maintaining their distance from the Germans, they sought to avoid attracting disapproving looks from their compatriots.³⁰ Although they instinctively found the Germans attractive, they also realised that their feelings could be controversial in the eyes of their fellow citizens and they did not want to draw attention to themselves for the wrong reasons.

Some girls, however, did have more sustained contact with the Germans, with mixed results. Fabrice Virgili draws attention to the fact that the affinity felt between French women and German men during this period could be compared to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, with the exception that the action takes place in a different period and context. His argument centres on the fact that the story of these fifteenth-century protagonists kept apart by their disapproving families is played out again and again during periods of crises and conflicts such as world wars when people on opposing sides find themselves attracted to each other, to the dismay of their families, friends and the wider community.³¹ Those involved justified their actions by explaining how they believed that love and politics were two separate, distinct spheres and that one should not influence the other.

Christiane Peugeot, whose diary focuses on 1944 when she was sixteen, had Germans living with her family. She reveals how the Germans confided in them about their own concerns and felt that they were also victims of the war:

One of them, who was staying in the garage with the horses, has lost three brothers and three brothers-in-law; he is engaged but fearing he will be killed has not got married. Another has lost two brothers. His parents and sisters have been evacuated numerous times due to bombings. They are 'Boches', of course, but they are still men and apart from the language, are no different to us!³²

Although Micheline Bood was extremely anti-German when she commenced her diary, her attitude mellowed as the war progressed. Her diary reveals that she faced an internal struggle when a decision had to be made about how she should react to the German presence. Although she felt comfortable enough to have a conversation in public with two German soldiers, when she sees one of them the following day, she writes, 'I was undecided, not knowing whether I was going to answer him in front of people'.³³ A sign, however, that she was maturing into a more tolerant young woman is demonstrated by a diary entry in June 1941:

I have always hated the 'Boch'³⁴ in their entirety and in their horror. But can you hate someone who you don't know? Or can you know someone when it is only based on stories from many years ago? That's the question. I hate and I would always hate the 'Boch' who has been our enemy for centuries but there is a big difference between a group of people and an individual within that group. The Germans, if you take them as individuals, are very nice, usually well brought-up and behave correctly.³⁵

However, an incident in April 1944 makes her see the Germans in a different way. She meets Karl, a member of the SS, who goes to visit her one night after he has been drinking. He offers to supply her with as much food as she wants but she declines and when she also refuses to kiss him he threatens to shoot her dog. She relents out of fear and a few days later she starts to feel that he has taken away some of her innocence:

I was thinking that I was eighteen years old and I was proud to tell myself that at eighteen years, I had not yet kissed a boy. Now, I am terribly sad because I have always believed that a first kiss should be something incredible, which transports you into a sort of dreamlike state and now that's been destroyed.³⁶

Antonia Hunt, an English teenager, was befriended by Egon Martin, an Austrian officer. Although their friendship developed naturally, their nationalities and personal circumstances meant that this was not a classic relationship between occupiers and occupied. Her friendship with Egon developed to the extent that he confessed his love for her and she shared her first kiss with him, but was unable to completely relax:

He kissed me – for the first time I had been kissed by a man. It was an indescribable sensation and I melted with guilty joy. Standing against the rocks on the beach he pressed his whole body against mine and in my complete ignorance and naive innocence, I wondered how wrong it was.³⁷

This was as far as their relationship went, but they had been living on borrowed time: 'Maybe he guessed my age,

or maybe they all had strict instructions; in any case he never tried to do more. Then the inevitable happened. I was found out. The disgrace was absolute'.³⁸ The Germans ordered any English people aged over sixteen living on the coast of Brittany to move inland, and, although she was under sixteen, she was sent away to prevent her from seeing Egon. She kept her past behaviour a secret, even from a close friend, as she was overcome with guilt.

In these examples, a rite of passage such as a first kiss takes on different connotations during wartime as it raises questions about collaboration and betrayal of one's country when it takes place with a person representing 'the enemy'. Girls could not be carefree in their choice of boyfriends – they had to think about the consequences of their actions on their families and on their own lives.

Consequences of associating with the enemy

Although the girls discussed above did not receive formal punishments for their behaviour, others were not so lucky. Following the Allied landings in June 1944, France embarked on a campaign of settling scores which involved punishing those who were considered to have collaborated with the enemy. According to Michael Kelly:

Perhaps the most strikingly gendered event of the Liberation is the wave of wildcat shearings of women as the liberating armies advanced through France ... Ostensibly punishing women for sexual relations with German soldiers or for passing information to them, the shearings took a carnivalesque public revenge on the bodies of women, revealing in the process that what they symbolically exorcized was experienced and constructed as male humiliation.³⁹

It is believed that between 10,000 and 20,000 women accused of this 'crime' were punished in this way.⁴⁰ Although the emphasis of this punishment was on righting the wrongs of women who had slept with Germans, this was not always the case. According to Julian Jackson, 'any woman seen in the company of a German risked finding herself accused of horizontal collaboration'.⁴¹ A young girl could quickly establish a negative reputation for herself. The power of rumours especially during wartime is the focus of an article by Jean-Marie Guillon, who writes:

Rumours exist at all times and in all places because they are one of the most instinctive ways of transmitting information. They start with word of mouth, the 'have you heard?', a piece of news passed on, which might be true, or false, but which is always credible in the context of the moment, and meaningful for those who spread it.⁴²

He adds that rumours are particularly important during wartime as emotions are heightened and fears for both the present and future are prevalent.

Archival sources relating to the Charente region support this claim as they show that young girls were

punished for a range of offences relating to the crime of associating with the enemy, even if sexual relations had not taken place. In some cases, the actions of the young girl reflected the attitudes of their families as two young girls were arrested along with their mothers on suspicion of both having had relationships with the Germans. One such girl was sixteen-year-old Georgette F. and her mother. Although both women fiercely denied the accusations, the report stated that there was certainty that Georgette had 'intimate' relationships with the occupiers due to the volume and amount of detail contained in witness statements.⁴³

In addition to the 'crime' of having relationships with the Germans, fourteen-year-old Léona N. and her mother were also arrested for supplying information and denouncing Free French Forces to them. Although both women denied the allegations, and the report concluded that there was no evidence to support the claims made against them and that physical relations between the Germans and Léona were unlikely, given her young age, they both received the punishment of having their heads shaved. The report does state, however, that it was believed that the women 'had fun' with the Germans.⁴⁴

A third girl's mother was also implicated following the arrest of her daughter. Twenty-year-old student Pierrette C. was arrested on suspicion of having had a relationship with a German officer since September 1940 when she was aged just sixteen. The report states that the relationship began after she had spoken to the lieutenant about how her family could secure the release of her cousin who had been taken prisoner of war in Germany. Her mother was aware of the relationship taking place, even burning three or four letters which the couple had exchanged, but chose to turn a blind eye to her daughter's antics even allowing the couple to meet in the family home. Pierrette became engaged to this German lieutenant in February 1941, shortly before he was sent to Poland. Her mother stated that she did not believe that her daughter's relationship with the German was a betrayal of the French nation. The report states that Pierrette admitted being engaged to a German officer but claimed that her behaviour was excusable given her young age. She also admitted receiving presents such as chocolate and cigarettes from him. The relationship ended in August 1943 and she had since become engaged to a Frenchman. Both mother and daughter were, however, punished by having their heads shaved and were interned in a concentration camp.⁴⁵

Twenty-one-year-old Renée F. was arrested on suspicion of having 'sustained, intimate relations' with the enemy. When arrested, she admitted conducting a relationship with a German for a period of eight months but denied that she had indicated the whereabouts of roadblocks to the Germans. The report concludes that she appeared 'sincere' and that the second allegation of providing intelligence appeared to be unfounded but the punishment of head shaving and internment was to be enforced.⁴⁶

These examples demonstrate that far from girls keeping their relationships with the Germans a secret from

their families, the mothers of young girls were complicit in their daughters' actions. As noted above, the absence of paternal authority in adolescence could be problematic as fathers were responsible for instilling discipline in their children. Furthermore, being of the same sex, mothers were thought to lead their daughters by example. Although the circumstances of individual families are not included in these reports, by conducting their own relationships with the Germans or turning a blind eye to their daughter's choice of partner, mothers implied to their daughters that this type of behaviour was acceptable or at the very least condoned. The fact that more than one family member was incriminated by these reports suggests that the family as a whole may have been in favour of collaboration. Even if young girls did not consider their relationship with the Germans to be a betrayal of the French nation, the fact that they were accused of denouncing Free French Forces to them would certainly have been deemed unpatriotic, as they were willing to endanger the lives of their compatriots.

In some cases, girls met Germans through their jobs, which resulted in accusations being made about their conduct. Seventeen-year-old Odette B. worked as a housekeeper at the Braconne camp and this brought her into contact with soldiers on a daily basis. She admitted 'having laughed' with them but fiercely denied having had any sexual contact. However, the report concludes that she undoubtedly had had sex with the Germans and that she had admitted she was no longer a virgin, a fact that had been verified by a doctor. The report adds that she appeared sincere in her denials. However, the punishment of having her head shaved was imposed.⁴⁷

Twenty-one-year-old Odette D. was arrested on suspicion of having had relationships with several Germans. When questioned, she claimed that she only had contact with the Germans through her business as she ran a cafe. She was also engaged to a member of the maquis, a clandestine resistance group situated in mountainous regions. Although she initially denied the allegations made against her, the report concludes that she had questionable morals, was often to be found in the company of Germans and furthermore that she had had relationships with several Germans. After she was questioned for a second time, the young girl admitted that her contact with the Germans had not been as innocent as she had first claimed. Her head was shaved and she was interned in a concentration camp.⁴⁸

In one particular case, a twenty-one-year-old girl was arrested for being the mistress of several German soldiers, which was confirmed by a witness seeing her on a German tank in March 1944. The report claimed that, although Janine B. denied the allegations and there was little concrete evidence, they still had serious suspicions that her conduct had been dubious.⁴⁹

From the examples presented, it is clear that these young girls were punished for 'collaboration', even when the reports admitted that the allegations had been denied and there was little substantive evidence to support the claims made against them. The fact that the vague term of 'having fun' is frequently used in these reports suggests that these young girls were naive about how their behaviour

could be construed by others. They were undoubtedly exhibiting the typical teenage behaviour of pushing boundaries, rebelling against the constraints placed on their lives because of the war and experimenting with their feelings and attraction to boys. One young girl even used her age as an excuse to justify her behaviour and the mother of another tolerated her daughter's meetings with the soldier in the family home, suggesting that she believed the relationship would not last. A seemingly innocent act such as standing on a tank, albeit one that belonged to the enemy, was seen as proof that a young girl had been having a relationship with a German, which typifies how actions take on different meanings during wartime. Guillon's assertion that the power of rumours during wartime should not be underestimated is validated by these reports, which allude to word-of-mouth accounts being responsible for the accusations made against these girls. These factors confirm Jackson's view that 'rather than viewing the relationships between French women and German men as a particularly flagrant form of collaboration, they should be seen as one of the many moral dilemmas confronted by people living under foreign occupation, especially where young girls are concerned'.⁵⁰

Conclusion

To conclude, we can see that young girls growing up in wartime France experienced similar anxieties to those growing up in peacetime in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They were at a crossroads in their life as they were passing from childhood to adulthood and experiencing friction with those closest to them. The self-imposed isolation which accompanies this transition was intensified by the absence of the father or brother and the tumultuous mother-daughter relationship. Although they wanted to have more control over their life and to make their own decisions, they had more constraints placed on them due to the circumstances of war, which left them frustrated.

Whereas in peacetime, finding herself attracted to a boy of a different nationality would not be considered detrimental, this was not the case in the context of wartime France. Young girls' autobiographical writings reveal that they felt an attraction, albeit in varying degrees of intensity, towards the enemy and empathised with the situation in which the Germans found themselves. However they also recognised that by associating and socialising with German soldiers they could be perceived as betraying their country by being unpatriotic and not acting like 'good French people'. Archival sources reveal that an innocent act such as standing on a tank in the company of a German could be deemed unpatriotic and that the word of another French citizen could be enough to cast doubt and suspicion on another's conduct which could lead to them being found guilty of 'collaboration' and subsequently punished. In this context, adolescent angst took on a very different meaning.

Notes

1. Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture* (London: Viking Penguin, 2007), xv.
2. Gisela Konopka, *The Adolescent Girl in Conflict* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1966), 40.
3. Philippe Lejeune, *Le Moi des demoiselles: Enquête sur le journal de jeune fille* (Paris: Seuil, 1993), 11.
4. Philippe Lejeune, 'Cher Cahier...': *Témoignages sur le journal personnel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), 11.
5. Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 169.
6. Archives Nationales, Paris (AN), AJ16 7122, Letter No. 26 Geneviève G., aged 13, La Rochelle, undated.
7. AN, AJ16 7122, Letter No. 27, Mademoiselle Anne-Marie R., aged 13, Maine et Loire, undated.
8. Sarah Fishman, *We Will Wait: Wives of French Prisoners of War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 146.
9. Micheline Bood, *Les Années doubles: Journal d'une lycéenne sous l'Occupation* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1974), 15.
10. Denise Domenach-Lallich & Christine Mittel, *Une jeune fille libre: Journal (1939-1944)* (Paris: Les Arènes, 2005), 8.
11. *Ibid.*, 203. It is interesting to note, that in hindsight, the author privileges the historical over the personal. Whereas accounts written by young girls during the period tend to focus on the effects that the war had on their own lives, Denise's comments on her diary show that age tends to reverse the trend as more focus is placed on events than on their own existence.
12. Bood, *Les Années doubles*, 15.
13. Domenach-Lallich, *Une jeune fille libre*, 79-80.
14. Benoîte et Flora Groult, *Journal à quatre mains* (Paris: Denoël, 1962), 24.
15. *Ibid.*, 19.
16. Elisabeth Sevier, *Resistance Fighter: A Teenage Girl in World War II France* (Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 1998), 8.
17. Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French: Life under the Occupation* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), 157.
18. H.R. Kedward, *Occupied France: Collaboration and Resistance 1940-1944* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 11.
19. Dominique Veillon, *La mode sous l'Occupation. Débrouillardise et coquetterie dans la France en guerre (1939-1945)* (Paris: Payot, 1990), 45.
20. Eric Alary, Bénédicte Vergez-Chaignon, & Gilles Gauvin, *Les Français au Quotidien, 1939-1949* (Paris: Perrin, 2006), 148.
21. Richard Cobb, *French and Germans, Germans and French: A Personal Interpretation of France under Two Occupations, 1914-1918/1940-1944* (Hanover & London: University Press of New England, 1983), 58.
22. Corran Laurens, "'La Femme au Turban': les Femmes tondues", in *The Liberation of France: Image and Event*, ed. H.R. Kedward and Nancy Wood (Oxford: Berg, 1995), 155-79.
23. David Boal, *Journaux intimes sous l'Occupation* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1993), 23.
24. Philippe Burrin, *La France à l'heure allemande, 1940-1944* (Paris: Seuil, 1995), 198.
25. Veillon, *La mode sous l'Occupation*, 46.
26. Maroussia Naïtchenko, *Une jeune fille en guerre: La lutte antifasciste d'une génération* (Paris: Imago, 2003), 163.
27. Antonia Hunt, *Little Resistance: A Teenage English Girl's Adventures in Occupied France* (London: Leo Cooper/Secker & Warburg, 1982), 16.
28. Geneviève de Gaulle, quoted in Margaret Collins Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance: How Women Fought to Free France, 1940-1945* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995), 25.
29. Groult, *Journal*, 45.
30. Patrick Buisson, *1940-1945 Années érotiques Vol.1 Vichy ou les infortunes de la vertu* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2008), 91.
31. Fabrice Virgili, *Naître ennemi: Les enfants de couples franco-allemands nés pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 2009), 62.
32. Christiane Peugeot, *Libérez Peugeot! Journal de jeunesse, 1944* (Paris: AkR, 2006), 98.
33. Bood, *Les Années doubles*, 27.
34. Although this term is usually spelt 'Boche' in French, Micheline was extremely pro-English and preferred to use the English spelling.
35. Bood, *Les Années doubles*, 106.
36. *Ibid.*, 276.
37. Hunt, *Little Resistance*, 19.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Michael Kelly, 'The Reconstruction of Masculinity at the Liberation', in *The Liberation of France*, ed. Kedward and Wood, 117-28.
40. Jackson, *France*, 334-5.
41. *Ibid.*, 335.
42. Jean-Marie Guillon, 'Talk which was not Idle: Rumours in Wartime France', in *Vichy, Resistance, Liberation: New perspectives on wartime France*, ed. Hanna Diamond and Simon Kitson (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 73-85.
43. AN 72AJ 108, 'Rapport de renseignements sur les femmes F. de C.', undated.
44. AN 72AJ 108, 'Rapport de renseignements sur Marguerite S., & Léona N.', undated.
45. AN 72AJ 108, 'Rapport de renseignements sur Pierrette C.', undated.
46. AN 72AJ 108, 'Rapport de renseignements sur Renée F.', undated.
47. AN 72AJ 108, 'Rapport de renseignements sur Odette B.', undated.
48. AN 72AJ 108, 'Rapport de renseignements sur Odette D.', undated.
49. AN 72AJ 108, 'Contrôle nominatif – camp de concentration', undated.
50. Jackson, *France*, 336-7.

Female denouncers: women's social transgression during the German occupation of Denmark, 1940-45

Lulu Hansen

University of Southern Denmark

This article analyses collaboration undertaken by Danish women during the German occupation by examining denunciations driven by personal and private motives. Previous research has shown that denunciations often sprang from private and personal conflicts while ideologically- and economically-rooted motives were far rarer.¹ It is my contention that a greater focus on female denunciations that were rooted in everyday situations can help us better understand some previously neglected aspects of the relationships between Danish women and German soldiers. Based on in-depth analysis of police reports concerning women who, after the liberation of Denmark, were suspected of having acted as denouncers in a large Danish provincial town, this article examines three specific cases where the subject of social transgression became a key issue. Transgression will be treated as two related phenomena. Firstly, it will be interpreted as the challenging of established norms in different everyday situations where women, because of their connection to the occupying forces, acted or were perceived to act in a socially inappropriate manner. Secondly, it utilises Barbara Babcock's concept of symbolic inversion which is 'broadly defined as any act of expressive behaviour which inverts, contradicts, abrogates or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly-held cultural codes, values and norms, be they linguistic, literary or artistic, religious, social and political'.² Such an approach will allow us a better understanding of the suppressive strategies that were mobilised to deal with female collaborators.

Background

Following the liberation of Denmark from German occupation in May 1945, Danish police quickly embarked on a large-scale investigation of people who were under suspicion for having collaborated with the occupying forces. The overarching council for the Danish resistance movement, *Frihedsrådet* (the Freedom Council), had in the autumn of 1943 formed a committee that was to produce a draft plan for a new penal law aimed at punishing collaborators.³ This plan, with some modification, formed the basis of the so-called special penal law implemented in the summer of 1945 and was used to convict around 13,500 Danes for different forms of collaboration. Six hundred and forty-four of these were women and the majority (about 400) were convicted for denunciation. Few of these women were actually professional denouncers.⁴ As will be seen, incidents leading to denunciations often sprung from conflicts where women who had engaged in relationships with German soldiers had been subjected to reprisals by other Danes.

Certainly the peculiar situation of occupation in

Denmark influenced the types of relationships formed between the civilian population and the occupier. Germany had subjected Denmark to a so-called 'peace occupation'. This meant that Denmark had accepted the German occupation as a preventive measure in return for Germany respecting Danish sovereignty and self-rule as long as this did not conflict with German interests.⁵ Most importantly it meant that it was the German foreign office and not the *Wehrmacht* who represented Germany in negotiations with Danish authorities, but it also meant that there were no formal restrictions on fraternisation between German soldiers and the Danish population. The Danish ban on prostitution, for example, seems to have been generally respected.⁶

From 1943 onwards an organised resistance movement started to gain hold in Denmark and tensions between the Danish government, which had until then continued its functions, and the German occupiers increased. During August 1943 the Danish resistance instigated a series of sabotage operations that, combined with German reprisals, led to a number of strikes in several towns all over the country. German calls for the Danish government to intervene included a demand to invoke the death penalty for acts of sabotage. The Danish government felt it lacked public support for implementing this measure and decided formally to end its functions. Although the Danish policy of negotiation with Germany continued, unofficially carried on by high-ranking civil servants, and despite no puppet government or actual military rule being instigated, the German strategy of occupation became more repressive during the last one-and-a-half years of the occupation at the same time that resistance activities became more hard-line. Consequently, Germany began to execute Danish saboteurs and use suppressive terror, while the Danish resistance began liquidating those they claimed to be Danish denouncers working for the Germans.

Women denouncers, in particular, were targeted by the underground press. This had grown tremendously, especially in the last years of the occupation and, while covering a wide spectrum of political views and recommending different strategies, the unifying factor was the attempt to mobilise resistance towards the occupiers. Women were often – although not always – connected with the issue of denunciation. Furthermore, during the last year of occupation a register was developed to keep track of people who were suspected of collaboration and who would be interned immediately after liberation. The register grew tremendously and contained around 40,000 names.⁷ Indeed, that was the number of people who were interned following liberation. Compared to the number of actual convictions for criminal collaboration



*Danish women having their heads shaved
(With the permission of the
Danish Resistance Museum)*

(around 13,500) it seems a high number. Women were a key target group following liberation, even though private and intimate relationships between Danish women and German soldiers were not expected to be criminalised. This aspect of the purge should receive further attention, not least because of the useful material that it generated prior to the actual court cases.

In focusing on this type of material, study has been limited to the large provincial town of Esbjerg on the Danish west coast. The town was distinguished in particular by a strong presence of German soldiers, not only because of its importance to German defence strategy but also because it became a centre for resistance activities in the region.⁸ At the end of 1945, there were about 45,000 people living in Esbjerg, roughly 1200 of whom were either interned or underwent police investigation following the liberation, and of these about 300 were women. This study is based on these latter cases of which the majority concerned official suspicion that the women might have acted as denouncers.⁹ The fact that the state attorney only pressed charges in twenty-three of these cases suggests that such suspicions were often based on little evidence. On the other hand, many cases that were not pursued further did in fact involve private forms of denunciations.

There are some obvious problems in using the kinds of sources dealt with here since they were produced following the liberation when statements by those involved were more likely to be affected by the spirit of liberation.

As has been noted, however, the frenzy of liberation was quickly followed by a more moderate atmosphere, somewhat critical of the suppressive elements of the immediate post-war attacks on suspected collaborators.¹⁰ This tendency is evident in the evidence. These documents constitute an invaluable source for understanding the different contexts in which individuals tried to create a meaningful narrative either to support or to discredit suspicions of a woman having acted as a denouncer.

Private denunciation – an everyday phenomenon?

