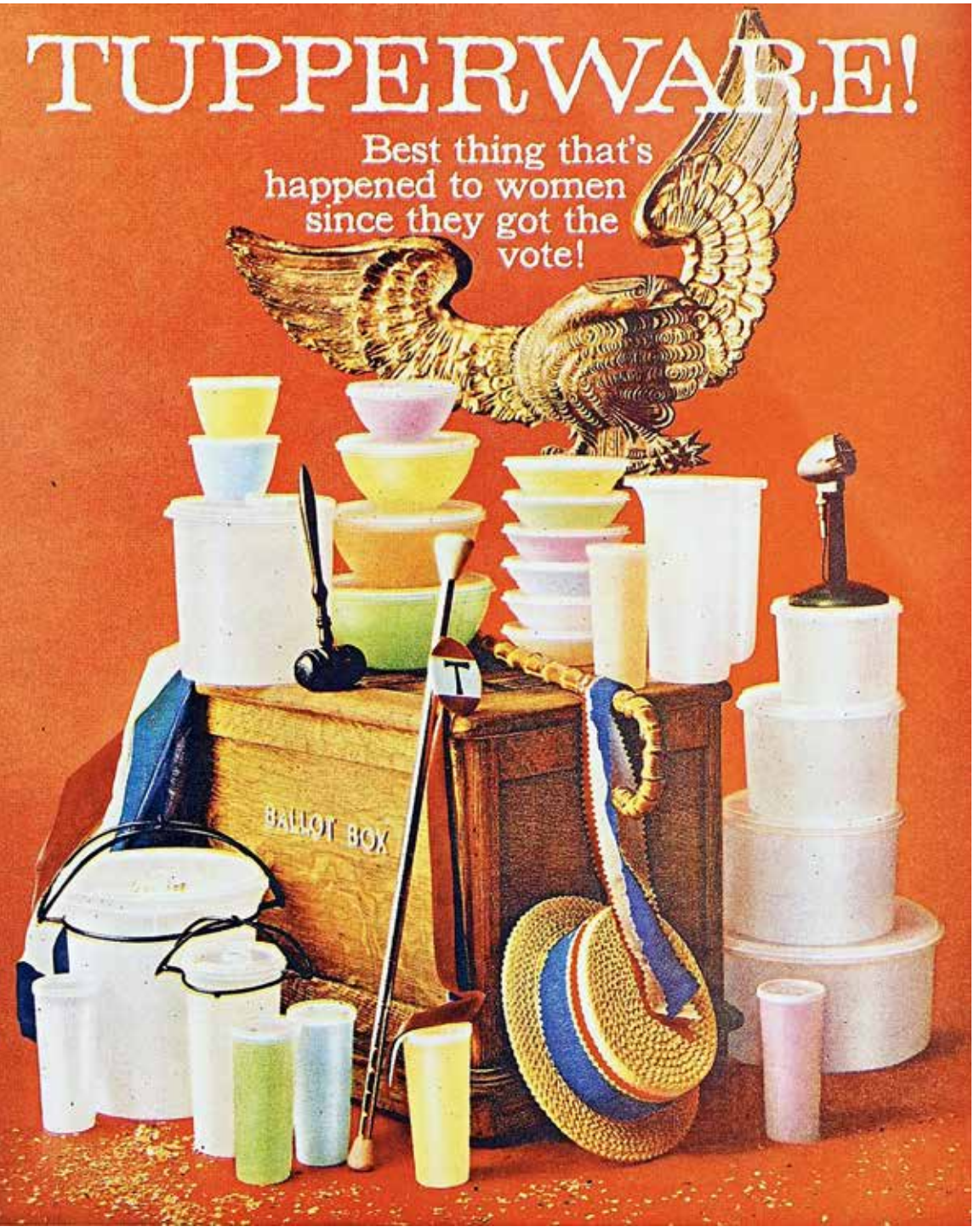
Women's History MAGAZINE



Issue 74
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Sutapa Dutta *on* Identifying Mother India in Bankimchandra Chatterjee's Novels

Rene Kollar *on* Convents, the Bible, and English Anti-Catholicism in the Nineteenth Century

Alyssa Velazquez *on* Tupperware: An Open Container During a Decade of Containment

Plus
- Twenty-one book reviews
- Getting to know each other
- Committee News

women's HISTORY NETWORK

www.womenshistorynetwork.org

University of Worcester

women's HISTORY NETWORK

First Call for Papers

HOME FRONTS: GENDER, WAR AND CONFLICT

Women's History Network Annual Conference
5-7 September 2014 at the University of Worcester

Offers of papers are invited which draw upon the perspectives of women's and gender history to discuss practical and emotional survival on the Home Front during war and conflict. Contributions of papers on a range of topics are welcome and may, for example, explore one of the following areas:

- Food, domesticity, marriage and the ordinariness of everyday life on the Home Front
- The arts, leisure and entertainment during military conflict
- Women's working lives on the Home Front
- Shifting relations of power around gender, class, ethnicity, religion or politics
- Women's individual or collective strategies and tactics for survival in wartime
- Case studies illuminating the particularity of the Home Front in cities, small towns or rural areas
- Outsiders on the Home Front including attitudes to prisoners of war, refugees, immigrants and travellers
- Comparative Studies of the Home Front across time and geographical location
- Representation, writing and remembering the Home Front

Image provided by - The Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

Although the term Home Front was initially used during the First World War, and the conference coincides with the commemorations marking the centenary of the beginning of this conflict, we welcome papers which explore a range of Home Fronts and conflicts, across diverse historical periods and geographical areas.

Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be sent electronically to: maggie.andrews@worc.ac.uk by **1 April 2014.**

For further details visit:
www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/home-fronts-gender-war-and-conflict or
www.womenshistorynetwork.org

Editorial

Welcome to the Spring 2014 issue of *Women's History Magazine*. This is a special issue which focusses on book reviews. There is so much excellent work being published in the field of women's history that we have been building up quite a collection of reviews waiting for publication. Most issues give priority to articles and the space for book reviews has been curtailed, but in this issue the situation is reversed. We hope you enjoy the reviews and find among them a least a couple which whet your appetite.

The reviews cover a wide range of subjects and individuals, including several biographies. Two investigate how women's own stories are hidden behind those of their husbands: pioneering archaeologist Tessa Verney Wheeler and Eslanda Cardozo Goode, the wife of Paul Robeson, are the focus here; a third presents a biography of novelist Olivia Manning; while another recounts the experiences of Adelaide Lubbock who worked for the Allies in Austria in the immediate aftermath of World War Two.

Examination of relationships is a theme shared by two books: between siblings in Georgian England, and between a group of English women and a male relative who lived in China in the second half of the nineteenth century. Slavery in nineteenth-century Cuba, a history of midwifery in Scotland, education of journalists in 1920s and '30s London and a previously lost account of religious and domestic life in eighteenth-century Ireland provide an indication of the breadth and depth of current women's history scholarship.

The collection of reviews includes two longer essays by Clare Mulley and Cheryl Law. Mulley reviews recent scholarship on the subject of twentieth-century female spies, some of whose work has never before been widely acknowledged. Law's article focuses on books which reveal insights into how three individuals from different times and circumstances used their personal and public personas to negotiate territory for themselves as women.

Despite this bumper crop of reviews we still have space for three fascinating articles. The first is from Sutapa Dutta, who takes us into the nineteenth-century world of Bengali author, Bankimchandra Chatterjee. She explores Bankim's novels, and how he attempts to use this literary form to examine a new type of citizenship in India, in the face of growing resistance to British colonialism. Bankim's use of powerful central female characters was instrumental, according to Dutta, in questioning the limits of accepted behaviour, and of creating a new identity for a nation in the making.

The second article is set in nineteenth-century England, but is also interested in how novels can be used to investigate contemporary ideas. Rene Kollar's article studies representations of the anti-Catholic sentiment of mid-century England in the novels of four women writers, who take suspicion of convents as their central theme. The focus in each of these novels is the Catholic Church's 'demonisation' of the Bible as a dangerous book, barred to all but priests and bishops. The lead characters in the novels (all nuns) all come to believe in the power of the Bible and reject their Church's teaching. Ultimately, Kollar argues, the authors failed in their campaign to vilify convents and their inhabitants, as the practical evidence of nuns' positive contribution to society exposed the scaremongering claims of anti-Catholics as nothing more than rhetoric.

The final article, from Alyssa Velazquez, moves to a very different place, this time post-war America and the rise of the Tupperware industry. This article raised childhood memories of the 'Tupperware' lady in our street whose parties my own mother would sometimes attend, returning with plastic bowls with their famous 'burp' seals and (in my memory) a rather odd smell. Velazquez examines how Tupperware became a tool in the US post-war project to re-domesticate its women-folk. Marketed as an essential addition to any respectable woman's kitchen, Tupperware , argues Velazquez, was aspirational. But it was the marketing strategy that was probably more influential in resettling American women in the home. Under the gaze of the indefatigable Brownie Wise (the company's original Tupperware Lady), women across the United States were recruited to the cause of selling the company's products from within their own homes.

As usual this issue also contains news from the network and a profile of one the Network's members, Lesley Hall, in the 'Getting to Know You' column. This is your magazine and we welcome articles, both long and short, which explore women's history in its many guises: send submissions to the **editor@womenshistorynetwork.org**. This is my (Sue's) final issue as a member of the editorial team. It has been a privilege to have been involved and I am going to miss the exposure to new scholarship, as it first arrives 'in the office'. I would like to thank all the authors I have worked with over the last four years or so, and wish the editorial team (and my replacement Rachel Rich) the best of luck for the future.

Editorial Team: Katie Barclay, Lucy Bland, Sue Hawkins, Anne Logan, Kate Murphy, Rachel Rich and Emma Robertson.

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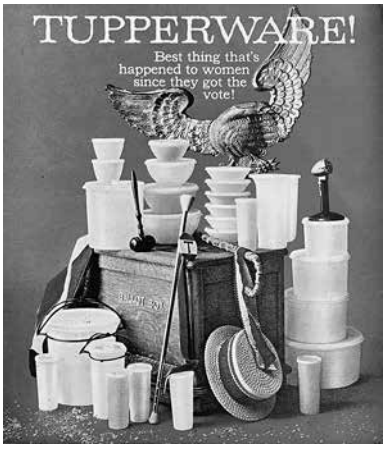

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Brownie Wise Papers, Series D, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Identifying Mother India in Bankimchandra Chatterjee's Novels

Sutapa Dutta
Gargi College, University of Delhi

Literature, because of its inherent nature of interacting with social space and social relations, plays an important role in the formation and representation of identity. Who writes for whom, and why, has no doubt shaped what has been written. The strategies, conscious or otherwise, for identity formation through literature are varied and depend on the social, political, or cultural requirements of the time. In trying to 'read' these strategies and methods, one has to be cautious of generalisations and monolithic categories that can either simplify or overlook the complexities and the differences. Strategies of representation and identity formation are based on power, hierarchy and class, and are formulated on the competing claims of heterogeneous groups by eliding differences, by collaboration and innovation of new parameters of identity. The novel, in particular through its distinctive narrative attribute, has the licence to magnify, play down, obscure, neglect or imagine an entire gamut of characters and actions.

By the end of the nineteenth century a spate of novels was being written in India, influenced no doubt by exposure to Western literature and thought. But the genre, borrowed from the West, was moulded to suit the purpose of addressing or resisting colonialism in British India, when nationalism had become a conspicuous mode of thought in the writings of the Indian intellectuals. Many indigenous narrative forms existed even before the novel made its appearance upon the literary scene in India. History, myths, stories or legends shared by a group of people have always provided a sense of belonging. This is evident in the case of the epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, which have through the centuries played a crucial role in giving an otherwise heterogeneous people a collective self-identity.

This has been evident too in the rest of the world, where folktales, songs and mythology have served to coalesce otherwise amorphous groups of people. The urge to give solidarity and a sense of unity to Germany led to the first serious collection of folktales and folksongs.[1] The rise of the novel in England, coinciding with the rise of nationalism in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europe, shows on the one hand how nationalism affects the course of literature and on the other, how the novel played an important role in creating a national awareness. In England especially, the novels of Richardson, Fielding, Defoe, and later Austen and Dickens, show a definite attempt to create a national prototype and to define what constitutes 'Englishness'. Timothy Brennan in his essay, 'The National Longing for Form', asserts the dependence and inseparability of the two: 'Nations, then, are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role.'[2]

In India, a nation that is multicultural and multilingual with varied social and economic backgrounds, the semantics of belonging can be very complex to understand and explain: who one is and where one belongs can be understood at several abstract levels of meaning. The idea of a nation as defined by Anderson or Bhabha is essentially a Western concept and had never existed in India before the late nineteenth century.[3] A vague idea of a large geographical area variously called *Bharatvarsha*, *Aryavarta* and *Jambudvipa* did exist in the minds of the people but this was largely a cultural rather than a political entity.[4] The idea of India as a political entity came from the West after the British education policy made English the language of higher education in India, and European concepts became easily available to the educated Indians. The need to define a united self was never felt so acutely as when their identity was questioned by the British colonisers who after 1857 had become the masters of India.

Nationalistic feelings in the latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed a preference for indigenous languages over English. It was perhaps the class of English-educated Bengali intelligentsia like Bankimchandra Chatterjee and Michael Madhusudan Dutt who first turned from Western literature and manners towards the Bengali language and a Bengali identity. They tried to amalgamate the diversities of race, language, creed and culture under a new type of citizen - 'Indians'.[5] They realised, what a research student of Calcutta University was to put so succinctly later in 1922:

> ... the establishment of the British supremacy was not seriously thwarted by that jealousy of the foreigner which is the necessary correlative of the sense of nationality. It is not therefore a conquest in the ordinary sense, that is, the subordination by a foreign power of a conquered people's nationality ... Thus the utter lack of nationality in India was historically the cause of the establishment of British rule in the country, and the cause is a continuing one and constitutes the real secret of the continuance of British power.[6]

The political and cultural contact with the outside world gave rise to the need to define the self. A common past or history had to be deliberately re-imagined, retold and recreated to consolidate a group of people. A conscious effort had to be made to invent a nation where none existed before, and to consolidate and bring together a group of people fragmented by internal differences. This required a serious rethinking and refiguring of the inclusion and exclusion of people and ideologies. Nation formation and nationalism influenced by western concepts and discourses had to be incorporated into indigenous ideas of cohesiveness based on religion, caste, locality, region and occupation. At the same time, the emergence of a narrative with an intrinsic wide spectrum of representation became the ideal medium to depict cultural and national identities. In the immediate need to forge a new sense of identity, more and more writers turned towards their mother tongue. This 'renaissance' in Bengali literature was markedly conspicuous by its frequent borrowings of form, style and subject matter of the English writers and poets, almost parading their knowledge of Western literature as a validation of their intellectualism.

The urgency to unite a disjointed people is most prominently seen in the works of the Bengali writer, Bankimchandra Chatterjee (1838-94). He is one of the foremost visionary and literary figures of nineteenth-century India, and Sri Aurobindo best sums up his contributions and achievements when he asserts: 'Bankim created a language, a literature and a nation.'[7] Bankim can be credited with popularising the spoken Bengali language, for arousing feelings of nationalism and patriotism through his literary works, and for creating consciousness among the masses for liberation from foreign rule. Bankim realised the immense potential of the past: the past was by no means a finished story of dead people. Instead it became a potent formative factor to stir up, discover, and shape the present. His works attempt to create an 'Indian' identity by retelling the heroic past and the heroic characters of India through mythological legends, genealogical records or ancient Sanskrit literature. The construction of a particular past and the glorification of this imagined past could be seen as a resistance – a subjugated people's way of retrieving their self-respect; though in their attempt to assert their identity vis-à-vis the British, the intellectual Bengalis were compelled to adopt the terms of discourse dictated by the colonial rulers.

Bankim had, in his essays, stressed the need to chronicle one's own history; of creating a mass consciousness, and he attempted to do this through his novels too.[8] This can be seen as the first phase of any national movement, one that E. J. Hobsbawm calls purely cultural, literal and folkloric.[9] Realising the special significance that historical narratives have for the Hindus, Bankim made full use of them. Moreover, history in the form of imaginative literature could enjoy the privilege of exaggerating, highlighting, distorting or eliding certain characters and incidents without offending the reader or making him question the authenticity of the narrative. It had the potential to exclude or include and to emphasise how tentative identity could be.

Rajmohan's Wife, Bankim's first novel (serialised in 1864) and the only one he wrote in English, is emblematic of the author's search for a national identity. Matangini, the spirited female protagonist, represents a new female subjectivity, for the first time in Indian literature. She is the symbolic representation of what the new India can be – beautiful, yet courageous and strong willed. Her vitality, her strength, her charm and her femininity personify what Bankim envisages as a new identity for the country. This was Bankim's first attempt at novel writing, and by no means a satisfactory one, but it does illustrate future possibilities, wherein the female characters could be harnessed with the unprecedented task of recreating the spirit of the emerging nation.

Most of Bankim's novels are named after his female protagonists, for instance Durgesnandini, Mrinalini or Debi Chaudhurani. They are bold emancipated women who can make independent and often radically audacious decisions regarding their lives. They go beyond societal expectations and norms, and exercise incredible power and clout over their surroundings even when confined within a narrow domestic sphere. In creating radical heroines in his novels, Bankim not only pioneered a new trend in literature, but was also responsible for creating an image of womanhood that was fundamentally different from the traditional social roles of contemporary women.[10] Women's participation in the public sphere, let alone politics, was negligible; their roles and activities remained primarily confined to the domestic arena, and the few women who dared to emerge out of the patriarchal confinement were disapproved of. It is significant that, even after the Great Revolt of 1857, women were not accepted in the nationalist movement. A new journal for women begun in 1875 clearly stated: 'We will not discuss political events and controversies because politics would not be interesting or intelligible to women in this country at present.'[11] In colonial India, the private sphere remained outside the scope of the intervention rights of rulers, and the absence of female rights was attributed to the Brahmanical sacred texts. Men wanted their women to adhere to the gender and domestic practices as spelt out and prescribed by religion.[12] By the middle of the nineteenth century reformists questioned and challenged the moral and ethical basis of Hindu orthodoxy. Rammohan Roy's argument for the abolition of *Sati* (the self immolation of widows) and Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar's ceaseless efforts in support of the remarriage of widows no doubt enabled the discourse to spill over from the sacred/religious sphere to the social domain. This saw a tentative articulation of women's rights – for property rights, education, marriage and entitlement to life. But it was not till the next century that women could articulate their dissatisfaction through self-narratives and dissent about the everyday social injustices meted out to them.

Bankim's heroines occupy that nebulous position between the public and the private. The roles that these women play are manifold: a self-sacrificing mother, a housewife whose duty is to look after the home and the hearth, or a rebel who does not follow the dictates of her mother-in-law; sometimes an outlaw, and if need be a warrior and fighter on the battlefield. Bankim counterposes the idealised romantic, classical heroines with more active, strong willed and mature women. It was not unusual for western-educated people like Bankim, married to young girl brides, to fantasise about a more passionate and intellectually fulfilling relationship.[13] The female fictional characters central to Bankim's novels often transcend Hindu domestic conventions and traditional gender paradigms, but the subjectivity of women still remained largely a male construct. It was what men wanted to see in their women. The women are replete with qualities that the country required at this point in time – calm and dignified, patient and determined, but protectors and defenders when challenged or attacked. They are the mothers who could wean the future generation on courage and determination, and raise 'masculine' sons who would be imbued with aggression and combativeness.[14]

Durgeshnandini (1865), Bankim's first novel in Bengali, uses a tale of romance, valour and honour to add a new dimension to the existing social barriers and relationships between Hindus and Muslims. The women characters, Tillotama, the daughter of a Hindu chieftain, and Ayesha, the daughter of the Muslim rebel Katlu Khan, both come across as heroic figures who face their fate with dignity and determination. Bimala, Tillotama's mother, is portrayed as a valiant woman who avenges her husband's death by beheading Katlu Khan. The novel heralded a new era in Bengali literature by its frank exposition of romance and love, and also by its bold theme that dared to transcend

accepted religious and gender stereotypes.

Mrinalini (1869), Bankim's third novel, was to refute the popular myth perpetuated by Muslims that Hindus were easily defeated because of their inherent weakness. Bankim's attempt to arouse nationalist feelings was implicitly based on establishing the idea that people need to write their own history. As long as the outsider's account of the past is accepted the indigenous people would invariably be wrongly represented. With his characteristic sarcasm Bankim points out the vulnerability of any historical representation, especially the 'Other's' version of 'facts':

> When men wrote a story about lions the latter were shown as defeated and humiliated. If lions were to write the story how would they have depicted men? Men would have been described as insignificant pests, no doubt. Our unfortunate country is usually weak and submissive, and then on top of it to be portrayed by our enemies! [15]

In *Anandamath* (1882), Bankim made use of two historical events, the rebellion in North Bengal and Bihar in the 1770s and the killings of two Englishmen, Captain Thomas and Captain Edwards, in December 1772 and March 1773 respectively. *Anandamath* is in many ways a reflection of what the author's attitude was towards his own past in relation to the West, enigmatic and complex. Bankim's position as a government servant, the overbearing attitude of the British and the prosecution of the dissenting Indians were some of the factors that constrained his overt representation of the nationalist spirit, forcing him not only to tone down the obvious differences with the English, but also to give the novel an ambivalent closure. He was, to borrow Sisir Kumar Das's term, 'the artist in chains' struggling to get his message of militant patriotism across to the people of India and also cautious not to bite the hand that fed him.[16]*Anandamath* became the Bible for the young revolutionaries of Bengal and the song '*Vande Mataram*' (Hail to the Motherland) their gospel.

Devi Chaudhurani (1884) was again a revolutionary work which successfully portrayed the multiple roles that women were capable of. Bankim's portrayal of a brave woman, who rebelled against patriarchal norms and became the leader of a group of outlaws fighting against the British oppression, filled hundreds of women with revolutionary zeal and inspired them to join the independence struggle. In the story, Prafulla is thrown out of her home by her father-in-law. Helpless and shelterless, she meets Bhabani Pathak, a well-known dacoit. Following a path of asceticism, dedication and rigorous physical training in martial arts, she follows the path shown by Bhabani Pathak and becomes the most revered and feared dacoit in southern Bengal. She is renamed Devi Chaudhurani, the Goddess-Queen, the arbiter of people's fate, the wise and the compassionate. Her elevated position and power enables her to protect the weak and fight the tormentors. The novel explicitly blames the British colonisers for perpetuating terror and suffering and graphically describes the torture they inflicted on the old, the children and the women – stripping the women in public, chopping their breasts and raping them. The imagery of violence, abuse and rape not only reinforces the symbolism of the land as a woman being exploited by the oppressors, but at the same time also legitimises the need to combat aggression with militarism. Devi Chaudhurani, like most of Bankim's female protagonists, is simultaneously the protected and the protector. She is the new India, no longer weak and oppressed, but more belligerent, the annihilator of oppressors, a decider of her own fate.

Bankim's last novel *Rajsingha,* first published in *Bangadarshan* as a short novel in 1877-78 and later developed into a full length novel in 1893, is what the author himself claims to be truly a historical novel. The characters, Aurangzeb, Rajsingha, Zeb-un-nissa and Udipuri, are historical figures and the battles between the Rajput ruler Rajsingha and the Muslim emperor Aurangzeb are historically verifiable. But these, as Sisir Kumar Das puts it, 'do not make *Rajsingha* as a novel more historical than his other novels for which he [Bankim] did not claim that distinction'.[17] Bankim's implicit purpose in writing this novel was to glorify the past and create a sense of unity among the people of India.

The backdrop of these novels in most cases was Rajasthan or Maharashtra and the characters were brave and valiant Rajputs or Marathas who fought to protect their motherland from the outsiders. In the nationalistic literature of the period the blame for the country's backwardness and degradation was squarely put on the shoulders of the erstwhile Muslim rulers who had ruled over the country in the past, even though the Hindus and the Muslims lived compatibly in their day-to-day life. The anti-Muslim stance in the literature of this time was a more convenient way of articulating the hostility felt towards the 'outsiders' and expressing the resentment that could not be openly expressed against the British.

The urban educated elite's anxiety to create an 'authentic Indian-ness' could be seen as a reaction against the coloniser's version of the 'orient' as ignorant, effeminate, lazy and disloyal. To counteract the tag of effeminacy, Hindus needed to project a much more proactive, virile and aggressive image of themselves. The counterpoising of an opposite argument by Indian intellectuals therefore meant a certain degree of acceptance of the dominant ideology of the colonisers. Instead of finding an alternative framework in which the oppressed would not seem weak or degraded, they implicitly accepted the colonial ideology that the present India was degraded and decrepit and went on to demonstrate that India's past was civilised, glorious and authentic. Indologists such as Ronald Inden have clearly demonstrated the firm influence of western cultural dominion over the imagination of the typical Indian elite.[18] Partha Chatterjee has emphasised that the very keywords of Indian nationalist discourse are borrowed Western terms. He states that 'there is ... an inherent contradictoriness in nationalist thinking, because it reasons within a framework of knowledge whose representational structure corresponds to the very structure of colonial power nationalist thought seeks to repudiate'.[19] Chatterjee's argument is based on the premise that while such imagining of identities was a 'derivative discourse', there were constant manipulations seeking an intellectual validation of colonial discourses in the fragmentary anti-colonial consciousness of Indian nationalists. Nationalist discourse gets entangled in the skein of multiple and conflicting discursive narratives in which the West remains the praxis for authenticating, validating

and establishing the precise definition of Indian-ness.