The first issue to be discussed relates to the occupying power as an alternative authority. As Peter Davies has suggested, the presence of the occupying forces can be seen as an alternative factor in the power relations in occupied societies.¹¹ This was not only the case regarding political struggles on the national stage where the Danish Nazis had initially hoped to secure political influence following the German occupation. It can also be seen as relating to everyday life where threats to involve the occupiers in private and individual power struggles seem to have been relatively common in Esbjerg.¹² While the German authorities did not intervene in conflicts between Danish subjects where German interests were not at stake, in many situations it could be hard to draw a strict line. The subject of relationships between young Danish women and German soldiers became, for instance, a difficult issue at diplomatic level and there are several examples, as we shall see, of German soldiers individually asserting their influence in private conflicts.¹³

In dealing with the cases investigated by the police in Esbjerg following the occupation, issues concerning conflicts of a private nature that came to involve individual German soldiers or other representatives of the occupying power are common. It therefore becomes of interest to investigate further how this new variable affected perceptions of these situations amongst those involved. As suggested by Erving Goffman, everyday interpersonal encounters can be understood as a form of symbolic interaction at the basis of which lies a set of shared perceptions of the roles everybody is expected to play.¹⁴ As such, everyday encounters can be understood as a form of role-play in which successful encounters are dependent on everybody working together in order to 'save face'. This form of symbolic interaction is guided by attempts to uphold common understandings of a given situation which secures a predictable outcome.¹⁵ If somebody steps out of line, the situation becomes open to contestation. As will be seen, the perception that women had transgressed societal norms by engaging in relationships with Germans was at the heart of many conflicts that ended in denunciation. Thus, as German soldiers constituted an alternative power authority, how their intervention in private conflicts was legitimised or de-legitimised by individuals and how the issue of stepping out of line by transgressing social norms surfaced in such negotiations will be examined. Three cases will be analysed and the events leading up to the denunciations will be placed within the framework

of altered power relations and potential unpredictability in everyday situations.

Protector of the weaker sex?

In December 1943 readers of the local underground paper *Sydvestjylland* learned about an incident that had taken place on the small island of Fanø, just off the coast of Esbjerg and allegedly involved the hunt of a young Danish woman and German helpers for six Danish workers. One of the issues that the clandestine press discussed was what constituted acceptable behaviour by Danes in relation to the occupying power.¹⁶ According to the paper a young woman, who was known for her relationships with the occupying forces, had allegedly encountered six workers on her way to the ferry back to Esbjerg. The young men had shown their disapproval by giving the woman 'a light tap on the bottom with the backside of a spade'. She instantly alerted the Germans who arrived at the ferry to catch the men. The paper alleged that the Germans searched for the men for several days and they were eventually caught, having been identified from their work permits.

When the case was brought to the attention of the police by an acquaintance of the young men in the summer of 1945, it appeared somewhat more complex. According to the police investigation, four (not six as reported in the press) young Danish carpenters employed at a German building site on the island had been on their way home.¹⁷ They admitted to stopping the young woman, trying to take her bike and one of them also admitted calling her insulting names with reference to her relationship with the Germans. The case is illustrative of a relatively mundane everyday situation that suddenly became open to contestation when the occupying forces became involved. The men stated that the girl attempted to attract the attention of some nearby Germans, with the result that the men fled to the ferry. The girl, however, maintained that it was her German employer who had observed the incident and pressured her into accompanying him to the ferry in order to find the men.

Whichever version is closest to the truth, German interference quickly turned the power balance around. As opposed to what was reported in *Sydvestjylland*, the men were not arrested by the Germans; instead they had fled on the ferry. However, after a few days of not daring to go back to work, one of the young men, on his own initiative, decided to contact the sixteen-year-old girl in order to settle the matter. According to his statement, the young woman and her mother had insisted that the Germans would have to be involved in the settlement. The men were asked to meet with the woman and her mother, together with a representative of the German forces on the island. The shift in power becomes evident in the young men's accounts of this meeting. In their statements, the symbolic elements in the encounter are evident. The men explained that they had, on their arrival in the house, been greeted aggressively by the mother and the German lieutenant, who had insisted that the carpenters should pay the young woman compensation. Although the men admitted that

they had themselves sought a settlement with the girl, their outrage is evident. The young men described how the women sat on either side of the German officer and one of them remembered that there was a gun lying on the table in front of the German lieutenant. According to the men, they had been willing to pay but they thought that the initial claim was too high and they had managed to negotiate an agreement. Furthermore, the men were required to place an announcement in the local paper apologising for slandering the young woman.

In such instances, it is important to remember that the stories were produced in the context of a police investigation and that the officer questioning the men was interested in knowing to what extent they had been threatened by the women and the German lieutenant. On the other hand, it was not the men themselves who later reported the incident. The accounts reveal the extent to which German soldiers could be perceived as acting as protectors of the 'weaker sex'. This particular case is interesting because it also reveals how this aspect was reinterpreted for propaganda purposes by the resistance movement. It is, for instance, significant that the version of the incident in the clandestine press did not involve any German threats but instead focused on the Germans' unsuccessful attempts to catch the young men. There was no room for the humiliation of the young Danish men in this account. Furthermore, this version of the story clearly downplayed the men's role in the incident and did not make an issue of the young woman's vulnerable position in the assault.

The question of how the women tried to legitimise their part in the incident constitutes another interesting issue concerning perceptions of social transgression. The young woman and her mother excused their good relationship with the Germans by trying to establish a context for their actions that centred on their lack of resources in economic and social terms. The mother explained to the police that she and her daughter knew the German officer involved in the case because they both worked on one of the many German sites on the island. They had, she explained, taken this kind of work because they needed to earn enough money to pay off the mortgage on their house. The issue of self-sufficiency and willingness to pay one's own way was one that often surfaced in public debates, especially in relation to unemployed workers and young people's access to public benefits. The issue of female idleness as the path to moral decay was a subject often addressed by debaters and public institutions such as police and child-care authorities. The women related their activities to a context where initiative and willingness to work hard would constitute a positive trait of women's social conduct, hence making it more difficult to condemn. This is an example of double inversion where positive traits, usually used to measure the degree to which a girl or a woman adhered to popular perceptions of what constituted the good daughter, wife or mother, became negative markers if they involved engaging with an occupying power.

The incident mentioned here is not the only one of its kind. Incidents involving young women who had been

insulted in public invoking the help of German soldiers were relatively common. In one unique case after the liberation, a man who attacked a female colleague was kidnapped by her German boyfriend to teach him a lesson.¹⁸ Strikingly, perceptions that some women would deliberately use the situation to their own advantage were widespread.

The young provocateur

One particular issue that permeates most cases raised against women suspected of acting as denouncers concerns the level of public outrage caused by their behaviour and the extent to which this had been deliberate. The concern that young women would be tempted by German soldiers was widespread, even in the early days of the occupation. The problem of how to keep young Danish women away from soldiers became a sensitive issue at diplomatic level as Danish interference could be perceived as an attempt to undermine or even show disrespect for members of the *Wehrmacht*.¹⁹ Concerns about controlling young women and their sexuality were clearly expressed in the stereotype of the young provocateur.

In January 1945 a dramatic incident took place at the local court house in Esbjerg where two sisters were brought before the judge accused of dealing in stolen fur coats. An employee of the Gestapo arrived at the court house where he held those present at gunpoint and left with the young women. The Gestapo had been present in Denmark since September 1943 and some examples of individual employees engaging in conflicts of a private nature are found in the material. This particular employee had been romantically involved with one of the young women. In this case, statements were given by two court officials. One of whom, a judge, explained how the Gestapo member had first arrived seeming quite rational, but upon encountering the women his attitude changed. The judge also noted that the women began complaining about the conditions in the prison cells where they had spent the night. Their statements were, as the judge later told the police, 'put forward in a loud and complaining way, typical of women who want to make an impression on a man from whom they hope to receive protection'.²⁰ The judge noted that 'it was against my will that they were given the opportunity to use their gift of the gab in my presence'. In commenting on the women's claims that he had initially stated that he would make sure their names were passed on to the press, he acknowledged that he had 'found no reason' to keep their names confidential. The judge's account of the events leading up to the rescue is full of outrage regarding the women's behaviour. A closer look at the elements involved in the narratives reveal several traces of the perceived disturbance of power relations. The judge's natural authority had suddenly been questioned. In encountering the women and the Gestapo employee, a routine situation suddenly became unpredictable. Furthermore, his attempts at talking to the Gestapo employee were interrupted by the women playing on their femininity in an attempt to win over the potential liberator.

Moreover, the situation also offered an opportunity for the women to overturn conventional power relations. The sisters were from a family well known to the local police and court officials.²¹ However, the younger woman's relationship with an associate of the Gestapo placed her in a position to negotiate her status. As well as insulting the judge, she also explicitly criticised the Danish court system. She had made a similar accusation when she was arrested. One of the civilian officers who brought her in explained how she had attempted to address several German soldiers whom they had encountered on their way, asking them to get word to her boyfriend that she had been 'taken', a popular term also used to refer to arrests of resistance fighters by Danish or German police.²² This kind of statement reveals an understanding that this was a time to settle old scores. After the occupation, the young woman was also investigated for conspiring to have a police officer murdered by a Gestapo employee in retaliation for the times he had acted as prosecutor in cases against members of her family.

Although unique, this case is illustrative of the widespread perception that the occupation itself meant less control and less power to institutions usually expected to keep young women in check. Other issues relating to perceptions of female engagement with the occupying power also became apparent and surfaced, for instance, in the account of the incident in the underground press. After describing how the young women had been arrested for stealing furs – one of the luxury goods that had become even more of a status symbol because of scarcity – it went on to describe how the women were freed. The article finished by stating that the two women 'removed themselves gloatingly with their liberator'.²³ This can be read as a growing concern that women who engaged in relationships with German soldiers could become defiant and overly confident, testifying to a deep rooted unease about young women's behaviour.

Denouncers in spirit?

Several women were investigated as possible denouncers even though they had never been involved in any direct face-to-face conflict with Danes over their relations with Germans. By means of such cases, the depth of the perceived disturbance in power relations and the issue of national and social embarrassment can be studied further. Female telephone operators were particularly exposed to suspicion of having behaved in a manner deemed 'nationally undignified'.²⁴ Telephone exchanges, staffed mostly by young women, were often frequented by representatives of the occupying power. These exchanges were sources of information, making them of particular interest to the occupying forces as well as the resistance. Telephone operators were able to listen in on conversations and pass on important information. In its June 1943 issue the local underground paper *Sydvestjylland* named five female telephone operators who had 'betrayed their home and their country'.²⁵ The notice clearly indicated that the women had engaged in

denunciations. Following the liberation, all five women were investigated in relation to such suspicions. As there was never any real proof that the women had engaged in the activities of which they were suspected, the focus was soon shifted to how the women had behaved when Germans were around. Body language such as smiling, leaning towards a German representative and turning the head when Germans were heard, were all regarded as a sign that the women had behaved inappropriately.

There are also references to cases in which female behaviour was considered deliberately provocative. Many such instances occurred in August 1943 when the Danish government formally resigned. This event was later used by the resistance as a symbolic milestone in Danish-German relations but there is evidence that the date became loaded with symbolic meanings in popular memory and that questions regarding who did and did not act in a 'nationally correct' manner was a central point of reference.²⁶ Not one witness felt that there was any indication that women had functioned as denouncers intentionally or otherwise. Instead, witnesses pointed to other indications of nationally disgraceful behaviour. One woman in particular had caused outrage in August 1943. A female superior told the police that immediately after the Germans had occupied the telephone centre, the suspected woman had told her colleagues 'that they should just refer to her if they had anything to discuss since she was now in charge'.²⁷ The woman's German boyfriend had been present and the witness noted that she used this occasion to 'further perform in a challenging and provocative manner. For instance she let herself be embraced by the soldier in front of the other ladies'.²⁸ This is another example of women's perceived lack of humility and propriety. Another female operator told investigators that 'everybody was against [one of the women] and the other ladies who went with Germans and how everything was done to try and "freeze" her out, but they were all afraid of her as she had connections to the Germans and could report them if it suited her'.²⁹ Fear of being denounced played a role in many such cases.

These women were perceived to have held an especially advantageous position as a consequence of their relationships with German soldiers. They were thought to have transgressed commonly-held notions of acceptable behaviour both amongst colleagues and between supervisor and employee. Returning to Babcock's definition of symbolic inversion, the women's behaviour in the cases outlined here inverted established norms of appropriate relationships and drew attention to alternative values, norms and cultural codes.



*Danish women talking to German soldiers
(With the permission of the Danish Resistance Museum)*

Conclusion

In each of these three cases, the women's different strategies of legitimising their actions expose certain ambiguities in the resistance propaganda concerning its attempts at defining the 'good' Danish woman. For example, the woman who was accused of attempting to assert her position over her colleagues claimed that she had merely tried to help since she was the only German-speaker and had been given the assignment by the Germans to organise a work plan that ensured the presence of German-speaking staff. She emphasised that she had only carried out her duties as a conscientious employee. Such narratives challenged the dominant meanings attributed to women engaging with German soldiers, but they also reveal certain ambivalences about the gendered issues of sexuality, single women's ability to provide for themselves and women's relationship to work and leisure.

The strategies of legitimisation presented above also illustrate the limits of social transgression during the occupation. While the occupation made different forms of transgression possible, it also spurred strong repressive measures. However, because of fears of offending the occupying forces, such repressive strategies had to be held in check and lean more on different subtle strategies than was the case after the liberation. In general the strategies chosen by fellow citizens relied on isolating women who were considered to have acted in a manner deemed nationally shameful. The broad range of witness

statements imply, however, that evaluations were much more differentiated when the women's close social networks are looked at. There seems to have been, in fact, much more acceptance of a serious relationship than was the case regarding looser connections between German soldiers and Danish women. The same seems to have been the case regarding Danish women who worked for the Germans in order to make ends meet and earn a living.

Studying the many investigations against Danish women suspected of having acted as denouncers during the German occupation reveals much about the perception of relationships between Danish women and German soldiers as a form of social transgression. It seems that several layers of meaning can be traced. On the one hand, we can note the social transgression of women who used their German connections to assert their own position in different social situations. On the other, we have the phenomenon of double inversion where commonly-held positive traits were deemed negative in the context of the occupation. It thus becomes clear that the phenomenon of double inversion could constitute an important source of resistance when it came to the dominant discourses of condemnation centring upon the women's behaviour. Moreover, social and class-rooted values seem to have taken precedence over the larger issue of national respectability in concrete situations. These were strongly conflicting tendencies that need to be accounted for in gaining a deeper understanding, not only of the subject of co-existence with the occupying power in general, but its gendered aspects in particular.

Notes

1. See Robert Gellately, 'Denunciation as a Subject for Historical Research', *Historical Social Research*, 2/3 (2001), 16-29; Anette Warring, *Tyskerpiger under besættelse og retsopgør* (Copenhagen, Nordisk Forlag, 1994), 66ff; Vandana Joshi, 'The "Private" became "Public": Wives as Denouncers in the Third Reich', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 37/3 (2002), 419-35.
2. Barbara A. Babcock, 'Introduction', in *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*, ed. Barbara A. Babcock (London, Cornell University Press, 1978), 13-36, 14.
3. See Ditlev Tamm, *Retsopgøret efter besættelsen* (Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 1985), 70ff.
4. Warring, *Tyskerpiger*, 16ff.
5. See Henrik Dethlefsen, 'Denmark and the German Occupation: Cooperation, Negotiation or Collaboration', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 15/1 (2011), 193-206.
6. Warring, *Tyskerpiger*, 12.
7. Tamm, *Retsopgøret*, 104f.
8. Sven Henningsen, *Esbjerg under den anden Verdenskrig* (Esbjerg, Esbjerg Kommune, 1955), 35.
9. They can be found at Landsarkivet i Nørrejylland (Provincial Archives of Northern Jutland, henceforth LN), Esbjerg Politi, B-412 and Esbjerg Ret, B-377.
10. Tamm, *Retsopgøret*, 244f.

11. Peter Davies, *Dangerous Liaisons: Collaboration and World War Two* (Edinburgh, Pearson Education, 2004), 105f.
12. See Lulu Anne Hansen, *Besættelse og social identitet. Esbjerg 1944-48* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Southern Denmark, 2011).
13. See also Lulu Anne Hansen, 'Youth off the Rails: Teenage Girls and German Soldiers A Case Study in Occupied Denmark, 1940-45', in *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century*, ed. Dagmar Herzog (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 135-67.
14. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self In Everyday Life* (New York, Penguin, 1959).
15. Erving Goffman, 'On Face-Work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in Social Interaction', in Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual Essays in Face-to-Face Behaviour* (New Jersey, Aldine Transaction, 2005, original edition 1967), 5-45, 8ff.
16. See Nathaniel Hong, *Sparks of Resistance: The Illegal Press in German Occupied Denmark April 1940 August 1943* (Odense, Odense University Press, 1996).
17. Statements were given to the police in the autumn of 1945. The state attorney never pressed charges. LN, Esbjerg Politi, B-412, 1997/859, *særlige sager* 620-750, jnr. 238/45, Police report, 14 November 1945.
18. Hansen, *Besættelse og social identitet*, 127ff.
19. Warring, *Tyskerpiger*, 19.
20. The following account is based on miscellaneous documents regarding initial police investigations and the court case against the woman in June 1946. LN, Esbjerg Ret, B-377, jnr. 337/45.
21. The family was under supervision by local authorities. Hansen, 'Youth off the Rails'.
22. The Danish police stopped functioning in September 1944.
23. *Sydvestjylland*, April 1945.
24. Tamm, *Retsopgøret*, 589f.
25. *Sydvestjylland*, July 1943.
26. This date was also central to the special penal code. Tamm, *Retsopgøret efter besættelsen*, 128f.
27. LN, Esbjerg Politi, B-412, 1997/855, *særlige sager* 201-295, jnr. 104/45, Police report, 23 May 1945.
28. *Ibid.*
29. LN, Esbjerg Politi, B-412, 1997/855, *særlige sager* 201-295, jnr. 104/45, Police report, 12 September 1945.

A fragment of the Blitz: Noel Streatfeild's wartime diary

Amanda Jane Jones

Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge

Noel Streatfeild was born on 24 December 1895 and is best remembered for her 1936 children's novel, *Ballet Shoes*, which was only one of over eighty works published in her lifetime, including many novels for adults. She worked in the Woolwich Arsenal as a munitions worker in the First World War, an air raid warden in the Second World War and also did voluntary work in South London. My research into her wartime fiction led me to her wartime diaries recording her voluntary work, carefully preserved by her family since her death in 1986. She never married nor had children, but her keenly observant writing is particularly alert to the situation of the child. Storm Jameson stayed with Streatfeild during the Second World War and described 'this daughter of the vicarage [who] was a lovely and charming young rake of an actress' who wrote 'lively sensible quick-witted children's books' and had an 'active social conscience' as a motivating factor behind her 'hard-working and eminently well-run life'.¹

In July 2010 I was fortunate to have the opportunity to visit Streatfeild's nephew, William Streatfeild, who kindly allowed me to see the papers left by his aunt. Amongst these were some typed and handwritten articles and notes kept by Streatfeild relating to her voluntary work amongst the poor of south London before, during and after the Second World War. It is to these that I was immediately drawn, along with a section of typed-up entries from her diary for 1940.

Between 1939 and 1945 many women in Britain kept diaries of their wartime experiences. Many civilians felt drawn to record their experiences for posterity as this war, unlike any other, involved the whole population to some degree. Mass Observation had been created in 1937 to record everyday life in Britain. Between 1939 and 1945, 500 diaries were kept for, and collected by, Tom Harrisson and Charles Madge and these were deposited with the Mass Observation Archive at the University of Sussex.

However, Streatfeild's diary was different. It had begun, like many others, as a private record, but as London became the target of the Luftwaffe, she saw a possibility for prompt publication. She may have been aware of Mass Observation but if she was, she had not chosen to take part. Naomi Mitcheson, a volunteer diarist for M.O., said of her own output over the years 1939-1945: 'This diary, which I wrote for Mass Observation, runs to a million words: who is going to read all that? Not me'.² There was a strong desire to write down what was experienced. Whether anyone ever read it afterwards seemed less important. Angela Bull, in her biography *Noel Streatfeild* (1984), writes about a manuscript comprised of diary entries and entitled *London Under Fire* which William Collins (of Collins publishers) decided 'should be kept until after the war, by which time Noel had moved

on to other things'.³ William Streatfeild, her nephew, had no copy of this manuscript, but copies of a typed draft covering the months of September and October 1940 are in his possession. I believe these papers may be a part of *London Under Fire*, which had survived the bombing of her flat on 10 May 1941.⁴ This untitled and unbound draft is typed up on the thinnest A5 paper, yellowing and fragile, letters blurring where the typewriter keys struck. The fragment runs to some 140 pages, but shows the novelist dedicating time, energy and effort to the city and its people under fire. Evocative of the time, the entries are full of Streatfeild's wry humour and what Jameson praises as 'her acuity about people'.⁵ There is much of interest to the historian and the literary critic, but this article is confined to her work as a novelist, warden and voluntary worker during the Blitz and her perceptive and revealing social comment. As novelist and diarist she distils experience to write history.

There is suffering, irritation, and frustration in this record of hardship and some misery, but also a vivid and often comic portrayal of character, speech and class relationships. Streatfeild employed a cook/housekeeper whom she calls Millie,⁶ and a secretary, Joan. As Streatfeild prepared to go to a social engagement: '[t]old Millie just now to brush and spruce up my better clothes. She said "They'll take more than that, Madam." Felt less like being amusing than ever'.⁷ Millie is stubborn, frustrating and enjoys spreading gloom: 'you'll make up your mouth once too often, Madam'.⁸

Streatfeild's humour and irony place the bombing and its consequences in a personal context and she confides her frustrations and fatigue to her readers: 'suspect this gloomy attitude due to the Fuehrer's Luftwaffe which made sleep impossible last night, was on at wardens post, and raiders hung about all the time, first one siren and then a second. Blast them'. This is immediately contrasted with her efforts to 'lift the spirits' with spring bulbs, which Millie predicts will 'get a bomb on the flat and the money'll be wasted'.⁹

The reader enjoys a privileged sense of complicity, recognising the diary/novel as a relief, an outlet and perhaps a therapy:

Discouraged by Joan. Secretaries should take a course in tact, it can't be pleasant for the author when for once she thinks she's done well to hear "I wonder who on earth reads serials?" Snapped at her. Millie evidently heard the snap, for then I heard Joan being given a cup of tea and a bun. No words seemed to pass between her and Millie but I know what volumes of pity Millie's face expressed. Bit down my rage with difficulty.

Struggling with a romantic serial about a country rectory, she 'failed to visualise the rectory, let alone the peace'.¹⁰ The humour is wry, as when Joan asks whether there is more for her to type: 'Blast her. Of course there isn't. I can't write about country rectories and help evacuate posts all at the same time', and when Joan is critical of Streatfeild's romantic serials: 'if Joan ever leaves, I'll get a low-brow secretary'.¹¹ While Streatfeild does not deceive herself that her romantic fiction, published under the pseudonym Susan Scarlett, is of great literary value, it did pay for Jean's services as secretary.

Streatfeild records her efforts to secure a safe and acceptable place in a shelter for Millie during the raids. After several attempts, one of which collapses leaving her 'buried all night' on 19 September, a solution is found. Having got Millie into 'the shelter habit', she has difficulties in finding a place to sleep for herself. She disdains the shelters but describes how she 'hate[s] being alone in a house at any time' so camps out with friends while looking for 'more permanent sleeping arrangements'¹² as she will not sleep alone: 'I do wish I didn't know my weakness for hearing imaginary burglars' and 'I shall not be able to hear comfortably through the noise and shall imagine all the more'.¹³ Reluctant to admit to her weakness, Streatfeild makes light of her situation. We hear the voice of the novelist, a 'daughter of the vicarage' as Jameson described her, short of money, patience and sleep but continuing her warden duties and visits to South London with tough good humour. She refers herself back to the entry of 24 September where she is 'bad tempered' and 'hope I shall frequently re-read this entry, as obviously good for my soul'. The therapeutic function of a diary is described by Naomi Mitcheson in *Among You Taking Notes*, where she refers to M.O. as 'a kind of God-Figure – one confesses, one is taken an interest in, encouraged. Will M.O. supersede psychiatry?' For Streatfeild, the diary is also a confidante, and a possible source of income: 'Blitz or no Blitz, must earn my bread and butter'.¹⁴

London Under Fire demonstrates Streatfeild's inheritance from her parents: her faith, a love of gardens and a drive to improve the lot of those less well off than herself. Thirty years earlier, her mother Janet Streatfeild had worked hard to familiarise herself with the poorest families and provide soup and practical assistance.¹⁵ Her father William showed a strong dedication to the welfare of his congregation. They seem to have passed on their strong ethic of public service to their strong-minded daughter, who, when writing about the Blitz, observes, 'Poor South London looked very depressing ... I went into a big shelter to see how they were getting along, there was a heavy fug of unwashed people. There were far too many children. ... Brave though the people are they must be frightened for their children, and fright so easily communicates itself to a child'.¹⁶ Streatfeild's concern for



*Streatfeild with the children of Deptford in 1942
(With the permission of W Streatfeild)*

children is deeply held. She observes how fear for the wellbeing of a child quickly becomes fear of which a child is aware. The inevitable, osmotic assimilation of anxiety by a child is a theme also closely observed in her fiction.¹⁷

Amongst the entries which make up the draft of *London Under Fire*, many include important references to the children of south London, where she saw much to cause concern. On 5 September she records how she: 'Learnt the gloomiest details in South London. Saw the caretaker of a block of flats, he said that the children were hopelessly out of hand. Even the small ones play in the streets until eleven o'clock at night, and their parents cannot manage them at all.' In estates where schools had been closed (as part of the general evacuation scheme of September 1939) some children had already missed a year's education and 'refuse to be washed and dressed properly' and 'had changed in the last year to semi savages'. Streatfeild, having seen some of the children, observes 'the parents' spirit had in many cases broken in their efforts at control'. The parson commented that 'evacuation, though necessary, had killed home life, the parents were losing their sense of responsibility, they were letting the government do the ordering about ... in his opinion the progress in child welfare of twenty-five years had been lost in one year'.¹⁸ This ominous prediction is also reflected in Streatfeild's own strong belief that the loss of education was one greatly to be regretted.

The 'gloom' she felt in September 1940 is dispelled by action: writing 'fervently' and 'to the only powers I know'. Social reform was an area for voluntary efforts and one for which she had campaigned and worked during the 1930s and continued to work and speak in the aftermath of the war, attempting to raise support and practical help. Her notes for a 'Speech made at a meeting of the Invalid Children's Aid Association'¹⁹ in 1949 refer to the 'dreary, bombed back streets, the dust, the papers blowing about and the peaky sad little face of the sick child' whose

life chances would be improved by time at one of the Association's homes which are 'full of a sense of security without which no child can get well'. These families, and their children are familiar, observed in *London Under Fire* as 'the grey-faced mothers sitting with a baby in their arms, and two small things lolling against their knees' at the rest and feeding centres for the bombed-out in south London on 23 September 1940. Her ability to sympathise with the south London mothers shows the novelist's scrutiny and sympathy as she observes: 'lolling sickly babies who were obviously spending too long underground' and thinks: 'how I would feel leaving a fifteen-year old in this nightly hell', but concludes, 'I wish I could see the end of their journeys to the country'. Streatfeild succinctly, and without censure, identifies the difficulties of many such mothers, for whom evacuation with younger children would leave older ones alone.

Streatfeild also lectured on behalf of the School Care Committee after the war and there remain notes of a lecture she gave after the war on 17 March 1952.²⁰ The School Care Committee Service was set up in 1908 to provide a home-visiting welfare service for schoolchildren, reliant for the most part on volunteers, this 'imaginative experiment in the integration of voluntary service with statutory provision'²¹ allowed the upper- and middle-class married or financially independent woman to act as liaison between authorities and parents, often in relation to the need for dental work or other needs. She was hoping to encourage more volunteers. Her sympathy with the poverty observed in 1950s Deptford is not incompatible with humour: 'A child who was out of school was asked why she had been away. "Mother's making marmalade", she said, "and I had to go to the cemetery for some pots"'.²²

One unexpected result of her wartime efforts is recorded, on 15 October 1940, at a dinner in conversation with a man at her table: 'I tried to be amusing too about my letter to the powers that I know, and the futility of such efforts [regarding the need for a mobile canteen in South London] when, quite suddenly, he stopped me by putting a hand on my arm and he said, "I will buy you a canteen. How much money do you want?"' By 23 October, Lord Woolton, Minister of Food, had agreed to receive the money and commission the canteen at which Streatfeild would work. Bull's biography includes a photograph of Streatfeild at her canteen.²³ The illustration which accompanies this article may also show this canteen, where Streatfeild can be seen with the children of Deptford in 1942.²⁴

Less surprisingly, for a warden experienced in assisting those who lost their homes and possessions, she imagines her own home being bombed. On 1 October, she praises some close friends who met the loss of their warehoused belongings with 'outward fortitude' but predicts: '[d]on't believe I'll behave well like that when I lose everything'. She 'never [has] believed in possessions. They are all roots and tie you down'. She anticipates the bombing of her home in the last entry recorded within the *London Under Fire* fragment, for 28 October: 'Wish I had brought more clothes down here, for goodness knows if my flat goes while I'm away, I have no money for any more either'. Streatfeild closes with this entry, a tantalising

and sober moment of reflection. On 10 May 1941, her flat was bombed and destroyed. Streatfeild's *London Under Fire* is an evocative, witty and enjoyable glimpse into the sometimes unexpected life of this successful woman novelist during the Blitz. It is unusual as such, and worthy of a wider audience.

Notes

1. Storm Jameson, *Journey From the North: Volume II* (London, Harville Press, 1970), 46.
2. Naomi Mitcheson, *Among You Taking Notes: The Wartime Diary of Naomi Mitcheson 1939-1945*, ed. Dorothy Sheridan (London, Phoenix, 2000), 11.
3. Angela Bull, *Noel Streatfeild* (London, Collins, 1984).
4. I shall refer to it as such for the purposes of this article. All references made by kind permission of the copyright holder, W. Streatfeild.
5. Jameson, *Journey From the North*, 46.
6. 'Millie' is the pseudonym given to Nellie Thompson, described by Jameson in *Journey From the North* as 'her shrewd friendly housekeeper, a Londoner to her ill-fitting teeth', 46.
7. Noel Streatfeild, TS entry for 14 October, 107.
8. Noel Streatfeild, TS entry for 2 September, 2.
9. *Ibid.*, 1 September, 1.
10. *Ibid.*, 11 September, 16.
11. *Ibid.*, 4 September, 4.
12. *Ibid.*, 26 September, 63.
13. *Ibid.*, 24 September, 56.
14. *Ibid.*, 11 September, 16.
15. Bull, *Noel Streatfeild*, 22-3.
16. Noel Streatfeild, TS entry for 3 October, 79.
17. See Noel Streatfeild, *Saplings* (London, Collins, 1945).
18. Noel Streatfeild, TS entry for 5 September, 5-6.
19. Noel Streatfeild. Unpublished TS. Private coll. Copyright W Streatfeild.
20. This lecture was given at The Princess Helena College, Ealing on Sunday 17 March 1952.
21. Miss Mary Stokes so described the service to Phyllis Wilmott in her 'London School Care Committee Service 1908-1989', *Voluntary Action*, 6/2 (Spring 2004).
22. Noel Streatfeild, Lecture on 'The Children's Care Committee and the Fourteen Group'. Unpublished. Private coll. Copyright W. Streatfeild.
23. Bull, *Noel Streatfeild*, Plate xii.
24. This photograph provided by W. Streatfeild.

'I was merely a shorthand typist': British women at work in the British Zone of occupied Germany, 1945-1949

Ruth Easingwood

Newcastle University

This article examines the expectations and aspirations of British women engaged in clerical work in the British Zone of occupied Germany between 1945 and 1949. Women's accounts of why they applied to work in Germany are characterised by an enthusiasm for a change of scene in which work played an essential part. Working in Germany provided women with a temporary escape route from the prosaic lifestyle mapped out for them in Britain with its emphasis on domesticity. This proved to be a crucial motivating factor for women and was predicated on their feelings of deflation after the war ended and a sense of confinement at 'home' in Britain. Historically, women's position in the labour market has always been constructed differently, which has had an impact on how women view the job opportunities that come their way. During this post-war period the more demanding jobs for women in Britain underwent a change. Men were returning from the war and were reinstated in jobs that women had 'borrowed' from them for the duration of the war. It was in this uncertain environment that women's recruitment to the British Zone took place. Although women were employed in a range of jobs in the British Zone, such as secretaries, canteen managers, welfare workers and telephonists, most of these involved some form of clerical duties. Essentially, this type of work located women on the margins of the occupation, but this did not deter women from ascribing meaning to their work and asserting their individuality in the workplace. This is important as it highlights the importance of work to women as well as the ways in which women were able to make claims on their work in a predominantly masculine environment.

The British in Germany

After the German surrender in May 1945, the country was divided into four zones of occupation to be governed by Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States respectively. The British Zone was situated in the north and included North Rhine Westphalia which encompassed the Ruhr Valley, Schleswig Holstein, Lower Saxony and the city state of Hamburg as well as a sector in Berlin. Each zone was run as a separate entity although the original plan had been to govern Germany as one unit. The British Zone was administered by the Control Commission for Germany (hereafter C.C.G.) who were responsible for executing the overarching policy of re-education. Very briefly, the re-education of the German people centred on the three d's namely: denazification, demilitarisation and democratisation, but there was no unified opinion as to how to go about this. What is clear is that the British regarded re-education as the lynchpin in the 'struggle for the soul of Germany', which called

for vigilance, loyalty and hard work from all staff.¹ Policy makers believed re-education was the key to unlocking German aggression and securing the future of Europe. By electing to re-educate the German people, the British favoured guidance over direct intervention, a philosophy which German historian Lothar Kettenacker believes was in keeping with the British liberal tradition.² However, in the early days of the occupation implementing re-education centred on authoritarian measures such as identifying and purging ex-Nazis from posts of responsibility and effectively rebuffing the German population through non-fraternisation. Initially, the British assumed they would encounter a hostile population who had been 'schooled in militarism, indoctrinated by Nazi ideology and fanatically committed to continued struggle'.³ Germany's culpability for the Second World War, combined with highly influential perceptions about Germany's history of militarism, ensured that at the beginning of the occupation Germany and its people invoked suspicion and contempt.⁴ In addition, the discovery of Belsen in April 1945, and increased awareness of the Holocaust, strengthened British resentment against the German people.⁵ Commentaries from eyewitnesses bear this out. M.E. Allan, a war correspondent, who wrote to her parents from Brussels shortly after a visit to Belsen in the spring of 1945, resolved: 'I will tell everyone I meet about Belsen – people must know what the Germans have done. I cannot forgive them for being the cruel people they are'.⁶ Belsen had a profound effect on her attitude to the German people and demonstrated the uncivilised nature of the German people. However, as time went on the context of the mission changed and, as a result, the role of the occupiers began to change. Firstly, for the most part the German people proved to be passive in their reactions to the occupying forces and secondly, pragmatism prevailed. The need to keep German administration operative and, if anarchy were to be avoided, to provide the population with food, water and shelter conflicted with the need to overthrow every German in a position of authority.⁷

Enlightening the German people in the ways of Western democracy was predicted to take time, and it transpired that the work of the C.C.G. was hindered by complex bureaucracy as well as economic difficulties. As the British Zone encompassed the Ruhr, its chief characteristic was industry and this proved to be a major impediment for the C.C.G. In effect, British bombing raids had left the British occupiers with all the major cities of their designated area in ruins, but those located within the Ruhr valley had experienced the worst of this bombing.⁸ Orme Sargent described the Ruhr area as 'the greatest heap of rubble the world has ever seen', and the task of reconstructing this area was compounded by the huge numbers of refugees as well as its physical isolation from



Women typists at work, 1940

the agrarian east.⁹ By 1947 cost-effectiveness made economic fusion with the Americans inevitable, and in June of that year Bizonia, centred on Frankfurt, came into being. The Bipartite Control Office (B.I.C.O.) supervised Allied control and was headed by General Macready for the British and General Adcock for the Americans.¹⁰ Bizonia was a concrete indicator of the emerging ideological spilt between the east and west zones in Germany and was a decisive factor in the 'polarisation' of Germany.¹¹ Hence, during a period of only three years the British Zone witnessed much reordering and reorganisation that affected the confidence of British staff in their ability to bring about lasting change in Germany.

Continuity was a major flaw in the administration of the British Zone. In May 1946, the military government running the British Zone was replaced by a civilian one. From the beginning, recruiting staff to work in Germany was a constant source of concern for the C.C.G. as well as the subject of intense debate in the House of Commons and caused the British press to ask probing questions about how the C.C.G. was run. Most of the problems centred on finding the right calibre of high-ranking staff to work in Germany on short-term contracts. Although terms and conditions of employment were favourable, at the end of the period of military rule in Germany many officers opted to return to Britain rather than remain for an unspecified period. The inability of the British to solve the recruitment problem had a detrimental effect on the morale of both incumbent British staff and the German people.

In general, many of the staffing problems the British faced any did not always apply to the recruitment of women as, unlike men, women regarded their work in Germany as an opportunity. Recruitment notices for women to work for the C.C.G., or to enrol in the armed forces, tended to emphasise a supporting role for women by which they were encouraged to fill vacancies created by the needs of the men serving in Germany. In some cases the idea of being useful to men in the field was projected as being preferable to being at home in Britain

with all its associations of austerity. For example, one advertisement for the N.A.A.F.I. attempted to attract women's interest by offering them the chance to 'look after the boys who are serving in the peacetime forces'.¹² On another level, the same advertisement made oblique references to the emptiness of women's post-war lives; 'you're not redundant – the N.A.A.F.I. needs you' was an attempt to entice women away from the monotony of post-war Britain. The C.C.G. also placed advertisements for staff in national newspapers. Mrs Read, an informant who lived in Bournemouth, responded to a recruitment notice in the *Daily Telegraph* as did Mrs Roscoe from Birmingham, who, after being appointed to work in Germany, had to wait for a vacancy to arise before starting work.

There are no exact figures for women working in the British Zone but at its peak the C.C.G. employed 26,000 British staff, in addition to 30,000 German employees.¹³ Predictably, women's wages were at the bottom of the pay scale. A temporary typist could expect to earn between forty-five shillings and fifty-seven shillings a week, whereas the lowest pay for men was somewhere between fifty-five and seventy-five shillings a week. Women were disqualified from engineering, accountancy, commercial management and transport supervision jobs in the British Zone, as they were 'unlikely to have the skills'.¹⁴

Despite limitations in their choice of job, women answering the call for staff in Germany did so in the belief that Germany presented them with a new challenge and an opportunity for personal advancement. Unlike some of the high-ranking male staff, women appeared to be highly motivated by the prospect of living and working in the British Zone. Women employed in the British Zone came from a variety of backgrounds and had disparate working histories. Some women had served in the armed forces during the war, whilst others had been employed in reserved occupations. Interestingly, a number of women felt they had missed out on the war. As Mrs Fagan from London declared, 'I wanted to join the services in the war and I was furious when the war ended. I was only nineteen and needed parental consent; you had to be twenty-one to go without it'.¹⁵ So, after the war, Mrs Fagan joined the W.A.A.F. and was posted to Germany where she remained for eighteen months as a clerk in the stores. Mrs Fagan joined the W.A.A.F. to fulfil a desire that had been thwarted in wartime, and at this particular moment in her life she wanted something more than life in Britain had to offer. Opportunities for women to take on a leadership role in the British Zone were rare, and 'high politics' was far beyond the remit of secretaries, canteen supervisors or modest welfare officers, but even a routine job in the stores held a certain appeal for women who wished to extend their horizons. Women's narratives that conceived of Britain as a place of containment need to be examined

in the specific context of the post-war milieu.

Women in post-war Britain

The complexities surrounding women's place in post-war British society have been well documented by historians. This debate centres on whether the Second World War had a liberating effect on women or if, instead, it served to cement women's place in the home and extenuated the delineation between men and women.¹⁶ Rebuilding Britain after the Second World War called on women to perform as mothers. Women had a crucial role in ensuring the future of Britain by producing children but women were also needed as workers, which made the role of women in British society ambiguous. The home was posited as the heart of British recovery and for some women the privations of the war enhanced the importance of the home and their significance in it.¹⁷

Judy Giles argues that the historical moment, in this case the end of the Second World War, which for several years had disrupted the traditional gender order in Britain, played a part in shaping women's relationship to the home.¹⁸ In other words, as well as being the site of women's domestic proclivities, the home was imagined as a place of stability after the chaos of wartime. Predominantly, it was married women who were the targets of this discourse, but single women were also under pressure to relinquish their jobs to men, as 'the boys return home', thus marking an end to the shared experiences of wartime.¹⁹ However, despite the assumption that women's 'incursions into the labour market' would be 'tidied away' once the war ended, young women's labour remained an economic necessity.²⁰ Running counter to this was the threat posed to society by women who worked. In the post-war period, the promotion of marriage and motherhood as the norm meant that women who chose work over family ran the risk of becoming estranged from mainstream society.²¹

In spite of the projected idealisation of life in the home, figures show that the majority of both single and married women wished to continue working and that only a minority of women cited marriage as the reason for wishing to give up work.²² As Selina Todd points out, 'paid work was a distinguishing characteristic of youth for many women' during the post-war period, and the aspirations and opportunities for young, single women differed widely from those of the married women who remain at the core of most studies.²³ Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that a collective consciousness amongst women existed, individual women did find space to pursue their goals, confirming the opinion that not all women were 'passive receptacles of gender ideology' at this time.²⁴ Moreover, just as post-war aspirations for an improved and modern home were linked to social advancement, some women sought self-improvement through their choice of job.²⁵ Personal testimonies from women who worked in Germany reveal that work was central to their lives; in fact, it was often an explicit work-related decision that led them to Germany in the first place. For women seeking employment in the post-war period, clerical work was a common destination yet how women responded to their

work and measured its importance is missing from the historiography of clerical work.

Women recruited to work in Germany were by no means unskilled, as in order to carry out clerical tasks it was expected that women would have experience, formal training or have been educated beyond the minimum standard. Some of the women I interviewed, or whose writings I studied, had benefitted from the Butler Education Act of 1944, which, by making secondary education compulsory, allowed a wider cohort of women to enter white-collar work.²⁶ For some women, white-collar work inferred respectability, social mobility and perceptions of security, which made obtaining an office job desirable. Such attributes had been circulating in the 'popular imaginary' for a number of years and, although clerical work was no longer the domain of aspiring middle-class men, it did represent reputable employment for educated young women.²⁷ The clerical sector had expanded during the inter-war years and women engaged in clerical work tended to be recruited from upper-working-class and middle-class backgrounds. Respectability was linked to status rather than pay and promotion, which remained elusive.²⁸

To some extent, the C.C.G. represented the civil service on active duty overseas and women were at a huge disadvantage within that institution. Notably, women were excluded from entering the Foreign Office until well into the 1930s, and even campaigners for women acknowledged the unshakable reputation of the Foreign Office as an exclusively male organisation.²⁹ However, as Sharon Strom has argued, it is unhelpful to group together all female clerical workers as, within the office, workers were separated by differentials such as skill, age, class and even marital status.³⁰ Several questions emerge from this, not least the suggestion that work played a significant role in shaping identity and forging an independent self, and there is an interesting dichotomy at work here. Clerical work was constructed by women as a job with 'prospects' as, despite the modest position offered to women, it seemed to have the capacity to confer an enhanced identity on those who sought such employment. Identity cannot be condensed to rest solely on occupation but, as Cowman and Jackson contend in their study of middle-class women, the connection between work and self is relatively unexplored.³¹

As such, oral testimonies, diaries and biographies offer valuable insights into how British women understood their work in Germany. The marginalisation of women's work in the British Zone meant that only glimpses of female clerical workers are available from both primary and secondary sources on the occupation.³² As a result, the majority of my testimonies come from women I interviewed for my doctoral thesis between 2004 and 2005. Most of these women responded to a letter placed in a magazine explicitly aimed at the over fifties asking for women to come forward who had worked in the British Zone between 1945 and 1949. Although the focus is on personal testimonies, this article draws on a range of source material. Weaving together personal testimonies with more conventional source material from archives,

libraries and private collections provides a broader perspective on women and their work in the British Zone. When focusing on subjectivity as a way of exploring women's lives it is essential to recognise that subjectivity is a product of 'specific cultural articulations' and the 'material experiences' of everyday life and that, within these frameworks, women can experience their lives very differently.³³ In the light of recent work on the social contextualisation of memory, Anna Green warns against over emphasising the 'cultural theorisation of memory' as to do so threatens to devalue individual memories.³⁴ There is also a danger of ignoring human agency and with it the ability to resist social forces if personal testimonies are seen as products of predetermined 'cultural scripts'.³⁵ Penny Summerfield maintains that when investigating subjectivity it is impossible to ignore the cultural scripts that shape people's lives, but how these 'scripts' are interpreted and acted on enables us to assess the stability of such scripts.³⁶ Why women adopted certain positions in relation to their work is therefore a complex process but one that can shed light on ways of being in the immediate post-war world.

Work as opportunity

For many women, work was the definitive reason for entering Germany as, without the benefit of employment, the journey to Germany, indeed anywhere outside Britain, would have been extremely difficult during the immediate post-war period. This was not so much because of the disruptive impact of the Second World War but, rather, as a direct result of the lack of opportunities for travel available to working-class women. Generally, only women from the social elite had the financial means and professional influence to travel independently. Hence, although post-war Germany seems an unlikely arena for an adventure, it appealed to women who were motivated by the possibility of foreign travel which, in turn, enabled them to transcend their working-class roots. Women's accounts of why they applied to work in Germany are characterised by an enthusiasm for a change of scene in which work played an essential part. In the aftermath of war, women expressed the desire to 'do something useful' and clerical work satisfied this need. Working abroad was one way in which women from less affluent backgrounds could take control of their own lives and become actively involved in the reconstruction the post-war world. Mrs Roscoe was living at home with her parents in Birmingham and working as a secretary when she responded to an advertisement in the *Daily Telegraph* requesting applications from women to work in Germany. She was attracted to the post as it involved travelling, and this acted as an incentive as she had never holidayed beyond Britain: 'It was great to be abroad. I did not think I would have the chance from my background'.³⁷ For Mrs Roscoe, social class delineated her boundaries and rendered foreign travel unfeasible, but through self-assertion she was able to divert her life from its predictable trajectory. As well as class, Mrs Roscoe's testimony stands out as in it she directly refers to the conventions of gendered behaviour in post-war Britain

and how they were challenged: 'I was taken on by the C.C.G. in August but a vacancy did not arise until January. A lot of de-mobbed women took these posts, women who did not want to settle down'.³⁸ Mrs Roscoe's account also suggests that there was an abundance of women willing to work in Germany; she had to wait until there was a vacancy as jobs for women with the C.C.G. were not readily available. This state of affairs contrasted sharply with the difficulties in recruiting suitable men to work in the British Zone, a situation that had serious consequences for the entire administration.