In identifying the ideological and political categories of the unifying linkages, Bankim was implicitly recognising and incorporating the western concept of nation. His historical novels that appear to be using the malleability of history actually get caught in the stereotypes constructed by colonial historiography. So Bankim's *Krishnacharitra* (1886) purposely elides the pastoral phase in Lord Krishna's life and focuses on Krishna as the apostle of duty. Bankim does not dwell on the fun-loving, frolicking, adolescent Krishna who dances with the damsels on the banks of the Yamuna River, but depicts him only in the next phase as a strong, virile, masculine warrior. The ideal man, as Bankim elucidates in 'The Aim' of writing *Krishnacharitra*, is the one who possesses 'scholarship in knowledge, competence in judgment, promptitude in work, piety at heart, connoisseurship in taste. Again above that, the body must be strong, healthy and expert in all types of physical exertion'. He asserts that the intention in writing *Krishnacharitra* was not to establish Krishna's divinity but to 'discuss only his human character'.[20] For him, the brave warriors from our mythologies, like Ramachandra, Yudhisthira, Arjuna, Laksmana and Devavrata Bhisma are more admirable and complete as human beings than godly sages such as Narada or Vasistha. Bankim admires the manliness of the *Kshatriyas* (the Hindu royal and warrior class) more than the passive divinity of the ascetic *Brahmins* (the priest and the scholar). It is therefore the *Kshatriyas*, whose greatest representative, according to Bankim, is Krishna himself, who 'possess all qualities and it is in them that all the faculties have developed fully. They [the *Kshatriyas*] are aloof though seated on thrones, fond of truth though wielding the bow, scholars though monarchs, powerful yet filled with love for all'.[21] The *Kshatriyas* therefore represented agency, militancy and potency. The valorisation of Kshatriyahood came to be projected for specific contemporary socio-political purpose, which then by extension was made to appear synonymous with Hinduism.

If Bankim's purpose in elucidating masculine characters was an attempt to nullify the charge of effeminacy levelled by the Europeans on the Indian men, his heroines too prove, to quote Ashis Nandy, 'the critical role that women as a symbol and womanliness as an aspect of Indian identity have played in the literature of this time'.[22] The equation between women and political potency was not new in Hindu culture and can be seen in the *Mahabharata* and the mythologies. *Shakti*, the primordial feminine energy, in the embodiment of woman was not new but its potential was being harnessed for the first time in literature for a definite political purpose. In India, as in most agricultural countries, Nature has always been associated with the feminine principle, both with its benign beauty and the terrific havoc it can cause; with nourishment, and also with famine and fatal diseases. The dominant image of the land, *dharitri,* is that of the nurturer, the all-sustaining land, the provider of food and shelter. Similarly all natural calamities were associated with the female principle, *Prakriti* (Nature). It was common to worship the cow, the *tulsi* (the basil plant), and fatal diseases like small pox as 'mother'.

In Bengal, the mother goddess became a potent figuration for Hindu nationalism. She was dissociated from the more rigid ritual practices of the two great sectarian traditions of Bengali devotionalism, the Shakta and the Vaishnav, who worshipped the Kali and Durga respectively. Both deities admirably suited the nationalist purpose of the times. The nationalists developed the double persona of the goddess, of the Nurturer and the Destroyer. She could either be the fair, serene, benign mother Durga surrounded by her four children, or she could be the dark, naked Kali, the tongue-lolling annihilator, a garland of skulls around her neck, dancing in rage, with her foot poised over the prostrate Lord Shiva. Worship of Kali formerly done only by the marginal sections of the society such as dacoits and prostitutes, came to be slowly appropriated by the urban *nouveau riche* of Bengal. Durga, the other co-ordinate of the *Shakti* image was a mother figure, the benign protector, the provider of food and nurture (the Goddess Annapurna). Durga worship became a popular religious and cultural festival associated with the elite castes.[23] In evoking the land as a goddess, Bankim was simply harnessing for fictional purposes the Bengali's fixation with the '*devi*', the goddess cult which has been pervasive over thousands of years. As Tanika Sarkar puts it, this was a neat way of allowing a 'new deity [to] slid[e] smoothly into the Hindu theogony as an always-already-there, a given'.[24]

In the first part of Bankim's *Sitaram*, as a frenzied Shri interrupts a fight between the Hindus and the Muslims, she appears as Chandi, a personification of the female principle; a mother goddess with ten hands who is supplicated by the gods to kill the demon Mahisasura in order to liberate the oppressed people of the earth. Bankim describes her as:

> ... the long-haired, dusky Chandi with her two feet strongly implanted on the two branches of a tree, her left hand held a branch, with her right hand she spun the end of her sari in the air and shouted, "Kill! Kill! Kill the enemy!" As if the goddess herself stood on the back of a lion fighting in the battlefield. As if the Mother intoxicated by the desire to kill the demon was calling, "Kill! Kill! Kill the enemy!" A shameless, possessed, fearless and unrelenting Shri kept shouting, "Kill! Kill the enemy! – The enemy of the gods, the enemy of men, the enemy of the Hindus, my enemy – kill them." Her beautiful arms, parted lips, dilated nostrils, glittering eyes, hair falling on her forehead moist with sweat inspired all the Hindus who shouted 'Victory to Mother Chandi' and rushed towards the enemy.[25]

In Bankim's novel, *Anandamath*, Satyananda Thakur, the Brahmachari leader, leads Mahendra into a temple in the forest. In the first chamber Mahendra sees an extremely beautiful, bejewelled image of a smiling Goddess:

> Mahendra asks, "Who is she?" and the Brahmachari replies, "Mother as she was." Next Mahendra is taken to a dimly lit room where he sees the image of Kali.
>
> The Brahmachari said, "See this is what the Mother is now."
>
> Mahendra fearfully said, "Kali."
>
> Brahmachari: Kali shrouded in darkness, the

> Dark Mother. Impoverished, that is why she is naked. Today the entire country is a cremation ground – that is why the Mother wears a garland of skulls.
>
> Then Mahendra is taken through a tunnel that leads into a brightly lit chamber, which is filled with the sweet songs of birds. Here Mahendra sees the golden image of the ten-armed Goddess, laughing and looking radiant in the new light of the morning. The Brahmachari saluted her and said, "This is what the Mother will become."[26]

Bankim was not the first one to construct Durga/Kali as the embodiment of the Motherland. Emergent nationalism was utilising the trope of Motherland in literary creations for dramatising the present abject state of the nation. Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay first published anonymously in 1866 a satirical piece titled 'Unabimsa Purana' ('The Nineteenth Purana') which identified Bharat Mata as the embodiment of all that is essentially Aryan. In 1873, a play by Kiranchandra Chatterjee called *Bharatmata* captured the attention and the imagination of the public. It depicted the Motherland as a weak, weeping dismal figure stripped of all her possessions, kicked and ill-treated while her children remained oblivious to her misery. [27]

In *Anandmath*, Bankim did not have to 'imagine' the Motherland: it already existed as a tangible deity, a part of the Hindu pantheon to be worshipped and glorified. The land is objectified as a mother figure, one who is not to be pitied but is powerful, angry and desirous of revenge. Bankim wrote the lyric of *Vande Mataram* in 1876 in a mixture of Bengali and Sanskrit and this was published in *Anandamath* in 1882 as a patriotic slogan. The Motherland is envisaged as prosperous, rich with an abundant harvest, to be protected by her seventy million children:

> Who hath said thou art weak in thy lands
>
> When swords flash out in seventy million hands
>
> And seventy million voices roar
>
> Thy dreadful name from shore to shore?
>
> With many strengths thou art mighty and stored,
>
> To thee I call Mother and Lord!
>
> Thou who saves, arise and save![28]

Bankim's *Vande Mataram* was a call to save the Motherland, an evocation of the land as it *used to be* in the past, a land of plenitude, green and ripe with corn, strong and free. The song invokes the image of an imperial demon-slaying figure who, like the Goddess Durga, will vanquish her enemies and recover grandeur. Patriotism is provided with a glowing figure of a goddess to be worshipped and her people must save her. In deifying a female figure as the Motherland, Bankim was associating the 'mother' with certain paradigmatically traditional qualities of motherhood and womanhood. As a mother figure she is the 'gentle' and 'caring,' a 'nurturer' of her seventy million children. When threatened by enemies she can be the fierce protector, the aggressive fighter. Bankim's construction of an 'Indian' identity through the symbol of the land as a woman dealt with complex and ambivalent ideologies. It was a linking of idealised womanhood with nationalism. Could Bankim's espousal of women be seen as radically modern or was it a glorification of past traditions?

Almost all of Bankim's novels which are centred on women (whether it be Tillotama and Ayesha in *Durgeshnandini*; Mrinalini, Manorama in *Mrinalini;* Suryamukhi, Kunda in *Bishbriksha*; Saibalini in *Chandrashekhar*; Rohini and Bharamar in *Krishnakanter Will*; Debi in *Debi-Chaudhurani*; Shri in *Sitaram*; Kalyani and Shanti in *Anandamath;* or Chanchal and Nirmal in *Rajsingha)* show a curious synthesis between the submissive and the empowered roles of women. The novel *Rajsingha,* though named after the hero, should also arguably be named after the heroine. Though Rajsingha is important as far as his status as a king is concerned, it is actually the women in the novel who propel the action. Without transgressing the accepted feminine qualities, Bankim's heroines are made to possess power and agency. In the process they are cast in a double role. Like most of his female protagonists, Chanchal and Nirmal are paragons of beauty and therefore vulnerable, so that they have to be protected, and this becomes the extended metaphor for the Motherland to be protected from territorial aggression. On the other hand, beauty itself empowers them. Nirmal's beauty and wit overpowers Aurangzeb so that far from punishing her for her impudence he fulfils most of her whims. Chanchal's divine beauty in the battlefield impresses the chief of the Mughal army, Mubarak, so much so that he declines to fight with the Rajputs and leaves with his army.

These women brought up in the sheltered comfort of palaces often break the standard feminine paradigms. They go against their fathers' wishes, propose to men whom they want to marry, enter the battlefield with naked swords in their hands, and are successfully able to cheat, deceive and manipulate their enemies with their superior intelligence and martial art. The exact balance of meekness and aggressiveness, of coyness and coldness, of feminine grace and intelligence is manipulated with extreme dexterity in an attempt to create and fulfil the need for a woman who can fight against oppression and injustice, and yet can be contained within the patriarchal society. So, Chanchal the Princess of Roopnagar, the quintessence of beauty and femininity can appear as Chandi on the battlefield, 'a goddess with huge eyes and a smile on her face' and be hailed as 'the Mother Goddess … Victory to Mother Kali' as she faces the fifty thousand armed Mughal soldiers.[29] Her action does not surprise the readers, nor are they intended to find her role inappropriate, because a page later Bankim explains why Rajput women 'have to' transgress the traditional limits of womanliness. Seeing a woman with a sword in her hand and leading the Rajput army, the chief of the Mughal army tauntingly asks Rajsingha:

> "Since when have the brave men of Udaipur been under the protection of women?"
>
> Rajsingha's burning eyes emitted fire. He said, "Since the day the Mughal Emperor has started oppressing the helpless, since then the Rajput women have gained strength."[30]

The figure that captured the literary imagination of nineteenth- and twentieth-century India was that of a powerful, independent and self-confident woman who could be a custodian of the moral life of both the household and the nation. In Bankim's novels the women simultaneously defined as well as defied the normal canons of femininity. They were at the same time 'both the symbol of a ravaged order and of the resistance to such ravage.'[31] In most instances, such as Debi Chaudhurani, Shri, Shanti or Chanchalkumari, the ravaged order itself gives them the strength and the resolution to resist. Yet, in Bankim, as in the other nationalistic writers of this period, the position of women is ambivalent. On the one hand characters like Shri, Shanti, Debi Chaudhurani and Chanchal are *Viranganas* – women who appropriate masculine attributes by joining the army in the battlefield with a sword in their hands. On the other hand, and often simultaneously, their weaknesses as women become their strength. Their spiritual strength lay in the fact that they were women, an ideology that Gandhi was to adopt later. As Tanika Sarkar points out, Bankim could not 'actualise a male agent for such redemption' as he always visualised the 'virtuous' woman empowered with 'divine energy' to save Hindu power and glory.[32] Thus Devi Chaudhurani, the dacoit who struck terror into the heart of many, still holds the rein in the private domain when she comes back as the third wife of Brajeshwar; and Chanchal, a radiant *Shakti* figure who leads the Rajput army against the Mughals, can threaten to consume poison because according to her, 'If you men know how to die fighting, cannot we women give up our lives too?'[33] Similarly, Nirmal when threatened with death by Aurangzeb replies:

> The daughter of a Hindu is not afraid to die by fire. Has the emperor of Hindus never heard that Hindu women can smilingly accompany her husband on the burning pyre? The death that you are threatening me with, my mother, my grandmother, and my ancestors have died the same death. I too pray that by the grace of God I can get a place besides my husband and die by burning myself on his pyre.[34]

It must be remembered that the practice of *Sati* had reached a climax during the East India Company's rule especially in Bengal. From 1815-1828 the Bengal Presidency recorded the highest figure for immolation of widows on their husband's pyre. The *Sati* was a person to be respected and venerated and was considered to embody a high ideal of womanhood. Immediately after William Bentick abolished *Sati* in 1828, the *Samachara Chandrika* let out a volley of criticism in its editorial and published protests from the influential section of the public.[35] While most of the Bengali intellectuals of subsequent generations may have been against the barbaric practice in real life, the emotive value of the image of a woman in the past who had the courage to face death for an abstract ideal continued to be potent in literature.[36] Also, the Rajput practice of *Jauhar*, where the women of the royal household threw themselves into a burning pyre in order to save their chastity from the invading enemies, still continued to have a strong emotional appeal. It would be wrong to say that Bankim approved of these practices, though such a position has sometimes been criticised as 'retrogressive.'[37] Partha Chatterjee[38] and Sumit Sarkar[39] feel that the framework of the nationalist ideology was not posited on an idea of identity but on a difference with the perceived forms of cultural modernity of the West. Chatterjee tries to expound the 'women's question' both from the point of tradition and nationalism, and concludes that the difference is a principle of 'selection': 'Fundamental elements of social conservatism such as the maintenance of caste distinctions and patriarchal forms of authority in the family, acceptance of the sanctity of the *sastra* (scriptures), … all these were conspicuous in the reform movements of the early and mid-nineteenth century.'[40]

What Bankim certainly tried to do was to harness the image of the courageous and self-annihilating woman for nationalist purpose. He sought to create a political model of womanhood, a more militant one, albeit within the restricted parameters defined by Hindu devotional text and mythology. The objectification of the female, a notion that had clearly become widely accepted in the nationalistic literature of this period, denied autonomy and empowerment to the woman as an individual. Like the land and its culture, the woman's purity and honour had to be saved from the outsiders by her own people. The body of the woman was representative of the nation itself and had to be protected from the violence and aggression of the foreign adversary. By drawing on traditional symbols of female power Bankim was emphasising women's strength and appealing to them as self-conscious arbiters of their own destiny. Self-immolation of Hindu women in order to show their firmness of mind, and adherence to *dharma* (righteousness) gave them a sense of power. This was the only way in which, without transgressing the limits of womanhood, they could emerge victorious in a patriarchal society. Paradoxically in the act of dying with her husband to prove that she was true to him and virtuous, the victim of patriarchy could appropriate power for herself. Bankim's novels posed with audacity what Tagore would invoke so clearly later, how nationalism itself became a 'site' to contest the inside/outside, home/world disjunction and tried to place women in this bifurcated model.[41] As Sarkar wrote of Bankim, 'His radicalism consists in opening several worlds in which radical possibilities flicker, exist, and are extinguished.'[42] Bankim's female characters grapple with issues of conjugality, domesticity and sexuality, and often find themselves in complex emotional and social crises. Bankim's heroines are not passive mute objects to be protected by the male protagonists; rather they are instrumental in playing an active autonomous role in questioning the limits of accepted and transgressive behaviour, in defining the identity of a nation in the making.

Notes

1. According to Bakhtin, 'The novel's roots must ultimately be sought in folklore.' Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Epic and novel,' in *The Dialogic Imagination,* ed. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Texas, University of Texas Press, 1981), 38.

2. Timothy Brennan, 'The National Longing for Form' in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhabha (London and New York, Routledge, 1990), 49.

3. Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, Verso, 1983).

4. Reference to Bharatvarsha and Jambudvipa can be found

in *Bhaktivedanta Vedabasa: Srimad Bhagavatam* 5:19:31: '*evam tava bharatottama jambudvipa-varsa-vibhago yathopadasam upavarnita iti'*. ('I have thus described to you, as I have been instructed, the island of Bharat-varsha and its adjoining islands. These are the islands that constitute Jambudvipa.' Translation from Sanskrit to English by Swami Prabhupada, founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness).

5. Bankim occasionally uses the word *Bharatiya* for the inhabitants of *Bharat* (the ancient name for India). But for Bankim, caste, religion and community affiliations were tantamount to national patriotism.

6. Sukumar Dutt, 'Problem of Indian Nationality' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Calcutta, 1926), 11. Dutt's thesis received the University Jubilee Research Prize in 1922.

7. Sri Aurobindo, 'Our Hope in the Future', *Indu Prakash* (1894), 102.

8. See Bankim's essays 'Bharatvarsher Swadhinta ebong Paradhinta', 'Bharat Kalanka', 'Banglar Itihas' in *Bankim Rachana Samgraha,* Vol.I, Part I – Essays (Calcutta, 1973).

9. E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), 12.

10. Geraldine Forbes studies the changing position of women as a result of the social reform movements in the nineteenth century in *Women in Modern India* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998).

11. *Ibid*., 122.

12. For what constituted 'virtue' in women, see Forbes, *Women in Modern India*; Tanika Sarkar, *Rebels, Wives, Saints*: *Designing Selves and Nations in Colonial Times* (New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2009); and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, *Real and Imagined Women: Gender, Culture and Postcolonialism* (New York and London, Routledge, 1993).

13. Bankim confessed that Kalidasa's coy heroines compared unfavourably to Shakespeare's Miranda and Desdemona, who were more articulate about their feelings and love. Bankimchandra Chatterjee, 'Shakuntala, Miranda ebong Desdemona' in *Bankim Rachana Samgraha,* 253.

14. Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995).

15. Bankimchandra Chatterjee, *Mrinalini*, 244, included in the collection of his novels *Bankim Rachnavali Upanyas Samagr*a, *Vol.I.* ed. Jogeshchandra Bagal (Tuli Kalam, Calcutta, 1986). All further references to Bankim's novels wherever quoted would be made from this volume and would be indicated only as *BR*. Translations from the original Bengali have been done by the author of this article.

16. Sisir Kumar Das, *The Artist in Chains: The Life of Bankimchandra Chatterj*ee (New Delhi, New Statesman Publishing Company, 1984).

17. *Ibid*., 189-90.

18. Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990).

19. Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1986), 38.

20. Bankimchandra Chatterjee, *Krishnachritra* in *Bankim Rachana Samgraha*, 556.

21. *Ibid.,* 557. Krishna may have had all the qualities of a *Kshatriya,* but by caste he was a *Yadav*. Thus when Bankim calls Krishna the greatest representative of the *Kshatriyas* he is not alluding to Krishna's caste but the ideals of manhood.

22. Ashis Nandy, *At the Edge of Psychology* (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1993), 40.

23. Krishnachandra Ray, the Hindu king of Kishnagore in Bengal, introduced the annual worship of Durga in the late eighteenth century. Tanika Sarkar, *Rebels*, 219.

24. *Ibid.,* 193.

25. *BR*, I., 835.

26. *BR*, I., 683.

27. Indira Choudhary, *The Frail Hero and Virile History* (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1998), 99.

28. The English translation of Vande Mataram was rendered by Sri Aurobindo.

29. *BR*, I., 604.

30. *BR*, I., 606.

31. Jasodhara Bagchi, 'The Economic and Political Weekly' in *Women Writing in India,* Vol.I, ed. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1991), 173.

32. Tanika Sarkar, 'Bankimchandra and the Impossibility of a Political Agenda'*, Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Communal, Religion and Cultural Nationalism* (New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2001), 161.

33. *BR*, I., 606.

34. *BR*, I., 627.

35. Upendra Thakur*, History of Suicide* (Delhi, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, 1963), 176.

36. Rabindranath Tagore wrote a passionate homage to all those widows who chose to immolate themselves on the pyre of their husband: 'Salutations to all those grandmothers of Bengal who sacrificed their lives. She who nurtured the nation, do not forget her even if you be in the heaven. O, Aryan woman, promote your beloved sons from troubles and anxieties of the world ... You have beautified the death and sanctified it too ... By your sacred sacrifice of yourself the flames of Bengal have purified ... We will bow down before the fire which is imperishable ... Death, how easy, how glowing, and how noble it is'. Cited in Thakur, *History of Suicide*, 183-84.

37. Ghulam Murshid, *Reluctant Debutante: Response of Bengali Women to Modernization, 1849-1905* (Rajshahi, Rajshahi University Press, 1983).

38. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*: *Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1997).

39. Sumit Sarkar, *A Critique of Colonial Reason* (Calcutta, Papyrus, 1985).

40. Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*, 117.

41. For a detailed analysis see Sumit Sarkar 'Nationalism and Stri-Swadhinta: The Contexts and Meanings of Rabindranath's *Ghare-Baire', Beyond Nationalist Frames: Relocating Postmodernism, Hindutva, History* (New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2002).

42. Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation,* 150.

Convents, the Bible, and English Anti-Catholicism in the Nineteenth Century

Rene Kollar

St. Vincent College, Latrobe, PA, USA

Introduction

Literature played an important part in the life of Victorian England. Works of fiction not only served as vehicles for entertainment and relaxation, but also addressed topics which were of interest to all segments of society. Novelists discussed domestic politics, foreign affairs and numerous social problems which confronted nineteenth century England. The authors wanted to inform the reading public about issues which might threaten to disrupt English society. Religion, and in particular the fear of Catholicism, was the subject of numerous novels. Throughout the century, the number of Roman Catholic convents increased, and believing this development could threaten the English way of life, some novelists took this theme. Religious sisterhoods consequently became the subject of numerous works of fiction, and when the authors were female, the message had an even greater impact. Emotional topics such as alleged loss of individual freedom and cruel punishments were discussed, but writers like Mary Martha Sherwood, Rachel McCrindell, Jemina Luke and Jeanie Selina Dammast also argued that Catholic convents berated and belittled an important aspect of English life, the Bible.

The Protestant culture of England has been well documented by historians. Linda Colley, in *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, points out that the threat of Catholicism from within and outside of the country still haunted the English during the eighteenth century. 'The struggles of the Protestant Reformation had not ended', she argues, 'but were to be fought out over and over again.'[1] But where would these besieged Protestant believers find support and comfort? Colley points out that people 'turned to the Bible, to sermons and homilies, and to a vast popular literature' for reassurance.[2] According to historian Hugh McLeod, Victorian popular religion was strongly Protestant, '[its] chief foundation … was the Bible, and a detailed knowledge of the Bible was general among those who made any claim to be religious.'[3] Scripture reading in Protestant households was seen as essential, and an increase in production of printed Bibles, from the inexpensive to the lavish, met this need.[4] English ecclesiastical historian Edward Norman, on the other hand, points out that 'Catholics did not even have the popular culture of the open Bible,'[5] and consequently, 'the Protestant construction of British identity involved the unprivileging of minorities who would not conform', such as Roman Catholics.[6] The significance of the Bible was also a central theme in Victorian literature.[7] Authors, including Sherwood, McCrindell, Luke and Dammast, acknowledged its importance and described the apparent disregard of this fundamental text by the Catholic sisterhoods recently established in England.

During the nineteenth century, a vocal minority of Protestants felt threatened by the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 and the Restoration of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in England and Wales (1850). The stream of prominent converts (such as John Henry Newman) to Rome occasioned by the Oxford Movement, and a steady increase in the Catholic population due primarily to Irish immigration, served to exacerbate this feeling of threat. Loyal Protestants looked with suspicion on Roman Catholics because of their purported neglect for the Bible. According to historian Timothy Larsen, 'a Catholic advance meant *ipso facto* a diminution of the place of the Bible in English life.'[8] The publication of the Old and New Testaments in the vernacular and the emphasis on their primacy in matters of religion, divided Protestants and their Catholic counterparts in England into two rival camps: 'Catholic claims to authority were based upon the Petrine rock of the Church of Rome, whose interpretation of both the Bible and tradition on major matters of faith and doctrine was regarded as infallible. Protestant claims were based upon the rock of the Scriptures …'[9] This division tended to increase the suspicion between these two religions.