In her positive account of clerical work, Miss Forrest tells how she adapted easily to her new job as 'it was like office work in Britain', a remark that disguised the objective of her job, which was to track down former Nazis and screen them. It was the justification for her work that led her out of 'a rut in Dundee' to 'a great experience' in Herford and demonstrates how for some women clerical work in the British Zone broadened their horizons.³⁹ Miss Forrest worked as an ambulance driver during the war but from August 1946 until December 1948, she was employed as a secretary in the Intelligence Division of the C.C.G. Miss Forrest rejected her life in Dundee even though she claims the work was interchangeable with work available to her in Britain. She had a sharp sense of what office work entailed in Britain during this period, even though at this point in her life she had not worked in an office in Britain. The 'great experience' she enjoyed in Herford rested on the chance to be somewhere different and to experience something outside the norms of Dundee. Similarly, Miss White, from the East End of London, worked for the C.C.G. in Hanover for a number of years, and was very clear about the difference going to Germany made:

When I came home I was looking out of the train at Hanover, I saw Hanover receding, and I was really crying. I was very sorry to come home. I was there for four years until 1950. If I had come back to England in 1946 and just got a job as a shorthand typist or secretary up in London, it would have been very humdrum whereas this was exciting. It was so different.⁴⁰

In her testimony, Miss White did not deliberate on her status as a 'mere clerical worker' but rather she recounted the opportunities provided by her work. Like Miss Forrest she was under the impression that clerical work in Britain was 'humdrum', but overall the tone of her testimony is less reverent to the innate order of the workplace. Stimulation and difference gave meaning to her work which in turn was central to the steps she took to prolong her time in Germany.

Another woman who, in her own words, sought adventure was Betty Carter. She had served with the Auxiliary Territorial Service (A.T.S.) during the Second World War and in 1946, aged twenty-five, she opted to join the C.C.G., and was then posted to Hanover. Her father was not impressed with his daughter's change of job, and in her memoirs she recalled the anguish in his voice as

he advised her, 'you know you will lose your pension'.⁴¹ At this stage in her life, Mrs Carter was single and was willing to abandon financial security in exchange for something new:

[Father's] worry was not registering in my young head. Instead I was remembering, only too well, the restrictive boredom of days in the civil service and I did not want to return to my pre-war occupation. Four years in the A.T.S. during World War Two had shown me that life could offer both novelty and adventure. Now demobilised, I was looking for new experiences and gaining employment with the CCG seemed the answer.⁴²

Mrs Carter remained in Germany for four years where she became the commandant of a transit camp that had been set up for young German women and displaced persons who were being recruited to work in England under a Ministry of Labour initiative.

Work as duty

The nature of the British occupation meant that all staff employed in the British Zone had a responsibility to the nation. In addresses to staff by British officials, the wartime rhetoric of extreme patriotism and the trope of solidarity came into play. James Hinton suggests that a sense of national unity and purpose permeated all corners of British society, so it is hardly surprising that traces of this found their way into the British Zone, particularly as a secure and peaceful post-war world was not yet assured.⁴³ In 1946, the Christmas message from John Hynd, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster who acted as the government representative for Germany, constructed the 'job' in Germany as one of extreme necessity and central to its success was the role of all staff:

One factor remains unchanged: the difficulty, the responsibility, and the supreme importance of the job. No more vital task faces the British people, for we know full well how closely the future happiness and well being of the peoples of Europe may depend on your work in Germany today ... The British Zone is no place for those without a mission.⁴⁴

Thus, there was an explicit correlation between work and the nation: 'Remember you are a representative of the British Commonwealth' forewarned an official handbook.⁴⁵ British staff in Germany were serving the nation, and work, rather than direct combat, was a means of expressing solidarity with the nation, as it was through work undertaken in the British Zone that the German people would 'learn the lessons of defeat'.⁴⁶ For women, this obligation was expressed in a number of ways, some of which fed into normative constructions of gender roles. For example, some women conflated the needs of the nation with the needs of the men serving in Germany, a stance which corresponds to the long-established view

of women as signifiers of reassurance and stability. In a similar way, some women undertaking white-collar duties in Germany achieved satisfaction at work by pleasing their boss.

Miss Gayle, a secretary to a quartermaster general in Wuppertal, a town in North Rhine Westphalia, accepted the conventions of secretarial work unequivocally. Her testimony centred on her ability to execute her duties successfully, rather than any ambition on her part, and she simply stated: 'As a secretary you did your best to do all your boss requires'.⁴⁷ For Miss Gayle, the pivotal elements of her job were determined by her boss: 'I am afraid the secretary's job does not vary very much. I saw that he was never kept waiting and that included getting his lunch and taking his clothes to the laundry.'⁴⁸ Miss Gayle's apology for the work of a secretary indicated her awareness of the job's limitations, but she took pride in the fact that she rose above the monotony and performed her duties well. Within their shared workspace, Miss Gayle and her boss occupied the traditional roles of the male boss and his considerate secretary who was willing to undertake superfluous duties for him, such as attending to his meals and organising his laundry. Miss Gayle's insistence that her job did not vary much appears to conform to ideas about the monotony of secretarial work, yet she also invokes the image of herself as a provider. By anticipating the needs of her boss, 'I made sure he was never kept waiting', Miss Gayle is the exemplary secretary and it is by taking up this position that Miss Gayle was able to attain status through her work. The job may have been unexciting, but she was able to execute it to an ideal standard.

At first glance Miss Gayle's construction of her job tallies with the theories that cultural knowledge relating to gender and the differences therein pervades to such a degree that this is seen as normal or pre-ordained.⁴⁹ An outstanding example of this is provided by the dismissive 'merely a shorthand typist' from Miss Forrest. The remarks of Miss Gayle also appear to collude with cultural definitions of women's work, as she was content to be inferior in the hierarchy of the workplace and to defer to the knowledge of her male boss. By taking such a stance, both women effectively placed themselves outside the real business of the British Zone. On the other hand, Miss White, who held a clerical post for the C.C.G. in Hanover, positions herself differently. Despite an imprecise description of her duties, Miss White's words convey her enthusiasm for her job in Germany, and she was so inspired by her work there that she took the singular step of extending her contract. Miss White's deference to the conventions of the workplace is less apparent, particularly as she did not construct herself through her boss – in fact, she never mentioned him.

Like all 'work' in the British Zone, Miss White's work in Germany was allied to serving the nation and its quest to democratise Germany, but she did not acknowledge this in her testimony. Instead, she felt that democratisation was achieved through the behaviour of staff rather than the execution of policy:

What we noticed was if you went to a theatre and there was a long queue the British never

walked to the front as the Germans would have done, we waited in the queue to get the tickets. This was all done by the little things you did to show them that you [the British] did not do that. You did not treat yourself like the S.S. walking ahead, you waited. It was little things like this that showed them [the Germans] what really democracy was.⁵⁰

In other words, it was through cultural exchanges rather than political actions that the Germans would embrace democracy, and on this point Miss White distanced herself from the correlation between work and duty to the nation.

For other women, work was an articulation of duty to the nation, to be achieved through the provision of welfare for the men serving in Germany. Feelings of responsibility towards the 'men' constituted a common thread in testimonies from women, who combined clerical work with a 'service' role in Germany. Miss Dunn worked in various locations as a welfare worker for the Y.M.C.A., and when asked about the rationale behind the occupation, asserted 'the troops needed us and we were there, that was all'. Mrs Thomas, who worked in the N.A.A.F.I., reiterated this theme. Her job revolved around serving 'teacakes, cigarettes, sausage rolls and cups of tea to the men', who 'had their duties to keep them going'.⁵¹ Mrs Thomas's routine canteen work located her in a separate sphere from that of men and their unexplained yet imperative duties. For some women, the connection between their job in Germany and serving the nation was very marked. Again, for Ursula Fookes, this translated into looking after the men and was the impetus behind her presence in Germany. She managed a mobile canteen for the N.A.A.F.I. around the Ruhr Valley from 1945, having volunteered to work for the N.A.A.F.I. in Germany after seeing an advert in her local newspaper. Recruitment posters for the N.A.A.F.I. in the immediate post-war period emphasised 'serving' the services, and passages from Miss Fookes's diary reveal how fully she embraced this role of provider: 'I was touched by the way in which the men regarded us as part of themselves; they were terribly grateful as we were volunteering to help them.'⁵² Her zeal concerning her role in Germany is apparent, especially when she questions the commitment of others: 'E.N.S.A. volunteered to avoid the call up'. For her, the execution of duty transcended the routine work of the mobile canteen; by acting as a crutch for the men, who remained the official vanguard, she was realising the needs of the nation. As women were denied an authoritative role in the occupation, it is not surprising that some women responded to the call of duty as providers, and that their experiences in the British Zone were shaped by a consolidation of the gender order. Britain was no longer at war, but British women in post-war Germany were to some extent still acting out their 'remorseless position of carers and nurturers' in opposition to the 'masculine role of defender'.⁵³ At the same time, the loyalty of women to either the nation or to their immediate boss should not detract from how women conceptualised their role as working women. This included women's belief in the personal qualities, which they brought to their work,

and how work boosted their self esteem.

Nevertheless it was not all sweetness and light in the rarefied atmosphere of the British Zone. The shade is provided by the records of the Women's Affairs and Welfare Section, which offer valuable insights into the tensions and problems of working in the British Zone. From these documents, there is no mistaking the limitations of women's autonomy in the workplace and the implications this had for morale. Miss Broome, a Women's Affairs officer in Düsseldorf, wrote:

Work here is crying to be done and we are hindered and bedevilled at every turn by people who have little understanding of what administration and administrative order mean, or are so inefficient that they pile order and confusion upon another.⁵⁴

Miss Broome's vision of the British Zone is greatly different from the one inhabited by Ursula Fookes. Miss Broome's work did not revolve around the needs of men as her priority was to publicise the existence of women in the Zone and expand their involvement in the affairs of the occupation. Indeed, she regarded the alienation of women as an error rather than as an inevitable product of gender relations. The final sentence of the letter quoted below summarises her disaffection with the C.C.G. and their deficiencies in responsiveness to, and appreciation of, women's potential: 'This is my last word on W.A. [Women's Affairs]. The next time I write will be my resignation. I am not willing as an individual to go on bruising myself against the impenetrability of a man-advised C.C.G!'⁵⁵ Miss Broome was frustrated by the misuse of power as demonstrated by high-ranking male officials in the C.C.G., and she had the means to express this in her letters to other staff. Although her position in the C.C.G. was not a commanding one, it is clear from her correspondence that she occupied a post that carried some weight. Unlike secretaries and clerical workers who worked on the periphery of the C.C.G., Miss Broome identified her job as being central to the success of the occupation, but her desires were ultimately thwarted by the folly of a 'man-advised C.C.G.'.

Conclusion

Women took up many different positions regarding their white-collar work in Germany and, whilst none of their experiences can be said to be definitive, it is apparent that many women did not regard their work as just a job. Some women constructed their work in the rhetoric of wartime unity and took up the position of patriot, which found an outlet in how well they were able to look after the men serving in Germany. Yet others related their experiences through the idiom of patriarchy, wherein the asymmetry of the office remained unchallenged but where a consummate performance brought its own rewards. For other women, the British Zone acted as a site of opportunity, and these 'adventuresses' found satisfaction in their work simply because they were living away from home. For them, the notion of working towards national

goals remained indistinct and patriotism was not invoked as a justification for their work. Even Miss Broome, who drew attention to her disempowerment at work, cannot be presented as a casualty of the male stronghold that was the C.C.G. Her letters are affirmation that she found meaning and purpose in her job even though there were limits to her effectiveness as a woman working for the C.C.G. By examining the testimonies of individual women employed in the British Zone, I wished to avoid monolithic interpretations of clerical work as the work women undertook, the roles they adopted, and the feelings their work engendered was more nuanced than the words 'I was merely a shorthand typist' imply.

Notes

1. Michael Balfour and John Mair, *Survey of International Affairs: Four Power Control in Germany and Austria 1945-1946* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1956), 64.
2. Lothar Kettenacker, *Germany Since 1945* (Oxford, Oup, 1997).
3. Richard Bessel, *Germany 1945: From War to Peace* (London, Simon and Schuster, 2009), 169.
4. See David Welch, 'The Political Re-Education of Germany after World War Two: A Need for Reappraisal?', *German History*, 5/2 (1987), 23-35. Welch argues that by 1944 the prevailing attitude of the Psychological Warfare Division (P.W.D.) was that the Germans were a race apart and that this opinion informed policymaking and propelled the need for re-education. Also, Lothar Kettenacker, 'Post-War Planning', in *Conditions of Surrender: Britons and Germans Witness the End of the War*, ed. Ulrike Jordan (London, Tauris, 1997).
5. Noel Annan, *Changing Enemies: The Defeat and Regeneration of Germany* (London, Harper Collins, 1995), 147.
6. Letter from M.E. Allan (no date given), 'Contemporary Documents', in Jordan, *Conditions of Surrender*, 92.
7. Frank Siegfried Vernon Donnison, *History of the Second World War: Civil Affairs and Military Government, North West Europe, 1944-1946* (London, H.M.S.O., 1961), 365.
8. To put the damage in context, 22 per cent of dwelling houses in the British Zone had been destroyed, whilst a further 35 per cent were badly damaged; these figures were higher than for any other Zone.
9. Kettenacker, 'Post-war Planning', in Jordan, *Conditions of Surrender*, 21.
10. Nicolas Lewkowicz, *The German Question and the Origins of the Cold War* (Milan, IPOC, 2008), 67.
11. See Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *Civilising the Enemy: German Reconstruction and the Invention of the West* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2006) and Alan Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945-1955* (Oxford, Berg, 1990).
12. *Evening Standard*, 8 Feb. 1946, 4.
13. *Second Report, Select Committee on Estimates, Session 1945-6, British Expenditure in Germany* (London: H.M.S.O., 1946), 16. Military staffs were less, peaking in early 1946 and eventually tailing off by 1950; even the Berlin Airlift did not involve a massive influx of military staff.
14. Draft copy of conditions of service for C.C.G. staff, October 1945, FO 1032/76, National Archives, Kew.
15. Interview with Mrs Fagan, May 2004.
16. Select bibliography: Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945* (London, Pelican, 1984); 'The effect of the war on the status of women', in *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, ed. Harold Smith (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1986); Julia Swindells, 'Coming Home to Heaven: Manpower and Myth in 1944 Britain', *Women's History Review*, 4/2 (1995), 223-34; *Nationalising Femininity: Culture, Sexuality and British Cinema in the Second World War*, ed. Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996); Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998), especially Chapter 6, 'Demobilisation and Discourses of Women's Work'.
17. Clare Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40/2 (2005), 341-62.
18. Judy Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain, 1900-50* (Basingstoke, MacMillan, 1995).
19. Swindells, 'Coming Home to Heaven', 223-34.
20. Juliet Gardiner, *Wartime Britain, 1939-1945* (London, Headline, 2004), 533.
21. Katherine Holden, *The Shadow of Marriage: Singleness in England, 1914-60* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007), 45.
22. Penny Summerfield, '"The girl that makes the thing that drills the hole that holds the spring": discourses of women and work in the Second World War', in Gledhill and Swanson, *Nationalising Femininity*, 47-8.
23. Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family in England, 1918-1950* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), 1.
24. Dolly Smith Wilson, 'A New Look at the Affluent Worker: The Good Working Mother in Post-War Britain', *Twentieth-Century British History*, 17/2 (2006), 206-29.
25. Judy Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb: Domestic Identities, Class, Femininity and Modernity* (Oxford, Berg, 2004), 64.
26. For the purposes of this article white-collar work encompasses clerical work.
27. Kim England and Kate Boyer, 'Women's Work: The Feminization and Shifting Meanings of Clerical Work', *Journal of Social History*, 43/2 (2009), 302-40.
28. Gerry Holloway, *Women and Work in Britain Since 1840* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2005), 155.
29. Helen Jones, *Women in British Public Life, 1914-50: Gender, Power and Social Policy* (Harlow, London, 2000), 157-8.
30. Sharon Hartmann Strom, *Beyond the Typewriter: Gender, Class and the Origins of Modern American Office Work, 1900-1930* (Champaign, University of Illinois Press, 1992).
31. Krista Cowman and Louise A. Jackson, 'Middle Class Women and Professional Identity', *Women's History Review*, 14/2 (2005), 165-80.
32. The British occupation is chronicled in detail by Balfour

and Mair, *Four Power Control* and by Donnison, *History of the Second World War*. For more recent reflections see Ian D. Turner (ed.), *Reconstruction in Post-war Germany* (Oxford, Berg, 1989); John E. Farquharson, 'The British Occupation of Germany, 1945-6: A Badly Managed Disaster Area?' *German History*, 11/3 (1993), 316-38 and Alan Bance (ed.) *The Cultural Legacy of the British Occupation in Germany: The London Symposium* (Stuttgart, Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1997).

33. Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life*, 2.

34. Anna Green, 'Individual Remembering and Collective Memory: Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates', *Oral History*, 32/2 (2004), 35-44.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, 15. Also Penny Summerfield and Corinna Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence: Men, Women and the Home Guard in the Second World War* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007).

37. Interview with Mrs Roscoe, May 2004.

38. One of Mrs Roscoe's friends in Germany had been de-mobbed from the Land Army.

39. Interview with Miss Forrest, July 2004.

40. Interview with Miss White, February 2005.

41. Papers of Mrs B. W. Carter, IWM Documents, London, 06/100/01, memoirs and photographs of Mrs B.W.Carter, 1946-1950.

42. *Ibid.*

43. James Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives: Mass Observation and the Making of the Modern Self* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010), 11.

44. *British Zone Review*, 21 December 1946, 3. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster was a junior ministerial post established in October 1945.

45. *Germany 1944: The British Soldiers Pocketbook* (Richmond, The National Archives, 2006), 40.

46. Richard Hiscocks, Edgar McInnis and Robert Spencer, *The Shaping of Post-war Germany* (New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), 14. See also *The Political Re-education of Germany and her Allies after the Second World War*, ed. Nicholas Pronay and Keith Wilson (Beckenham, Croom Helm, 1985); Anne Deighton, *The Impossible Peace: Britain, the Division of Germany and the Origins of the Cold War* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990).

47. Interview with Miss Gayle December, 2008.

48. *Ibid.*

49. For example, Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, Routledge, 1999).

50. Interview with Miss White, February 2004.

51. Interview with Mrs Thomas, July 2004.

52. IWM Documents, London, 94/27/1, diary of Ursula Fookes, 1945-1946.

53. Gill Plain, *Women's Fiction of the Second World War: Gender, Power and Resistance* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1996), x.

54. National Archives Kew, FO 1013/2224, Letter from Miss Broome, Women's Affairs officer, Düsseldorf, April 1949.

55. *Ibid.*

Membership Announcements

You can now manage your WHN membership, update your details, pay your subscription, add your research interests/books and make a donation by logging into the **Members' Area** at www.womenshistorynetwork.org

Do you pay your subscription by standing order?

If so, can you check that the payment details reflect the 2011 rates. Don't forget, we have different rates to reflect different personal circumstances, so it is worth checking that you are paying the correct rate for you. Details of the 2011 rates for all categories of members can be found on the inside back cover of the magazine or by logging in to your account at www.womenshistorynetwork.org.

Why not switch to standing order for your subscription?

It could reduce the cost of your membership fee and certainly helps the Network, by reducing administrative overheads. Please be sure to ask your bank to use your *WHN reference number*, which can be found by logging in to your account at www.womenshistorynetwork.org.

Has your email address changed? If we don't have your current details, you may not receive the monthly e-newsletter, included in your membership fee. If you have changed email addresses since joining, or recently acquired a new email address, please update your details by logging into your account at www.womenshistorynetwork.org OR by emailing the membership secretary.

All information (or queries) about membership, including requests to set up a payment by standing order and changes to personal details, can be arranged by logging in to your account at www.womenshistorynetwork.org OR by emailing membership@womenshistorynetwork.org OR by mail to Dr Henrice Altink, WHN Membership Secretary, Dept of History, University of York, Heslington, York YO10 5DD.

The lesbian monster in Spanish *fantaterror* films

Alex Melero

University Carlos III, Madrid

There is hardly anyone whose sexual life, if it were broadcast, would not fill the world at large with surprise and horror.

W. Somerset Maugham

This article studies the representation of sexual minorities in Spanish films made between 1970 and 1979 and focuses on lesbian sexualities. In order to do so, a selection of films made during this period will be examined, analysing the emergent trends in filmmaking in recent Spanish history and how these new cinematic discourses on sexuality coexisted with older Francoist tendencies. It will show how the creation of sexual narrative was shaped by a society that was experiencing crucial changes in sex, social values and politics, and how cinema was both a consequence of these new sexual discourses and an instrument for their expression. The analysis of particular films and filmmakers is framed within a theoretical and historical context; this illuminates the sexual politics of the time and its representation on celluloid. Many of the films that are studied here have never been written about before; similarly, they have long ceased to be in circulation. This article therefore aims to make an important contribution to the construction of historical awareness in the context of post-dictatorship cinema in Spain.

Its theoretical framework functions on three levels. This has been vital for this article as it analyses the sexual discourse (Foucauldian theories on discourse, Francoist theories on homosexuality) of a specific time (historical and archival research and theory) in a specific medium (film theory). This means that theories on discourse and sexuality are applied in order to analyse Francoist theories on and around homosexuality. Historical and archival research and theory relating to the period of the Transition are of central importance in this effort. There is also reliance to a great extent on film theory appropriate to the study of the cinematic medium. This includes Robin Wood for the theorisation of the creation of fear in film language, as well as feminist film critics such as Paula Webster, Patricia White and Caroline Sheldan. It has been crucial to integrate the historical sources of the time with the different levels of theory, juxtaposing Francoist theories on sexual minorities with Michel Foucault's works and with relevant film theory. The aim of this article is to explore the emergence of sexual discourses that were very dependent upon the past, and hence the refiguring of sexual politics, through selected film narratives. In so doing, issues of agency and intentionality in the context of films arise. This is particularly so with regard to popular filmmakers who developed very personal film texts which were nevertheless clearly dependent upon Francoist ideology and earlier fascist cinema. Film scholars, such

as Tatjana Pavlovic, have indeed raised such questions and much of the ground covered in this article paves the way for future research on these topics. This article is, however, limited to uncovering the ways in which sexual discourses emerge from selected films.

There are three different sections: the first introduces the presence of lesbianism in Spanish film history to show how the first representations of lesbians can be found in horror films; the second analyses such representations; the third focuses on the film *Las vampiras/ Vampyros Lesbos/ 'The Lady Vampires'*, a case study that includes the main characteristics of these representations.

Lesbianism and Spanish film history

There are very few lesbian characters in pre-democratic Spanish cinema. Critics such as Álvarez Lechón have interpreted the existence of ambiguous characters as an early and hidden portrayal of lesbianism. Such is the case of the independent and unmarried aunt of the protagonist of *Cariño mío/ 'My Darling'* (Rafael Gil, 1961), whose 'masculinity', to use Álvarez Lechón's term, makes him categorise her as 'potentially lesbian'.¹ This reading could also be applied to characters in other films such as *Los maridos no cenan en casa/ 'Husbands Don't Come for Dinner'* (Jerónimo Mihura, 1957), in which the wives of the male characters are sent to a hostel where the unequivocally 'masculine' hostess lectures women on how to forget men and live without them. In the hope, however, that future studies can further explore this underground and hidden presence of lesbian characters, it must be admitted that pre-democratic cinema largely ignored female homosexuality. In this sense, it seems legitimate to argue that Vito Russo's analysis of the representation of lesbianism in American cinema is also applicable to the Spanish one. According to him, 'in celebrating maleness, the rendering invisible of all else has caused lesbianism to disappear behind a male vision of sex in general. The stigma of tomboy has been less than that of sissy because lesbianism is never allowed to become a threatening reality any more than female sexuality of other kinds'.² In Spain, as in Hollywood, the politics of censorship, together with social and commercial factors, rarely allowed the portrayal of female homosexuals.

However, in the early seventies the presence of lesbians and lesbianism in Spanish films proliferated with the arrival of the, officially, more liberal legislation on censorship. The 'New Norms of Censorship' in 1975 and, above all, the so-called 'Real Decreto 3071' on 11 November 1977, which eliminated censorship, made it possible not only to explore sex in pictures but in fact permitted one of the most liberal periods in Spanish film history. The proliferation of lesbian characters can only

be understood in the context of a cinema that demanded the sex that had been forbidden for many years. Lesbians appeared for the first time in Spanish cinema, together with new and then scandalous issues such as adultery, abortion and premarital sex.

The fact that sex on screen became so fashionable made it almost compulsory for a film to have, at least, one erotic sequence. Very often, this eroticism was built upon the suggestion, or explicit showing, of lesbian sex. The extent to which this happened is exemplified in a number of films made in 1975 and onwards, framed under the genre of adventures but in fact with very overt sex. *Kilma, reina de las Amazonas*/ 'Kilma, Queen of the Amazons' (Miguel Iglesias Bonn) was a rather successful film of 1975, set on an exotic island where a shipwrecked sailor arrives to find beautiful and lesbian amazons. Surprisingly, the film is addressed to family audiences and children and was in fact categorised as a 'family' film. The publicity stills and press bills, however, let the viewer guess that sex would play an important part in the film as they feature two semi-naked women fighting, accompanied by the following text: 'a primitive hatred for men ... and a new, incomprehensible, feeling' (Press-book located in Filmoteca Nacional, Madrid). The success of *Kilma* helped in the production of other films included within the exotic adventures genre. Two years later *La isla de las vírgenes ardientes*/ 'The Island of the Flaming Virgins' (Miguel Iglesias Bonns, 1977) pushed the frontiers of lesbian sex even further. This time the publicity stills stressed the lesbian scenes and it was no longer declared a 'family' film but was rated under the 'over 18' category.

By the mid seventies, lesbianism was present in all genres within the Spanish film industry. One particular genre became specialised in the portrayal of this issue: the horror film, an innovative type of film with very little tradition behind it, that would, however, become one of the most successful forms of popular entertainment.

Horror films and lesbianism

One of the most popular genres of the Spanish film industry of the seventies was the horror film. Remembered today as *fantaterror*, this tendency in popular Spanish cinema created a whole industry with its own clichés and star-system in a number of cheaply made films that in many cases became very popular. Filmmakers such as Juan Bosch or León Klimovsky, who had cultivated all sorts of genres, specialised in this national horror that included successful titles such as '*Dr Jeckyll y el hombre lobo*'/ 'Dr Jekyll and the Werewolf' (León Klimovsky, 1972) and *La noche del terror ciego*/ 'The Night of the Blind Horror' (Armando de Ossorio, 1972) (for instance, *Dr Jeckyll y el hombre lobo* had an audience of over 500,000 when it was released and *La noche del terror ciego* was even more successful, with an audience of 784,000). With the gradual liberalisation of Spanish society and the increasingly less rigid censorship, these films incorporated sex as a trait of their unique cosmos. By the early 1980s, sex was to be an important part of these films in titles such as *Los ritos sexuales del Diablo*/ 'The Devil's Sex Rites' (José Ramón

Larraz, 1981) or *Sexo sangriento*/ 'Bloody Sex' (Manuel Esteba, 1981), in which eroticism is mixed proportionally with horror.

Lesbianism appeared frequently in many of these films. Lesbian vampires, brutish dykes or dictatorial housekeepers played with the stereotype of the menacing lesbian and confirmed Vito Russo's assertion that 'the essence of homosexuality as a predatory weakness permeates the depiction of gay characters in horror films'.³ From the men-killer Mircalla in *La novia ensangrentada*/ 'Blood-spattered Bride' (Vicente Aranda, 1972) to the predator Countess Barthory in *El retorno del hombre lobo*/ 'The Return of the Werewolf' (Jacinto Molina, 1980), many of the Spanish horror films of the seventies and early eighties included lesbian characters in their depiction of horror.

Thus, *La noche de Walpurgis*/ 'The Night of Walpurgis' (Leon Klimovsky, 1970) deserves to be considered the first and most influential *fantaterror* movie and reveals the key issues that the genre would later develop, including the use of lesbianism as a frightening narrative device. Although rather timid in its representation, the film presents a female vampire, Wandessa, who is possibly the first lesbian vampire in Spanish film history. She contaminates (to use their words) the beautiful main characters of the film, promising that they will 'enjoy all kinds of pleasures' and causing them problems with their boyfriends. The sexual scenes of possession/biting are shot in darkness and the semi-naked women are not clearly seen, but the lesbianism is as explicit as it would be in later non-censored films. That same year Jesús Franco shot the very successful *El proceso de las brujas*/ 'The Trial of the Witches' (Jesús Franco, 1970), which is a curious case of the so-called *doble versión* cinema (films with altered/extended copies to be shown abroad, normally with more explicit sex). When it came out in May 1971, Spaniards were not able to see the lesbian rituals. A comparison of the original copy with the one available today shows that most of the differences have to do with the representation of lesbianism.

La noche del terror ciego/ 'The Night of the Blind Horror' (Armando de Ossorio, 1971) is another interesting case. This is one of the first cases of explicit lesbianism in a horror film, and also one of the most gratuitous as far as its narrative justification is concerned. Betty, the protagonist, is jealous when her friend Virginia flirts with a man. Virginia consoles her and flirts with her, and the two women kiss (seemingly the first homosexual kiss on screen in Spain). The next sequence shows them younger, looking at the portrait of a married couple. Betty, playing with her hair as if it were a moustache, points to the man and herself, and then points to Virginia and the woman of the picture, and they kiss again. Afterwards, there is no reference at all to this past relationship. Lesbian love appears also in *Una lagartija con piel de mujer*/ 'A Lizard in a Woman's Skin' (Lucio Fulci, 1971). This film tells the story of a woman who is accused of having murdered her beautiful female neighbour. Viewers are meant to believe that she is innocent and the plot follows her in her struggle to prove that she is not guilty, but the surprise ending

reveals that she did in fact kill the woman, who was her lover. Lesbianism is thus the final, surprising, twist of the story.

Susan Martín-Márquez sees *La novia ensangrentada* 'Blood-Spattered Bride' (Vicente Aranda, 1972) as an example of how 'lesbianism perhaps first surfaced onscreen during the late Franco years, tellingly, in horror movies'.⁴ The film tells the story of Susan, who marries the male protagonist of the film (whose name is never revealed) and fears losing her virginity. As the plot develops, spectators are told how Susan dreams of Mircala, an ancestor who killed her despotic husband. Mircala and Susan are spied upon by a man while having sex and the husband is informed ("Do you really know her? They have the same inclinations ... I saw the most disgusting ritual between the two women. I shall not go into details, but let me tell you that Susan is a victim and that she is dangerous, not for me, but for you"). *La novia ensangrentada* is therefore one of the first films portraying lesbians as dangerous to the husband and, implicitly, to the patriarchal society that he personifies. Similarly, *El ojo en la oscuridad* 'The Eye in the Darkness' (Umberto Lenzi, 1975, opened 1977) is a whodunit in which all the suspects are evil. One of them is a lesbian and her lover thinks that she could be the killer as she was in love with the victim but was not loved in return. Again, the copy shown in Spain did not include the sexual scene between the two women (that can be seen in the Italian and British copies), but the lesbian relationship was inferred nevertheless. Another interesting case is *Dios bendiga cada rincón de esta casa* 'God Bless This House' (Chumy Chúmez, 1977). Not strictly a horror film, it tells the story of Saturna, a despotic housekeeper who, as in Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940), adores her former mistress. When she finds some erotic pictures of her boss's new wife and finds out that she has a lover, Saturna first blackmails and later abuses her sexually in a very explicit scene. Interestingly, the publicity for the film mainly displayed some pictures taken out of the abuse scene between the two women. One final interesting example is *El retorno del hombre lobo* 'The Return of the Werewolf' (Jacinto Molina, 1980) in which the lesbian vampire Countess Elizabeth Barthory meets Spain's most famous werewolf, Valdemar, and tries to conquer him for her evil plans. In order to do so, she vampirises his beautiful lover Karin, in addition to many other women. The plot is very similar to that of *Las vampiras*, which will be analysed in depth later, and the spectator is presented, once more, with the story of a heterosexual romance threatened when the woman is converted into a lesbian vampire. Again, only when Barthory dies do all her victims return to their heterosexual and non-vampire state.

Finally, it is important to note that one of the genre's favourite situations was that of the sexual rite of possession and/or sacrifice, normally inserted in the horrifying climax of the film and including lesbian characters more often than not. This narrative convention became so recurrent that a number of films were based exclusively on this, such as *Los ritos sexuales del Diablo* 'The Devil's Sex Rites' (José Ramón Larraz, 1980) or *Macumba sexual*

'Sexual Curse' (Jesús Franco, 1983). Other horror films including these rites are: *La llamada del vampiro* 'The Vampire Calls' (José María Elorrieta, 1972), *El gran amor del conde Drácula* 'Count Dracula's Great Love' (Javier Aguirre, 1972, opened in 1975), *El espanto surge de la tumba* 'Horror comes from the Grave' (Carlos Aured, 1973) and *Exorcismo* 'Exorcism' (Juan Bosch, 1975).

The Spanish *fantaterror* films were not the first to make use of lesbianism as a tool of fear. In fact, the history of lesbians in horror films is a long one and dates back to the years of the silent movies and is not restricted to Spain. Film theorists and critics have analysed this phenomenon for many decades and many readings have been applied. One of the most influential theorists has been Patricia White, who has traced the ghostly presence of lesbianism in classical Hollywood films such as *The Haunting* (Robert Wise, 1963), in which 'the disruptive force of lesbian desire' is used and manipulated in order to provoke horror amongst viewers. By doing so, the film 'transforms homosexuality into homophobia – replacing sexuality with fear'.⁵ White reaches the conclusion that it is not homosexuality that produces fear but the reactionary portrayal of it (that is, homophobia) which destabilises the viewer. Ellis Hanson's essay, 'Lesbians who bite', explains how the vampire myth works on the basis that 'lesbian desire often functions as a destabilising, derailing force in the paranoid narrative that seeks to demonize and condemn it'.⁶ 'The vampire lesbian', Hanson explains, 'partakes of a long narrative tradition of the gothic in which homosexuality is always the unspeakable that is nevertheless spoken in a nightmarish fit of panic and horror. In this tradition, the lesbian is represented as spectral, demonic, brutal, unnatural, murderous, pathological, perverse and a real bitch to the husband and kids'.⁷ This helps to explain why in many of the horror films listed earlier, a lesbian character appears in the climatic horrifying moment, destabilising and disturbing the spectator and fulfilling therefore his/her expectations to experience fear. Like a werewolf, vampire or deformed hunchback, the mere presence of the lesbian seems to be enough to shock the audience.

In the hope that future studies can develop the list of representations of lesbianism in Spanish horror films, and their analysis, it can be admitted that the proliferation of homosexuality in horror films is a key aspect in order to understand the sexual discourses of Spanish early democratic cinema. In the following analysis of Jesús Franco's *Las vampiras*, these classic ideas will be developed, taking into account the particular characteristics of the Spanish context in order to explain how the horror genre used the popular and official conceptions of lesbianism as a narrative device in order to create horror.

The lesbian monster in Jesús Franco's *Las vampiras*

One of the most notable directors in the horror genre was Jesús Franco (Madrid, 1936). Producer, actor, musician and scriptwriter, his filmography includes, at least, 190 different films, some of them under a

pseudonym. He specialised in horror and erotic films, working inside and outside Spain, but cultivated other genres as well.

The study of Franco's filmography is a difficult task; some of his films are lost and unavailable in the market and even in the Spanish Film Institutes. A few copies of some films are in the possession of private collectors; such tapes are presumably altered versions of the original film. A significant number of his films are in different versions, with variations in contents and length. Some films were recycled into others, not to mention the fact that in each country the copies that were shown were different. Other films were released several times, modified on every occasion. Those released on television also differ from the standard copies in the Spanish Film Institute (Filmoteca). For the study of *Las vampiras*, this article uses the longest available version, re-released by Franco himself in 2003, taking into account that part of the material of this film was not seen in Spain until recent years.

Lesbianism was, and is still today, one of Jesús Franco's major obsessions: it appears in Franco's latest digital films such as *Paula-Paula* (2010) and *La cripta de las malditas* 'The Vault' (2008). Since his early films, lesbian relationships and sex were presented as, and often constituted, the *leitmotif* of the film. Unable to deal with Spanish censorship in the film industry, Jesús Franco went into exile and found the freedom his films required, and consequently lesbianism was shown in a less ambiguous way. In the 1970s, back in Spain, he specialised in erotic films without neglecting the horror genre in which he was an expert. Male and, above all, female homosexuality are primary elements in both his erotic and horror films.

A study of his pre-1970s *oeuvre* shows how lesbianism had already been a recurrent element in his films, as Pavlovic's seminal study has proved.⁸ Thus, in the whodunit *Venus in Furs* (1969) the killers turn out to be a lesbian, a sadist and a necrophiliac, meaning it contains possibly the first murderous lesbian in Jesús Franco's filmography. In *Los ojos siniestros del doctor Orloff* 'Dr Orloff's Sinister Eyes' (1972), Dr Orloff, one of Franco's recurrent characters, is hired by two evil sisters who are lesbians and share an incestuous relationship. In *Caged Women* (1975), Franco returns to a constant motif in his portrayal of lesbians: the brutal governor of a penitentiary. They are normally cruel and sadomasochistic characters who abuse the heroines of the films. They can also be seen in *Mujeres en el campo de concentración* 'Women in the Concentration Camp' (1976) and *Ilsa, the wicked warden* (1977), as well as in



Poster advertising 'Venus in Furs'

Furia en el Trópico / 'Tropical Fury' (1983), also catalogued as *Mujeres encarceladas* / 'Women behind Bars'.

As for the films Jesús Franco made during the Transition to democracy, most of them include references to gays and lesbians in some way or another. They are very often the villains of the films and their homosexuality is normally a problematic and destabilising issue. One of the most negative portrayals of a lesbian character in Franco's works is provided by his film *Blue Rita* (1977), a film in which everyone seems to be both homosexual and evil. *Diario íntimo de una ninfómana* 'The Private Diary of a Nymphomaniac' (1977) tells the story of Linda, who works in a nightclub as a dancer and has lesbian relationships onstage, as well as offstage. Very interestingly, *Cecilia*

(1980) presents lesbianism as a positive practice that saves Cecilia's monotonous marriage. *Gemidos de placer* 'Sighs of Pleasure' (1981) represents an interesting twist in the role of the lesbian. It tells the story of a man, Antonio, who wants to use his lover, Julia, in order to drive his wife, Martine, crazy. Antonio does not expect that Martine and Julia will feel sexual interest for each other, thus providing erotic scenes for the spectator and punishment of Antonio's chauvinism.

If the earlier portrayal of homosexuality seen in 'Sighs of Pleasure' could be read as positive (two lesbians taking revenge upon the tyranny of a chauvinist husband), in *Confesiones íntimas de una exhibicionista* 'Private Confessions' (1982) Franco goes back to erroneous ideas about homosexuality and tells the story of a woman who becomes addicted to sex (and starts having homosexual relationships) when she finds out that the man she loves is gay. Jesús Franco's explanation of lesbianism in this film coincides with that provided by Antonio Sabater, a legislator on homosexuality under Francoism, for whom lesbianism was caused by the shock provoked by exposure to an act of sexual perversion. The causes of female homosexuality were many and varied according to Sabater, but most of them had to do with traumatic events that made women feel 'a deep disgust towards men', which leads them to 'homosexual practices'.⁹ He cites Pérez Arilés, a prominent judge, to conclude that 'an unfortunate experience with the opposite sex [and] the need for affection and protection' can make women homosexuals.¹⁰

Las vampiras (1970, opened in 1974), one of Jesús Franco's most successful films, provides an excellent example of his portrayals of lesbianism in horror films. It is no surprise that the alternative title for the film is *Vampyros lesbos*, as the plot freely conflates lesbianism with vampirism. It was a very popular film when it came out and is now considered a cult film by many. The reason for this success can be attributed to the presence of the star Soledad Miranda, but also to its effective plot, which is far more elaborate than the average in the genre and was written by Franco himself, with the collaboration of the prestigious filmmaker Jaime Chávarri.

Freely based on Bram Stoker's *Jonathan Harker* (1906), it tells the story of a woman, Alice, whose life changes when a female vampire seduces her. The film starts with the performance of an erotic lesbian show that disturbs Alice, who watches it with her boyfriend Omar on holiday in Istanbul. After the show Alice confesses to her psychologist how she has been experiencing strange nightmares about a woman who possesses her. That night Alice, guided by a supernatural force, visits Countess Nadia, the woman of whom she used to dream. The Countess poisons Alice's drink so that she falls asleep. When Alice wakes up, Nadia seduces her naked; after making love, Nadia bites Alice's neck. The next sequence introduces us to another character, a woman who has become a lesbian and a vampire after a possession and is now schizophrenic. She explains to the audience the danger of Nadia: 'that being comes from the darkness, searching for new victims. She is horrifying and attractive

at the same time'.

Nadia and Alice go on meeting in dreams in which they make love and drink blood. In the meantime, Omar is getting very pale and sick, because Alice sucks his blood without him noticing. When Alice and Omar visit the doctor, he tells Alice that she has been possessed and that it is not Omar who is in danger but herself. Although the doctor promises to help Alice, he is in fact interested in contacting the vampires in order to gain their secret of eternal youth but when he finally meets Nadia she tells him that she is not interested in him and kills him. Omar goes back to the cabaret of the first scene and sees another show in which two women dance naked and then one bites the other's neck. Omar then realises the danger Alice is in and, advised by the schizophrenic woman, goes to Nadia's palace. There he finds Alice, who has killed Nadia and freed her (and herself) forever. "It wasn't a dream", Alice says, "I've lived it. People talk about nightmares and realities, as if they were not the same thing. But you and I, Nadia, know it. I will never be able to forget you". Omar and Alice, in love once more, leave Istanbul.

Las vampiras is more a film about lesbianism than about vampirism. The way the plot is constructed suggests that the real fear of the film and the real problem Alice has to face is not the monster of the vampire but the monster of the lesbian. As Elizabeth Baines argues,

Our conventional Western plot follows the linear conflict-crisis-resolution pattern, with its roots in the ideal plot defined by Aristotle in the *Poetics* as having a beginning, a middle and an end ... A classic story begins with a situation in which there is potential for conflict, but in which nothing has so far happened to set that conflict off ... Then something happens (the catalyst: equivalent to Aristotle's beginning) ... to disrupt the *status quo* ... Once the catalyst has taken effect, there is usually a build-up of conflict and tension, a series of scenes or moments in which matters complicate, and culminating in a crisis (the equivalent of Aristotle's middle)... followed, often very quickly afterwards, by a resolution (Aristotle's end).¹¹

The plot of *Las vampiras* clearly follows such a conflict-crisis-resolution classic pattern, only this time the catalyst is that Alice is raped and then seduced by Nadia, a lesbian vampire. Omar and Alice's *status quo* is disrupted by Nadia, providing a conflict usually found in Jesús Franco's films: the heterosexual couple threatened by the homosexuality of one of its members.

One of the most interesting arguments on the construction of the narrative discourse of horror in film is that provided by Robin Wood.¹² His account of the production of the feeling of panic in cinema is not far from Baines's analysis of the Aristotelian narrative structure. According to Wood, most horror films build their frightening potential on three interrelated variables: Normality, the Other and the relationship between the two. Normality is defined by the heterosexual patriarchy of the capitalist system and is

opposed to the otherness normally embodied in the figure of the monster. Although the monster can be understood as political and/or ideological, but also ethnic or racial, they frequently adopt the figure of the sexual Other and, more often than not, their purpose is to disrupt the romance of the heterosexual heroes. The crisis of the narrative pattern exposed above (or Aristotle's middle) in such horror films arises from the conflict produced by the relations and tensions between normality and the other. Thousands of popular horror films for all periods follow such a pattern: in the *Friday 13th* series (1980s and 1990s) the psychopath surprises and kills teenagers before or while they have sex; Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963) proposes a romance interrupted by the unexplained presence of an aggressive nature; in *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973) a woman sees their family nucleus threatened when her daughter is possessed by the Devil. The list is endless and undoubtedly includes *Las vampiras*, which clearly adapts such narrative *schema*: Alice and Omar (the Normality) see their stability in danger when Nadia (the Other) appears. This is the conflict of the film, which is only resolved when Alice kills Nadia and goes back to Omar.

The frightening portrayal of lesbians as predatory people works effectively in the film because it is taken from the social, legal and even medical context of the time. During late Francoism, homosexuals were generally considered predators whose sickness was contagious. Two different pieces of legislation prosecuted homosexuality: first the *Ley de vagos y maleantes* and, from 1970 to 1979, the *Ley de Peligrosidad* ('Law of Danger'). The judge, Vivas Marzal insisted on the danger of its expansion, while Antonio Sabater explained that the predatory intentions of homosexuals 'eventually led to assassinations'.¹³ Another jurist, Pérez Argilés, compared 'sexual inversion' with tuberculosis, considering homosexuality 'even more contagious'.¹⁴ Their texts prove how very often the legal and scientific justification of the danger caused by homosexuals in Franco's Spain was based upon the presumed contagious capacity of the so-called 'illness',¹⁵ as well as its 'destabilising potential for society',¹⁶ which led to imprisonment for scandal.

The way *Las vampiras* uses lesbianism coincides with such a view. Princess Nadia belongs to a race of vampires who need to attract victims and, by doing so, convert them into monsters like themselves. When Nadia bites Alice, she becomes a vampire, and a lesbian too. This is exactly the idea that Saumench, a doctor in the Court of Barcelona in the department of Social Danger, explained when he was interviewed about the danger of homosexuality: 'the homosexual tends to proselytise. When homosexual people discover their condition, it is as if they become the member of a religious sect or a political party, and therefore tend to look for other addicts, to capture other people ... The danger of homosexuality is not in the homosexual acts themselves, but in that proselytism. And this, when it affects teenagers and young people, who are not still sure about their sexual orientation, can become an extremely complicated danger, as it can drag them to an unsatisfactory situation since ... homosexuality, after all, leads to failure and reduces social adaptation'.¹⁷

Saumench's predictions do take place in *Las vampiras*. Alice becomes a lesbian and a vampire after Nadia makes love to her and bites her neck, just as Nadia had also been converted. In her palace, Nadia explains her conversion as follows: "it was a warm night and the windows were open. I could not sleep, troubled by sensual feelings. I still remember: I felt something that was like wings, and then she was in front of me. Her gaze had a mysterious power. She opened her mouth and her smile revealed two sharp fangs, approaching my neck, making me feel an indescribable pain and pleasure. I could feel how she was taking over my soul and my strength ... I was losing my life, but was happy". Like Alice, Nadia was attracted by a force that repulsed her while it gave her pleasure. Alice confesses that she does "things that I don't want to do, as if a superior force invaded me" but, at the same time, cannot help feeling happy: "I don't know who that woman is, no matter how hard I try, I cannot recollect her face. I fear and desire at the same time, anxiously waiting for the night to come so that I can dream of that face, to live in my sleep that amazing anger that covers me like a spider web, to feel the joy of meeting her ... Night after night, she calls me, and when I listen to her I feel panic. But, and this is the strangest thing, I desire the whisper of her voice, it attracts me like an animal who is fascinated by the eyes of a snake".