Critics characterised Roman Catholics as 'idolatrous' people who lived their lives by 'downgrading the true Word of God, the Bible.'[10] In *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century*, Edward Norman captures this prejudice which appeared in the pages of anti-Catholic diatribes: 'All the literature emphasised the apparent lack of respect paid to the authority of the Bible in the Catholic Church, and the exaltation of ecclesiastical authority "priestcraft".'[11] Moreover, Norman continues, 'This seemed especially outrageous to English Protestants, immersed as the popular culture was in Biblical knowledge.'[12] But did English Roman Catholics actually disdain the Bible, or was this a slur contrived to make them appear as pseudo-Christians who had forfeited their English birthright?

The Protestant Reformations had occasioned a strong and swift response by the Roman Church articulated by the Council of Trent (1545-63). Not surprisingly, the Council addressed the relationship of the Bible and tradition in the Catholic Church.[13] During the fourth session, 8 April 1546, both Sacred Scripture and tradition were declared to be valid sources of truth (a position belittled by the Reformation theologians), and the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments were enumerated. The Council also proclaimed that the authority of the Vulgate 'which has been tested in the church by long use over so many centuries should be kept as the authentic text in public readings, debates, sermons and explanations; and no one is to dare or presume on any pretext to reject it.'[14] The same decree also asserted that the Catholic Church, and not the individual believer, enjoyed the exclusive prerogative to interpret the Bible. As a result, many Protestants believed that this was another attempt to diminish the importance of scripture in the life of Christians and a move to centralise power and authority in Rome. The Catholic Church in England soon recognised the necessity of promoting an authorised translation of the Bible in the vernacular to address the challenges of the Reformers.

English Catholicism and the Bible

Despite some positive accomplishments, Trent remained quiet on the question of translations of the Bible into the vernacular, and this task was left to Pope Pius IV. The 'pope warned against those vernacular translations that were "indiscriminately circulated" and declared that "in this matter the judgment of the bishop or inquisitor must be sought, who on the advice of the pastor or the confessor may permit the reading of a Bible translated into the vernacular by Catholic authors"'.[15] English Roman Catholics understood that a Bible in the vernacular would not only strengthen the faith of their countrymen, but would also answer charges that the Catholic Church had little appreciation of the scriptures. Consequently, an English translation of the Bible based on the Vulgate and which later influenced the King James Version (1611), was published by English Catholic exiles at the English College at Douai.[16] The New Testament translation appeared in 1582 in Rheims, and the English version of the Old Testament was published in 1610 at Douai.[17] Bishop Richard Challoner (1691-1781) later made revisions to the Douay-Rheims Bible, the first appearing in 1749, and according to Gerald Fogarty it 'took on doctrinal authority, which translations from the Vulgate did not have in other languages.'[18]

In spite of the importance which the Catholic Church had placed on an English translation of the Bible, conflicts continued into the nineteenth century. The high standard of translation and scholarship which produced the King James Bible and led to its acceptance as the "Authorised Version" gave Anglicans the opportunity to belittle Catholic attempts to render the scriptures in the vernacular. English Catholics, however, accepted only the Douay-Rheims Bible and subsequent revisions as the true word of God, and looked with suspicion and distrust of the Protestant-inspired King James Bible.[19] Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman (1802-65), the first Archbishop of Westminster after the Restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850, worked tirelessly to demonstrate to Protestants that Roman Catholics not only treasured but possessed a strong devotion to the scriptures. In a series of talks, *Lectures on Principal Doctrines*, he set out 'to demolish any suspicion that Protestants might have that Catholics do not sufficiently value the Bible.'[20] Wiseman argued that 'the Catholic Church has been always foremost in the task of translating the Scriptures, but also in placing them in the hands of the faithful.'[21] He even desired a new English translation of the scriptures and explained 'why it was insufficient for a new translation to be made simply from the Latin Vulgate, but rather it was essential that it be undertaken with "constant recourse to the original Hebrew and Greek texts"'.[22] There were plans for John Henry Newman, a recent convert from the Anglican Church, to supervise this project, but this had to be abandoned because of lack of support from Cardinal Wiseman and the other Catholic Bishops.[23] Wiseman was keenly aware that Protestants had spread stories that the Roman Catholic Church discouraged the faithful from reading the scriptures, but he argued that the high rate of illiteracy and lack of adequate means to distribute the Bible had contributed to this misconception. The policies of Cardinal Wiseman, however, did not silence critics who believed that the Bible occupied a minor place in Roman religion.

English Anti-Catholicism, the Bible, and Sisterhoods

Published in 1850, *Popery: An Enemy to Scripture* attempted to re-acquaint Protestants with Rome's perceived animosity toward the Bible and the threat posed by Catholicism. The author, James Serces, argued that 'the Church of Rome prohibits the laity to read the Scriptures', pointing out that Catholics believed 'that the Scriptures have no authority of their own …They are an imperfect Rule of Faith', and that the Catholic Church was 'diametrically opposite to the acknowledged Decisions of the holy Scriptures'.[24] Consequently, the tenets of Roman Catholicism were 'entirely subversive of Christianity itself' and, he noted, its teachers had misused and abused biblical texts for self-serving and shameful purposes.[25] According to Serces, the freedom and liberty of the English nation had been founded on the spirit of the Reformation and the principles of the Bible, 'but Popery and slavery are twisted together' and threaten the country.[26] The Rev. R. P. Blakeney focused on this theme in *Manual of Controversy: Being a Complete Refutation of the Creed of Pope Pius IV*. Taking aim at the Roman emphasis on tradition and pronouncements of the Catholic Church, Blakeney stated that 'the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice'.[27] He pointed out that the Church of Rome openly discouraged 'the exercise of private judgment in the interpretation of the Bible' since this would prove that many practices and devotions (such as the number of sacraments, Transubstantiation and Purgation) had no basis in Scripture.[28] Writing in the late 1870s, the Rev. Richard Frederick Littledale, author of numerous books on liturgy and theology, pointed out that the Catholic Church belittled the significance of the Bible.[29] For English Catholics, he claimed, the Bible 'is almost an unknown book'.[30]

These allegations also found expression in Victorian literature, and readers noticed a close connection with another perceived threat from Catholicism to Britain's spiritual health: the growth of Roman Catholic sisterhoods. English Catholic nuns had fled to the Continent during the Reformation where they continued to observe the religious life, but they were uprooted again during the persecution and violence associated with the Napoleonic era. Between 1792 and 1800 twenty-three contemplative communities, including the Benedictines, Poor Clares and Dominicans, returned to England attracting little attention.[31] Beginning in 1830, however, the number of sisterhoods began to increase significantly, due to the arrival of 'modern orders' from Ireland and the Continent, that is, nuns who worked in education, orphanages and hospitals. In 1840, less than twenty convents existed in England, but by 1880 their number had grown to more than three hundred, and their work did not go unnoticed. [32] Anti-Catholic sections of English society feared that the presence of these sisterhoods, many with foreign roots, might influence and strengthen Catholicism, attract converts and undermine Anglicanism. Such apprehension can be seen in the activities and publications of anti-Catholic groups such as the Protestant Alliance, the Protestant Association and the unsuccessful campaign of Charles Newdigate Newdegate, M.P. for North Warwickshire, to secure oversight of Catholic convents

through parliamentary inspection.[33]

Beginning with the publication of *The Monk* by Matthew Lewis in 1796 and continuing through the nineteenth century, works of fiction described the wickedness of convent life: the imprisonment, immurement and torture of recalcitrant nuns; sexual impropriety with clerics; the birth and killing of illegitimate children; and murder and secret burials of nuns.[34] Anti-convent literature attempted to expose these dangers. Concerned authors, including male and female writers, published novels which articulated this fear, which was further exacerbated by an increase in Irish immigration following the famine.[35] Diana Peschier, an independent scholar, argues that Catholic sisterhoods 'contradicted Protestant culture, the bedrock of which was the structured family life that was the embodiment of a patriarchal society.'[36] Many Victorians believed that young women, with their perceived weak and 'sensitive' nature, might be drawn to life in a sisterhood. According to Peschier, in matters of religion the 'ultra-sensitive, irrational female' was believed to 'have tendencies towards hysteria' and could be attracted by the trappings and mediaeval ethos of convent life.[37] Characterised by a strong Evangelical outlook, anti-Catholic fiction, which revealed 'an increasing belief in conspiracy theories which verge on paranoia,' was popular among the literate middle class.[38] Moreover, Roman Catholic sisterhoods' supposed lack of reverence for the Bible was highlighted in popular works of fiction which attempted to expose this wickedness and threat to the spiritual character of England.

The Nun

According to some critics, Catholic convents tried to protect women from the dangers of reading the scriptures, and one of the earliest books to describe this was Mary Martha Sherwood's *The Nun* (1833).[39] Sherwood (1775-1851), author of numerous children's stories, revealed her Evangelical beliefs, especially in the importance of the Bible, and her dislike of Catholicism in *The Nun*. The novel, which was reprinted several times during the century, was set in a convent in Roman Catholic Italy and the convent's rituals 'are shown as bizarre and extremely suspect and the inmates of the convent as young, innocent and ingenuous, very beautiful but cunning and cruel.'[40] In the opening pages of this book, Sherwood pointed out that the Mother Superior exercised a strict censorship over the reading material of the sisterhood. When a candidate arrived at the convent for admission, one of the sisters asked if she possessed any reading material: 'You are aware, no doubt, that no books but those approved by Madame [Mother Superior] are allowed in the house.'[41] Another nun, Sr. Clarice, was suspect because her father was English, and she suffered inhumane treatment at the hands of the Mother Superior because of her apparent laxity in prayer and her refusal to 'obey the ordinances of the holy church [and] of showing contempt of our sacred mysteries.'[42] Her secret devotion to the Bible appeared to be the cause of these shortcomings. The Mother Superior believed Sr. Clarice was possessed by demons and an exorcism was ordered. While being interrogated by the convent's confessor, the local Bishop and a Jesuit (the order most feared and hated by English Protestants), Sr. Clarice proudly proclaimed: 'You have been informed that I am a heretic, and I confess to you that I am constrained (by a power greater than my own, and one I cannot resist), to reject all objects of faith which are not revealed in Holy Scripture.'[43]

The three clerics continued to question Sr. Clarice about her devotion and loyalty to the Bible. The Bishop asked when she had become acquainted with the scriptures, but before she could reply, the convent's confessor broke in and proclaimed that the 'infernal spirit must have helped her … if she got them in this house.'[44] The Bishop told the cleric to allow her to answer, and Sr. Clarice stated that her childhood nurse had been a Protestant and that she had read the Bible as a child. The confessor again interrupted and muttered, 'Rather say, an accursed heretic … '. The Jesuit priest then asked if it was only the influence of the Bible which brought about this sad transformation in her spiritual life, and the Bishop quickly stated that 'the utmost mercy will be shown to you which your unhappy circumstances will allow' if you reveal what caused the change in your attitudes towards Catholicism.[45] Without hesitation she replied, 'The reading of the divine word, my father … '[46] Sherwood then put words in Sr. Clarice's mouth which would make English Protestants proud: 'God forbid that I should attempt to conceal the blessed means which have rendered my life, even in this dungeon, more bright and blessed than all that the world could have given while destitute of that peace of mind which has been bestowed on me through the reading of scripture.'[47] She continued boldly, 'Before I was blessed with a sight of that holy word, I was in bondage to the fear of death; I could not see my salvation secure in the Redeemer … but now, having been enabled to see my completeness in my Redeemer, I can look forward to death as to the entrance into a state of blessedness, which can cease only when one greater than God shall arise to tear me from his arms.'[48] The author's description of the reaction of the three ecclesiastics to the nun's firm belief in the Bible confirmed for many Protestants that Catholic Church and its sisterhoods held the scriptures in low regard. '"Blasphemy!" exclaimed the Father Joachim; whilst the Jesuit bit his lip, and the pale face of the venerable bishop was flushed to the brow.'[49] Sr. Clarice was immediately locked away in solitary confinement; her attachment to the Bible marking her as a heretic.

Following the incarceration of this 'Protestant martyr,' the author made several references to the importance of the Bible and how the actions of Sr. Clarice influenced other members of the sisterhood to appreciate the scriptures. The story continued with the visitation of plague upon the convent, after which it was mistakenly reported that Sr. Clarice had died. Using the body of a dead nun, Sr. Clarice's burial was faked and she escaped the confines of the cloister. Two other nuns, friends of Sr. Clarice, also fled, converted to Protestantism, and became devoted to the wisdom of the Bible, the book banned in their former convent. In an act of symbolic cleansing and purification, a mob attacked and burned down the convent. Mary Martha Sherwood's *The Nun* contains all the stereotypical anti-Catholic rhetoric one might expect from a nineteenth-century Evangelical, and it ends with a strong word of advice to its readers. Sherwood prayed that 'those things respecting the Roman Catholic Church, which I have faithfully recorded, may tend to fill the inhabitants of this Protestant land with a sense of gratitude to that God, who has liberated their country from the slavery of that great apostacy whose name is *Mystery*.'[50] In her view

Roman Catholic sisterhoods endangered England's Protestant heritage, and their blatant disrespect and dislike of the Bible was a mark of their wickedness.

The Convent

Nineteenthcentury anti-Catholic novels, especially those exposing the inherent evils of sisterhoods, frequently were set in traditional Roman Catholic countries. Spain provided the background for *The Monk* and Martha Mary Sherwood's story took place in Italy. Sicily was the setting for another book critical of sisterhoods, Rachel McCrindell's *The Convent; A Narrative Based on Fact*, published in 1848. McCrindell, who also wrote a novel about the anti-Bible atmosphere in a French convent school, believed that convents fostered a dislike for the Bible and forbad their members from possessing and reading the scriptures.[51] This emerged as a central theme of *The Convent* which went through several printings. Dianna Peschier, in *Nineteenth-Century Anti-Catholic Discourses*, notes that 'McCrindell had spent several years in Catholic countries and, according to her, had witnessed much of Catholicism's persecuting spirit, making her well prepared to show how the system practised to deceive the simple minded'.[52] At the beginning of her book, McCrindell told her readers that its substance was supported by factual evidence, but in fact a good deal of imagination and fabrication also went into its writing.

This story of convent cruelty, spiritual and physical, revolved around two young novices, Rosa and Isabel, who entered the convent of Santa Rosalia in Sicily full of religious fervour, but their initial enthusiasm quickly turned into disillusionment. The convent's negative view of the Bible was revealed quite early in the novel when Isabel asked Rosa, the Spanish novice, 'why should anyone be debarred from reading that blessed book? Surely, it must be delightful to read what God himself has inspired'.[53] In a later conversation with Rosa, Isabel mentioned that she was experiencing spiritual difficulties and was beginning to doubt her vocation. When Rosa suggested that she should seek the advice of the convent's confessor, Fr. Giacomo, Isabel stated that she could not discuss her state of mind with this priest. She revealed that in the past 'I entreated permission to read the Holy Scriptures; but he was so angry, that I shall never be able to mention the subject again'.[54] When Rosa asked what had prompted the priest's irate response, Isabel replied, 'He said that the Bible was a most dangerous book … in the hands of unlearned people, especially to females; that it was only intended for the clergy'.[55] Rosa, feeling the need to have a Bible, made arrangements for the scriptures to be smuggled into the convent with the help of her brother, Francisco. The two novices then began to read and discuss its contents. Isabel, in particular, was affected by her reading: 'Her precious Testament was the object of unceasing solicitude, and constant study, during every moment she could secure from the wearisome round of monastic observances'.[56]

The study of the Bible soon consumed most of their time. They began to realise that certain Catholic practices, for example, worship of the Blessed Virgin, the invocation of saints, 'worshipping' of pictures and statues, and Purgatory, were at odds with the teaching of scriptures, and they vowed to read the Bible to understand and appreciate the authentic will of God for His people. During one of these clandestine meetings, Isabel described the convent's 'spiritual instructors' as 'unprincipled deceivers, who would lead us blindfold to destruction, in order to compass their own wicked purposes',[57] and consequently 'we ought to read the Scriptures for ourselves, in order that we may know what is really the will of God'.[58] Rosa wanted to know why these holy men would want to deceive members of the convent, and Isabel replied quickly 'that they conceal the Bible from us, to prevent our eyes from being opened to the falsehoods they teach us '.[59] The two friends began to drift farther away from Catholicism as their reading of the scriptures continued, and they even attempted to convince a dying nun that the Bible alone provided the path to salvation. Isabel and Rosa, however, soon realised that their possession of a Bible jeopardised their safety within the sisterhood, and they took care to hide the sacred text, ironically in a statue. Spies were everywhere, and the Mother Superior and the convent's confessor soon began to suspect the presence of this illicit book within the cloister. Suspicion fell first on Rosa, who when confronted would not break her vow of silence about the Bible, and she was forced to spend as penance a night in an underground vault where she was visited by Isabel.

Eventually Isabel was also questioned and punished for her devotion to the scriptures. In an interrogation by the convent's superior and the confessor, Fr. Giacomo, the priest confronted Isabel: 'It has come to our knowledge, daughter, that you have lately been engaged in studies not enjoined by your vows, nor even sanctioned by the church … You have in your possession a book which was not given you by your spiritual guides. Is it not so? Answer me truly'.[60] Isabel's responded confidently, 'If you mean the New Testament, father, it is true that I have read it. But, surely it cannot be a crime to study the Word of God'.[61] The confessor interpreted this as an admission and he wanted to know how she came in possession of the book. Having refused to answer his questions, the priest then accused Isabel of violating the convent's rules by visiting a seriously ill nun and reading to her 'from your heretical Bible'.[62] She admitted discussing the Bible with this sister, and declared that they now both believed that pardon from one's sins could only come through the atonement of Jesus and not through the intercession of priestly absolution. With visible rage, Fr. Giacomo replied: 'Daughter, you already display the fearfully perverting effects of unauthorised Scripture-reading'.[63] He then falsely accused her of clandestine meetings with a man in the convent's garden, but Isabel refused to reply to this fictitious charge. She was sent back to her room and ordered to perform harsh penances in solitary confinement in an attempt to break her strong will.

The story then proceeded to the 'day of trial', when Isabel was required to seek absolution for her actions by confessing her misdeeds to Fr. Giacomo. She began the ritual by omitting the usual prayers to the Blessed Virgin, the apostles and the saints, and instead addressed only God and the priest. The confessor exploded with anger and accused her of making an 'insolent mockery of the sacrament of confession … Cease your blasphemies, unhappy creature … and let me see that false Bible'. Isabel still refused to hand over the sacred book.[64] However, the day of profession of Isabel and Rosa was upon them, and appropriate punishment for their stubbornness could wait until after they 'took the veil' and committed themselves to the convent for life.

The church was crowded for the ceremony with friends and relatives as the two novices entered, ready to take 'that irrevocable vow, which would bind them forever to seclusion—perpetual seclusion.'[65] But Rosa's brother, Francesco, had already drawn up a plan to rescue his sister and her friend. The day before the ceremony, he told Rosa that as Sicily was under the control of the British government protocol demanded the presence a number of British officers and that they would play an important role in the rescue. He advised his sister, when Fr. Giacomo 'asks whether "it is of your own free-will that you renounce the world" ... then answer boldly,—No! And immediately throw yourself on the protection of the British Government. Your friend [Isabel] would do well to follow your example.'[66] Isabel agreed with this scheme, 'She knew that British officers were not at all to pass the cry of distress unheeded; she knew, also, that liberty, especially liberty of conscience, was dear to every Englishman, whatever his grade.'[67] Thus, when the priest asked the two novices if they were taking their vows with a free conscience, Rosa and Isabel both shouted in the negative and rushed to the railing separating the chapel from the body of the church where Isabel shouted, 'Englishmen, help us, deliver us from this cruel bondage.'[68] The frantic priest tried to silence them, but two officers, commanded by their superior, confronted Fr. Giacomo and demanded in the name of the British government that he surrender the two distressed novices to them. The officers argued that the young women had declared that they had no intention taking religious vows and pointed out that the 'British Government permits no slavery in its dominions, and this is slavery of the worst kind.'[69]

The author stressed the important role which the Bible played in the discovery of the shallowness and deception of Catholicism and which led to the eventual escape of these two women. On board a ship sailing away from Sicily, Rosa's brother, Francisco, remarked:

> I thought that, if you had perused the Testament I gave you, Santa Rosalia [the convent] was no abode for you; for I am fully convinced that the more the Word of God is studied, the greater will be our distaste to the sinful doctrines of that church in which we have all been educated. I have, blessed be God, been likewise led by His Spirit to lay hold of the truths of that inspired volume, and have renounced my allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church.[70]

Both Isabel and Rosa eventually settled in England, the land of Protestantism, freedom, and the scriptures, and McCrindell proudly declared that country a 'favored land, where the Bible is within the reach of the poorest individual' and where ministers proclaim 'nothing to be believed but what is agreeable to the Word of God.'[71] She ended the story by praising England where there exists, unlike Roman Catholic convents, 'the blessed privilege of being allowed free access to the Holy Scriptures.'[72]

The Female Jesuit

Jemima Luke's *The Female Jesuit; Or, The Spy in the Family* was published in 1851 during a period of heightened anti-Catholicism. Reprinted several times during the nineteenth century, it described the alleged anti-scripture mentality present in convents in Catholic European countries. Luke (1831-1906), a composer of children's hymns and a Nonconformist who emphasised the importance of the Bible, combined, in her book, two Catholic organisations which had become identified with treachery and a hatred of things English in the minds of Protestants: the Jesuits and sisterhoods. The story was based on fact. According to historian Michael Wheeler, 'Jemima Luke explains that she and her husband were duped by a young woman called "Marie" who presented herself as the innocent victim of Catholic treachery. Forced to become a nun, she falsely claimed she had escaped from a convent on the Continent and needed shelter and protection, which the worthy couple duly offered.'[73] After Jemima and her husband discovered the fraud, the 'female Jesuit' was sent away and Luke wrote the story to warn others to beware of similar deceptions and to illustrate the hatred of the Bible present in convents.

The bogus ex-nun's fabricated story and revelations of her experiences of convent life on the Continent contained the usual anti-Catholic denunciations of practices such as Transubstantiation, which she termed 'spiritual cannibalism', worship of the Virgin Mary and the saints, 'the daily repetition of scores of useless prayers, and the idle mummery of public services', and the complete disregard and belittlement of the Scriptures which she experienced in this sisterhood.[74] When in England after her 'escape', Marie revealed that the numerous convents in France and Italy where she had lived had no respect for the Bible. She stated that one of the convent's confessors refused 'to permit her to read the Scriptures', and this 'awakened her suspicions' about the truth of the Catholic religion. Marie also 'had feared for life ... [and] longed for liberty to read those pages which would reveal to her the way of eternal life.'[75] In a French sisterhood, shortly before her flight to English freedom, she claimed she witnessed a solemn profession ceremony, and her doubts about convent life and Roman Catholicism increased. The scriptures, she believed, would help to resolve these uncertainties, and she asked the confessor at the sisterhood 'why we were not to read the Bible', pointing out that she had wanted to consult this holy book numerous times in the past.[76] The priest wondered why she 'asked such a presumptuous question', and Marie replied that she 'desired to feel convinced that the doctrine the Church of Rome taught ... was in accordance with the Word of God.'[77] The confessor's response would have hurt the ears of English Protestants. According to Marie,

> My confessor reasoned long with me on the impropriety and wickedness of the question; and the only reply I could get to this important subject was, as given me on a former occasion, viz. that it would tend to do me great harm, for I was incapable of understanding aright the Word of God ... As a penance for this presumptuous inquiry, absolution was withheld, and several prayers were given me to repeat daily, that God might be satisfied for the great sin I had committed in desiring to search the Scriptures.[78]

Finally, during Mass on Christmas Day in Paris, Marie realised that the Roman Catholic religion was a fraud. She believed that the truth could be found only in the Bible and planned to obtain a copy. However, Marie knew that 'there was

no opportunity of getting one on the continent, and I ardently wished I was in England.'[79] The Bible was banned in convents, and possession of one unthinkable: 'for had I possessed a copy of the Scriptures for any time, previous to leaving the convent, it might have placed me in very dangerous circumstances, for it would have been impossible to have kept one concealed for any length of time.'[80] She eventually fled to England and secured employment as a governess in the Luke household until her deception was discovered and she left her position. Jemima Luke believed that Marie probably exaggerated any association with a French convent, and 'cannot now vouch for a single particular of her convent history or of her escape.'[81] Nevertheless, the book served as a warning to its readers to be wary of strangers who might be 'Jesuits in disguise', and also illustrated the alleged evils of convent life, emphasising the low regard in which the Bible was supposedly held by Catholic sisterhoods.