The metaphor of the vampire works perfectly in the context of the horror film. Nadia, like Dr. Saumench's lesbians, predates on victims who, at the same time, will be predators for future vampires in a never-ending chain of horror. Being a vampire/lesbian consumes the individual with sorrow and remorse, even though they may feel pleasure from it. Saumench, being a doctor and a jurist, reflected nothing but popular ideas on lesbianism, and so does *Las vampiras*. Likewise, Francisco José Íñigo's book, *Homosexuales y lesbianas*, published as late as 1978, alerts parents to the danger of lesbianism owing to its predatory features as follows:

Let us picture this: an inexperienced young lady is the object of the attentions of a lesbian, and starts getting presents from her, invitations which imply spending the night together ... When they are alone, the lesbian starts kissing and hugging her friend, and the young lady may not find anything strange about it. Perhaps, the will to be pleasant and nice can move her to allow the lesbian's caresses. Afterwards, the surprising moment shall come, when the kisses and caresses have a deeper meaning. But it will be too late. The lesbian has touched the feelings of the young lady, and she will be her prey, answering to her demands.¹⁸

This advice is not followed by Alice, who, to her own surprise, surrenders to Nadia's powers. The fear some spectators may have experienced when watching *Las vampiras* is built on the fear many parents and children may have suffered because of the ideas about lesbianism conveyed by such documents as those referred to above.

According to Michel Foucault, certain societies have created the figure of the monster as a category that copes with the 'Other', an otherness that is often based on sexual criteria. This category is explained by Foucault as the sum of three types that characterise the monster: the human monster ('a juridical category that refers not only to social laws but to natural laws as well'), the individual to be corrected (who 'asserts the need to correct, to improve, to lead to repentance, to restore to "better feelings"') and the so-called Onanist, a figure born in the eighteenth century, which is representative of the new importance given to the body and to health and appeared in connection with the new relations between sexuality and family organisation.¹⁹ The combination of these three elements (the anti-social monster, the helpless individual pleading for correction and the potentially dangerous sexual body) makes the figure of a new *persona*, the abnormal, derive from the juridico-legislative exceptionality of the monster; what it actually produces is a monster-borne category able to cope with sexual otherness. And once that 'Other' has been categorised as an abnormal monster, it is not difficult to elaborate a complex web of dangers that he or she can bring. The monster possesses a contagious monstrosity and represents a danger for the society that categorised him/her as a monster. Foucault analyses the construction of madness as the deviant or morally 'other' and as a social danger in terms of rationality. As McNay puts it, 'in so far as madness was regarded as a specific manifestation of unreason, it was a shameful phenomenon to be concealed because of the threat it presented to rationality through the production of contagious examples of transgression and immorality'.²⁰ References in this article prove the extent to which the legal and scientific justification of the danger brought by homosexuals in Franco's Spain was based upon the presumed contagious capacity of the so-called illness (homosexuality was equalled to tuberculosis in several medical texts), as well as its destabilising potential for society (the 'Social Danger' law dictated imprisonment for scandal).

All three Foucauldian patterns are seen in the monsters of *Las vampiras*, as the analysis has proved. Jesús Franco's lesbian vampires, like Foucault's human monsters, defy social and natural laws as well, spreading their evil as if it were contagious. The notion of the dangerous individual that Foucault associates with the human monster is put into words in *Las vampiras* by the doctor when he explains to Alice that not only is her life in danger, but also her boyfriend's. Alice, remorseful, confesses: "I know that my problem is above normal medicine". Like the individual to be corrected, they are imprisoned and driven out from society in the hope that their vampirism (and the lesbianism it carries with it) will disappear. Like the Onanist, their danger is expressed through their sex; lesbianism is brought by vampirism, but it is not a mere cause of it, it is in fact its ultimate punishment and danger. Alice's vampirism destroys her life through lesbianism when she destroys Omar by sucking his blood and prefers Nadia for her sexual life. Her stability and happiness are in danger not because she is a vampire but because she is a lesbian. The film has

placed Alice's body and sexuality, like the Onanist's, at the root of her problems.

Conclusion

Spanish *fantaterror* films include the first important representations of lesbianism in Spanish film history and contribute to questioning the ideological content of this first lesbian cinematographic discourse of the democracy. They confirm the feminist concern with the use of lesbianism in male-orientated cinema and also its contradictory use in horror cinema. As Edith Becker put it,

The most explicit vision of lesbianism has been left to pornography, where the lesbian loses her menace and becomes a turn-on. Men maintain control over women by creating the fantasy images of women that they need. [They] control and use lesbianism by defining it purely as a form of genital sexuality that, by being watched, can thereby be recuperated into male fantasy.²¹

The refiguring of the sexual discourse around lesbians that cinema experienced during the Transition to democracy was also controlled by male directors. Foucault showed a deep interest in the presentation of non-conventional sexualities that shaped new sexual discourses to argue that repression has complex net-like ways of expanding its creative potential. With reference to the nineteenth-century concern with homosexuality, he wondered:

What does the appearance of all these peripheral sexualities signify? Is the fact that they could appear in broad daylight a sign that the code had become more lax? Or does the fact that they were given so much attention testify to a stricter regime and to its concern to bring them under close supervision? In terms of repression, things are unclear.²²

The horror films of the Transition to democracy bear testament to the appearance of peripheral sexualities in narrative cinema, as they signify the first representation in broad light of lesbianism. This fact makes these films a most valid example of the debate promoted by feminist critics who have remarked how the conventional patriarchal gaze has monopolised the representation of lesbianism and 'colonialised' (to use Dworkin's famous word²³) the lesbian, while it has also offered the possibility of exposing novel and sometimes transgressive forms of sex and 'demystify[ing] a number of sexual practices that have been taboo for women'.²⁴ For, no matter how horrifying lesbianism is in films such as *Las vampiras*, the fact is that the film narrative also presents it as desirable (even if the ending denies lesbianism the chance to survive). The figure of the lesbian was used prolifically in the cinema of the Transition to democracy; the ideological apparatus of these narratives depended upon Francoist doctrines, and was always sexually exploitative and appropriated by male directors. These films have therefore contributed

to shaping the contemporary sexual discourse on sexual minorities, and their narratives were influenced by these emerging discourses too. Thus, the emergence of this sexual narrative discourse of the lesbian, like that of the Foucauldian medical texts, 'should be seen rather as a dispersion of centers from which discourses emanated, a diversification of their forms, and the complex deployment of the network connecting them'.²⁵ Beyond their ideological content, they were the first approaches to a sexual minority and the first steps towards the construction of a new sexual discourse for lesbianism. I would like to think that the films analysed in this article are examples of a cinema that is very far and different from, or even opposite to, today's narratives and I therefore believe that film scholars and historians should pay attention to them and take them as a shortcut to our recent past. They are an accurate way of getting to know the history of sexual discourses in Spain and maybe also learning what a film should not be like. If only for this, the study of these films is worthwhile.

(This article is part of a research project: 'Los medios audiovisuales en la transición española (1975-1985): las imágenes del cambio democrático' (CSO2009-09291), Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación, Gobierno de España.)

Notes

1. Manuel Álvarez Lechón, *La sala oscura: guía del cine gay español y latinoamericano* (Madrid, Nuer, 2001), 13.
2. Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet* (New York, Harper & Row, 1987), 5.
3. *Ibid.*, 49.
4. Susan Martin-Márquez, *Feminist Discourse and Spanish Cinema* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), 247.
5. Patricia White, 'Female Spectator, Lesbian Specter: The Haunting', in *Inside/Out. Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (London, Routledge, 1991), 161.
6. Ellis Hanson, ed., *Out Takes: Essays on Queer Theory and Film* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 1999), 184.
7. *Ibid.*, 193.
8. Tatjana Pavlovic, *Despotic Bodies and Transgressive Bodies: Spanish Culture from Francisco Franco to Jesús Franco* (Albany, State of New York University Press, 2003).
9. Antonio Sabater, *Gamberros, homosexuales, vagos y maleantes* (Barcelona, Editorial Hispanoeuropea, 1962), 200-201.
10. *Ibid.*, 221.
11. Elizabeth Baines, 'Innovative Fiction and the Novel', in *The Creative Writing Handbook*, ed. John Singleton and Mary Luckhurst (London, MacMillan, 2000), 144.
12. Robin Wood, *Hollywood: from Vietnam to Reagan* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986), 79-81.
13. Luis Vivas Marzal and Eduardo Molero Massa, *Contemplación jurídico-penal de la homosexualidad: discurso de ingreso en la Academia Valenciana de Jurisprudencia y Legislación, pronunciado por D. Luis*

Vivas Marzal el día 26 de noviembre de 1963, contestación por Don Eduardo Molero Massa (Valencia, Academia Valenciana de Jurisprudencia y Legislación, 1963), 180.

14. Valentín Pérez Argilés, *Sesión inaugural del discurso académico celebrado el día 25 de enero de 1959 con un 'Discurso sobre la homosexualidad'* (Zaragoza, La Academia, 1955), 26.

15. Sabater, *Gamberros, homosexuales, vagos y maleantes*, 181.

16. Vivas Marzal, *Contemplación jurídico-penal*, 31.

17. Gimeno Saumench, 'Ley de Peligrosidad Social', in *Los homosexuales frente a la ley. Los juristas opinan*, ed. Victoriano Domingo Lorén (Esplugas de Llobregat, Barcelona, Plaza & Janés, 1978), 182.

18. Francisco José Íñigo (Franklin Ingmar pseudonym), *Homosexuales y lesbianas* (Pinto, Madrid, Andina D. L., 1997), 66-7.

19. Michel Foucault, 'The Abnormals', in *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault Volume 1, 1954-1984. Ethics*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London, Penguin, 1997 [1975]), 31.

20. Lois McNay, *Foucault: a Critical Introduction* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994), 29.

21. Edith Becker, *et al.*, 'Lesbians and Film', in *Out in Culture (Lesbian and Gay Studies)*, ed. Corey K. Creekmur and Alexander Doty (Durham, Duke University Press, 1999), 27.

22. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol.1, An Introduction* (London, Penguin, 1975, [1990]), 40.

23. Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (London, Women's Press, 1981).

24. Paula Webster, 'Pornography and Pleasure', in *Caught Looking: Feminism, Pornography and Censorship*, ed. Kate Ellis *et al.* (New York, Caught Looking, 1986), 35.

25. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 34.

Conferences, Calls for Papers, Events, Prizes, News, Notices, Publishing Opportunities ...

All of the above can be found in the WHN electronic

Newsletter

The WHN Newsletter, which will be emailed to members monthly, enables us to keep you up-to-date with news, conferences and other events concerning women's history.

The Newsletter also provides a more frequent forum for publicising your events and informing members about other activities and projects.

To advertise in the WHN Newsletter, please email its editor, Jane Berney, at:

newsletter@womenshistorynetwork.org

To download current and back issues visit the Newsletter pages at

www.womenshistorynetwork.org

Ten years on: reflections on the *Women's History Magazine*

Deborah Simonton

University of Southern Denmark

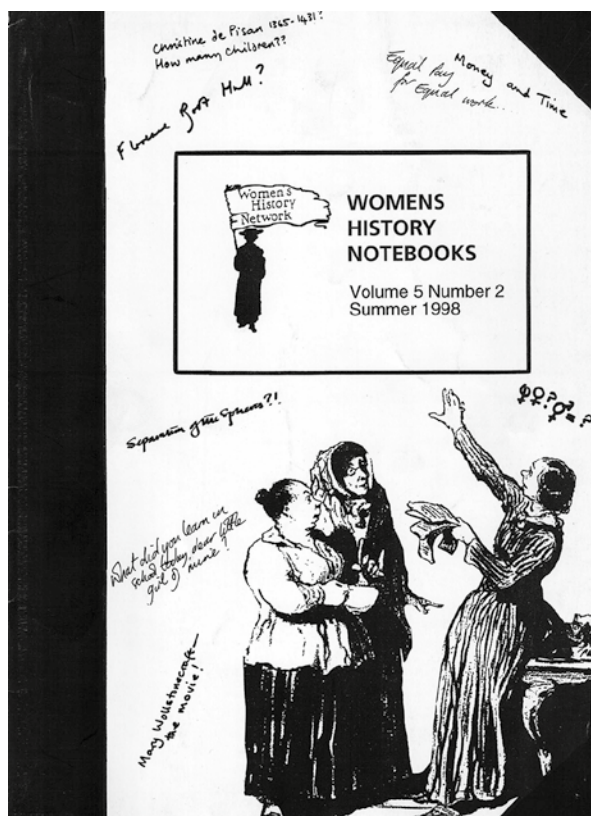
This issue of the *Women's History Magazine* marks the close of our tenth year of operation in the magazine format. Launched during the tenth anniversary of the Women's History Network, it replaced the *Notebooks* that had been a significant feature of the Network's early days. Initially the *Magazine* also incorporated the items that had comprised the *Newsletter*, bringing together the two publications of the Network. From the outset, the *Magazine* aimed to build on its predecessor while adopting a magazine format, which included long and short pieces, allowed space for reviews and other sorts of historical information and discussion, while retaining responsible historical writing. It was never meant as another academic journal, although it adopted peer review from the beginning, for the standing and credibility which peer review entails. It aimed to include two or three longer articles and one or two shorter ones, plus reviews, notices, reports and other relevant information. When the Network launched the *Magazine*, it hoped to provide accessible, informative and interesting material for our very wide readership with their array of backgrounds, interests and relation to the academic world. It was hoped to provide a space for anyone to bring material to the *Magazine*, to be able to give advice on writing and presentation and to bring new research to the readership. The magazine format, with illustrations and shorter pieces, was intended precisely to break up the text and to augment the articles,

while the addition of notices and reports was part of the process of keeping the membership informed.

The first issue was indicative of this approach. Following on from the Tenth Annual Conference of the Network, it included articles by Jane Rendall, based on her plenary presentation: 'Women's History in Britain, Past, Present and Future: Gendered Boundaries?' and by Lynn Abrams, looking at women's history in Scotland: 'Gendering Scottish History: An Agenda for Change'. Jo Stanley contributed a piece on 'Getting Women's History Published', and there were reports on an educational history research project, on women's history in Lithuania, book reviews and conference reports. The first editorial team, Heloise Brown, Elaine Chalus and I, addressed the readers in the editorial:

We hope you enjoy our new look, and that you, our members, will respond to the debates presented in this issue: in addition to research articles, we encourage feedback or comment pieces on any subject of relevance to women's history.

This has been a difficult line to maintain, and at times, the editors have found that they were dealing with several long, carefully researched and admittedly 'dense' submissions, rather than the more accessible ones we aimed for. The team has experienced periods of drought as well as times



Original notebook format from 1998, and an early magazine format from 2002

of plenty; with articles that needed a great deal of help and others that were immaculately produced. Some have had to be rejected, but far more were helped during the editorial process to make it to the published stage. The editors and publisher have also had some 'interesting' moments with foreign languages and foreign scripts, with m-dashes and n-dashes, with tables and graphs and with 'innovative' writing styles, such as history written as poetry.

The *Magazine* has changed over the years, as well. Initially we dated the *Magazine*, i.e. February, May and October, very quickly learning that we were far more likely to hit deadlines if we called the issues: Spring, Summer and Autumn! For a short time, the Steering Committee reluctantly pulled it back to two issues a year, but it was swiftly restored to its regular three issues, since everyone involved recognised how important it is to the membership and to the public face of the Network. Since its inception, the internet has played a role in shaping the *Magazine*. The creation of the Women's History Network website (www.womenshistorynetwork.org) allowed some material to migrate to the web, as well as giving the *Magazine* a public space to promote its back issues, encourage submissions, give access to the guidelines and provide a record of its content. Thus, the editors have noted a much wider range of submissions, from further afield, while purchase of back issues has increased. This latter has probably been assisted by the fact that the *Magazine* was invited to be included in the EBSCO database, therefore widening its visibility further.¹ The internet also fostered a move to an e-newsletter, which meant there was more space in the *Magazine* for articles and reviews, since the editors had been struggling with overcrowding. Also, many items had become out of date by the time of publication.

The e-newsletter resolved these issues and gave both forms of communication more vibrancy and flexibility.

The structure has shifted somewhat, partly as a result of the changes mentioned above, but also because the editors have constantly been aware of the need to keep the *Magazine* interesting and responsive to the different facets of women's history. It has published articles that focused on 'gender', as opposed to simply recovering women's history. The editors also introduced an 'occasional' section overtly about recovering women's lives, called 'Reclaiming Women's Histories'. This was initiated when the editorial team received a lovely piece by Vivienne Barker about Edmonde Robert, a French schoolteacher who had been a resistance fighter, 'A Half-forgotten Heroine: Edmonde Robert' (50, Summer 2005). We have continued to receive the occasional 'debate' article, such as Joy Bone's short piece about the memorial to women in World War II in Whitehall (55, Spring 2007). It has allowed authors to publish work in progress, or shorter pieces that might not be suitable (or long enough) for an academic journal. The summer issue has frequently been a conference issue, based on the previous year's WHN conference, though sometimes the conference submissions have migrated to other issues of the *Magazine*. Periodically, the editors have combined articles submitted into 'themed' issues, like Spring 2007, which celebrated 'Women and Culture', or have solicited articles for a special issue, such as the Spring 2011 issue on Nursing History.

The editors have always been volunteers, most starting as members of the WHN Steering Committee, and a link to the Committee has always been deliberately maintained. Initially there were three editors, and no



Updated look in 2006/2007

formal system for getting the *Magazine* produced. Heloise Brown undertook the DTP (desktop publishing: text preparation for printing) on the first issue and I did the second one. Initially we decided to use the poster for the forthcoming conference as the cover picture, but this was confusing and limiting and so was dropped after two years. A significant change has been the ability to use far more colour. For a time the DTP was linked to the WHN administrator, but it became clear that the skills required to produce a more professional product were not the usual skill set held by an administrative assistant. We moved to professional software and turned to a professional (but fortunately a member and editor) as our publisher, Claire Jones of Jones5 Publishing. Her research and sourcing of printers has enabled the shift to full-colour, especially on the front cover, which has enhanced the image of the *Magazine* considerably as has her work to ensure we are getting good quality reproduction at the right price. This link with Claire has had numerous benefits, but one of the more interesting is that she and the WHM editors have often referred authors to each other, so that some submissions to *HerStoria*, edited by Claire, have moved to the *Women's History Magazine*, and others have moved the other way.

As editors' own lives and careers moved on, editors changed and the team began to work to develop more robust systems.² Thus, the editorial team increased so that instead of three editors doing it all, the *Magazine* is now produced by seven: a Lead Editor, Book Review Editor, Web Manager (for the internal website), Peer Review Editor, Committee Liaison, Advertising Manager as well as a deputy shadowing the Lead Editor with a view to taking on this role. Better distribution of tasks across a larger editorial team has helped share the load, and produce a more carefully edited *Magazine*. At the same time, the team worked to produce clear guidelines for contributors³ and created a working internal web-based database for managing submissions, reviews and other content and several internal documents for deadlines, editing and policy. We have evolved a strategy for retirement from the *Magazine*. It has been difficult in the past for editors to step down, such as the pressure of the editorial work and the demands of 'getting up to speed' for new team members. But with a larger team, clearer tasks and deadlines and a planned programme of retirement, this should become easier in the future. No longer does anyone have to feel they are 'letting the team down' by leaving.

These reflections and comments are completely personal, though I have tried to give a straightforward view of the way the *Magazine* has moved over the years. They are personal, because this issue also marks my retirement from the *Magazine*. I shall miss the joy of receiving exciting and interesting submissions, of reading history I would otherwise have been unaware of and of dealing with authors wishing to improve their pieces and their delight with their publication. Some of my favourites have included the 'reclamation' on Edmonde Robert, mentioned above, for its story and sense of humanity. Nancy Rosoff and Stephanie Spencer's article on girls' novels and lessons in femininity, 'Teenage Fiction, 1910-

1960' (62, Spring 2010) is not only an innovative piece of research – but also I cannot forget their double-act rendition at the WHN conference in Oxford. Anna Cremer's article on dollhouses, 'Utopia in Small Scale' (63, Summer 2010) made me think about self-identity and presentation. Nina Koefoed on 'From Sinner to Parent: the regulation of non-marital sex in Denmark in the eighteenth century' (66, Summer 2011) and Barbara N. Wiesinger on 'Women's Armed Resistance in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945' (60, Summer 2009) are both fascinating pieces of research of which we may know little; both were also beautifully prepared and a pleasure to work with. Katie Barclay's short piece, 'Family Legacies' (61, Autumn 2009) was a model 'think' piece of the sort it would be good to see more of. There are many others I enjoyed and many authors I enjoyed encouraging, editing and working with. Most of all, I shall miss the terrific team members with whom I have worked. Their commitment, grace and support for the whole team has been unparalleled. Their sense of humour was a real bonus. So, as I leave, I would like to say thank you. I should also say that I am delighted to be handing over to Katie Barclay who will bring her own inimitable brand of humour and good sense to the role of leading the team.

Notes

1. Members should encourage their institutions where appropriate to ensure the *Magazine* is added to their library subscriptions. WHN gets the institutional membership fee plus a percentage of all downloads.
2. Editors have included, in alphabetical order, Katie Barclay, Heloise Brown, Elaine Chalus, Sue Hawkins, Gerry Holloway, Claire Jones, Ann Kettle, Anne Logan, Juliette Pattinson, Jane Potter, Nicola Pullin, Emma Robertson and Deborah Simonton.
3. www.womenshistorynetwork.org/whnmagazine/authorguide.html



WHN Book Prize

An annual £500 prize for a first book in women's or gender history

The Women's History Network (UK) Book Prize is awarded for an author's first single-authored monograph which makes a significant contribution to women's history or gender history and is written in an accessible style. The book must be written in English and be published the year prior to the award being made. To be eligible for the award, the author should be a member of the Women's History Network (UK) and be normally resident in the UK. The prize will be awarded in September 2012.

Entries (books published during 2011) should be submitted by 16 March 2012.

For further information please contact Ann Kettle, chair of the panel of judges, Mediaeval History, School of History, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, Fife KY16 9QW

Email: bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

Carol Adams Prize

An annual £100 prize for the best AS, A2 or Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers essay on women's history

The Women's History Network will award a £100 prize for the best AS, A2 or Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers essay on women's history. This award was set up in honour of the late Carol Adams (first Chief Executive of the GTC) who helped pioneer women's history in schools.

Essays

- can focus on any aspect of women's history
- should be no longer than 1,500 words
- should include a bibliography
- be word processed
- the front page should include your name, the name of your school and the title of the essay

If you require any further information please contact Dr Paula Bartley at drpauladudley@hotmail.com. Essays should be sent to this email address.

Deadline: The deadline for submission is 31 May 2012. The prize will be awarded in September 2012.



Clare Evans Prize

An annual £500 prize for a new essay in the field of GENDER AND HISTORY

In memory of Dr Clare Evans, a national prize worth £500 is offered annually for an original essay in the field of women's history or gender and history. Essays are considered by a panel of judges set up by the Women's History Network and the Trustees of the Clare Evans Memorial Fund. Subject to the normal refereeing criteria, the winning essay is published in *Women's History Review*.

Clare Evans was an outstanding woman who died tragically of cervical cancer on 30 November 1997, aged just 37. Born in Bath, she read history at the University of Manchester, graduating in 1982. She continued her studies, registering for a PhD at the University whilst preparing and delivering seminars on feminist history, creating the first feminist historiography course in collaboration with Kersten England and Ann Hughes. Clare would have approved of an award which helped women to publish for the first time, giving them the confidence to further develop their ideas.

To be eligible for the award, the candidate must be a) a woman who has not yet had a publication in a major academic journal, b) not in a permanent academic position, and c) normally resident in the UK.

The article should be in English and of 6,000 to 8,000 words in length including footnotes. We welcome submissions from any area of women's history or gender and history.

Please send completed essays to Ann Hughes by 31 May 2012. Please also include brief biographical details (education, current job or other circumstances) and include a cover sheet with title only (not name) to facilitate anonymous judging.

Those wishing to apply for the prize should first email or write for further details to:

Ann Hughes, Department of History and Classics, University of Keele, Keele, Staffs, ST5 5BG. Email: hia21@keele.ac.uk.



WHN Book Prize Awarded

This prize (£500) is awarded for a WHN member's first single-authored monograph, which makes a significant contribution to women's history or gender history and is written in English in an accessible style. The book must be published the year prior to the award being made, and the author must normally be resident in the UK. This year's judges were Ann Heilmann (chair), Ann Kettle, Claire Midgley, Alex Shepherd and Penny Summerfield.

The seven submissions the panel received in 2011 made for an exceptionally strong field; the judges were delighted to read so much original, vibrant and exciting scholarship. There was a broad subject and period coverage across women's history, and including culture and literature, from the early modern periods onwards (Renaissance, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries).

The prize was awarded to Victoria Harris, Research Fellow in History at King's College, Cambridge. Her book, *Selling Sex in the Reich: Prostitutes in German Society 1914-1945* (OUP 2010), offers a bold, gripping and perceptive account of German prostitution in the world war and interwar periods. *Selling Sex in the Reich* traces the nature of prostitution in two German cities over thirty years, widening out from the prostitutes' experience to their milieu, to the prostitute and society and, finally, to the prostitute and the state. Well embedded in key debates about theory and method in women's history, the study offers insightful reflections on class, the relationship between democracy and permissiveness, fascism and sexual repression, and historical periodisation. It draws on a very rich seam of primary source material, including detailed police records, and uses case studies to excellent effect to show the inadequacy of crude generalisations about prostitution that fail to take into account the specific local contexts and varied implications of policy. Gender and class analysis are combined in an illuminating and far-reaching social history of women.

Ann Heilmann, Chair of the Judges for the WHN Book Prize



Ann Heilmann (left) presents the Book Prize to Victoria Harris at the 2011 Conference

Clare Evans Essay Prize Awarded

The Clare Evans prize, established in 1997 in memory of Clare Evans, a talented and committed scholar of women's history from Manchester University, is awarded for the best essay on women's or gender history by a woman historian at the start of her career or working outside an academic context. We had a strong entry in 2011, with all essays writing on nineteenth- and twentieth-century themes. The subjects ranged from male involvement in the British suffrage movement to East German lesbian identities. As in previous years, most entrants were completing or had recently completed doctoral theses, and the prize works well in encouraging early career historians of women and gender. Feedback is given to all entrants. We are very grateful to Roger Crouch, Merlin Evans and other friends and family of Clare Evans for their continuing support for the prize. The judges are Merlin Evans, Kath Holden, Karen Adler and Amanda Capern, with Ann Hughes as Chair.

The winner for 2011 was Dr Ruth Davidson who has just completed a PhD at Royal Holloway on 'Citizens at Last: Women's Political Culture and Civil Society, Croydon and East Surrey, 1914-39'. Her essay, based on this work, is entitled, "Dreams of Utopia": Female agency within Civil Society and its impact on the scope and ideology of the Infant Welfare Movement in Croydon, 1914-39'. Like the best essays submitted over the years it combined detailed, imaginative research with a sophisticated discussion of important general issues, the relationships between women's activism, voluntary agencies and the state.

Ruth gave a paper at the 2011 Conference where the prize was presented to her by Merlin Evans and Kath Holden.

Ann Hughes, Chair of the Judges for the Clare Evans Prize

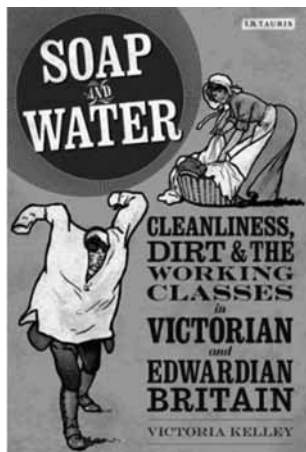


Presentation of the Clare Evans Prize at the 2011 Conference: l to r, Ruth Davidson, Katherine Holden and Merlin Evans

Book Reviews

Victoria Kelley, *Soap and Water: Cleanliness, Dirt and the Working Classes in Victorian and Edwardian Britain*

London and New York: I. B. Tauris and Co, Ltd., 2010. £56, ISBN 978-1-84885-052-1 (hardback), pp. xii + 240
Reviewed by Deirdre Palk
Independent Researcher



Victoria Kelley's study focuses on a closely defined area - the urban working classes in Britain between 1888 and 1914. Here dirt, and cleanliness of clothing, household linen, bodies and the home itself, are domestic, individual and private matters. The all-important place of 'soap and water' in the context of family life and economy has rarely been written about systematically; so this is a

welcome publication. The source materials for the study include contemporary investigative reports on the lives of the urban poor, working class memoirs and advice literature and, thanks to Kelley's background in art and design, excellent use is made of commercial sources, starring the humble 'soap' - its branding, presentation and advertising - giving a more public perspective to the subject.

Kelley reminds us that the concept of cleanliness is relative, variable and defined by context. Having fixed her focus on the working classes in a domestic setting, the context of cleanliness in this study is almost entirely feminine and private. A different setting would have produced a different picture. The daunting nature of the task of dealing with dirt in a confined and inappropriate setting such as the family home may be seen negatively, a common view of many of women's activities. It was, as Kelley suggests, 'the sign of a female preoccupation with the small tasks of everyday domestic life, an attachment to petty routine' (p.14). However, her attention to the details of the task of household cleanliness allow it to be seen as a work of 'pride and polish' which could reorganise for the better the domestic environment. The work may have taken place in a hidden and private sphere but it affected a family's position in public; hard work, thrift and cleanliness indicating resources of character despite often precarious domestic economic situations.

Perhaps working class memoirs introduce an aura of nostalgia and idealise the role of 'mother' in the home. Kelley discusses in an interesting way the complex identification of woman, home and 'everyday' involvement

with unimportant things, concluding that 'the everyday can also be seen as the traditional base of most of whatever power women have been able to wield, until comparatively recent times' (p. 104). Creating a small breach in the private, domestic picture, Kelley briefly mentions 'the messy tangling' of women's domestic duties and their paid labour, in particular the taking in of laundry for others, but she says little about women who were professional laundresses whose work brought cleanliness into public view, nor about the contemporary provision and use of wash-houses alongside public bath-houses in larger urban settings from the mid 19th century. These features would suggest that 'soap and water' were not confined to domesticity. The public places where dirty linen was laundered in other European countries, and the female power which was present in the act and place of washing, pose the question as to whether there was something peculiarly British about the hidden nature of domestic dirt and cleanliness.

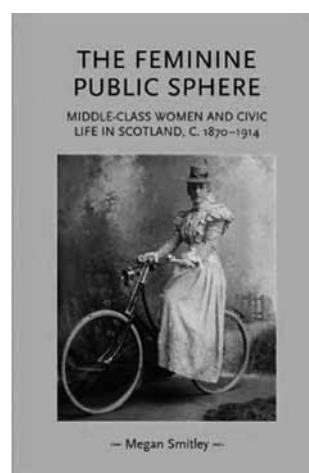
In the greater part of her book, Kelley presents, in a lively and entertaining way, the commercial story of soap, a mundane product which made such a difference to everyday life. Soap brings dirt and cleanliness out of the closet. Its history also brings women out into the open. The story of the producers of this medium from 1880 to 1914 is dynamic. Advertising was competitive and innovative, with striking new images, slogans, logos, celebrity endorsements and closely defined brand images, as the product moved from 'washers' - neat tablets of soap, stamped, wrapped in brightly coloured boxes - to soap flakes and to easily dissolved powders. The link between gender and advertising was strong. Advertisers believed that women were the decision-makers about soap purchasing, although suggested that they were easily led by advertising. While notions of domesticity and femininity dominated soap advertising, a changing world was being represented and appealed to. Her analysis of the series of 'Lifebuoy' advertisements in the first two decades of the 20th century provides a vigorous measure of the changes taking place at this time, displaying modernity in the presence of a mass market. Their setting in public spaces, not in the home, but in a cinema, a school, an omnibus peopled by women, made dirt and cleanliness a public matter, not one confined to the home.

This study provides, in a careful and enjoyably readable way, a significant contribution to both social and design history. Kelley's specific focus on class and time presents soap and water, dirt and cleanliness as private domestic matters; with a wider focus her conclusions may have been different. But her careful analysis of the work of cleanliness in the home, and her interesting account of the public face of 'soap' bring the 'everyday' subject to life.

Megan Smitley, *The Feminine Public Sphere: Middle-Class Women and Civic Life in Scotland, c.1870-1914*

Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009. £55.00, ISBN 978-0-71907-966-5 (hardback), pp.x + 178

Reviewed by Kate Bradley
University of Kent



The later nineteenth century witnessed expansion in volunteering by middle class women, in terms of the organisations that served as conduits for it and in the scope of the work undertaken. It is a topic that has been much explored, certainly in terms of how what Koven and Michel described in *Mothers of a New World* (1993) as a 'maternalist' approach enabled women to move beyond the private domestic sphere into the public arena through using their

'natural' expertise in the home. Megan Smitley's monograph provides fresh insight into this field by examining the work on middle class women in Scotland, and particularly their efforts in temperance and suffrage.

The Feminine Public Sphere tackles its subject through the study of around twenty women's organisations, including the British Women's Temperance Association, the Scottish Temperance League and the Scottish Women's Liberal Federation. Smitley approaches these organisations in two ways: the first through qualitative analysis of their archival records, and the second through a MySQL database that enabled a network analysis of these groups to be undertaken. The resulting network analysis is fascinating, and is a useful demonstration of how this technique can be successfully applied in the context of modern social movements. More detail on the database would have been welcome, for this reason. Similarly, whilst the book is appropriately located within the historical literature on the subject of women in the public sphere, it lacks engagement with other historical work that explores aspects of network analysis (such as the work of Mick Ryan or Anne Logan) as well as the social science literature on networks, social capital, habitus and other germane areas. Smitley's work is perfectly sound and engaging as a historical study, but this broader conceptual approach would have enabled the book to act as a route map for others contemplating similar techniques in history and other disciplines. This aside, *The Feminine Sphere* makes key contributions to our understanding of this field. First, the network analysis helps to unpick the ways in which women were recruited into and across organisations, and how this intersected with kinship networks: with mothers bringing their daughters into the group. Smitley neatly exposes the importance of religion

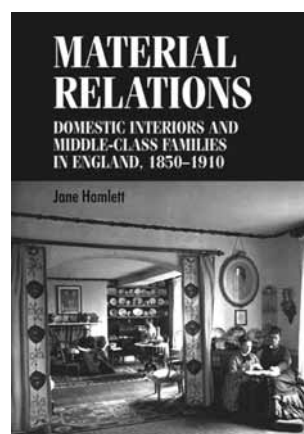
as both a motivation and a framework for volunteering. She also provides a strong case for female activism as a means of shaping a middle class identity in the city, rather than this being necessarily a method of regressively maintaining the status quo. What also emerges from *The Feminine Sphere* is a sense of the way in which these women were also part of what Smitley describes as a 'Britannic' or Anglophone world, which influenced them as much as they influenced others. That Smitley's work is rooted in Scotland is an ever-pertinent reminder that the Four Nations are not homogeneous and we should not assume that a metropolitan English experience speaks for or influences all. Through the Britannic dimensions, *The Feminine Sphere* is an invitation to others to consider the ways in which associations and associational cultures have lives beyond national borders.

In conclusion, *The Feminine Sphere* is a very welcome addition to the literature on women's participation in public life, in both conceptual and methodological terms. It provides fresh thinking on the experience of associational culture for women across the British Isles and beyond, whilst also demonstrating the rich potential of databases for historical research.

Jane Hamlett, *Material Relations: Domestic Interiors and Middle-Class Families in England, 1850-1910*

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010. £60.00, ISBN 978-0-71907-863-7

(hardback), pp. xvi + 264
Reviewed by Katie Barclay
University of Adelaide



The use of material culture – clothing, furniture, textiles, wallpaper, ornaments, and more – as a historical source has flourished over the last decade, coming to fruition in the last few years as historians, such as Amanda Vickery and Karen Harvey, have moved the field from asking what material culture tells us about consumption patterns and lifestyles to exploring the ways that the

material world shaped human relationships in a variety of contexts. Jane Hamlett's *Material Relations* contributes to this discussion, exploring the role of material culture in the making of the middle-class Victorian English family. She provides a colourful and well illustrated account of the ways that housing layout, possessions and taste influenced family power dynamics and intimacy, contributing to ongoing debates around privacy in the domestic sphere, the male 'flight from domesticity', the gendered nature of ownership and the creation and maintenance of familial relationships.

After an introduction surveying the literature on the material world of the period, the Victorian family, and material culture as a source, Hamlett begins with a chapter exploring the ways that the layout of the house influenced gendered divisions of space and labour and meanings of privacy. Using a combination of novels, advice manuals, wills, inventories, sale catalogues, photographs, diaries and letters, she highlights the typical structure of middle-class homes, noting how families with smaller homes prioritised a drawing room, over a morning room, and a nursery over a study, and the ways that many rooms had multiple purposes, so that many libraries, associated with male solitude and study, contained that feminine leisure activity, the piano. Similarly, she demonstrates the ways that servants should have been kept at a distance, and indeed were entitled to some privacy of their own, but that in many homes, the intimacy of shared activities broke down strict class barriers, or, conversely, reinforced them. Household design and the meanings and activities allocated to particular spaces therefore complicated any simplistic interpretation of the Victorian household as private, or divided along strict gendered lines.

Moving on, Hamlett focuses on the ways that the household and its goods influenced intimacy and power within courtship and marriage. She carefully demonstrates the ways in which women and men used their decoration of the home and the careful placement of their possessions to take ownership of particular spaces, to reinforce their authority within them and to negotiate with each other. In addition, she highlights how the use and description of particular spaces, particularly the bedroom, could be used to create intimacy between couples as they imagined themselves together in those spaces. It was not just marriage, but relationships between parents and children that were influenced by their material surroundings. A chapter on children's place within the middle-class home, as they moved from nursery to separate bedrooms and a schoolroom, and from 'tiresome trips downstairs' to full members of the family, highlights how the use of physical space determined the nature of family relationships and people's emotional relationships within it.

Material Relations also takes us beyond the middle-class household to boarding schools, university accommodation and private lodgings, which provided homes for many middle-class youth and young adults in the late Victorian period. Hamlett illustrates, with several fabulous images, the ways that young people decorated such spaces, using their rooms to speak to their identities as independent young adults, as scholars, and as men and women. Following the lead provided by Harvey, she demonstrates the way that the cultural artefacts of domesticity were not just desired by women, and of equal interest, notes that similarly many women eschewed such decor, complicating any simplistic association between gender and flowery fabrics! In a final chapter, Hamlett explores the impact of death on the household, engaging with discussions on how goods held particular emotional, as well as material, meanings, and the multiple and gendered ways that the Victorians coped with these identifications.

The Victorian family found within the pages of *Material Relations* reflects Hamlett's engagement with the current literature and so will feel familiar to historians in the field, but the use of material culture to access them is not only novel, but offers a different way of understanding *how* they became who they were. In doing so, it helps uncover some of the more obscure negotiations of familial emotional and power relationships, demonstrating the usefulness of embracing the material world. Indeed, throughout this book, there is an enormous sense of the potential that this opens up, and the many other relationships and houses (and workplaces, institutions, etc.) that are left to be explored through the lens of their material cultures. This is both a fascinating contribution to our understanding of the Victorian middle-class family and the uses of the material world as a historical source.

Leigh Whaley, *Women and the Practice of Medical Care in Early Modern Europe. 1400-1800*

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011,
£55.00, ISBN 978-0-23028-291-9 (hardback),
pp. vi + 316

Reviewed by Jennifer Evans
University of Exeter



Leigh Whaley's *Women and the Practice of Medical Care* is an ambitious work. Unlike many previous investigations which have tended to focus quite narrowly on female healers in either one country or a specific time period, Whaley's intends to cover several hundred years and a minimum of four key countries: France, England, Italy and Spain. In addition Whaley intends to look, not just at one aspect of female healing but, at a breadth of

different types of medical practice.

The book is divided into nine easy-to-read chapters that cover different aspects of female medical practice. Each of these chapters is richly illustrated with examples, case studies and explorations of individual women who have left traces of their medical practice in the historical record. The early chapters focus on the established contribution of medieval women to medical care throughout Europe and the subsequent institutional and legal attempts to remove them from these roles during the Renaissance. These chapters systematically outline the state of play in each of the four main countries examined and highlight the nuances and differences that could exist both between and within these countries. For example, the differences in regulations restricting women acting as physicians, surgeons and barber-surgeons are emphasised. In these chapters, Whaley also demonstrates

the uncertainty and indecisiveness that surrounded the attempts to exclude women from acting as healers. One particularly engaging example shows that, although the University of Paris prosecuted many women, including Jacoba Félice de Almanía, they did not always deny the efficacy of their practice. In this instance it was noted that Félice had not studied and was not learned, but the success of her practice was never challenged. (pp.43-44).

Having established the legal and institutional arguments against female practitioners, Whaley's later chapters consider the various roles women played in medical practice in the early modern period. These chapters examine the publications written by women at this time, the continuing and contentious role of women as midwives, the presence of women in institutions and hospitals as nurses and women as irregular practitioners. Chapter 6, entitled 'The Healing Care of Nurses', is particularly fascinating; it not only examines a topic that has only recently come to the fore, nurses and nursing, but also provides numerous and detailed examples of how religious, and especially Catholic, orders were dedicated to providing health care for the poor sick. One of the book's key strengths demonstrated in this chapter is the way in which Whaley consistently presents the Protestant and Catholic traditions alongside one another and, in the case of Spain, the Jewish and Muslim traditions. Only very occasionally does the focus on three Catholic countries, and just one Protestant, feel a little unbalanced. Whaley very effectively counters this partiality by including examples from Germany and other Protestant nations.

In the final two chapters Whaley continues her examination of different medical practices undertaken by women, looking in detail at women as domestic practitioners and finally as wise-women and witches. The chapter on wise-women is again very interesting for its comparative material, showing how England varied from its continental Catholic counterparts, who instead of removing all healing, sought to reassert the Church's control and authority over supernatural healing. One minor critique of the chapter on domestic medicine is that the opposition set up throughout the book between male, elite, learned practice and women's actions and knowledge, becomes a little strained here. Whaley initially suggests that domestic medicine can be characterised as 'folk medicine' which lacks a theory of disease and does not follow logical testing (p.152). Yet the chapter emphasises that many women's medical remedies were not clearly distinguished from those provided by their male counterparts. Medicines created by physicians and doctors were used and recorded by women, and those invented by women were praised, used and promoted by physicians. In this sense it becomes very unclear that women's medicines were in fact folkloric. Furthermore, no mention is made of the annotations and crossings out to be found in these manuscripts, which identify women's testing of their recipes and clear rejection of those that were found to be ineffective. This, however, is a minor point; throughout the rest of the book Whaley expertly draws attention to the blurring of the boundaries between male and female practice, while highlighting the contention

between the two.

Overall Whaley skilfully achieves her aims, producing a book of considerable temporal, geographical and thematic scope. The book is consistently enthralling; the many examples of individual women's actions paint a vivid portrait of women as medical practitioners in this period.

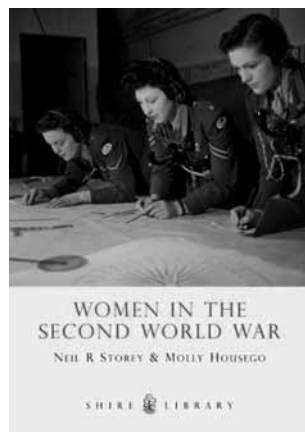
Neil R. Storey and Molly Housego, *Women in the Second World War*

Oxford: Shire Books, 2011. £6.99, ISBN 978-0-74780-812-1 (paperback), pp.63

Elaine M. Edwards (ed), *Scotland's Land Girls: Breeches, Bombers and Backaches*

Edinburgh: NMS Enterprises Ltd. 2011, £8.99, ISBN 978-1-90526-732-3 (paperback), pp. xxxii +144

Reviewed by Linsey Robb
University of Strathclyde



'It's the girl that makes the thing that holds the oil that oils the ring that work the thing-ummy-bob that's going to win the war.' So went the popular wartime song that now so neatly encapsulates the well-known view of the Second World War: without women the war wouldn't have been won. It is the work of these women which is the concern of these two books. Storey and Housego's *Women in the*

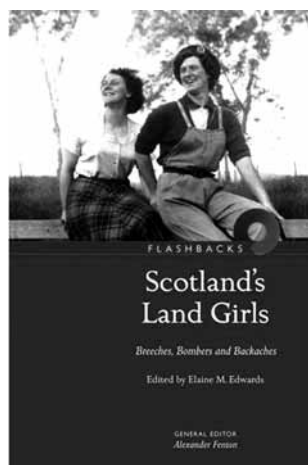
Second World War is a follow-up to last year's *Women in the First World War* and seeks to provide an overview of the work of British women, both at home and abroad, during the Second World War. In a similar vein *Scotland's Land Girls*, edited by Elaine Edwards, is an oral history of the Scottish Women's Land Army (SWLA) released to coincide with the National Museum of Scotland's exhibition 'Land Girls and Lumber Jills' currently on display at the National Museum of Costume in Dumfries. The book seeks to give 'an insight into the ways in which the individual lived and how they felt about that life' (p. 11).

Storey and Housego's book presents a useful introductory text for those interested in women's roles in Britain during the Second World War. Despite a few illustrative anecdotes it is largely factual in nature. Although at 64 pages, it is a short text it still manages to give a comprehensive overview of nearly all the different roles women undertook during the conflict. It goes into enormous detail about the work done by women as well as going into great detail about their uniforms and the impact of working on their day-to-day lives. It explores not only the role of women in munitions, on the land and uniformed services during the war but also their demobilisation and legacies;

this is to be commended as they are often overlooked in wartime accounts. However, the book does perhaps present an overly optimistic view of women's roles in the war. Although the book does make reference to women who died both on the home front and in theatres of war, it skates over other problems which faced women. While the book mentions in passing such issues as unequal wages and poor living conditions, these are never explored in detail. Although this may have been due to considerations of space in such a short book it does leave the reader with the impression of a rather jolly war.

Similarly, Edwards' book, especially the introductory chapter, is very informative and explains well the role of the SWLA as well as the process of recruitment, selection and training by using archival research as well as veterans' oral recollections. It convincingly explores the differences between the Women's Land Army in England and the SWLA. It also goes some way towards undermining an overly rosy view of life in the SWLA, as can be found in many popular representations, by drawing attention to loneliness and the exposure to danger and subsequent injuries. The book also discusses the work of SWLA in the post-war period which is often overlooked. The testimonies presented are generally quite technical and explain such things as how they washed, who did the cooking, the jobs they were expected to perform as well detailed explanations of how they performed specific tasks on the farm. As such it forms not only an interesting study into the role of women in wartime but also of the intricacies of farming in general in mid-twentieth century Scotland. As with Story and Housego, the book does present a perhaps overly positive view of working in the SWLA. Many of the women give oddly similar accounts of their experience: that it was hard work but they enjoyed it nonetheless. Edwards does acknowledge that 'those who responded to my appeal for information tend to be the ones that enjoyed their time in the women's land army'. However, she does go on to argue that 'I believe they still retain a realistic recollection of conditions in the fields and of their daily lives' (p 9). Yet, although one of the interviewees does seem to suggest she was unhappy on her first farm, she does not expand and so the overarching tone of the book suggests that the experience of being in the SWLA was almost universally enjoyed, a notion which would have benefitted from more critical exploration.