St. Mary's Convent

Roman Catholic Ireland, the home of a large numbers of immigrants bringing their 'popish' religion into England, provided the setting for *St. Mary's Convent; Or Chapters in the Life of a Nun* (1866) written by Jeanie Selina Dammast. Born in Dublin in 1826, Dammast moved to London, where she wrote *St. Mary's Convent,* before eventually immigrating to America where she died in 1895. Her book was a great success. In 1896, The Catholic Truth Society published *Protestant Fiction* by James Britten which acknowledged the popular appeal of this type of anti-Catholic literature. He noted that Dammast's book 'has attained its hundredth thousand, and is now reprinting: this will give some idea of the enormous circulation reached by these stories.'[82] The suspicion of Irish Catholicism and its potentially wicked influence on the social, political and economic climate of Protestant England caught the attention of many readers, and works of fiction dealing with sisterhoods in Catholic Ireland and their animosity towards the scriptures also resonated with English Protestants. *St. Mary's Convent* is one of the best examples of an anti-convent polemic written during the Victorian era. Dammast described convent life in terms of a 'living death', a life opposed to the 'natural ties' of family, and an inhuman existence where the nuns forfeited their freedom and liberty to tyrannical religious superiors, but the author also described the hostility of sisterhoods toward the Bible.

Emily, the heroine who had previously some acquaintance with the Bible, was tricked by her father into entering the convent of St. Mary's. Once in the sisterhood, she learned of her father's description of her as a 'bigoted Protestant, and about to wed one as bigoted as yourself', his deception and trickery to get her into the sisterhood to stop the wedding, and his desire to a live a life of seclusion as a monk in a Spanish monastery. [83] In addition to these shocking revelations, Emily immediately began to experience the horrific conditions of convent life and soon contemplated escape. Not yet a professed member of the sisterhood, she confided to a friend, Sr. Mary Theresa, describing Catholicism as a 'cruel religion, false faith' that can destroy a family. 'The religion of the Bible is love', she continued, but the Roman faith 'is a denial of God's chief attribute'. Sr. Mary Theresa responded to this outburst stating that she had often wished to read the scriptures, 'but my confessor would not give me permission; he said it was a very dangerous book.'[84] Emily replied that Sacred Scripture contained the guide to truth, inner peace and comfort. Still Sr. Mary Theresa baulked at this suggestion, stating that she would have to confess reading this prohibited book, and the penance she might receive from her confessor frightened her.

Emily's reaction to this disturbing thought probably resounded well with English Protestants: 'Penance for reading God's Holy Word? … What a dreadful idea; surely, you only confess your sins?'[85] Sister Mary Theresa replied and repeated her belief that 'it *is* a sin to read the Bible when I have been forbidden to do so by my confessor.'[86] Moreover, the nun continued, where would she procure a Bible? Certainly the convent did not possess one. Emily admitted that she had secretly brought one into the convent with her: 'I have my little pocket Bible with me … Fortunately it was in a pocket in my under-clothing, and so it escaped the notice of those who removed my clothes.'[87]

The story progressed quickly with Emily, still unsure of her vocation, preparing to make her final profession. Apparently drugged with wine, Emily pronounced her vows in a stupor. Approximately a month after the ceremony, Sister Mary Theresa spotted Emily 'on her knees, going painfully up and down the walk.'[88] Shocked, she asked what was happening, and Emily, as 'large tears coursed down her face', revealed that she was being punished: 'I was discovered reading my Bible, and I refused to give it up.'[89] Emily explained the Bible had been a gift from her mother and confessed she was frightened that the convent authorities would discover its hiding place while she was carrying out her humiliating punishment. In response, Sr. Mary Theresa convinced Emily to reveal its hiding place, and promised to bring it to her. From then on, fearing the book would be discovered, Emily 'never ventured to remove it from her person during the day, and at night it lay securely under her head.'[90] Her punishments continued, but she found comfort in her Bible and Sr. Mary Theresa's friendship. As in the other books discussed, Sr Mary Theresa, under the influence of her friend, became more of the opinion that teachings and practice of the Roman Catholic Church 'differs widely from the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.' [91] Emily pointed out that the simple message of God's love for the world and the atonement of Jesus Christ were the authentic plan of salvation and 'yet how the Romish Church perverts it!'[92]

Punishment at the hands of the Mother Superior was Emily's fate for her devotion to the Bible and her attempts to convince another member of the sisterhood to appreciate the scriptures. As she was waiting for the arrival of the superior, Emily took comfort reading her Bible when suddenly 'the book was snatched from her hand, and the reverend mother stood before her in all triumph of her victory.'[93] 'Contemptuously' and 'sneeringly' the Mother Superior examined the Bible and displayed it 'for a moment opposite the weeping girl before she consigned in to a pocket concealed in her dress.'[94] The Superior then pronounced her verdict: 'You have been discovered corrupting the minds of the community, and you must be separated as a black sheep from the flock: follow me.'[95]

The shock of losing her Bible 'stupefied her', and as a punishment she was incarcerated in an underground prison vault. Demmast vividly described the revolting conditions which Emily had to endure for remaining faithful to her Bible,

but also noted that this holy book still gave her consolation and a sense of peace. Emily's 'precious Bible was, indeed, gone', she wrote, 'but from her well-stored memory hosts of consoling promises rose up to comfort her ... [and] she laid her head on the pillow that night, and slept more calmly than her persecutors.'[96]

The conclusion to *St. Mary's Convent* took place shortly after Emily's imprisonment. A minor rebellion occurred within the sisterhood and several discontented nuns, including Sr. Mary Theresa, fled from the convent. Emily, who had become ill, remained behind. She was soon rescued by her former fiancé, Edward, and the two eventually married. The importance of the Bible for all Christians and the manner in which Catholic convents denigrated its worth was vividly portrayed in the book's final pages. The solicitor who helped Edward in the rescue (and who would eventually marry Sr. Mary Theresa) wanted to retrieve the precious Bible which was still in the possession of the Mother Superior. After Emily had been safely escorted away from the convent, he demanded that the Bible be returned: 'Are you aware that you are dealt with very leniently in not being prosecuted for theft, or rather open, violent robbery?'[97] The response of the superior exhibited her low regard for the scriptures: 'Almost suffocated with suppressed fury', the Mother Superior threw the Bible on the table and shouted, 'There Sir, take your wonderful prize, and now rid me of your presence.'[98] The last line of the novel summed up the feelings of the author and contained a message for England's Protestants: 'Thus "out of evil came good"; and, in after years, at many a Christmas gathering, the friends recounted scenes from their past experiences to illustrate the evils of convent life.'[99]

Conclusion

During the nineteenth century, authors Mary Martha Sherwood, Rachel McCrindell, Jemima Luke and Jeanie Selina Dammast maintained that Catholic sisterhoods posed a threat to the integrity of Protestant England. Nuns were subjected to cruel superiors, loss of freedom and inhumane treatment. To underpin this view and to raise alarm among their readers, these writers argued that sisterhoods devalued the Bible and even considered the scriptures as dangerous and harmful to spiritual health. They credited the Bible with exposing the deception of Catholicism, in particular convent life, and revealing the truth of Protestantism. Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman maintained that Roman Catholics appreciated the Bible, but it would take decades before Wiseman's words became a reality. It was not until 1965 that Vatican Council II's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*) re-affirmed the importance of the Bible and stressed that men and women should have easy access to the scriptures.

Moreover, the Victorian stereotype of convents as prisons and a threat to traditional English values through the introduction of Roman Catholic beliefs and practices into the country began to lose strength by the end of the nineteenth century, as the perceived threat from Catholicism began to wane. The campaign for parliamentary inspection of convents, for example, had failed to attract needed support and eventually disappeared. The activities of the anti-Catholic organisations which had vilified convent life during the century also diminished as it became apparent that the sisterhoods were not subversive institutions seeking to re-convert England to Roman Catholicism. Nuns slowly gained the respect of cynics, particularly through their praiseworthy work among the urban poor. They established orphanages, worked in hospitals and taught in schools. The novels by Sherwood, McCrindell, Luke and Dammast attempted to reveal the alleged duplicity of convents and characterise them as enemies of Protestant England. Since the authors were women, their negative insights into convent life were thought to have more value, but, as people began to recognise the worthwhile work of nuns, these accounts of life in a convent began to jar with reality. The four novels, which for a time stoked anti-Catholic sentiment, were in the final analysis nothing more than works of fiction. Any supposed challenge to English society emanating from the Catholic sisterhoods had been disproved by their positive contribution to that same society.[100]

Notes

1. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992), 25.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Hugh McLeod, *Religion and Society in England, 1850-1914* (London, Macmillan Press, 1996), 116.
4. Frances *Knight*, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), 38.
5. Edward Norman, *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984), 11.
6. Colley, *Britons*, 53.
7. Timothy Larsen, *A People of One Book: The Bible and the Victorians* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), 2-4.
8. *Ibid.*, 45.
9. Michael Wheeler, *The Old Enemies: Catholic and Protestant in Nineteenth-Century English Culture* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), 187.
10. McLeod, *Religion and Society in England*, 43.
11. Norman, *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century*, 18.
12. *Ibid.*
13. See Norman P. Tanner, S.J. ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils: Volume Two, Trent to Vatican II* (Washington, DC, Georgetown University Press, 1990), 663-5.
14. *Ibid.*, 664. The Vulgate, the accepted Roman Catholic version of the Bible, was a Latin translation undertaken by St. Jerome (c.345-420).
15. Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J., *American Catholic Biblical Scholarship: A History from the Early Republic to Vatican II* (San Francisco, Harper & Row Publishers, 1989), 4-5.
16. The College temporarily moved to Rheims in 1578 where it remained until returning to Douai in 1593.
17. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York, McGraw Hill, 1967) and *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997) contain outlines of the history of the English translation of the Bible.
18. Fogarty, *American Catholic Biblical Scholarship*, 5.
19. *Ibid.*, 4-5.
20. Larsen, *A People of One Book*, 50. For a biography of Cardinal Wiseman, see Richard J. Schiefen, *Nicholas Wiseman and the Transformation of English Catholicism*

(Shepherdstown, West Virginia, The Patmos Press, 1984).
21. Quoted in *Ibid*., 51.
22. *Ibid*., 56.
23. Schiefen, *Nicholas Wiseman*, 242.
24. James Serces, *Popery: An Enemy to Scripture* (London, The British Society for Promoting the Religious Principles of the Reformation, 1850), vii-viii.
25. *Ibid*., 92.
26. *Ibid*., 104.
27. Richard P. Blakeney, *Manual of Roman Controversy: Being a Complete Refutation of the Creed of Pope Pius IV* (Edinburgh, The Hope Trust, 1851), 56.
28. *Ibid*., 59.
29. Richard Frederick Littledale, *Plain Reasons Against Joining the Church of Rome* (London, SPCK, 1909), 90. The book was first published in 1879.
30. *Ibid*., 92.
31. Carmen M. Mangion, *Contested Identities: Catholic Women Religious in Nineteenth-Century England and Wales* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2008), 33.
32. Susan O'Brien, 'Religious Life for Women' in *From Without the Flaminian Gate: 150 Years of Roman Catholicism in England and Wales*, ed. Vincent Alan McClelland and Michael Hodgetts (London, Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1999), 112.
33. For more on the campaign of Charles Newdigate Newdegate, see Walter L. Arnstein, *Protestant versus Catholic in Mid-Victorian England: Mr. Newdegate and the Nuns* (Columbia MO, University of Missouri Press, 1982).
34. The most famous was Maria Monk, *Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery in Montreal* (1836). W. Lancelot Holland, *Walled Up Nuns and Nuns Walled In* (London, J. Kensit, 1895) contains reports of cruelty purportedly based on fact.
35. Diana Peschier, *Nineteenth-Century Anti-Catholic Discourses: The Case of Charlotte Brontë* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 2.
36. *Ibid., 5.*
37. *Ibid*., 44-45.
38. *Ibid*., 4.
39. Mary Martha Sherwood, *The Nun* (Princeton, Moore Baker, 1835). First publication in London, 1833, by Seeley and Sons.
40. Peschier, *Nineteenth-Century Anti-Catholic Discourses*, 83.
41. Sherwood, *The Nun*, 28.
42. *Ibid.*, 86.
43. *Ibid*., 130.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid*., 131.
46. *Ibid*.
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid*.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid*., 322.
51. See Rachel McCrindell, *The English Girl in a Convent School: The School-Girl in France* (London, R. B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1840).
52. Peschier, *Nineteenth-Century Anti-Catholic Discourses*, 85.
53. Rachel McCrindell, *The Convent; A Narrative, Founded on Fact* (New York, Robert Carter, 1848), 30. Also published in London, in 1848, by Aylott & Jones.
54. *Ibid*., 46.
55. *Ibid*., 47.
56. *Ibid*., 66.
57. *Ibid*., 93
58. *Ibid*., 92.
59. *Ibid*., 93.
60. *Ibid*., 202-03.
61. *Ibid*., 203.
62. *Ibid*., 207.
63. *Ibid*., 208.
64. *Ibid*., 231-3.
65. *Ibid*., 308.
66. *Ibid*., 297.
67. *Ibid*., 299.
68. *Ibid*., 309.
69. *Ibid*., 310.
70. *Ibid*., 313.
71. *Ibid*., 317.
72. *Ibid.*
73. Wheeler, *The Old Enemies*, 221.
74. Jemima Luke, *The Female Jesuit; Or, the Spy in the Family* (New York, M. W. Dodd, 1851), 30.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid*., 100.
77. *Ibid*.
78. *Ibid*., 101.
79. *Ibid*., 111.
80. *Ibid*.
81. *Ibid*., 350.
82. James Britten, *Protestant Fiction* (London, Catholic Truth Society, 1896), 5. In the same pamphlet, Britten critiqued *St. Mary's Convent* and *The Female Jesuit,* pointing out that books of this nature were not based on facts and were written by people with a prejudice against Roman Catholicism.
83. Jeanie Selina Dammast, *St. Mary's Convent; Or, Chapters in the Life of a Nun* (London, S. W. Partridge & Co., 1899), 62. First publication, 1866.
84. *Ibid*., 62-63.
85. *Ibid*., 63.
86. *Ibid*.
87. *Ibid*.
88. *Ibid*., 81.
89. *Ibid.*
90. *Ibid*., 82.
91. *Ibid*., 84.
92. *Ibid*.
93. *Ibid*., 86.
94. *Ibid*., 87.
95. *Ibid*.
96. *Ibid*., 89.
97. *Ibid*., 109.
98. *Ibid*., 109-10.
99. *Ibid*., 112.
100. For additional information on the contribution of Roman Catholic sisterhoods to British society in the late nineteenth century see for instance, Carmen Mangion, *Contested Identities*; Susan O'Brien, 'Religious Life for Women'; or Rene Kollar, *Foreign and Catholic: A Plea to Protestant Parents on the Dangers of Convent Education in Victorian England* (Cambridge, James Clarke & Co., 2011).

Tupperware: An Open Container During a Decade of Containment

Alyssa Velazquez
Washington College Alumni

Introduction: The Burp

'If dreams were for sale, what would you buy?' This was the question asked to Tupperware dealers at Tupperware's 1956 Wish Fairy Jubilee. Built up to believe they could obtain independence through plastic, Tupperware dealers were perpetually told that they possessed magic. As one piece of plastic propaganda stated, 'We will forever remember the magical moment when the Tupperware Wish Fairy waved her wand and wishes became a reality.'[1] Tupperware was not the first home party system to enter the American consumer market: however it was by far the most successful, in terms of sales, longevity and the suppression and recentralisation of women into the home following World War II.

Tupperware and its line of signature burping plastics[2] were gendered commercial goods designed to pull the industrial female of the 1950s back into the cult of domesticity. As women were taught to 'Tupper Seal' their home goods into Tupperware's injection moulded containers, the 'businessmen' behind the polyethylene miracle continually perpetuated a gendered image for their leading plastic of the future, christening their saleswomen with the feminised title: Polyethylene-Ladies or Poly-Ladies for short.

As a household product, Tupperware symbolically offered both freedom and containment for post-war, middle class, white women. Tupperware targeted women, encouraging them to take part in a growing employment market in sales in which they had previously been unrepresented. Prior to the industrial movement of World War II, the most visible women were those whose labour closely resembled traditional feminine talents and needs: nurse, teacher, secretary and maid. Tupperware was the first commercial household product that successfully combined the 'domesticity revival' of the 1950s with the post-war socialite, and industrial era businesswoman.[3] Yet, Tupperware was careful to never lose its emphasis on traditional domestic roles that restricted women's domain to the household.

Today Tupperware is still a multi-billion dollar company, its success built on the social and cultural contradictions of the 1950s and on the need for self-esteem and meaning in a contained suburban, post-war middle class. It began as a post-war product and grew into a symbol that transformed and challenged the image of women from the World War Two era.

The Birth of Tupperware: A Product of 1950s Post-War Culture

The 1950s was a time of notable social change and cultural complexity.[4] The United States had, since the onset of the Great Depression of the 1930s, witnessed World War Two, the Chinese Revolution of 1949, the dropping of the first hydrogen bomb by the USSR and the Korean War; all within the time span of two decades.[5] In this state of national fragility, there was an unrelenting drive for a return to traditional morals, values, family life, and most significantly, gender roles. These events, and the fear they generated, produced a stream of cultural upheavals that would push America towards a unified social commitment to home life and a radical return to the nuclear family.[6]

From the 1930s until the end of World War Two women were offered widespread employment opportunities outside of their gendered social service jobs. Continuous war efforts forced the public to recognise women's status within the public sphere; and with growing need for industrial labour, women's pay increased as did occupational opportunities and the economic status of women within their households. Women during the war effort were praised for their skills and contributions to industrialisation. However, once the war was over and their men returned from war, women in the work force became a potential threat to national security. Not only allegedly did they take away jobs from returning soldiers, their absence from the home was seen as depriving America's returning service men of happiness and comfort and as a result, depriving America of its prosperity. Returning veterans not only wanted to get their jobs back they wanted their 'girls.'[7] As white, middle-class Americans began to adhere to rehabilitated traditional home systems and the domesticated family, women's sense of identity was directed by post-war culture to domestication and caricaturised femininity: the iconic 1950s American female hostess and housewife developed out of this decade of turmoil.

Alongside these cultural shifts, America was no longer calling for conservative consumption. Instead, with renewed economic stability, it was experiencing a growing consumerist culture. In the five years after World War II consumer spending increased sixty per cent and the amount spent on household appliances and furnishings rose two hundred and forty per cent.[8] The model home was considered to be one with a male provider, a full time female homemaker and an array of consumer goods. All these became essentials in the symbolism of American freedom for United States citizens. The increase in modern appliances and furnishings began to serve as a tangible symbol of the American way of life.[9] In the midst of fears about communists, the threat of atomic warfare and lingering post-war attitudes, Americans were becoming more and more willing to embrace the commercialism of American goods.

In conjunction with the influx of household products and commodities, the housing market gained significant momentum after the war as a result of democratic patriotism, governmental legislation, financial affordability and a severe post-war housing shortage. The Depression of the 1930s had ravaged the market, as house building fell by ninety per cent and the vast majority of the population unable to afford to buy, sell, or construct. [10] But this decline was reversed post-war, when financial aid offered to war veterans and reunited families, a growing personal prosperity and a boom in births and marriages, created a market for housing construction companies; and more houses meant more consumption.

On the surface, the suburban home fulfilled its functional role as a shelter for returning veterans and breeding ground for the subsequent baby boom. Culturally, the suburban home was America's democratic Fort Knox: protecting its patriots and domestic treasures associated with 'the good life.' Prior to the war, as an example of shifting ideas about houses and homes, dwellings in the Chicago suburb of Park Forest were described as merely housing, yet after the war, the development's tagline and marketing reference was: happiness.[11] A home complete with a housewife, modern appliances and home decor served as a tangible symbol of the consumer happiness that post-war citizens viewed as the American way. Along with buyable happiness came reproductive happiness; what had once been a birth rate of eighteen per thousand during the struggle of the 1930s spiked to twenty-five per thousand during 1950.[12] By 1953, the baby boom inflated the US suburban population to thirty million.[13]

The consumer extravagance that would characterise the 1950s housewife was as much a result of external advertising and governmental pressure as it was an internal need to over-compensate for their own thwarted childhoods. It was, after all, much easier to focus on love, sex and neighbourhood lawn regulations than it was to dwell on Cold War fears of communism.

As families began to fill their homes with monetary assets, a conformity developed regarding which commercial goods were favoured, perpetuating the growing ideology of the 'good life' that American commercialism propagated among white middle class suburban families.[14] Goods associated with the home and family life were viewed as investments for the future. Where America had once prided itself on being the melting pot of the world, homogenous 'American' values and 'identical suburban American households' were replacing diverse cultural practices through the act of universal consumption.[15]

The commodities of the 1950s were therefore intended to reinforce America's rising commerce, and they emphasised traditional gender roles of women within a commercialised domestic setting. Such commodities ranged from gas and electrical appliances and even to plastics. Polyethylene had, throughout the war effort, been used as insulation in fighter jets and airplanes. It was a material utilised and associated with masculine activity. It was only when Earl S. Tupper, a New England tree farmer, invented a plastic container for household use that polyethylene was transformed into a feminised commercial product. The gendered ambiguity of plastics generated conflicting emotions in consumers, who were both in fear and awe of this man-made material: emotions were fuelled through romantic marketing ploys developed by plastic producers. Rather than focusing on plastics' chemical processes and the importance they played in a war effort many people were trying to forget, plastic companies highlighted its tactile qualities, its sensuality and decorative aspects rather than its technical or chemical specifications.[16] Dressed up in a new, more consumer accessible product, polyethylene's name was changed to a fashionable brand name: 'Poly-T: Material of The Future.'[17]

Tupperware was the first commercial household product that successfully combined the 'domesticity revival' of the 1950s with the post-war socialite and industrial-era business-woman.[18] It began in 1939, with the Earl S. Tupper Company producing barely successful plastic novelties such as the camouflage comb, a nail file and comb disguised as a fountain pen. Tupper was an ambitious man who aspired to be the next Thomas Edison or Henry Ford, yet his ideas of a fish-powered boat, dagger shaped comb and no-drip cone all failed to gain him the notoriety he craved. Then in 1942, he produced a seven-ounce, 200-gram injection moulded, milky-white container in a conical design (the bell tumbler), and from that day polyethylene would become a household name.

After two years of plastics research Earl Tupper established Tupper Plastics, and began to mass-produce his new products.[19] Yet, how could consumers be persuaded to choose to buy a product, the type of which they had never seen before? The fact is, Earl Tupper not only created a household product that harked back to the shortages of the Great Depression and wartime rationing, but the flexible, injection moulded, polyethylene bell-shaped container also embodied traditional gender values, good housekeeping and wartime technology.[20] Not only was Tupperware durable; it was reliable, practical, serviceable, identical and ready for the domestic needs of the 1950s housewife, if only she knew it.[21] As Nixon said in the infamous kitchen debate with Nikita Khrushchev, 'the superiority of America is the idea of the suburban house complete with modern appliances and distinct gender roles.'[22] Tupper believed his product had the potential to change the lives of American citizens by dispelling the wasteful practices of 1950s commercial society. He had no idea that Tupperware, as a commercial product, would turn into a cult phenomenon, or that advertisements one day would bear the slogan: 'Tupperware: the best thing to happen to women since they got the vote.'

Brownie's Wives: The Buyers and Sellers of Tupperware

Brownie Wise, a white middle-class single mother and working woman, single-handedly feminised the retail products of Tupperware.[23] Following its department store retail launch in 1947 Tupperware had failed to penetrate the domestic market in any substantial quantities.[24] Despite Gimbels' and Bloomingdales' advertising campaigns, complete with introductory pamphlets, four-colour booklets, descriptive leaflets and window displays featuring apron-clad mannequins incorporating Tupperware into their consumer-rich kitchens, no one quite knew what to do with it.[25] Sales people in department stores often had to entreat customers to grab a Tupperware container and 'yank it, bang it, and jump on it' and this interaction between sales person and customer soon led to in-store demonstrations of the physical properties and virtues of Tupperware on Tupper's Self-Merchandising Sales Display Stands .[26] The in-store demonstrations caught the attention of direct sales companies who were looking for a fresh product to add to their catalogues, and by the late 1940s several direct sales companies and individual salesmen began using Tupperware to spruce up their stock. Now Tupperware was being displayed not only on department store floors but also on doorsteps and in entryways. However, these contractors

ordered Tupperware products independently and were not recognized as a centralised work force for Tupper Corporations.