However, neither book engages with the lively historiography in this field. Notably in Edwards' work the testimonies are left to speak for themselves with no editorial incursions. This perhaps renders the books of more use to a popular audience than an academic one. However, the Storey and Housego book may also prove a useful text for those in the later stages of school education and a good introductory text for lower level undergraduates.

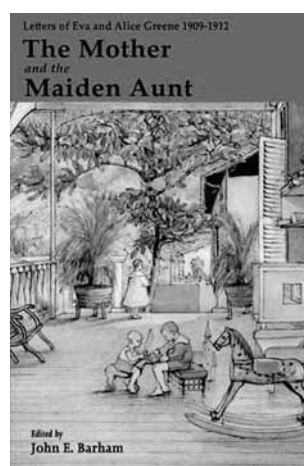


Nevertheless, both books provide an engaging, interesting and comprehensive overview into the SWLA specifically and women's work during the Second World War more generally.

John E. Barham (ed), *The Mother and the Maiden Aunt: Letters of Eva and Alice Greene 1909–1912*

Leicester: Matador, 2010. £12.50, ISBN 978-1-84876-465-1 (paperback), pp. 280

Reviewed by Sally Dugan
Oxford Brookes University



These letters celebrate a close friendship across the generations, and show how two lively women found their way around the constrictions of middle class life in Britain and on the fringes of Empire in the Edwardian era.

When Eva Stutzer – German-born and Brazilian-educated – came to England for the first time in 1901, she was overwhelmed by the number of things an 'English lady' was expected to know without being told: never go outside without a hat; never do embroidery on a Sunday; make sure you leave the right number of calling cards. Her initiation into ladylike ways at the hands of her new mother-in-law is a classic example of the way women were socialised by each other into 'acceptable' behaviour.

The Greene family, which had made money in brewing and sugar plantations, took Eva to its Establishment bosom after her marriage to Edward – 'Eppy' – Greene. Eppy worked for a firm of coffee importers, based in Santos, South-Eastern Brazil. His firm had a house up in the coastal mountains at Ribeirão Pires next to a place owned by Eva's parents. She was the youngest of six daughters, and – despite Eppy being twice her age – they were married after a short courtship when she was just seventeen.

Eva spent most of her early married life in Brazil, but developed an intense friendship with her older sister-in-law Alice after staying in Britain for the birth of her fifth child. Both were outsiders: Eva, by virtue of her German nationality and Alice as an older unmarried woman who spent many years teaching in South Africa. Both had a passion for education, hard work and a desire to escape the female straitjacket.

Home-educated herself, Eva clearly found fulfilment in teaching her children – a task in which she was given a free hand. She taught English and Biblical History daily, with History and Geography on alternate days. History lessons apparently came from the Lady Callcott and Mrs Markham school: hour-long monologues that left her

hoarse, but must have had incalculable influence. At the same time, she nurtured a passion for self-improvement, reciting by heart all ninety-eight lines of Matthew Arnold's *The Buried Life*, while Eppy smoked his after-dinner cigar. Eppy, constantly away on business, is otherwise a shadowy figure in these letters.

All this had to be fitted in between visits from the dressmaker – who stayed for weeks at a time, tweaking outfits in line with the latest fashion – and the 'tyranny of the mending basket' for a family of five. Then there were the calls, the Brazilian ladies who came 'and sat and sat, saying "we really only came for a few minutes. Don't count this as a proper visit".' One call lasted five hours – a serious endurance test, given Eva's limited Portuguese. Claustrophobia found vivid geographic expression in her comment to Alice from Ribeirão Pires on New Year's Day, 1910: 'Hills surround us on all sides, and I sometimes feel

as if my eyes were getting cramped and wanted a stretch'.

Alice's letters are dominated by speculations about Eva's young children. As she put it in a letter from Tintagel: 'There will not be the tiniest thing you can tell me which will not be thrillingly interesting. You are my family – my crowd of Darlings, inexpressibly dear'. It is perhaps this note of Peter Pan sentimentality that led to the – in my view – misconceived title of this collection. Alice – as was demonstrated in John Barham's previous collection of her letters, *Alice Greene: Teacher and Campaigner: South African Correspondence 1887–1902* (Leicester: Matador, 2007) – was so much more than the stereotypical maiden aunt. A friend of Olive Schreiner, she helped run a girls' school in South Africa, and gave active support to Boer women and children held in British camps.

My other reservation is also connected to presentation. John Barham – Eva Greene's grandson – tells us that he found these letters preserved in their original envelopes. There are constant references to the difficulties of writing: a sputtering pen, a rolling ship, a snatched moment of time. Just one facsimile of handwriting would help to transcend the limitations of a conventional twenty-first-century paperback. Nevertheless, Barham's meticulous editing manages to convey some sense of their materiality. These were lengthy epistles that took days to write, often months to arrive, and gave immense pleasure. As Alice wrote to Eva after receiving her first letter from Santos, 'It has [...] fed me and warmed me all the week, that six sheet letter.' This volume is a testament to two women's lives and the power of letters as therapy, both for writer and recipient.

Shop Online and Raise Money!

Have you heard about easyfundraising yet? It's the easiest way to help raise money for The Women's History Network! If you already shop online with retailers such as Amazon, Argos, John Lewis, Comet, iTunes, eBay or HMV, then we need you to sign up for free to raise money while you shop!

So how does it work?

You shop directly with the retailer as you would normally, but if you sign up to www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/whn for free and use the links on the easyfundraising site to take you to the retailer, then a percentage of whatever you spend comes directly to us at no extra cost to yourself.

How much can you raise?

Spend £100 with M&S online or Amazon and you raise £2.50 for us. £100 with WH Smith puts £2.00 in our pocket and so on. There's over 2,000 retailers on their site, and some of the donations can be as much as 15% of your purchase.

Save money too!

easyfundraising is FREE to use plus you'll get access to hundreds of exclusive discounts and voucher codes, so not only will you be helping us, you'll be saving money yourself.

We've raised over £24.56 with easyfundraising so far but we need your help to keep donations coming in. Sign up at www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/whn and start making a difference ... simply by shopping.

easyfundraising
.org.uk

BOOKS RECEIVED & CALL FOR REVIEWERS

If you would like to review any of the titles listed below, please email Anne Logan: bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

William Cross, *The Life and Secrets of Almina Carnarvon* (William Cross)

Eleanor O'Gorman, *The Front Line Runs Through Every Woman* (James Currey)

Hew Stevenson, *Jobs for the Boys* (Dove Books)

Charles Magerison, *Amazing Women: Inspirational Stories* (Viewpoint Resources)

Kim M. Phillips and Barry Reay, *Sex Before Sexuality: A Premodern History* (Polity)

There are also some titles left from the list published in the Summer 2011 edition of the magazine. If you are interested in any of these please email bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

Getting to Know Each Other



Name : Deborah Simonton

Position :

Associate Professor of British History, University of Southern Denmark

How long have you been a WHN member?

From the beginning ...

What inspired your enthusiasm for women's history?

Partly my mother. She loves history, and I read her library books – usually historical novels (!) after she finished them. She also inspired a sense of justice in me – and I could see the world simply was not 'just'. I once asked her why women were never US President! (We will get there, yet.) But also Retha Warnicke, a young professor who taught me on my BA and MA, at Arizona State University and, almost coincidentally, Richard Barlow, a lecturer who terrified me, but also introduced me to Mary Wollstonecraft. My rather amorphous thinking was sharpened by Ludmilla Jordanova, who supervised my doctorate, and Leonore Davidoff, who examined it. Ultimately, however, the friends and colleagues of the Women's History Network and Women's History Scotland have inspired me, encouraged me and provided a community that has been an energising influence.

What are your special interests?

I am mainly interested in eighteenth-century issues of women and gender. My central focus is on education and the economy, which led me to study apprenticeship and which has ultimately led to the work I am currently doing on gender in the European town. I am interested in understanding how women (and girls) negotiate their places and identities in the largely patriarchal society of the eighteenth century, what 'materials' and devices they used and how they circumvented restrictions, such as guild and corporation regulations. I have recently moved towards thinking about the physical and metaphorical spaces they occupied and how they positioned themselves within them. I am leading a network funded by the Danish Research Council on Gender in the European Town, and have to say that the discussions and shared research of colleagues from across Europe has been one of the most interesting and stimulating experiences of my 'historical' life.

Who is your heroine from history and why?

Possibly Wollstonecraft, but also the myriad of 'little' women who make up the fabric of history; women like Margaret Morice, an eighteenth-century baker in Aberdeen, or Annie Hastie, my partner's mother, a fixture in her small community in Scotland.

Women's History Magazine is keen to carry profiles that celebrate the diversity of WHN membership. If you would like to complete a 'Getting to Know Each Other' questionnaire, or you would like to nominate someone else to, please email: magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org

The twentieth annual conference of the Women's History Network:

Looking Back – Looking Forward 20 Years of the Women's History Network The Women's Library, 9-11 September 2011

This was an Annual Conference with a difference. It was a celebration of the twentieth birthday of the Network (Looking Back) and a glance into the future (Looking Forward). While the former was packed with achievements, the latter was cautiously optimistic. It was a nice touch that the venue for the Annual Conference was celebrating its tenth birthday this year and the organising team from the Library are to be congratulated on making the participants so welcome and on their logistical skills in getting speakers and their audiences into the right rooms at the right times and, in particular, feeding hundreds of people a hot lunch in the space of an hour on Saturday! In view of the impressively detailed report on the conference by Jas Scutt, a bursary holder and also a new member of the steering committee, that follows, this report will concentrate on the themes of celebration and optimism.

The fact that nearly one hundred papers, linked in a dozen themes, were delivered over the three days of the conference indicates that both the Network and women's history are in rude health. The number of delegates increases every year, as do the countries that they come from and the networks that they represent. It is a characteristic of our conferences that established scholars share sessions with 'young' researchers of all ages in an atmosphere of support and good humour. Indeed David Doughan commented that, although it was good to see so many of those who were involved in setting up the Network twenty years ago, he found it 'a cheering thought in less than cheering times' that '... we old timers were outnumbered by so many bright young women presenting such a variety of papers'.

A large lecture hall was packed for the first of the Plenary Panel sessions on 'Writing Women's History'. Sheila Rowbotham, Anna Davin, June Purvis and Sally Alexander enthralled and inspired the audience with reminiscences of the family backgrounds and books that had formed them as feminist historians and of battles fought and won within the academy. In the second Plenary Panel session on 'Beginnings of the WHN', some of the 'old timers', namely Leonore Davidoff, Ida Bloom, Jane Rendall, Krista Cowman and Jo Stanley shared their memories of the formation and early days of the Network from different perspectives.

Several of the plenary panel members noted 'current challenges' and drew attention to the danger of complacency about the foothold gained in the academy by feminist historians. Kathryn Gleadle in her keynote address, 'The Imagined Communities of Women's History: Current Debates and Emerging Themes', wondered if 2011 might have marked a high point in the 'normalisation' of women's history, only to be followed by decline, marginalisation and

continued exclusion. Overall, however, her conclusions were more optimistic. In one of her striking metaphors she compared women's history to the shoots and roots of a rhizome: subterranean, circuitous and subversive. In spite of the gathering gloom, this conference showed that there is good reason to celebrate the achievements of the Network over the twenty years of its existence and to be hopeful for its continued healthy development.

Ann Kettle



Writing Women's History Plenary Panel, l to r: Sally Alexander, Lucy Bland, Sheila Rowbotham, Anna Davin and June Purvis

Bursary holder's conference report

The theme 'Looking Back, Looking Forward' was apposite for the twenty-year celebration of Women's History Network Conferences. The conference provided a unique opportunity in the setting of The Women's Library, East London, for not only were participants able to peruse the Reading Room holdings, Reading Room resources formed the foundation for some presentations. Amongst these were: Sheila Hanlon on 'The Bicycle', its place and impact on women as feminists; Anne Summers exploring 'Relations between Christian and Jewish Women 1880-1940'; Mary Coghill on 'The Woman Clerk' (explored through 1920s trade union, civil service, and Women Clerks Association journals); Chloe Kroeter reflecting through images upon 'Force Feeding ... in the Edwardian Suffrage Movement' and its impact on the body physically, psychologically and visually; and Mary Clancy analysing 'Philippa Fawcett's Diary' account of her 1893 visit to Ireland with her mother Millicent Fawcett. Listening and responding to recitation and analysis against the backdrop of sighting pertinent documents, postcards, journals, writings and posters was not only intellectually stimulating but also visually inspiring.

These sessions ran alongside myriad presentations under titles including 'Religion', 'Life Histories', 'Politics', 'Space' and 'Media & Space', 'Women's Movements', 'Sexualities', 'Motherhood', 'Politics, Colonisation & Race' and 'Ethnicity/Race', 'Feminism & Public History', and 'Networks'. With an array of topics and speakers, choice (as always with parallel sessions) was difficult. Yet it meant everyone had an opportunity to hear, reflect upon and discuss papers touching upon or extending their own fields of interest, research or enquiry.

As a filmmaker and historian, being able to participate in one of the 'Media & Space' sessions was especially pleasing. Maggie Andrews' paper on 'Feminist History and Heritage Film ...' analysed story and image by reference to 'The Young Victoria' and 'The Duchess', with some emphasis on dress: lush and even fantastical period costuming frames women's bodies inside the screen. This combination of dress and body, dictating body image and women's identity, was explored, too, in Domenic Alessio and Anna Lisa Johannsdottir's exposition on 'Gender, Power, and Colonialism in Icelandic Tourist Imagery'. This warned that poverty alone does not lie behind the burgeoning sex industry, with its infiltration into one of the most highly respected countries on the women's equality ladder. Karen Buczynski Lee's paper, 'Power, Knowledge and Communication', on the use of early technology by Vida Goldstein in her 1903 campaign for Australian political office, illustrated women's long-time cognisance of the importance of dress in how women are seen – and the importance of positioning women as actors in control, rather than simply acted upon.

Chairing a 'Women's Movements' session meant I was bound to make the choice of Kirsten MacLeod's film and oral presentation, 'Women's History via Participatory Media', based on Glasgow; Sarah Browne's research on the equal pay struggle through Scotland's Women's Liberation Movement, 'Responding to Working Women'; and Monica Threlfall's dissertation on measuring the political impact of 'Women's Movements ... in changing history', by reference to Spain's democratisation process, 1976-1983 and methodologies that might illuminate such assessment. Each presentation led into or flowed from that which it preceded or followed. Questions, discussion and debate highlighted how, whether in Scotland, Spain, Australia, England, Wales, Ireland, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Northern America, Europe or elsewhere, women's political struggle centres on similar themes and demands. It confirmed that women's claims for effecting and affecting advances are legitimately made – yet require methods for analysis and assessment. In this way we equip ourselves to learn from the past, to advance into the future.

Plenary sessions combined dynamism with insight. Perspectives on 'WHN's Beginnings' brought the past into sharp relief, with presentations from Jane Rendall, Jo Stanley, Leonore Davidoff, Krista Cowman and Ida Blom. These personal reflections provided texture

and context to earlier presentations on 'Writing Women's History' from Sheila Rowbotham, Sally Alexander, Anna David and June Purvis; as did Kathryn Gleadle's reflection on contemporary debates and emerging themes, 'The Imagined Communities of Women's History'. Each a doyenne of women's and feminist history, they brought memories, insights and analysis, prompting lively discussion in corridors, the Café, dinner at Toynbee Hall, and the evening of prize-giving, book launches, drinks and finger buffet!

The keynote and farewell – 'Geographies of Belonging: White Women and Black History' – was a fine note to formally end the conference: Caroline Bressey brought to us all new reflections on the Black/White conundrum, particularly as involving women as sometime victims, survivors, operators in the game of politics, and influencers of the way multiculturalism plays itself out on local, national and international stages.

Overall – an overwhelming array of fine papers, fine presentations, fine historians and fine women. The 21st WHN Conference in Cardiff is most assuredly an event not for missing.

Jocelynn Scutt, University of Cambridge

Women's History Magazine Back issues

Back issues of *Women's History Magazine* are available to buy for

£4.50 inc postage (UK)

£5.00 inc postage (Overseas)

Most issues are available, from Spring 2002 to the present. Discover the contents of each issue at

www.magazine.womenshistorynetwork.org

Order and pay online or email
magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org



Committee News

The Steering Committee met on Saturday 18 June at the Institute of Historical Research, London. It was reported that there are over 350 members and all members can update their own personal details on the WHN website. Those with outstanding subscriptions have now had their membership cancelled. Prof Angela John is giving next year's WHN 2nd Annual Lecture held at The Women's Library on the evening of 8 March 2012. Katie Barclay (2009) and Emma Robertson (2010) have stepped down from the Committee as they both leave the UK to take up jobs in Australia. They will however continue to serve on the editorial team of the magazine. Ann Heilman has stepped down from chairing the Book Prize but remains on the WHN committee. There are vacancies for three new committee members and those with social networking/ new media skills are particularly encouraged to apply. The WHN now has a presence on Facebook and Twitter as well as a blog and contributions are always welcome. In order to save money at a time when travel costs are increasing, it was proposed that three (rather than four) meetings are held a year.

The Steering Committee also met at the conference on Friday 9 September. Tanya Cheadle, who serves on the publicity sub-committee, reported that 62 people are currently following the WHN on Facebook and 35 on Twitter, with more joining every week. A 'history and the media' session will hopefully run at the 2012 conference which will be held in Cardiff. Claire Jones provided her annual web report. A new page has been added for News, there are now links to Facebook and Twitter and the membership system has been developed to include a gift aid reporting function, resubscription emails and friendlier user interface. Members can log into their own private pages to manage their accounts, pay or donate by paypal and add their publications. Members set their own privacy levels. Claire urges all members to log in and update their personal records. Anne Logan, the Charity representative gave a report in which she noted that a gift aid tax repayment claim has been submitted to HMRC covering donations made from 2007.

All WHN members are invited to attend the next committee meeting which will take place on 19 November at the Institute of Historical Research, London. For further details, email convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Publishing in *Women's History Magazine*

Women's History Magazine welcomes contributions from experienced scholars and those at an earlier stage in their research careers. We aim to be inclusive and fully recognise that women's history is not only lodged in the academy. All submissions are subject to the usual peer review process.

Articles should be 3000-8000 words in length. Contributors are requested to submit articles in final form, carefully following the style guidelines available at:

www.magazine.womenshistorynetwork.org

Please email your submission, as a word attachment, to the editors at

editor@womenshistorynetwork.org



What is the Women's History Network?

The WHN was founded in July 1991. It is a national charity concerned with promoting women's history and encouraging women interested in history. WHN business is carried out by the National Steering Committee, which is elected by the membership and meets regularly several times each year. It organises the annual conference, manages the finance and membership, and co-ordinates activities in pursuit of the aims of the WHN.

Aims of the WHN

1. To encourage contact between all people interested in women's history — in education, the media or in private research
2. To collect and publish information relating to women's history
3. To identify and comment upon all issues relating to women's history
4. To promote research into all areas of women's history

What does the WHN do?

Annual Conference

Each year the WHN holds a national conference for WHN members and others. The conference provides everyone interested in women's history with a chance to meet and it has become an exciting forum where new research can be aired and recent developments in the field can be shared. The Annual General Meeting of the Network takes place at the conference. The AGM discusses issues of policy and elects the National Steering Committee.

WHN Publications

WHN members receive three copies per year of the *Women's History Magazine*, which contains: articles discussing research, sources and applications of women's history; reviews of books, conferences, meetings and exhibitions; and information on calls for papers, prizes and competitions, and publication opportunities.

Joining the WHN

Annual Membership Rates

Student/unwaged	£15*	Overseas minimum	£40
Low income (*under £20,000 pa)	£25*	UK Institutions	£45
High income	£40*	Institutions overseas	£55
Life Membership	£350		

* £5 reduction when paying by standing order.

Charity Number: 1118201. Membership application/renewal, Gift Aid Declaration and Banker's Order forms are available on the back cover or join online at www.womenshistorynetwork.org

Women's History Network Contacts:

Steering Committee officers:

Membership, subscriptions

membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

or write to Dr Henrice Altink, WHN Membership Secretary, Department of History, University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD

Finance, Dr Gráinne Goodwin:

treasurer@womenshistorynetwork.org

Committee Convenor, Professor Barbara Bush:

convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Web Team:

web@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Book Prize, Chair, Ms Ann Kettle:

bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

UK Representative for International Federation for Research into Women's History, Professor Krista Cowman:

ifrwh@womenshistorynetwork.org

Charity Representative, Dr Anne Logan:

charityrep@womenshistorynetwork.org

Newsletter Editor, Jane Berney:

newsletter@womenshistorynetwork.org

Magazine Team:

Editors, submissions: Dr Debbi Simonton, Dr Sue

Hawkins, Ms Ann Kettle, Dr Juliette Pattinson,

Dr Anne Logan, Dr Emma Robertson, Dr Katie Barclay:

editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Book Reviews, Dr Anne Logan:

bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

or send books to her at University of Kent, Gillingham Building, Chatham Maritime, Kent, ME4 4AG.

Advertising, Ms Ann Kettle:

advertising@womenshistorynetwork.org

Steering Committee Liaison, Dr Juliette Pattinson:

liaison@womenshistorynetwork.org

Peer Review, Dr Emma Robertson:

magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org

For magazine back issues and queries please email:

magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org

*You may now join the WHN online – just go to
www.womenshistorynetwork.org and follow the instructions.
Payments, standing-order mandates and Gift-Aid declarations can all be
accessed online as well – see panel on page 27 for further details*

Membership Application

I would like to *join / renew my subscription to the Women's History Network. I */ enclose a cheque payable to Women's History Network / have filled out & returned to my bank the Banker's Order Form / for £ _____ (* delete as applicable)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____ Tel (work): _____

Tick this box if you DO NOT want your name made available to publishers/conference organisers for publicity: ☐
Detach and return this form with, if applicable, your cheque to Dr Henrice Altink, WHN Membership Secretary, Department of History,
University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD
Email: membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

Gift aid declaration

Name of Charity: Women's History Network

Name :

Address:

.....

..... Post Code:

I am a UK taxpayer and I want the charity to treat all donations (including membership subscriptions) I have made since 6 April 2000, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

Signature: _____ Date/...../.....

Notes

1. If your declaration covers donations you may make in the future:

- Please notify the charity if you change your name or address while the declaration is still in force
- You can cancel the declaration at any time by notifying the charity—it will then not apply to donations you make on or after the date of cancellation or such later date as you specify.

2. You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 28p for each £1 you give).

3. If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration (see note 1).

4. If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return.

If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask the charity. Or you can ask your local tax office for leaflet IR113 Gift Aid.

Banker's Order

To (bank) _____

Address _____

Account no.: _____

Pay to the account of the Women's History Network, Account No. 91325692 at the National Westminster Bank, Stuckeys Branch, Bath (sort code 60—02—05), on _____ 20__, and annually thereafter, on the same date, the sum of

(in figures) £ _____ (in words) _____.

Signature: _____