'Hostess parties', which evolved from these ordinary door-to-door salesmen, provided the ideal vehicle for introducing Tupperware's alien products into a familiar environment, the home, and became Tupperware's lasting hope for consumer acceptance. Originally devised in the 1920s by Norman S. Squires, when he was the leading national producer of Wearever Aluminium Cooking Products, home parties were institutionalised by the legacy of the Fuller Brush Men, and revolutionised by Stanley Home Products in 1932. By the early 1950s Stanley Home Products was the leading home demonstration company in the country.[27] Those who worked for Stanley were 'Stanley People', and everyone belonged to the BCH, that is the 'bright, cheerful, and happy' club. Brownie Wise was one of these people.

A fellow sales person at Stanley, Gary McDonald, introduced Wise to Tupperware and convinced her to abandon the 'BCH club' for plastics. Together, building on Squires' original hostess party plan, they established a highly successful system of 'patio parties' to market Tupperware, entirely independently of stores. As their and others' independent Tupperware sales grew in the consumer market, Victor Collamore, director of Tupper Corporations' growing division of 'Hostess sales' was given the task of creating a new sales team for a new Tupperware frontier: Florida. In the 1950s with three million residents and not a single Tupperware distributor to be found, Florida seemed like the ideal home for Brownie Wise. On Monday 15 May 1950, Wise opened her first Tupperware business venture in Florida called 'Patio Parties.'[28] Her 'parties' (or demonstrations), employed unskilled and untrained women in the business of marketing and selling Tupperware. In Brownie Wise's sales plan, her dealers need only use the 'traditional feminine' social structure and domestic sphere to succeed in the selling of household goods.[29]

Upon arrival in Florida, Wise found herself in a Tupperware wasteland. Not only did few consumers in the state know about it, but Tupper Corporations also sometimes forgot about Florida. Early in her venture, Wise contacted the company to complain about late shipments and an inability to meet demand created by her successful patio parties. Meanwhile, Collamore, suspected of stealing money from the company, had been dismissed and Tupper found himself without a general sales manager to deal with Tupperware's sales forces. On 3 April 1951, Tupper travelled to Florida to deal with Wise in person. During their meeting he was taken by Wise's tenacity, 'you talk a lot and everybody listens', he is reported to have told her.[30] He had obviously been impressed by what he heard, as Wise was offered the vacant position of Head of Sales Management. She grabbed the opportunity by the horns, outlining her ideal sales team, creating a new division of Tupperware Home Parties, and was furthermore appointed Vice-President of Tupperware Corporations.

After Wise's appointment, the home party division was established and from then on all Tupperware products could only be bought through Tupperware's home sales. All products were withdrawn from the shelves in retail and department stores and private contractors could no longer buy and sell Tupperware. Everyone had to go through Wise or one of her 'wives'.

Wise was notorious for her extensive note taking. In preparation for one of the first of many sales manager speeches to the growing Hostess Division workforce, Wise jotted down a few thoughts including the point that 'ours is a complex world, complex, and changing; we need each other.'[31] Faithfulness and security were two qualities a war-experienced nation craved most of all, even in its consumer goods.

Reminiscent of the 1920s, the home party system was derived from traditional peddling. The direct sale method boomed during the Depression due to mass unemployment. By harnessing a displaced work force, peddling offered a form of casual labour with minimal capital outlay, formal skills or professional qualifications.[32] Distributors were essentially independent contractors: their only commissions were made from sales. When used by Tupper, this limited form of income ensured that housewives who were employed by Tupperware would never earn more than their husbands. Up until 1962, many states still had head and master laws, affirming that the wife was subject to her husband.[33] As long as a wife did not appear to enjoy her work too much, and her husband did not object, it was acceptable for a woman to have a job outside the home, with the important provisos that her income should always be lower than his and that her work should never push her motherly duties into second place. The femininity demanded by post-war US society of its female population was sacrosanct.[34] Tupperware-selling met these stringent demands: it was a needs-based occupation that kept women in the home, surrounded by home goods, for the benefit of her household. While the rest of the country looked to restrain women's desire to grow or fulfil their potential, Tupperware allowed its female employees personal and financial growth, albeit that they were opportunities which did not extend beyond household or family. In the company wide newsletter, Tupperware Sparks, Wise was very explicit about the cooperation of the family, a saleswoman's 'family must approve of her work…'[35]

The sociability of demonstrations and the hostess component went hand-in-hand with the fact that Tupperware-selling as a profession was not only part-time but also remained within the confines of the home. Tupperware, from its advertisements and sale pitches to its form of retail, was *the* gendered commercial product of the 1950s; the product was an open container made famous by its airtight seal, designed for the needs of housewives in a decade when America's norms and values were pushing for female domestic containment.

Today, ninety percent of American homes own at least one piece of Tupperware[36] and a Tupperware home party happens every 2.2 seconds.[37] Earl Tupper's goal was to produce a product that would change American lifestyles and set in motion the 'Tupperisation' of America. Tupperware exploited the white middle-class housewife of the 1950s. As one piece of recruitment propaganda would state, 'It's as easy as A B C because all you have to do is say yes.'[38]

Tupperware as a product, within the home, and in the context of the home party system perfectly embodied good housekeeping, hostess etiquette and the consumerism

of 1950s America. All Tupperware dealers were given a songbook that praised Tupperware's impact on material, social and cultural history. One such hymn, set to the tune *My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean,* contained the line 'seal tight, seal tight, those Tupperware items, seal tight, you see', its chorus proclaiming the various food items Tupperware keeps fresh or dry. Not only did the jingle effectively demonstrate that leftovers could be tasty, it reinforced traditional American femininity and sharper definition of gender roles within the home. In no way was the nuclear family of the 1950s a 'modern' conception of domesticity, rather traditional gender notions were juxtaposed with modern science.[39]

As *Life* reported in 1953: 'the nine billion a year chemical industry has transformed American life, it has scrubbed the modern world with detergents, doctored it with synthetic drugs, dressed it in synthetic textiles, cushioned it with synthetic rubber, and adorned it from head to toe with gaudy plastic'.[40] This particular piece of gaudy plastic, Tupperware, introduced modern design to domestic consumers and reinforced the consumption of material assets as a complement to America's 'contemporary suburban household.'[41] Tupperware was one showpiece among many that Nixon was proud to include in the July 1959 American Exhibition in Moscow. Guaranteed by *Good Housekeeping* and commended by the consumer service bureau of *Parents' Magazine*, Tupperware served as a reliable and effective gendered distraction for a worn down and anxiety-ridden United Sates.

Colour Her Successful: The Presentation of a Plastic Lady

Tupperware was the 'it' girl of twentieth century consumer goods. Nonetheless, what would stir dealers' and consumers' unfailing enthusiasm and devotion to the products of the Tupperware Corporation would be the home party plan. For the party plan economy was not simply gendered, it existed only because of gender. Intimate geographic settings, static economic roles and distinct gender spheres solidified Tupperware home demonstrations and parties in the consumer market.

As Tupperware relied more and more on the generosity and hospitality of housewives and mothers for in-home sales, homemaking went from an invisible labour to a marketable skill. Not only had homemaking skills been reconstituted into a process of accumulating mass-produced possessions, but Brownie Wise would utilise the 'knowledge' and the 'innate skills' of housewives to sell home products. In historian Sue Zschoche's reflection on gender domains, particularly home parties, she states, 'Wise was not, of course actually selling plastic. Her job was to sell the idea of selling plastic to women looking for work that could dovetail with home responsibilities.'[42] The script for home demonstrations was built on personal housekeeping stories and shared experiences in any aspect of social entertaining. When interviewed by *The Boston Herald*, the Damigellas, one of the earliest husband and wife distributor teams, said, 'a woman can go into one of these parties and say look girls, I run a kitchen, I have a home of my own, but a man tends to become an authority in the same situation, a lecturer.'[43] This idea of lecturing or talking down to women at a Tupperware demonstration was an issue addressed in dealership training. One sheet of tips and tricks for communication at a home party asked women if they were guilty of preaching, arguing or haranguing. The figurines pictured for each of these methods of speech were male. As one sales leaflet explained, 'Selling is not preaching. Selling is teaching and comparing. Ladies do not attend Patio Parties to be talked to; they come to visit with you and their neighbours and friends.'[44] Not only did Tupperware gender speech by identifying male figures with domineering forms of communication, but a home demonstration was being clearly defined as a 'friendly visit' and not a business transaction. The man that preached and was always right sold consumer goods, while the woman who listened and treated the customers and hostess as her personal guests was a Tupperware dealer.

Following her appointment as head of Sales Management and Vice-President to Tupperware Corporations, Brownie Wise wasted no time in working on recruiting wives to sell, teach and believe in the world of plastic. Amongst her personal notes and sale speeches, Brownie had a strict outline of the essential personal characteristics required of a Tupperware saleswoman. There were fourteen characteristics that were found to be most important, the first being appearance. 'Is her appearance attractive? She need not be beautiful, but she should look attractive and interesting, so that people will naturally tend to like her when they first see her. And she should be dressed neatly and conservatively.'[45] All Tupperware ladies were required to possess a genteel manner, voice and attitude; poise, ability to talk, good grammar, a strong driving force, self-supervision and loyalty.[46] Each of these essential characteristics was described in paragraph length and distributed to dealers. It was their job to find, during home demonstrations those individuals who were not only warm, but also had a pleasing voice, a need of money and their families' agreement. 'If she is married, her husband must be willing to see her give several evenings a week to our work, we must see him ourselves, sell him on it, so that we can be sure of his full cooperation.'[47] The husband's consent was essential to the employment of Tupperware ladies.

Wise also became the editor, writer, artist and copy girl for the company-wide newsletter, *Tupperware Sparks*, intended to boost employee morale and motivation, demonstrate the potential of Tupperware and educate women on the requirements and expectations of a Tupperware Lady. One of Wise's first sales manager speeches in Detroit was on the presentation of a Tupperware dealer. 'Are you yourself as fresh as you should be is your hair well arranged and shining and our [sic] hands well groomed (remember they frame every piece of Tupperware they handle), are your white shoes white, and your dark shoes gleaming?'[48] In *Tupperware Sparks* she would publish diagrams of women fully dressed and accessorised, with the tagline, 'Color her Successful.' Wise utilised every opportunity to not only preach the Tupper religion but also to remind women of the responsibilities they had to maintain the Tupperware image. A saleswoman's dress was to be simple, clean and pressed; nylons and a slip were to be worn at parties. The simplicity of Tupper plastics was to be reflected in the dealers' neatly set hair, jewellery, makeup and polished un-chipped nails. The ideal Tupperware lady was a woman with coiffed hair, pearls, earrings and a not-too-casual summer dress. The beauty of Tupperware design was meant to meet harmoniously with

Figure 1: Promotional material aimed at women dealers and designed to re-inforce the Tupperware image of femininity. Damigella Series 8, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

the beauty of its selling force. Claire Brooks, a saleswoman during the 1950s, proclaimed that 'Tupperware moved us up to being a lady.'[49]

The similarity between the two images in Figure 1 is striking. The uniformed smile, eyes, and hands demonstrate the 'stock character' that was utilised in all Tupperware publications and propaganda during the 1950s. The image on the left is a character from an advertisement demonstrating the ease and sociability of a Tupperware party. In contrast, the image on the right is the cover of an information pamphlet for *Tupperware College of Knowledge*. Both pieces of propaganda were distributed to Tupperware's existing hostesses as subliminal re-enforcements on appearance and demeanour. The Tupperware lady was portrayed as a white, middle-aged, well-groomed and stylish female.

Physical presentation, however, would not sell Tupperware alone. Interactions and a party atmosphere were integral to creating an economically stimulating atmosphere. In a Tupperware home catalogue the home party was described as the modern, convenient way to shop. 'Enjoy armchair comfort and the company of your friends as you see Tupperware demonstrated in your own living room', it urged.[50] Convenience, leisure and economy were three adjectives that Tupperware attributed exclusively to the home party system. Women could receive 'sisterly advice' on household problems while shopping for home products.

Recruiting new acolytes to the Tupperware cause was just as important as selling the plastic wares themselves. Advice on what to say and who to target were distributed to Tupperware dealers and managers. Recruitment materials identified widows, women whose husbands had lost their jobs, women with children to put through school and those looking to acquire extra money as ideal Tupperware dealers. To those individuals who might reply, 'It's not for me, I've never sold anything in my life', Wise advised women to respond, 'most Tupperware dealers never have. You are a homemaker telling another what Tupperware will do for her … you don't have to be experienced. Most of our people are homemakers.'[51] Tupperware selling was never deemed work, rather a passing on or preaching of intuitive feminine knowledge. Work was a very specific term, one that implied market and masculinity, while the home party system was conducted in feminine venues and centred on female activities.

In its recruitment package the sales department would include the story of a woman who was very ill, tired and often 'blue', kept busy by her housework. There was something missing, that she couldn't understand. Then one day she discovered Tupperware, 'Now … she's a happy dealer; her days are never blue! She hasn't time for sadness, she's Tupperware all through!'[52] This story draws on Betty Freidan's feminine stock character in *The Feminine Mystique* and showcases Tupperware as the antidote for Freidan's restless housewife condition. Whatever the event, whether it was a home party, club party or repeat sales, Tupperware portrayed itself as a vehicle of independence or means of attaining higher socioeconomic status. It was the 'proper' alternative for women to obtain discretionary funds, and those funds were then to be used for the benefit and betterment of the family unit.[53]

Tupperware Jubilee: A Pageantry of Beauty, Grace, and Selflessness

The Tupperware enterprise relied heavily on well-established systems of barter, reciprocity, displays of ritual, mysticism and gift giving. As another means of bringing women into the Tupperware fold, Wise developed Tupperware Jubilees. The first Jubilee was hosted in 1954, to coincide with the completion of Tupperware Home Party Headquarters in Kissimee, Florida. The Jubilee, a four-day retreat for Tupperware saleswomen, was meant to build

Figure 2: Dealers, managers and distributors all met for a four-day celebration of Tupperware and the Home party system. Women who had lived through the depression and a world war were now being encouraged to dream and make believe, as displayed in this image of the Alice and Wonderland Jubilee of 1970. Damigella Series 8, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

loyalty to Tupper plastics. Described as a 'family reunion with so many brothers and sisters' the Tupperware Jubilee borrowed ideas and themes from television shows, beauty pageants, the movies and children's fairy tales.[54] The first Jubilee of 1954 was 'The Homecoming Jubilee.' In homage to the American frontier and independent self-reliant adventurers, Tupperware saleswomen were encouraged to embrace the financial benefits of Tupper Home products. Months prior to the event a promotional campaign was aired on national television. A narrator's voice could be heard recounting the historic gold rush of 1849, accompanied by images of mines and men in cowboy hats. The film drew analogies between gold mine labour and the need for consistent dealer recruitment, ending with a shot of Tupperware Headquarters in preparation for the 'Big Dig.'[55]

Within a 'golden acre' of roped off land in the company's grounds was buried approximately forty-eight and half thousand dollars-worth of commodities: mink coats, television screens and jewellery.[56] Dealers, managers and distributors were instructed to 'strike it rich'. With Brownie Wise astride a stallion, she directed her employees to grab a shovel and dig. In an interview, Mrs Siriani recalled that she still had her first jubilee prize from that year: 'A little double broiler with a cover that I dug up myself.'[57] The idea of the independent entrepreneur permeated the agenda of Tupperware Jubilees. The 'Big Dig' event specifically served as a hybrid charade of American cultural mythology, referencing both the pioneering spirit of the Wild West cowboy and the gold rush fervour.[58] All these representations emphasised the spoils of an industrial nation in the midst of economic prosperity, and an increasing dedication to the American dream. Aside from attending lavish dinners and grand award ceremonies, all Tupperware employees also had homework to complete and tests to take, followed by workshops and guest lectures. Dr Ralph W. Sockman was the key speaker for 'The Homecoming Jubilee'. In his lecture he stressed the value of the home: he believed the household was the magic circle to transform society and defend communities against the threats of communism.

Within the Tupperware Jubilee, traditional social institutions were recreated, from an end-of-ceremonies family dinner to a graduation. Dealers were reminded of the importance of family and kinship in the Tupperware Home Party system. Jubilees were specifically formatted as a family reunion devoid of drinking, dancing or late night partying. Themes and activities had to be 'appropriate' for unescorted wives and mothers, especially if those women were Tupperware ladies.

Tupperware motivated its dealers to dedicate themselves to a working wish,

> 'you must give it body, strength; there is a way for your wish to come true. We have to dig deep in ourselves to believe, believe in a God, we feed on a goal. It takes courage to wish, you have it, don't be afraid in that moment, in that time to go ahead, right then.'[59]

These quasi-religious sermons invoked reverence amongst dealers towards Brownie Wise, the plan and the product. What women should and should not be was dictated by the products and ideology of yearly jubilees just as much as the printed catalogue images, recruitment requirements and *Tupperware Sparks* weekly newsletters.

The Shelf Life of a Tupperware Woman

The 'Housewifisation' and then 'hostessisation' of the 1950s Tupperware lady was an insidious process that undermined women's possibilities for self-fulfilment. In 1969, Margaret Laurence published the *Fire Dwellers*, a fictional representation of Friedan's female housewife. The novel is an exploration of the alienation of a housewife, and Tupperware makes an appearance in the action of the novel in the form of the fictional 'Polygram Party.'[60] The Polygram lady is described thus: 'the plastic lady is petite and emancipated, high frothed-up metallic blonde hair, high thin heels supporting bird-bone ankles, face gay-gay-gay with its haggardness fairly well-masked by tan makeup and the scarlet gash of a lipstick smile.'[61] Laurence is very clear, in her reference to in-home sales and its dealers, that artificial glamour cannot hide the empty promises of the commercial product. Yet Brownie Wise's highest achievement through

weekly newsletters, Tupperware education programs, yearly jubilees and honour societies was to convince women that consumer objects constituted an appropriate object of desire and meaning, that investment in an object and a company could transform you into a Cinderella of suburbia.

The wishes and dreams with which Tupperware brainwashed its employees were not only monetary dreams, they were also always for the benefit of someone else. Tupperware in the 1950s developed family-oriented propaganda. One such piece of publicity was the Wish Fairy colouring book. It featured two children, Tip and Top, and their household pet Tuppy. Tip is shown wishing for clothes, Top is pictured with toys orbiting in his dreams and Tuppy is envisioning various treats. At the end of the colouring book Tip, Top and Tuppy all receive their wishes through Tupperware. Yet, it is not Tip, Top or Tuppy who will be selling Tupperware, it is their mother. The Tupperware saleswoman, who despite having wishes, hopes and dreams of her own, is not factored into the Wish Fairy Colouring Book. The central characters are her family and it is for her family that she must sell Tupperware. [62]

A Tupperware lady benefitted her family through additional income and all the monetary gifts acquired through successful sales. A woman's wishes for herself were not highlighted or even discussed in Tupperware propaganda. In Tupperware, the self was overshadowed by the whole. Women were built up only to stagnate in a job whose products fostered increased household labour and hostess duties.

The family unit was a fundamental feature of the Tupperware's staff. At the end of every Jubilee as dealers, managers and distributors left the Tupperware headquarters, staff members waved a fond farewell from the front steps of the main building. The 'farewell salute' as it became known was 'symbolic of a family waving its relative on their way, after a visit home.'[63] The Tupperware Company fostered a circle of companionship, an inner circle within post-war American isolation. In the process of protecting households and homes, Tupperware quarantined women into the home.

Despite Brownie's prestigious position as Vice President of Sales Management for Tupperware Home Products she owned very little. She did not own her house outright, nor did she own the private island she made use of, Isla Milagra; she did not own her car, she had no employment contract, or health insurance, nor did she possess legal documentation for various agreements between Tupper and herself. Brownie Wise built her public image on faith and trust in one man, which would prove to be her downfall.[64]

As early as 1953, Earl Tupper had become increasingly irritated with Wise's extravagance in the construction of Tupperware Headquarters in Kissmee, her elaborate spending at yearly jubilees and her growing stardom as the face and voice of Tupperware. In response to a manuscript of Wise's developing autobiography, Tupper stated, 'however good an executive you are, I still like BEST your picture as a woman, of course with Tupperware.'[65] By 1957 after low sales growth and constant year-on-year increases in corporate spending Tupper had had enough of Tupperware's 'Fairy Godmother', as Wise had been dubbed in some circles.

In 1955 at the dedication ceremony of 'The Garden that Loyalty Built,' perhaps sensing a storm brewing, Wise stepped on to the podium, looked out into the crowd of Tupperware ladies, and said, 'I hope that we may always remember that our interest is common and that any real eminence that we attain as a company will always rest in the personal growth and achievement of our people.'[66] In the end, the selflessness that Wise had instilled within her dealers was the exact quality that led to her demise. In a note to her attorneys Brownie wrote, 'The most serious mistake I have made with Tupperware and Tupper is that of being naïve (stupid is the better word I suppose) after all these years of blindly putting Tupperware and its interests ahead of Brownie and her interests.'[67] In 1954, Wise had been the first woman to ever grace the cover of *Business Week,* as leader of a multimillion-dollar company, but by the beginning of 1958 she was forced to relinquish all materials associated with Tupperware, move out of her company home, and was banned from working in sales for the term of two years. The Queen of Tupperware was unemployed, homeless and soon to be forgotten.[68]

The diminution of the individual in Tupperware sales prohibited women from defining themselves in a decade focused on re-feminisation. The speech that Wise made at the dedication ceremony of the Loyalty Garden highlights the dependency that Tupperware home parties were able to foster to succeed in a fad-driven consumer market. Tupperware ladies did not hold a job; according to Tupperware recruitment pamphlets, they had appointments. Tupperware worked as a unit, yet Earl Tupper opposed unions and to this day Tupperware remains anti-union.[69] Given neither employment benefits nor the option of being unionised, Tupperware not only instructed women on how to be good wives and caregivers it was also an instructive primer on the limits of 1950s corporate culture, especially for women.[70]

Tupperware-selling, during the 1950s, was marketed to women using similar techniques to the way they sold the product itself. Women were asked questions on food storage and thrift, only to have their imaginations roused with the airtight Tupper seal. At home, demonstrations and yearly jubilees created desire through product gift-giving. This desire for wealth, esteem and recognition turned into a need, and to accomplish these needs women had to take action. The action was selling plastics; and their desires, wants and needs were those predetermined by American society for its wives and mothers. Domesticity was as important as consumption in 1950s American culture, and it was Tupperware products and sales plans that kept women contained in the home, buying and selling Tupperware's plastic independence, self-esteem and gender ideals.

Notes

1. Laurie Kahn-Leavitt , director, *Tupperware*, (Boston: PBS Home Video, 2004), DVD.

2. 'Burping plastics' refers to the sound produced when trapped air was expelled from all Tupperware products.

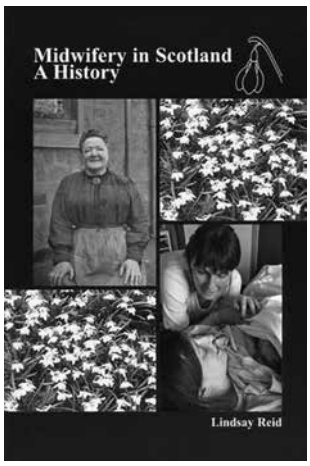
3. Susan Vincent, 'Preserving Domesticity, Reading Tupperware in Women's Changing Domestic, Social, Economic Roles', *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 40, 2 (2003), 5.

4. Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Post-war America* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1994), 5.

5. Elaine T. May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York, Basic Books, 1988), 16.
6. *Ibid*., 14.
7. Kessler-Harris, *Gender Ideology and Family Survival* (Massachusetts, D.C. Heath and Company, 1996), 78.
8. *Ibid*., 147.
9. May, *Homeward Bound*, 144.
10. Paul Boyer, *Promises to Keep: The United States since WWII*, (Massachusetts, D.C. Heath and Company, 1995), 131.
11. *Ibid*., 104.
12. Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, 130.
13. Alison J. Clarke, *Tupperware: the Promise of Plastic in 1950s America* (Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), 104.
14. May, *Homeward Bound*, 1.
15. Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, 132-133.
16. Clarke, *Tupperware the Promise of Plastic*, 45.
17. *Ibid.,* 2.
18. Vincent, 'Preserving Domesticity', 5.
19. Clarke, *Tupperware: the Promise of Plastic, 9.*
20. *Ibid*., 35.
21. *Ibid*., 38.
22. May, *Homeward Bound*, 148. The Kitchen Debate, between Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev, took place at the American National Exhibition in Moscow, in July 1959.
23. Amanda Spake, 'Brownie Wise has one word for you: plastics,' *U.S News and World Report*, Oct. 18, 1999, 82.
24. 'Tupperware,' *Time*, 8 Sep. 1947, 92.
25. Bernard G. Preistley, 'Tupperware Makes Whirlwind Debut via Big Store Demonstrations,' *Sales Management*, Apr. 15 1948.
26. Clarke, *Tupperware: The Promise of Plastic,* 79-80.
27. *Ibid*., 87.
28. Bob Kealing, *Tupperware Unsealed: Brownie Wise, Earl Tupper, and the Home Party Pioneers,* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2008) 38.
29. National Museum of American History (hereafter NMAH), 509, series 1, Brownie Wise's personal notes.
30. *Ibid*., 53.
31. NMAH, 509, series 1, Brownie Wise's personal note to Brownie Wise, 1952.
32. Clarke, *Tupperware the Promise of Plastic*, 82.
33. Stephanie Coontz, *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s* (New York, Basic Books, 2011), 5.
34. Marynia F. Farnham and Ferdinand Lundberg, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex.* (Massachusetts, D.C Heath and Company, 1947), 402.
35. Laurie Kahn-Leavitt, *Tupperware*.
36. Clarke, *Tupperware: the Promise of Plastic*, 1.
37. Spake, 'Brownie Wise has one word for you', 82.
38. NMAH 509, series 2, recruitment propaganda 1944-1996.
39. Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, 126.
40. Ibid., 126.
41. Clarke, *Tupperware: the Promise of Plastic,* 82-83.
42. Susan L. Williams and Michelle Bemiller, *Women at Work: Tupperware, Passion Parties, and Beyond* (London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011), 39.
43. Robert Taylor, 'And Army Uses It in Its Tanks', *The Boston Herald*, 3 Mar. 1960, section B.
44. NMAH 509, series 2, *The Go-Getter,* 'Are You Guilty' leaflet, 25 Nov 1950.
45. NMAH 509, series 3, folder 14, *Tupperware Sparks,* 1951-57.
46. NMAH 509, series 3, folder 14, *Tupperware Sparks*, 1951-57.
47. NMAH 509, series 2, box 9, folder 26, 'How to Induce Dealers to Work,' n.d.
48. NMAH 509, series 2, box 9, 'Colour Her Successful,' n.d.
49. Laurie Kahn-Leavitt, *Tupperware.*
50. Clarke, *Tupperware: The Promise of Plastics,* 107.
51. NMAH 509, series 3, folder 14, *Tupperware Sparks*, 1951-57.
52. NMAH, 583, series 5, 'Formula for Success,' Tupperware University, n.d.
53. NMAH, 509, series 3, folder 14, *Tupperware Sparks*, 1951-57.
54. Laurie Kahn-Leavitt, *Tupperware*.
55. NMAH, 583, series 10, 'The Tupperware Jubilee Story', Thomas and Ann Damigella, home videos, 1954-80.
56. 'Tupperware Timeline', PBS, www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/tupperware/timeline/index.html.
57. Laurie Kahn-Leavitt, *Tupperware*.
58. 'Tupperware Timeline', PBS, www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/tupperware/timeline/index.html.
59. NMAH 583, series 10, 'Wish Fairy Jubilee,' Thomas Damigella home video.
60. Vincent, 'Preserving Domesticity', 193.
61. *Ibid*.
62. NMAH 583, series 5, 'Wish Fairy Colourings Book', n.d.
63. NMAH 583, series 8, box 3, *Tupperware Sentinel Magazine*, 1967-1982.
64. Laurie Kahn-Leavitt, *Tupperware*.
65. NMAH 470, series 4, box 11, Earl S Tupper Papers.
66. NMAH 583, series 10, 'Commencement of the Garden That Loyalty Built', Thomas and Ann Damigella Collection.
67. NMAH 509, series 1, Brownie Wise's personal documents.
68. Clarke, *Tupperware: the Promise of Plastic,* 130.
69. Jennifer Scanlon, 'Review of *Tupperware Unsealed: Brownie Wise, Earl Tupper, and the Home Party Pioneers* by Bob Kealing', *The Journal of Southern History,* 75/4 (2009), 1099
70. Lisa M. Stepanski, 'Review of *Tupperware Unsealed: Brownie Wise, Earl Tupper, and the Home Party Pioneers* by Bob Kealing', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 42/4 (2009), 800–802.

Book Reviews

Lindsay Reid, *Midwifery in Scotland: a History*
Scotland: Scottish History Press, 2011. £24.95,
ISBN 978 0 9565577 0 8 (paperback), pp. vii + 290
Reviewed by Sarah Crook
Queen Mary, University of London



By any measure the twentieth century was an era of extraordinary upheaval in healthcare services. For Scottish midwives, the key battleground was autonomy, as they sought to have their specific expertise recognised and respected. This struggle was both professional, as midwives sought to maintain parity with other medical practitioners, and also personal, as an overwhelmingly female profession worked under the influence of predominantly male general practitioners and obstetricians.

Prior to 1915, Scottish women acted as unregistered 'howdies' and assisted at births with varying degrees of competence. Following the passage of the 1915 Midwives (Scotland) Act, midwives were registered and their training centrally overseen. In *Midwifery in Scotland: a History,* Lindsay Reid is careful to avoid a Whiggish narrative, noting that although it was in part the high rates of maternal and infant mortality that stimulated state regulation, howdies formed a recognised part of the medical infrastructure before and after the Act. This was due to Scottish geography and demography, and also to the slow, uneven pace of social and attitudinal change.

Scottish midwives bore witness to significant changes in the location and experience of birth across the twentieth century. An estimated ninety-five per cent of births occurred at home prior to 1915, a figure that had diminished to just 0.5 per cent by 1981. The move towards hospital births, Reid argues, often had a negative impact on midwives and the experience of mothers. It inhibited the relationship between women and midwives, and undermined pregnant women's individuality and autonomy. However, this shift was partly driven by childbearing women in reaction to reports indicating that hospital births were safer. Once in hospital women's experiences were subject to the trends of the era and the policies of the hospital. Reid details midwives' discomfort with the routine use of episiotomies in the mid-1970s as an example of how care was depersonalised and midwives' prerogative undermined. By the late twentieth century, however, women began to be able to take ownership of their birthing experience.

Reid steers clear of sentimentalising the role of midwives, instead drawing on oral histories to allow the women themselves to speak of how they surmounted often adverse working conditions. This approach is particularly successful, allowing midwives to recount how acute poverty and ignorance contributed to poor maternal and infant health. These sections of the book draw attention to midwives' enduring commitment to women-centred care, even before it was the *zeitgeist*. Reid is clear that the midwife has long had a more significant role that simply the attendant at birth, as she was vital to women's pre- and post-natal care. The midwives interviewed by Reid entered women's homes and placed their care within the context of their domestic life. They stood at the juncture between the state, the medical profession and women at their most vulnerable. Reid concludes with a consideration of the current state of Scottish midwifery, and reflects that the future is bright for both professionals and patients. *Midwifery in Scotland: a History* should be of interest to those working on the history of healthcare in Scotland, but also deserves to be read by those concerned with the power struggles fought by women, for women.

R.J. Minney, *Carve Her Name With Pride: The Story of Violette Szabo*
Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military Press, 2011.
£12.99, ISBN 978 1 8488 4742 4 (paperback)
pp.187

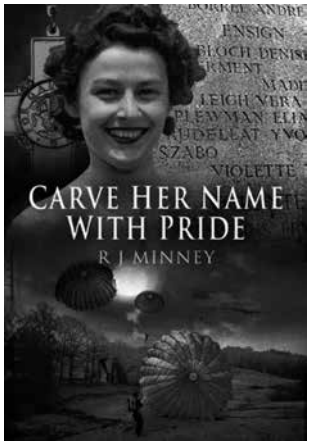
Bernard O'Connor, *Agent Rose: The True Story of Eileen Nearne, Britain's Forgotten Wartime Heroine*
Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2012. £20,
ISBN 978 1 4456 0838 9 (hardback), pp. 232

Bernard O'Connor, *Women of Tempsford: Churchill's Agents of Wartime Resistance*
Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2011. £18.99,
ISBN 978 1 4456 0434 3 (paperback), pp. 280

Reviewed by Clare Mulley
Independent Scholar ***www.claremulley.com***

Written in 1956, R. J. Minney's *Carve Her Name With Pride* was among the first stories of British female special agents to be told. Its subject, the courageous Violette Szabo, became even more famous after a film of the book, starring Virginia McKenna, was released two years later. This welcome reprint, published to coincide with the 90th anniversary of Szabo's birth, tells us as much about the telling of this history, however, as it does the inspiring story of its subject.

At the start of the Second World War, Violette Bushell was selling perfume in a Brixton department-store. The next year she met and married Etienne Szabo, a French officer on leave in London, who died of his wounds at El Alamein two years later. Despite now having a baby, Szabo offered her services to the Special Operations Executive (SOE). After rigorous training, she was sent to France in

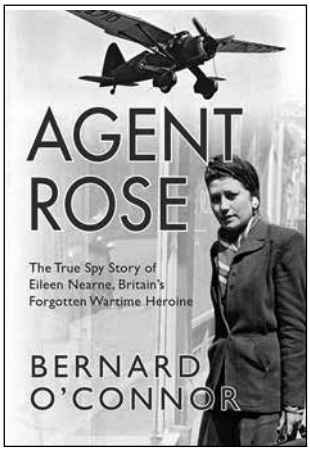


April 1944, on a mission to help reestablish a broken resistance circuit, identify targets for British bombers, and support the destruction of a viaduct. Pleased with her success on all fronts, she treated herself to a couple of Paris dresses and was flown back to London. During her second mission, she was captured after a gun-fight in what is probably the most famous episode in Minney's narrative, and sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp. In January 1945, she and two other British agents, Denise Bloch and Lilian Rolfe, were executed by firing squad. Szabo was posthumously awarded the George Cross in recognition of her courage.

In the 1950s however, it seems that to be publicly revered, even highly trained and operationally-effective female special agents needed to have their full complement of feminine virtues. There is no doubt that Szabo was as beautiful as she was brave, but that does not require her to have been always kind and cheerful, and the superlatives heaped upon her throughout this book threaten to overwhelm the real woman. 'She was really a delightful person', 'always happy, always laughing', 'her large sparkling eyes made everyone turn to look again, and come up, eager to be served by her' Minney quotes Szabo's friends, on one page alone. Unsurprisingly Minney also keenly defends Szabo's maternal impulse. Her daughter hardly appears without being 'clasped close', kissed repeatedly or causing 'a glow of happiness' to light up her mother's face. How much more interesting it would have been to have had Szabo's repeated decision to leave her daughter properly examined! This in many ways compelling book gives us a wonderful, terrible, fairytale in which a beautiful young woman, 'a girl' as Minney calls her in his introduction, helps to defeat the forces of evil by making the ultimate sacrifice. Szabo deserves better than this; she deserves to be remembered as a real woman, with complex motivations, fears and joys.

Yet it is easy to forget, behind all the praise, just how controversial this book was in its day, celebrating the life of a woman who left her infant daughter behind to fight alongside men in the field, and opening up a whole new genre of biographies looking at female special agents. It would have been useful to have had a new introduction reminding us of the social context in which the book was written: a time more familiar to Szabo than to the reader today. As it is, it remains a fascinating look at a wonderful character, and a valuable precursor to more recent biographies, not of just Szabo, but of other female agents who were less celebrated in their own day.

The *Agent Rose* of Bernard O'Connor's title is Eileen 'Didi' Nearne, whose lonely death in Torquay and modest council burial in 2010 made international headlines after her wartime medals revealed her to have been another of Britain's female special agents during the war. After months spent serving undercover as a wireless operator in France, the courageous Nearne was caught by the Gestapo



and, after some brutal but fruitless interrogation, sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp. Amazingly, unlike Szabo from whom she wisely kept her distance at the camp so as to remain undercover, Nearne survived the war to live modestly and die alone over half a century later.

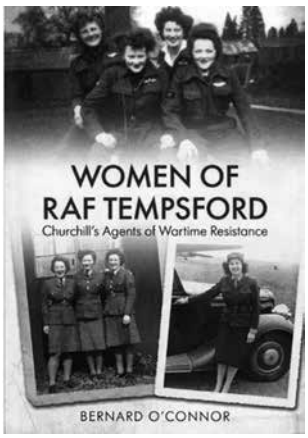
Keeping quiet was one of Eileen Nearne's great strengths, and she saved many lives (including her own) through silence, bluff and determination in the face of what must have seemed a hopeless situation. However this ability, along with scant records, has made O'Connor's job rather difficult. The first five chapters of this biography deal mainly with SOE agents' recruitment and training, in detail, but without much revealing reference to Nearne herself. It is almost half way through the book before she appears in any personal sense. Here she is in a damning supervisor's report that opens, 'she is not very intelligent or practical and is lacking in shrewdness and cunning…' It is only when Nearne had overcome such objections, and was serving covertly in France, that the reader begins to gain a real picture of this modest and enigmatic woman whose ability not to stand out from the crowd and, when caught, to 'play the daft lassie' proved so valuable.

Nearne's work as a wireless operator in France kept agents in touch with London. Her sister, Jacqueline, also served with the SOE, as a courier, and one of her brothers, Francis, would also join 'the firm', as the SOE was known to insiders. Although the sisters knew of each other's work, they operated separately, and O'Connor's intention to write Jacqueline's story in a subsequent book means that she features rather less than might be expected here. Eileen Nearne was arrested in July 1944, and suffered appalling torture during interrogation. She nevertheless persuaded her captors that she was simply a naïve Frenchwoman caught up in things she did not understand. Showing remarkable resilience, having survived a period at Ravensbrück, she eventually escaped from a forced labour camp in Silesia.

This dramatic story is largely told in long quotes from other sources, but it is the rare examples of Nearne's own words that are the most poignant in the book. 'When I put my hands on the signals keys, there came a feeling of patriotism', she later recalled. 'I was pleased I was doing something. It was perhaps a little emotional'. And this is about as emotional as the reader is going to get with this oddly hollow book, unless you count the bathos of 'the very sad time', for example, when an elderly Nearne lost her ginger cat.

Agent Rose is useful if you want an overview of the training of F [French] Section agents, but brings little insight into the character or motivations of Eileen Nearne. In some ways it is hard not applaud this very private woman for having successfully evaded capture yet again, this time by a biographer, but it leaves the reader rather frustrated nonetheless.

Better is O'Conner's history of the *Women of Tempsford: Churchill's Agents of Wartime Resistance*. This



book provides an overview of the WAAF, FANYs and life at RAF Tempsford, home to the special duties squadrons who delivered agents and supplies to Europe during WWII, as well as brief biographical sketches of over seventy-two women who served as agents.

What is fascinating here is to learn not only about the roles undertaken by the FANYs and WAAFs, but also how little was known about them by the general public at the time. O'Connor quotes a wonderful 1945 article from the *Sunday Express* that aimed to set the record straight by explaining that, 'the interesting thing about these girls is that they are not hearty and horsey young women with masculine chins ... but pretty young girls who look demure and sweet'. It was clearly stories like this that helped pave the way for biographies like Minney's of Violette Szabo. There is also an interesting section on life, romances and general entertainment at Tempsford, which has been less covered elsewhere.

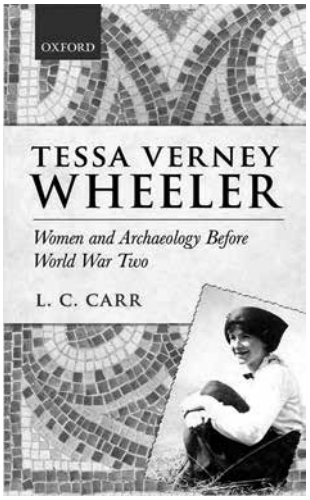
The women whose stories are at the heart of this book are, by necessity, each touched on only briefly, but there is much that is poignant in their courage, determination and, often, their sad fate. The section on Violette Szabo paints a more colourful picture of the woman than Minney's entire biography, including a wonderful quote from the lady who supplied her clothes for operations in France, remembering 'making black underwear for her' on request. Sadly however the information on Krystyna Skarbek, aka Christine Granville, is full of inaccuracies from her age to the various details of her operations, which does not inspire confidence in the rest of the entries. Nevertheless it is good to see Skarbek included. As a Pole, and the only female agent dropped to France from Algiers, rather than from England, she is often overlooked.

If sometimes reading rather like a digest of other published books and material, O'Connor's bibliography does reveal good use of a range of sources, including a thorough trawl of the rich material now available online. It is therefore a shame that sources are referenced wordily in the text rather than with endnotes, that the long quotes used throughout, such as the accounts from Maurice Buckmaster, Head of SOE's 'F' Section, do not receive the critical attention that they demand and, above all, that there is again no index. A better editor might have helped shape this book into both a more user-friendly, and a more accurate, history.

All in all, this is a useful first stop for those interested in finding out more about the women who were in different ways connected to RAF Tempsford, as well as some of their colleagues who were flown or dropped to missions from elsewhere, and life at the base itself. However those with a serious interest will want both more accurate information, and deeper analysis. I am delighted that new biographies of several female agents from WWII are due to be published later this year, as well as the previously untold story of Noreen Riols, the last surviving female member of SOE's 'F' Section. O'Connor's is a helpful addition to the literature here, but should not be read in isolation.

L. (Lydia) C. Carr, *Tessa Verney Wheeler, Women and Archaeology Before World War Two*

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. £65,
ISBN 978 0 19 964022 5 1 (hardback), pp. 274
Reviewed by Ruth E. Richardson
Independent Scholar



The focus of this biography is to counter the usual preamble that would begin: Tessa Verney Wheeler (1893-1936) was the wife of the eminent archaeologist Sir Mortimer Wheeler (1890-1976). Yes, she was but she was also an eminent archaeologist in her own right. She was an inspiring person, a meticulous excavator and recorder, a discerning teacher and an equal partner with her husband on the several archaeological investigations they carried out together. A biography of her is welcomed as long over-due. However, this biography is not simply an account of her life and work, for the author places her as the crucial transition figure between generations. Previously, women like Hilda Petrie (wife of the Egyptologist, Sir Flinders Petrie) were expected to be invisible supporters of their husbands, while a few, like Margaret Murray, had the finance and connections to be gender-rebels. Tessa Verney Wheeler made it possible for women to 'obtain degrees and jobs in a way similar at least to that of their male friends'. She paved the way for all modern female archaeologists and museum curators.

Tessa, consistently described as charming, was undoubtedly very kind, but she also had a core of steely dedication to the project in hand. The author demonstrates that she was a far more complex personality than has been recognised, even in the biographies of her husband. She came from a relatively humble background. Her mother, from a family of moderately prosperous ironmongers in County Durham, had an adventurous life. Claiming to be a widow, she moved to South Africa with her son, returning to England before 1901 with him and her daughter Tessa. By 1910, Tessa was calling herself Tessa Verney but there is considerable doubt surrounding the identity of her father. What is certain is that Tessa owed a great deal to the financial support of her mother's final partner, Theophilus Morgan Davies, owner of a chemist shop, who made it possible for her to continue her academic studies. Tessa did not complete her degree because she met the charismatic R.E.M. (Rik) Wheeler at University College, London, where she studied History, Latin and Roman History, English, French and Italian. They married in 1914 and moved in with Wheeler's family in London, their only child, Michael, being born in 1915. Wheeler was in the army during the 1914-1918 war. Tessa became the first female assistant surveyor of income tax. She was an efficient administrator and throughout her life served as a valued member on numerous important committees.

After demobilisation, Wheeler resumed his post at the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments and then became Keeper of Archaeology at the National Museum in Cardiff. Such posts were prestigious but not highly paid and there is evidence that the family actually lived in the museum at times (apparently their usual practice). In 1924, he was appointed Director of the National Museum of Wales which allowed them to afford their first house. It was in Wales that Tessa began her career in excavations, notably at the Roman forts of Segontium/ Caernavon, Brecon Gaer, and at Caerleon. Because Wheeler transferred to be Keeper of the London Museum in 1926, Tessa was in charge of the superb excavation of the Caerleon Roman amphitheatre, the best preserved in Britain, and the summary report was her first sole publication, facilitating her election to be a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. Tessa and her husband then excavated the Roman temple, mine and complex at Lydney Park, Gloucestershire, which was their only joint excavation on a privately owned site. Wheeler, from a journalist background, felt strongly that as the public ultimately paid for investigations on public sites they should be involved if they wished. Lectures were given but more innovative were the site open days, the sale of postcards and souvenirs, and the encouragement given to regular press coverage. Their next project was the Roman town of Verulamium at St. Albans, where Wheeler also discovered evidence for the earlier Iron Age oppidum. The author describes how each of these provided a progression in Tessa's confidence and ability. At the Iron Age Hillfort of Maiden Castle 'she was at the peak of her powers. By the time she died, she was able to delegate tasks to any number of trained assistants – men and women she could trust to do a job properly because she had taught them how herself.' Here she was 'truly a leader'.

Good excavations should involve such meticulous and clearly stated recording that they can be readily re-evaluated by later archaeologists using more recent criteria. The Wheelers' excavations are examples of this standard and, where they survive, the site notebooks demonstrate how carefully Tessa noted the details. Mortimer Wheeler developed what is known as the Wheeler Method, which employed a grid of trenches across a site so that the vertical and horizontal stratigraphy was available for study. However, it was usually Tessa who operated it in the field. He saw his job as taking the overall view, while she, with quiet dedication, concerned herself with administration, accounts, practical site organisation and the well-being of the students and employed diggers. She was also an acknowledged expert on the conservation of small finds, with a particular interest in coins and Roman mosaics. When she died, Wheeler found he had to appoint three different people to carry out all the tasks she had performed on the still unfinished Maiden Castle excavation. Wheeler acknowledged his debt to her. They had a uniquely strong working partnership, although she lived with the stress caused by his serial philandering. Occasionally, she even consoled his discarded girlfriends to avoid discord on a site. For Tessa, in later life, her work came first, followed by her son and husband.

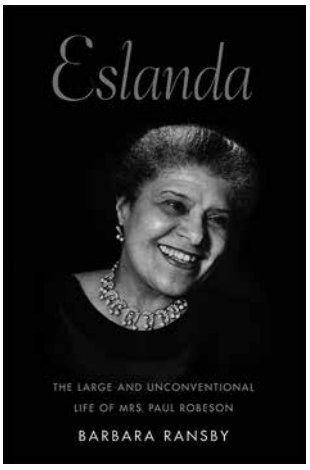
She was an inspirational teacher, giving lectures, but more importantly teaching on site. She focused on the small-scale, technical aspects of their excavations, developed artefact context sheets that are still in use, and helped produce clear reports that included specialist analysis of pottery, coins and other site components. One of her students, Middle-East archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon, said that she was the source of 'what she had learned of site management and field technique, notably the detailed control of stratigraphy and pottery recording'. Tessa worked in the National Museum in Cardiff and in the London Museum, where she seems to have been paid. She was closely involved, with her husband, in the foundation of the Institute of Archaeology (now part of UCL), the well-regarded and largest centre for archaeology. It opened after her untimely death and was dedicated to her.

This book covers all aspects of Tessa Verney Wheeler's life in detail. There are errors, sometimes of fact (Mortimer Wheeler died in 1976 not 1978), and sometimes of spelling (surely 'an American affection' should be 'affectation' on page 89) and grammar. Good editing would have helped eliminate a tendency to repetition. It is a great pity that the photographs are so poorly reproduced. The Timeline of Main Events in Tessa's life is very useful. There are footnotes, a short index and a perhaps overlong bibliography. The arrangement of the chapters, although chronological, focuses on the different aspects of their subject's life for clarity. Despite these caveats, this is an interesting account of a woman whose immense contribution to archaeology and the cause of female independence has been sadly overlooked for too long.

Barbara Ransby, *Eslanda: The Large and Unconventional Life of Mrs. Paul Robeson*

New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013. £25, ISBN 978 0 300 12434 7 (hardback), pp. vii + 373

Reviewed by Henrice Altink
University of York



In 1919, Eslanda Cardozo Goode, a light-skinned, middle-class African-American woman met the then law student Paul Robeson. She soon fell in love with him and by 1921 the couple was married. While the singer, actor and political activist Paul Robeson has been the subject of many books, his wife has thus far received scant scholarly attention. This extensively-researched book is the first to centralise Eslanda, an accomplished writer and political activist in her own right. Although it proceeds chronologically, it is not a traditional biography. Each chapter focuses on one or more of the political issues that concerned Eslanda. By adopting a chronological and thematic structure, the book succeeds in charting how Eslanda's political thinking developed from a focus on America to Africa and gradually also China and other parts of the world.

Eslanda was not just a talented but also a prolific writer. In addition to a biography of her husband, she

published a book based on one of her visits to Africa, co-authored a book with Pearl Buck, contributed articles to magazines and wrote several unpublished novels. Barbara Ransby, a historian of African-American women, has used Eslanda's writings alongside her public speeches, letters and interviews with Eslanda's son and daughter-in-law for this biography. It sheds light not only on Eslanda's life but also on many key events of the twentieth century, such as the Harlem Renaissance (she was Paul's manager in the 1920s negotiating some of his most memorable performances), the Cold War (she appeared before Joseph McCarthy's permanent sub-committee on investigations), and post-war internationalism (she attended the founding conference of the United Nations). While existing work on the Robesons deals with the East-West divide, Ransby, by centralising Eslanda, shifts our attention to the couple's focus on the North-South divide. Eslanda was deeply interested in the affairs of and developed relationships with nationalists in India, the Caribbean and Latin America but it was the freedom struggle in Africa that concerned her most. She not only wrote extensively about the continent but also worked in such organisations as the Council on African Affairs.

Eslanda's writings on Africa were largely informed by visits made to the continent in 1936, 1946 and 1958. By narrating not only these trips but also those to England, Eastern Europe, the USSR, and China, Ransby enhances our understanding of black transnationalism. Eslanda was one of and met various other African Americans on her trips abroad. For example, in 1949 she attended a women's conference in Beijing with Ada Jackson, who like Eslanda herself had run unsuccessfully as the Progressive Party's candidate for congress. Yet she also met and developed strong relationships with men and women from the Global South, such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Cheddi Jagan, which led her to view herself as 'part of a "world family" as well as an African Diasporic and Third World Family' (p.7).

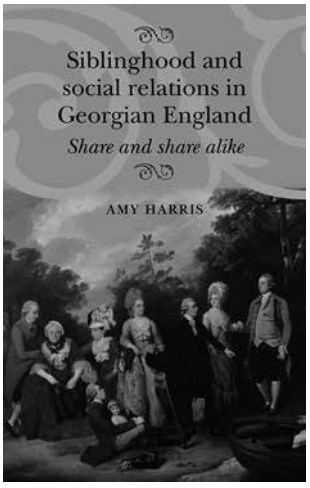
But this book will not just be of interest to readers of *Women's History Magazine* because it focuses on Eslanda rather than on her famous husband. Although she never called herself a feminist, gender equality was one of the various issues that concerned Eslanda. Ransby gives several examples of her work on behalf of women both at home and abroad. She attended women's conferences, was a member of several women's organisations, and used her writings to advocate gender equality. For instance, in one of her articles she took the UN to task for the lack of women on its governing body and in the book she co-authored with Pearl Buck, she argued that 'sex and marriage could, and perhaps should, be viewed separately' and that there was nothing 'sacred about sex' (p. 182), a view that was not widely articulated by feminists until the late 1960s.

Although Ransby at times makes too much of the limited material for some parts of Eslanda's life, such as her trip to Central America in 1940, and is occasionally too reluctant to criticise her subject, as in the case of her and Paul's continued support for the USSR, there is little to fault in this fluently-written book that contains a helpful chronology of Eslanda's life and numerous photographs. The book provides readers with a very moving account of a woman who was never reluctant to speak out about causes that were unpopular or taboo, even though at times her passion and commitment cost her dearly. Her refusal to sign an affidavit stating that she was not a communist, for instance, led many friends to turn away from her. As such, the book holds up a mirror to all of us not to be blind to the injustices that surround us and to work towards equality and freedom.

Amy Harris, *Siblings and Social Relations in Georgian England: Share and Share Alike*

Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2012. £65.00, 9780719087370 (hardback), pp. xv + 205.

Reviewed by Hannah Barker
University of Manchester



Amy Harris's *Siblings* is a delightful read: full of rich descriptive detail and written in a lively and engaging style, it is not hard to get from the front cover to the back. Even the preface (not normally the subject of reviews, but which I, in common I suspect with most nosey social historians cannot resist) is so witty that it made me laugh out loud (again, not the sort of thing one usually puts in reviews of history books). Yet though any reader or reviewer is grateful for a book that is readable, this does not mean that *Siblings* is an easy read in the sense that it is somehow lightweight. This is a thoughtful and thought-provoking work that sheds light on a generally neglected area of family history: that of sibling relations. As Harris herself points out, for both historians and social scientists, the importance of sibling relationships has paled in comparison with relations between married couples and parents and children. Yet, she argues convincingly, 'siblings, at times more than parents, were essential to one another's social, financial, familial and emotional well-being, and for sheer longevity nothing outdid the sibling tie' (p. 169).

Harris's study is based on a mix of diaries, letters, prescriptive literature, wills, probate disputes and Old Bailey records. From these she pieces together the ways in which siblings were expected to behave towards each other and a large body of examples of lived experience. *Siblings* begins with an examination of youth and adolescence, exploring the ways in which one learnt to be a sibling and the impact of siblings on each other's development, as well as on their role in helping to bridge the move into adulthood. The book's middle chapters focus on both the 'ties that bound' and the 'ties that cut': studying the nature of friendship, love and affection between siblings and the ways in which siblings' relations could become strained and even positively hostile. The final section of the book analyses how childhood patterns of adult friendship and resentment affected household management, relationships and power. Harris includes here examinations of social and financial credit, physical care (for the sick, around childbirth and for nieces and nephews) and

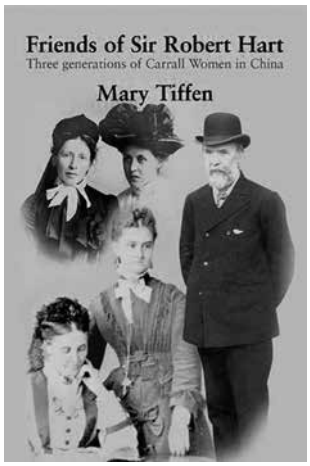
disputes over inheritance.

Though Harris works hard to integrate the lives of a broad spectrum of eighteenth-century society, this is still a book that centres on the lives of the gentry. Whilst court and poor law records can shed some light on the experiences of the labouring and lower middling classes, the rich stream of family papers upon which she lingers most frequently (and not surprisingly given their fabulous detail) mean that the book is skewed – as the author herself acknowledges – towards presenting an elite experience of sibling relations. It is also a work in which religion is largely absent. Harris is not alone amongst social and cultural historians of eighteenth-century England in overlooking religion (I would hold my own hand up to that) but I suspect that in nonconformity in particular, and amongst evangelicalism too, she would find a rich mine of material on the language and meanings of sibling relations. It seems likely that such subjects will be covered as sibling studies develops. For, as Leonore Davidoff's new book on siblings in the long nineteenth century demonstrates, Harris is clearly not alone in her interest.

Mary Tiffen, *Friends of Sir Robert Hart. Three Generations of Carrall Women in China*

Crewkerne, Somerset: Tiffania Books, 2012.
£14.99, ISBN 978 0 9570353 0 0 (paperback), pp. xviii + 333

Reviewed by Jane Berney
The Open University



Much of what has been written about Sir Robert Hart has concentrated on his professional life in China, as the Inspector-General of the Chinese Imperial Customs. Hart's role in trying to modernise nineteenth-century imperial China is fascinating and unique but Mary Tiffen has attempted to reconstruct his emotional and personal life using the letters written by and to him from three generations of her own family.

Tiffen uses the letters and diaries of her aunts, grandmother and great grandmother who all lived in China for part of their lives and who were regular correspondents with Hart from the mid 1850s until his death in 1911. She highlights two themes that dominate them: friendship between men and women and the importance of family. For Tiffen, the letters are foremost a demonstration of the deep and intimate relationships that Hart formed with women. She is at pains to maintain that the relationships were platonic, but the tone of the letters is occasionally flirtatious and I have to admit that I found a few of them rather uncomfortable reading. The letters also demonstrate the importance of family networks and hint at the problems caused by illegitimacy. Hart, like many expatriate men, had an illicit relationship with a Chinese woman and although he provided for their children he went to great lengths to ensure that they did not meet his legitimate family.

The letters and diaries provide a fascinating insight into middle class expatriate life from a female perspective. Although they often concentrate on the mundane, they also illustrate the depth of feeling mothers (and fathers) had for their children and how important they took their parental responsibilities. These responsibilities were not simply feeding, clothing and educating their children but ensuring they married well and got a good job. Herein lies my main problem with Tiffen's study. She makes no attempt to analyse why so many letters were sent between Hart and the Carralls. It is quite clear that many of the letters sent by her grandmother and great grandmother were little more than begging letters, although not always overtly so. Furthermore, the correspondence between Hart and the Carrall women was maintained assiduously for over fifty years and Tiffen's aunts, once they became teenagers, were also encouraged to maintain the correspondence, even though they had either not met him or only briefly as very young children prior to this. Networking in this way was commonplace and for many the only way to promote the interests of their spouses, children or other family members. Hart was frequently accused of nepotism and favouritism; the letters in this collection suggest that the Carroll women were well aware of this and were determined to exploit it to their advantage. It is not to undermine the women of Tiffen's family to point this out, but as an historian, one must fully appreciate the subtext of such a correspondence. Undoubtedly there was friendship but that is not the whole story.

More problematic is why Hart would be so willing and have the time to pore his heart out to women, young girls even, who were not close family relatives. Tiffen suggests that Hart was lonely, as his wife and children were estranged, and this is certainly plausible but why so many female correspondents and not just members of the Carrall family? Hart's correspondence with Tiffen's grandfather (who was employed by Hart) was far more formal and professional. I have no wish to impugn the reputation of Hart but Tiffen makes only a very half hearted attempt to understand Hart beyond saying that it is 'our own current attitude to the dominance of sex and the publicity now given to perverts that now causes doubts.' (p.306).

Letters and diaries promise a tantalising glimpse into the private lives and thoughts of public figures but they have to be treated with caution. Although they were not usually written for public consumption, they are still public documents and the historian has to interpret them accordingly. The letters of the Carralls and Hart do provide insight into the minutiae of daily life but they do not provide great insight into the tremendous changes that China was undergoing at the time. Hart played a pivotal role in this, but the role of the Carrall women was as bystanders and the letters reflect this.

There is much to enjoy in Mary Tiffen's book but it is also a good example of both the joys and pitfalls of using letters written and received by one's own family as an historical source.

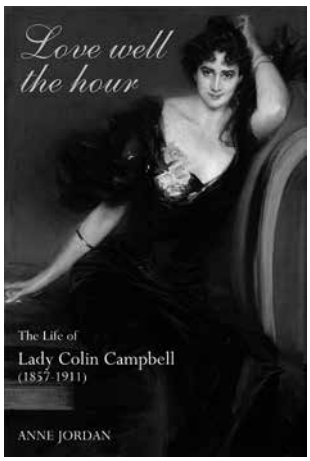
Anne Jordan, *Love Well the Hour, The Life of Lady Colin Campbell (1857-1911)*
Leicester: Matador, 2010. £11.99, ISBN 978 1848766 112 (paperback), pp.222

Lesley Lawson, *Out of the Shadows, The Life of Lucy, Countess of Bedford*
London & New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2007. £65, ISBN 978 1847252128 (hardback), pp. 198

David Llewellyn, *The First Lady of Mulberry Walk, The Life and Times of Irish Sculptress Anne Acheson*
Leicester: Matador, 2010. £18.99, ISBN 978 184876 405 7 (paperback), pp. 232
Reviewed by Cheryl Law
Ruskin College, Oxford

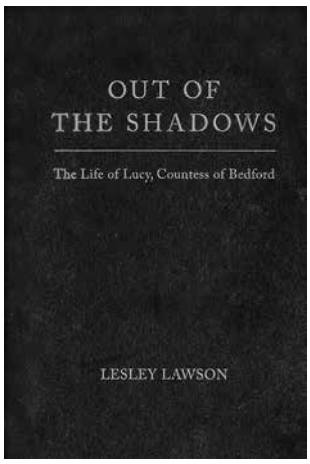
Opening a new biography that reveals insights and information about how a woman from a different time and circumstance negotiated the territory of 'being a woman' through her personal and public personas is an exciting prospect, enhancing our own twenty-first century journey. Here three such biographies reach across a time span from the sixteenth/seventeenth, and the nineteenth/twentieth centuries, rooted in the oppositional nationalities of English and Irish, the class contentions of the aristocracy, the upper and middle classes, alongside immersion in the diverse spheres of courtly politics, artistic patronage, journalism, medical innovation, and sculpture. Additionally, the complex gender politics of marriage, divorce, and childbirth versus the contradictory conflicts of celibacy are woven into the narratives.

By virtue of their social status, two of these subjects, Lucy Harrington, Countess of Bedford (c.1581-1627) and Lady Colin Campbell (Gertrude Blood) (1857-1911) already had a visible public presence captured in portraiture, still on public display today (see the NPG Collections at **www.npg.org.uk/collections.php**). Aristocratic lineage delivered the public role and status of a courtier for the Elizabethan Lucy Harrington, whilst being a remarkable beauty and society hostess tainted by scandalous divorce brought notoriety to the Victorian Gertrude Blood. But both these publicly acknowledged traditional female personas had occluded these women's significant contributions to challenging societal roles which finally gains them historical recognition. Lucy Harrington was a noteworthy patron of the arts and was prominent in court politics, while Gertrude Blood joined other pioneering women as a sportswoman and journalist. The third biography, of Anne Acheson (1882-1962), functions as a reinstatement of Acheson's work. During her lifetime she had garnered significant public recognition of her achievements, firstly with a CBE (1919) for her work in orthopaedic advancements during the First World War, followed by becoming the first woman Fellow of the Royal British Society of Sculptors (1938) in recognition of her professional artistic success.



How fortunate to be David Llewellyn discovering Anne Acheson as a relative of his mother's and painstakingly reclaiming Acheson's narrative with the modest intention 'to chart the deeds, the acts, state the facts and place them in the context of the world at that particular time' (pp. xi-xii). Along with Acheson's reinstatement as a wartime medical innovator and professional sculptor, what Llewellyn also uncovers are additional threads about Irish women's involvement in the Temperance and Home Rule movements, plus involvement in journalism, political literature and higher education in Ireland, through the activities of Acheson's mother, Harriet, who might merit her own biography. Both of Acheson's liberal-minded parents supported equal educational opportunities for their daughters, yielding encouragement for Acheson's journey from Portadown through the Royal University of Ireland, the Belfast School of Art and London's Royal College of Art, South Kensington at the start of the twentieth century. Further research could yield links between her mother's involvement and the shaping of Acheson's support for the suffrage movement in London. More work is needed to trace Acheson's full medical legacy in the history of medicine as she utilized her art school modelling skills to invent several types of splints during her wartime work for the Surgical Requisites Association (SRA) through her innovatory use of plaster of Paris, a technique still in use today. This is all additional to Acheson's professional life as a sculptor, dating from her first exhibition and sale at the 1911 Royal Academy summer exhibition up to the late 1950s. How she came to a celibate life, her involvement in networks such as the Society of Women Artists, close friendships with other women artists, such as Amy K. Browning (1882-1970), can all provide further testimony to an understanding of women's personal, professional and political stories in the critical years of the opening of the twentieth century, initiated by Llewellyn's straightforward familial curiosity.

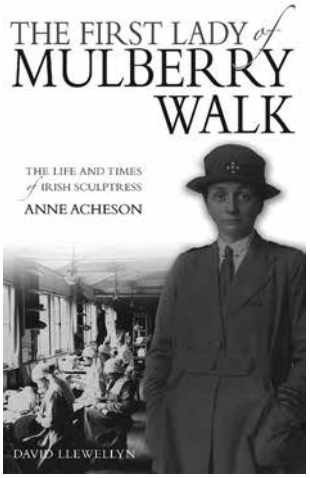
Anne Jordan seeks to rehabilitate Lady Colin Campbell's (Gertrude Blood) profile from that of a Victorian 'sex goddess' (G.H. Fleming, *Lady Colin Campbell*: *Victorian Sex Goddess*, 1989) not by way of ignoring her scandalous divorce trial, but by refocusing the evidence to provide a more equitable version of the truth behind the complexities of her marriage to Lord Colin Campbell and its devastating outcome for her, socially, economically and physically. The latter third of the book then provides the remainder of the story, detailing her previously neglected (apart from the brief *Dictionary of National B*iography 2004-2013 and *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, 2010 entries) career as an art critic, journalist and sportswoman. In challenging the traditional account of this society scandal, Jordan highlights the colossal extent of the gendered hypocrisy of the sexual double standard, with its infinitesimal application to the social and sexual life of Victorian women in middle- and



upper-class society. Jordan's forensic examination reveals the inexorable situation facing married women who neglected to apply themselves rigorously to the behavioural minutiae of the married state, and who failed to comprehend the maxim that a man's conduct, however disgraceful, would always be regarded by society as correct, despite the judgement of law. What might have been regarded as Blood's wrong-headed choice of husband is shown to be the inevitable result of a young woman totally at odds with the hidebound social mores of the aristocratic tradition into which she married. As a result of her liberal, culturally diverse upbringing, where freedom of experience, thought and movement were highly valued, her parents had produced a gifted, dynamic young woman almost bound for collision with the world she had entered on marriage. Jordan devotes the last third of her account to Lady Campbell's enforced need to earn her own living after the scandalous divorce. Referencing her youthful experiences and education from Co. Clare in Ireland to France and Italy, Campbell returned to her intellectual interests in art and writing and her love of travel and combined them with her childhood sporting ability. All these talents enabled her to forge a creative career in journalism, specializing as an art critic, travel and sports' writer. Eventually, she founded her own journal, the *Realm* (1894-1895) and became an editor of the *Ladies' Field* (1901-c.1905) before severe ill health, most probably the result of the syphilis contracted from her husband, resulted in her untimely death. Despite Jordan's exposition of Campbell's early life and social disgrace, there is room for another text that might concentrate solely on a detailed investigation into Campbell's career at a time when women were widening their participation in the world of print journalism.

Tracking the life of a woman across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, albeit that of an aristocrat with a high profile at court, delivers a biography of a very different tenor in *Out of the Shadows* by Lesley Lawson. The difficulty in evidential terms for an investigation originating four hundred years ago are honestly dealt with using frequent caveats ('may well have been', 'was probably', 'suggests that', 'it appears that', 'no evidence to suggest', 'it is more than likely that'). The difficulty of reaching back to envisage a living person rather than a constructed court figure, an aristocrat whose behaviour is wholly circumscribed by her role, leaves Lawson with many hurdles to negotiate. Not least of these is how to distinguish between the inclusion of available detail on less important subjects as a compensation for lack of material on more significant events. This can lead to a confusion of emphasis within dense passages of text. Yet much of the detail is fascinating, although making it probematic to assess the importance of Bedford's achievements.

Lucy, Countess of Bedford's particular visibility



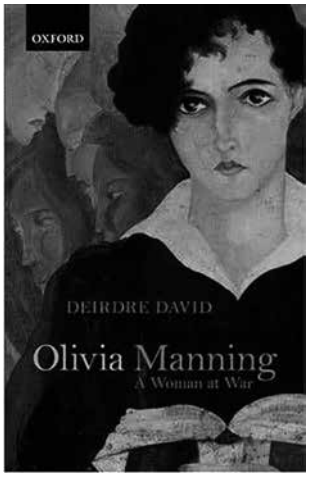
resulted from her inherited social position. Bedford's role as a literary patron to many poets and writers, the most prominent being John Donne and Ben Jonson, her position as favourite Lady of the Bedchamber to Anne of Denmark, Queen to James I, with the concomitant political activity that she found herself embroiled in, delivers the Countess as a prime biographical subject. Lucy's mother had been a maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth I and trained her daughter expertly to fulfil her expected position at court. With an inadequate and sometime errant husband, Lucy proved more than adequate to the task of embodying the family role at court whilst ingeniously ensuring their continued survival despite their turbulent financial affairs. Her struggles through ill health, pregnancies and the deaths of her children as almost a peripheral part of a life packed with activity and frequent travel at a time when any form of travel was a hazardous and demanding activity, produce admiration for her fortitude and interest in the physical disparities of her and our world.

The fascination of this book is in imagining and envisioning an entirely different mode of female being and activity. One of Bedford's significant roles was as a prominent participant in the many masques held at court. As a leading female masquer she was demonstrating not only her standing at court, her cultural contribution to the delivery of performances by those writers she was patron to, but also her historical position in an important form of cultural capital. As both patron and performer, Bedford held significant power that was additional to her role as an eminent courtier. Her accumulated power even propelled her to a status that could transcend her gender so that she was said by the writer, Lady Mary Wroth (1587-1652) to have, 'excelled her sexe so much, as her perfections were stiled masculine' (p.98). This also informs the nature of the marital relationship of such aristocratic women who often led quite separate lives from their husbands as they traveled between court and their, often, multiple homes. A further layer to this existence lay in its precarious nature, governed as it was by the twin instabilities of royal approval and financial security, both of which might explosively deliver a sudden end to a previously illustrious life. It is this complexity and the challenge to our imagining of this pre-Enlightenment world that provides the prompt for greater knowledge and understanding of how such women exercised and survived such compromised power.

Deirdre David, *Olivia Manning: A Woman at War*

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. £25,
ISBN 978 0 19 960918 5 (hardback), pp. xvii + 405

Reviewed by Gillian L. Beattie-Smith
University of the Highlands and Islands and The Open University



Deidre David's biography of Olivia Manning is sensitive, sympathetic, engaging and learned. David's academic distance, together with her empathy for Manning's wartime experiences, offer a balanced discussion which is in sharp contrast with the very personal view expressed in the 2004 biography by Neville and June Braybrooke. David combines informal narrative with recollections from Manning's friends and biographers, academic metatext and a keen and extensive critical analysis of the novels.

Manning was born in Portsmouth in Laburnum Grove, known by Manning as 'Lavatory Lane'. She was the daughter of a naval officer, whom she affectionately called 'Dumps', and an Ulster Presbyterian mother, whose opinion of her daughter as 'wretched, sulky, shut in, disagreeable' affected Manning's self-esteem all her life. At the age of 16 she left school and went to work as a typist, which, we are told, David also did. The typing paid for Manning to study art, and some of her sketches can be seen in the margins of her manuscripts. But she wanted to write.

Her first short story, 'The Rose of Rubies' was published by the *Portsmouth Evening News* in 1929, in the name of Jacob Morrow – a name borrowed from Virginia Woolf – and her first novel, *The Wind Changes*, which is concerned with the period preceding the Anglo-Irish Truce of 1921, was published by Jonathan Cape in 1937. It was Hamish Miles who recognised her talent and introduced her to literary London. Miles is the first of Manning's lovers recalled by both Manning and David, though there were others and David acknowledges Manning's 'healthy enjoyment of female sexual pleasure'. After Miles' sudden death, Manning met and, within three weeks in 1939, married Reggie Smith, then a British Council lecturer. They immediately left for Romania, where began years of running, as refugees in the second world war, to Greece, Cairo and Palestine.

Manning's best known works are *The Balkan Trilogy* (1960-65) and *The Levant Trilogy* (1977-80). Based on her own life with Reggie, they provide an eyewitness historical account of events in Bucharest in 1940 and of the war in the Middle East, and paint an accurate and empathetic picture of an interdependent married life. In 1987, the BBC produced a dramatisation of the trilogies, *The Fortunes of War* in which Emma Thompson and Kenneth Brannagh played the parts of Guy and Harriet Pringle, the fictionalised Reggie and Olivia.

David's style is not literary and is, at times, laboured. Nonetheless she guides us through the life of an intelligent woman whose work might have deserved greater acclaim had her subject matter not offended men. For example, one 'undistinguished male writer', as Manning identifies him, announced to her that he did not read novels by women as he could 'never get over the idea that women are here to serve men,' and Auberon Waugh, reviewing *The Battle Lost and Won* in the *Evening Standard* in 1978, deridingly wrote, 'Men at war – by a woman'.

Manning is portrayed by David as a woman at war, not only because of her knowledge of and skill in writing about war, but also because she was a woman metaphorically at war with her friends, with society and with herself. She was frequently disagreeable; she bemoaned her lack of acclaim as a writer; she squabbled over petty bills with tradespeople, and even with Stanley Kubrick over £25 for a dealer's commission for a painting by his wife, Christiane. But she was also at war with changing opinions in society; her views on immigration to the UK from the Caribbean, Kenya and India, for example, were overtly racist, and she was a right wing Tory, wholly disappointed by Edward Heath's leadership. And yet, underlying that performance of being part of a conservative past, there were liberal ideologies to which she held fast. She decried sexism in all its appearances and spoke out for women's equality, though she avoided being labelled a feminist, and her novel, *A Different Face*, published in 1953, at a time of homophobia and public prosecutions for homosexuality, provides a sympathetic narrative located in the theme of homosexuality. All her life, she was self conscious of what she saw to be her lowly social upbringing, and despite her successes, she remained insecure.

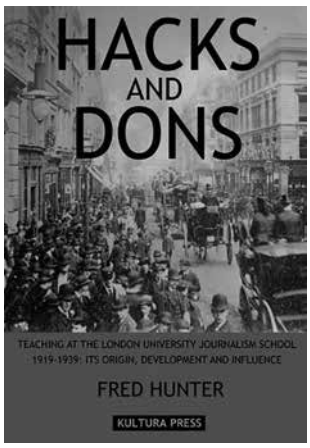
David's treatment of Manning, her life and her work is partisan. She defends her with empathy supported by rigorous research of her subject and her historic periods, which is engaging. I was daunted by the 405 pages at first glance, but it is a book I will return to time and again for its literary critique, its analysis of history and to engage with the discussion of a novelist of whose work, until now, I had read little.

Fred Hunter, *Hacks and Dons: Teaching at the London University Journalism School 1919-1939: Its Origin, Development and Influence*

Essex: Kultura Press, 2012. £25,
ISBN 978 0 9542899 4 2 (paperback), pp. xiii + 335

Reviewed by Kate Murphy
Bournemouth University

Media courses are part of today's university landscape, their value still hotly debated. In *Hacks and Dons*, Fred Hunter tells the story of the UK's first stab at media education within a university: the Diploma in Journalism which ran from 1919 to 1939, based at the University of London. Initially targeted at ex-servicemen returning from the First World War, it quickly became popular with young women, 219 of whom received the Diploma, compared with 190 men. Many more attended the course but left before



completion, often to take up jobs in the newspaper industry.

Unlike the United States where, by the early twentieth century, journalism was an accepted academic discipline, in Britain it took years of negotiation and persuasion to get the course off the ground. The usual career path for a journalist was to start on the provincial papers, gradually progressing towards Fleet Street; experience on-the-job was widely viewed as more valuable than classroom training. Once the Diploma had started in 1919, it was subject to the complexities of the London University system. This meant that, right up until 1935, very little practical journalism was actually taught, rather students attended lectures and tutorials in, for example, English, history or economics. In fact, one of the reasons why the course was so popular was because it enabled young people to access a university-style education without the usual strictures of matriculation. In 1935, there was a radical change to the way the course was run, with the appointment of Tom Clarke, as Director of Practical Journalism. Clarke, a former Fleet Street editor, introduced both rigour and hands-on assignments, creating for the Diploma the atmosphere and tension of a newspaper office.

Hunter is painstaking and expansive in his details of the roles played by the dozens of individuals who contributed to the foundation and development of the Diploma in Journalism, almost all of whom were men. This means that the overall tone of the book is steadfastly male; it is only when it reaches 1937 that the first significant woman makes an appearance, Miss Joan Skipsey, who was appointed as an Assistant to Clarke. An ex-student, she had gained her Diploma in 1936. Aged just twenty-two and earning £250 a year, Skipsey was responsible for setting the practical journalism tasks which involved liaising with a wide variety of commercial agencies, legal organisations and national bodies. The selected assignments were then allotted to scores of students who had to report, write-up and submit each task to a strict deadline. Skipsey then oversaw the marking, paying particular attention to presentation, punctuation and spelling.

Chapter Eleven, the final chapter of the book, is of most interest to women's historians. Entitled 'Young Women Learning Journalism at London University', here Hunter briefly explores the development of journalism as a career for women before divulging snippets about many of the colourful individuals who attended the Diploma in Journalism course. This is where the book really comes to life and amongst the impressive list of former students are Stella Gibbons, Elizabeth Bowen, Penelope Mortimer, Leila Berg and Yvonne Kapp. The author, Ruth Tomalin, kept a diary of her time on the course with entries from 1938 that reveal lectures on psycho-analysis, Bow Street Court reporting, gossip paragraphs and headline writing (pp. 217-218).

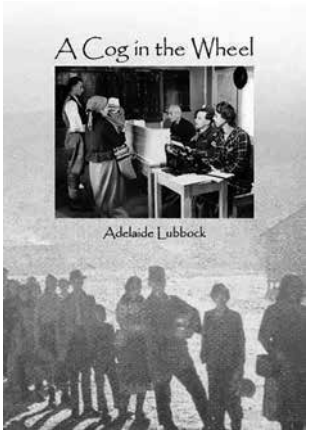
The Diploma in Journalism was suspended at the outbreak of the Second World War, and despite attempts to revive it in the 1940s, it was not until 1970 that journalism was again taught in a British University with the founding of a one-year Postgraduate Diploma at Cardiff University, followed by a similar course at City University in 1976.

Fred Hunter, who sadly died aged 77 just before the book was published, was eminently qualified to write this history. He was a founding director of Independent Radio News (IRN); the first person to complete a Journalism PhD at City University, who then went on to develop the Broadcast Journalism course at the London College of Printing. The book is based on his PhD thesis and herein lies the problem. Although it has been extensively re-written, it remains very dense and fact-based. Hunter was planning a second book specifically on women journalists, which may explain why, in *Hacks and Dons*, they appear more as an elaborate footnote, rather than as an integral part of the text.

Adelaide Lubbock, *A Cog in the Wheel* (ed. Sara Goodwins)

Sutton, Surrey: Loaghtan Books, 2012. £9.95, ISBN 9 781908 060037 (paperback), pp. 164

Reviewed by Sue Jones
Independent Scholar



'I have written down everything as it occurred to me at the moment and, for what it is worth, it is the day-to-day account of the experiences of a very small cog in a very large wheel.' (p. 164)

This expresses, in a somewhat understated way, part of Adelaide Lubbock's summary of what she had tried to achieve in writing her diary from early 1945 to mid 1946. After working for the British Red Cross in London throughout the war, she was appointed Staff Captain in the Health and Welfare Branch, Displaced Persons and Prisoners of War Division of the Allied Commission for Austria, and left the UK for Italy in April 1945.

Travelling north from Naples through the aftermath of the recent advance of the Eighth Army, she finally arrived in Austria in August to take up her post. However, the first half of this book is devoted to her progress, or lack of it, through Italy and the turmoil and Kafka-esque bureaucracy she encountered in trying to establish herself. To extend her own metaphor of being a cog in a large wheel, she found that the wheel was clogged by competing agencies and individuals, and its turning was hindered by a lack of clear objectives and directives while being confronted by a swollen and turbulent river of DPs and POWs, whose status was often unclear.

Lubbock's descriptions of this period (and the later one) are dominated by her frustration and disdain for the men (and a few women) she met, nearly all of whom she considered inadequate to the task. The extent of her disdain reveals a sharp intelligence which she felt could have been employed to greater effect, but perhaps also some lack of

empathy with those officials, primarily military, who were overwhelmed by a multiplicity of tasks and a movement of people and troops not previously encountered. Terms such as 'loutish', 'stupid' and 'muddleheaded' are used without reserve and the personnel she met once established in Vienna appear to have been similarly unprepossessing. Even the Commander-in-Chief, General McCreery, is 'not clever, and no good at dealing with crooks and schemers… He strikes me as a weak man striving against odds which he doesn't understand.' (p.103)

Nevertheless, condemnation of character is mitigated by sections where she comments astutely on the politico-military situation. She understood and experienced the effects at ground level of the conflict between the military government and the Allied Commission, in a situation in which the four Allies were trying to find a modus vivendi within the Commission, the Russians were trying to commandeer areas not agreed as theirs and Yugoslav partisans were complicating the picture by holding up the Eighth Army in Italy. Her political judgements are as strongly expressed as those on character. She did not trust the Russians, did not agree with war crimes trials which she felt would lead to a 'moral quagmire' in the future (p. 74) and felt that the Austrians had no moral sense of their own guilt. The fact that she felt no sense of relief at the end of the war, but just concern about the legacy of destruction and the fear of the future, is a stark reminder of the perils of post-war triumphalism.

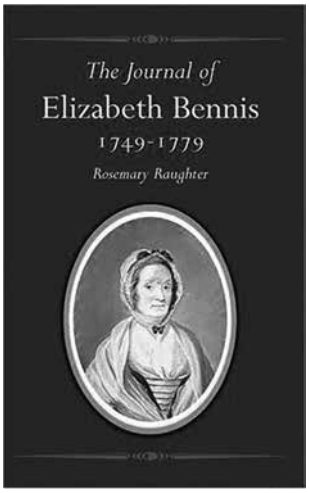
Alongside these thoughts, Lubbock presents detailed descriptions of the countryside, some devastated and some not, and vivid pen portraits of the art and architecture she saw for the first time in cities like Rome, Florence and Venice. In between physical privation and distressing sights, she made time to visit and absorb her surroundings, to stay in luxury accommodation and to dine with the upper echelons of the military. There is thus some incongruity as the diary entries juxtapose a chaotic and war-ravaged country and the misery of displaced persons with descriptions of idyllic peasant life and the grandeur of dining at Sacher's Hotel in Vienna. She does not comment explicitly on this contrast and there is an acceptance of its existence which others might have found less easy.

Adelaide Lubbock was obviously a woman of great vitality and many readers will speculate on how easily she settled into life in England again. Eric Lubbock's 'Foreword' gives useful information about his mother's life before 1945, but the later context is not approached: this would have contributed to a rounder picture. Other minor criticisms are the lack of information about how far the diaries have been edited and a strange selection and positioning of photographs. Overall, this is a fascinating insight into one aspect of post-war Europe and one redoubtable woman's reaction to it.

Rosemary Raughter, *The Journal of Elizabeth Bennis, 1749-1779*

Blackrock, Co. Dublin: Columba Press, 2007. £17.99, ISBN 978 1 85607 566 4 (paperback), pp. 344

Reviewed by Serena Dyer
University of Warwick



In publishing *The Journal of Elizabeth Bennis,* a fascinating and previously lost account of religious and, indirectly, domestic life in eighteenth-century Ireland has been unearthed. The journal itself charts the spiritual and religious life of Elizabeth Bennis (née Patten, 1725-1802) from the time of her conversion to Methodism in 1749. Bennis was the daughter of a Presbyterian family from Limerick, who married her cousin, Mitchell Bennis, a hardware merchant, at the age of 20. After four years of marriage, in March 1749, Bennis observed a crowd following the first Wesleyan preacher to enter the city, and determined to follow and listen. Three months later she marked her conversion with her first journal entry.

The religious journal was intended as a personal, spiritual record. It was a tool of self-examination and reflection, which was commonly used by Bennis' contemporary Methodists. However this spiritual introversion was set against the backdrop of the busy domestic reality of life as a merchant's wife and a mother in eighteenth-century Limerick. As such, alongside providing documentation of the religious inner-consciousness of an individual, Bennis' journal also provides an insight into motherhood, grief, illness, business, debt, marriage and domesticity.

Part of the journal, along with the memoir of Bennis' grandson Henry, was discovered at the back of a cupboard at a Methodist church in Philadelphia. Henry Bennis' *Recollections* relate that he had three volumes of his grandmother's journals. It is these three volumes, searched for and discovered by Raughter, that are published in this book. Raughter has abridged these volumes, which ran to 250,000 words, omitting what she has termed repetitive material. In doing so, Raughter states that she aimed to ensure the journal's readability, which has been skilfully achieved. The abridged passages are clearly marked, but do not interfere with the flow and the narrative of the journal.

Two introductory chapters, one by Dudley Levistone Cooney, who is currently president of the Wesley Historical Society in Ireland, and the other by Raughter, preface the journal. Cooney's opening introduction provides a factual narrative of Bennis' background, life and conversion. He focuses heavily on the chronology of Bennis' life, the rise and fall of the family's fortunes and the religious leanings of the Bennis children. Though this seems the weaker of the two chapters, the clear summary of Bennis' life and local

significance will be beneficial to those unfamiliar with her. Raughter's chapter takes a more thematic and analytical view, exploring the wider religious and historical context of the journal under the title 'Faith, Family and Endeavour.'

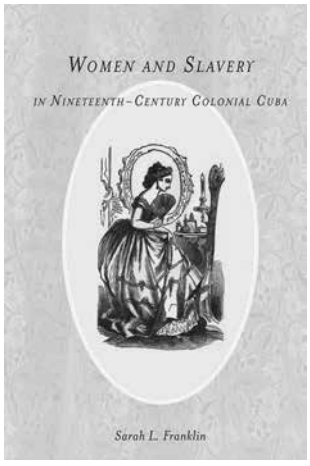
Of particular interest must be the insight that both the journal itself, and Raughter's analysis, can give into the role of women both in Irish Methodism, and in wider Irish society. Although Bennis never preached, the impression received from this book is that Bennis' contribution was wide-reaching and heterogeneous. Her contribution to Methodism can be seen both in the form of her work as a band and class leader, and also in her conversations, discussions and the epistolary network of contacts she built up. Beyond her impact on Irish Methodism, Bennis' journal also provides insight into the feelings of a grieving mother, the financial worries of a businessman's wife and the domestic role of wife and mother.

Although not unique at the time of its writing, its length, and the fact of its survival, as Raughter points out, make Elizabeth Bennis' journal a remarkable primary source for historians of religion, women, Ireland and domestic life.

Sarah L. Franklin, *Women and Slavery in Nineteenth–Century Colonial Cuba*

Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2012. $90.00, ISBN 978 1 5 58046 402 4 (hardcover), pp. xi + 223

Reviewed by S. Jay Kleinberg
Brunel University



Sarah L. Franklin situates her study of women and slavery in Cuba in an international context, drawing comparisons with a number of nations particularly the United States, Haiti and Spain. This is especially apposite given that there were numerous influences that shaped plantation slavery in Cuba including Spanish values, the decisions by the US and UK to abolish the international slave trade, the Haitian Revolution and the cult of *marianismo* (veneration of the Virgin Mary). The principal focus of the book is upon the way in which patriarchy and paternalism perpetuated slavery and the role of gender systems in the maintenance of both patriarchy and slavery. As with other authors, including Gerda Lerner in her pioneering and magisterial *The Creation of Patriarchy* (1986), Franklin also places female subordination at the heart of slavery. While the Cuban sugar grandees did not create patriarchy, Franklin demonstrates how they adapted it as a means of sustaining the sugar economy and plantation slavery as well as their place at the top of a rigid social hierarchy.

The ruling body in Cuba, the *Sociedad Patriótica*, sought to increase secular control over Cuban society in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. One of the ways it accomplished this was by founding a charitable institution, the *Casa de Beneficicencia*, in 1792 in order to educate orphaned poor white girls in skills needed to run a home such as sewing, washing and cooking in addition to basic literacy. As with many such institutions a paucity of funding meant inmates had to work in order to sustain the residential home through their embroidery and sewing. Moreover, there were insufficient funds to provide dowries for the young female residents, so many of them became domestic servants. In Franklin's view, the *Casa de Beneficencia* functioned as a locus of social control promoting and maintaining the plantation system's rigid social hierarchy.

As in the post-revolutionary United States, the sugar elites in Cuba viewed education as a means of inculcating national identity. They believed that women played a vital role in maintaining plantation society and should be educated to do so. Education was a tool of social order, so while white girls received some schooling it was not on a par with that of white boys. Instead they received tuition appropriate to their sex either from nuns who directed them to adhere to the belief that the Virgin Mary was the model for all women, or in sex-segregated free schools which taught dressmaking and embroidery alongside reading, writing and Christian doctrine. The pace of education increased across the second quarter of the nineteenth century as the sugar elites' fears about growing slave numbers led them to formalise the inculcation of patriarchal values and social control.

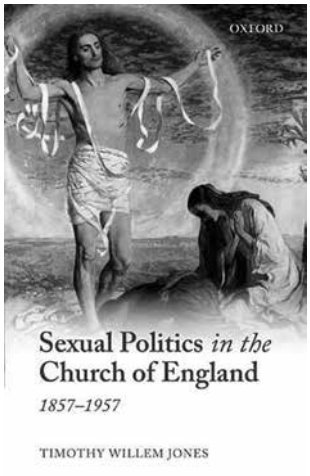
The prevailing gender conventions regarding white people did not apply to those of African descent. For instance, unlike for white women, slave motherhood was not a higher social calling, nor did it give enslaved Afro-Cubans moral authority. There was no incentive to preserve slave women's purity, since the more children they had the greater the profit for their masters. White women's honour and that of their family rested on their virginity before marriage and circumspect behaviour afterwards, in order to ensure the passage of property between father and son. No such criteria applied to enslaved women who were themselves a form of property. Yet such general statements must be modified by slave owners' willingness to use slave women's sexuality and maternality by employing them as wet nurses. Franklin's examination of newspaper advertisements of slaves for sale in the 1830s and '40s indicates that there were more women than men for sale. Unlike in the advertisements for male slaves, which typically listed only one occupation, most of those for women combined several aspects of domestic labour. Furthermore, their biology might be their destiny, as in examples with the wet nurses sold with or without their child. This despicable practice indicates the extent to which patriarchy dominated enslaved women's lives.

Franklin demonstrates how patriarchal values controlled all aspects of women's lives in colonial Cuban society. Whether it was social customs which kept white women in their homes unless accompanied by a male relative or in a closed carriage, or the practice of selling slave women who could suckle white children to the detriment of their own, the system of pervasive male domination ensured that all white women, slave men and slave women served their masters and maintained the economic and social hierarchy that dominated the island.

Timothy Willem Jones, *Sexual Politics in the Church of England, 1857-1957*

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. £55.00,
ISBN 978 0 19 965510 6 (hardback), pp. 218

Reviewed by Catherine Lee
The Open University



This is an ambitious book, which aims to place the Church of England's current 'gender trouble' (p. 2) in broader religious and social historical context. Jones calls for the Church's historical stance on questions of gender and sexuality to be reconsidered, arguing that this was more complex and diverse than has generally been recognised. Indeed, in some respects the Church's sexual and gender politics were dynamic and played a key role at the forefront of social change. This persuasive and compelling thesis is advanced through the exploration of key debates and controversies related to sex and gender faced by the Church during the century between the Matrimonial Causes Act and the Wolfenden Report. These debates, namely those surrounding marriage law reform, the revival of female religious orders, women's suffrage, the campaign for women's ordination, contraception, celibacy and homosexuality, are used to illustrate the Church's diversity of response on questions related to sex and gender during this period. These debates have been selected on the basis that they reflect the broad trend of changing gender relations over time and are argued to demonstrate the spectrum of positions adopted by the Church, from conservative (on marriage law reform) to enlightened (on homosexuality).

Jones' discussion ranges widely and a number of established areas of debate in the history of gender relations are revisited for what they can add to an understanding of the history of the Church of England in this period. The now-contested separate spheres ideology, for example, provides an appropriate framework for the examination of the restoration of religious orders for women in the later part of the nineteenth century. Jones argues that women who chose to live in female communities transgressed class, rather than gendered role expectations, albeit that they thereby escaped the sexual and political ties of the Victorian family in so doing. Likewise, celibate Christian ministry and its increasing association with homosexuality in the 1940s and 50s is examined against the backdrop of the early twentieth-century shift from moral to medico-psychoanalytic understandings of sexuality.

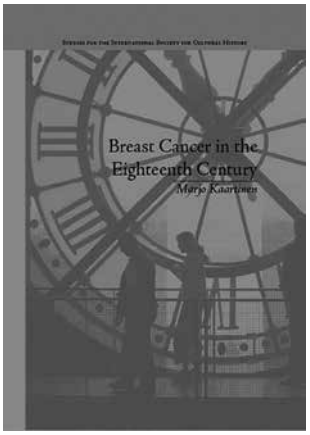
One of Jones' central theses is that the rise and 'cultural triumph' (p. 184) of Anglo-Catholicism in the latter part of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries had a significant influence on understandings of sex and gender in a number of key areas. This supremacy is argued to have made a challenge to the established gender ideology of evangelical Anglicanism by placing greater emphasis on sacramental rather than biblical authority. Thus, sacramental understandings of marriage, of the priesthood and of sexual intercourse, 'sanctified' (p. 185) and reinforced patriarchal attitudes towards sexual difference and gender relations. The dominance of Anglo-Catholic thinking amongst the Church's elite also served to privilege tradition and it is this, Jones argues, that distinguishes those changes that were not easily articulated in terms of tradition (such as suffrage and contraception) from those that were, principally the ordination of women.

Inevitably, given its wide scope, Jones approaches his subject from a top-down perspective. There is some interesting future work to be done in terms of exploring these issues at ground level in order to evaluate the reach and influence of these debates within the parish and the family.

Marjo Kaartinen, *Breast Cancer in the Eighteenth Century*

London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013. £60,
ISBN 978 1 8489 33644 (hardback), pp. 181

Reviewed by Katie Barclay
University of Adelaide



Not for the squeamish, Marjo Kaartinen's history of *Breast Cancer in the Eighteenth Century* is situated at the intersection of medical and cultural history, using a wide variety of sources to access how both doctors and lay people experienced breast cancer and its treatments across the early modern period. Across four chapters, Kaartinen explores how eighteenth-century people recognised and diagnosed breast cancer, what they understood to be its causes, how they treated it, the role of women in choosing their treatment and their emotional responses to a very frightening and often deadly disease. It contributes to a number of major debates in the history of medicine and women's history, including the professionalisation of the medical field (it was messier than the historiography suggests), the need for 'dispassion' in medical practitioners (this is overstated), the agency of the patient in medical treatment (greater than realised), and the extent of female modesty during the period (overplayed). While the book title locates the body of this work in the eighteenth century, this reviewer, at least, would have been more than comfortable with a more encompassing 'early modern', as Kaartinen provides numerous comparisons with earlier centuries to explore and highlight change over time, making this a far more comprehensive study than the title suggests.

The first part of the book explores medical and lay understandings of breast cancer and its treatments, using medical treatises, doctor's notes and correspondence and popular culture to build a picture of how people recognised

and responded to breast cancer, and developments in this area over the century. With very vivid descriptions and details on medical practices, this is not for the faint-hearted, and it provides a fascinating and colourful insight into what breast cancer was thought to look and smell like, what it signified in the imagination, and the, often painful, ways it was treated and how they changed over time. There are remarkable resonances with current medical anxieties, with eighteenth-century people receiving as much conflicting advice on proper diets and activities to prevent cancer as we do today.

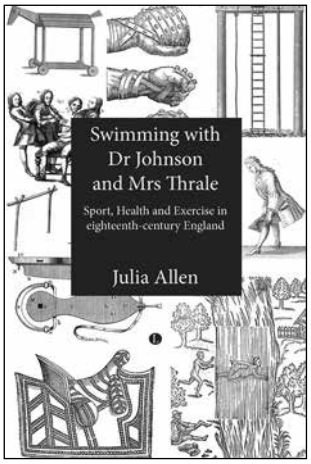
Perhaps the most innovative contribution this work makes is to an increasingly important approach to the history of medicine that focuses on the patient's experience of disease and particularly their emotional responses and agency. The second half of Kaartinen's work covers how women (the main sufferers of breast cancer) responded to the suspicion and diagnosis of cancer, the role they played in making decisions about seeking and choosing treatments, the use of women's knowledge and networks in treating and relieving the suffering of cancer patients, and the emotional dimension of suffering from breast cancer. Kaartinen shows the level of choice and agency women exercised in their medical treatments and how they responded to disease. She also attempts to explore how models of femininity shaped how women with breast cancer were expected to behave, how cancer provided an opportunity to resist such models, and how their fortitude was often understood to be remarkable given their sex. In a fascinating discussion, *Breast Cancer in the Eighteenth Century* also explores how women felt about cancer, the fear it caused, how they coped with pain, prepared for death, and the responses of their family, carers and doctors who found them courageous but also felt pity for their suffering. This section reminds us that disease should not only be understood in the context of doctor and patient, but within a wider community of friends and family that support, care and feel for the unwell.

The work has a relatively short epilogue in place of a conclusion which is slightly unfortunate as the work makes a number of significant contributions to debates within the field, and it would have been useful to bring these different strands of argument together more coherently and to perhaps see how far the conclusions could be pushed as a result. The relationship between increasing professionalisation of the field, medical dispassion and the emotional responses to cancer are clearly very closely tied together, but how they shaped each other could have been developed more in a final section. Yet, overall, this work makes a significant contribution to our understanding of breast cancer, patient-doctor relationships and the emotional dimension of disease in eighteenth-century Britain.

Julia Allen, ***Swimming with Dr Johnson and Mrs Thrale: Sport, Health and Exercise in Early Modern England***

Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2012. £20.50, ISBN 978 0 7188 9276 0 (paperback), pp. 310

Reviewed by Victoria Dawson
De Montfort University



Julia Allen's latest monograph is something of a curious affair, and potential readers ought to note that *Swimming with Dr Johnson and Mrs Thrale* is something of a misrepresentative title for a work that covers a broad range of eighteenth-century sport and leisure pursuits, from boxing to skating, in a forensic amount of detail.

I came to this book expecting more on Johnson and Thrale as the introduction seemed to promise; Dr Johnson's influence is heavy as his dictionary definitions with their evidential quotations are replicated throughout, but the reality is that both he and Mrs Thrale are merely bit parts in this encyclopaedia of selected eighteenth century sport and leisure pursuits.

The book is in two parts; the first section, which is quite short at fifty-one pages, gives an introduction to physical culture in the eighteenth century, discusses the roles and methods of medical practitioners and looks at the influence of medical theory on contemporary eighteenth-century ideas about exercise. Part two presents the reader with alphabetically arranged chapters on boxing, cricket, dancing, foot-racing, leaping and climbing, riding, skating, swimming, before ending with a chapter on coach travel that is informative but, despite Thomas Sydenham's assertion that riding in a coach can have health benefits for some, it seems somewhat misplaced in this volume.

Julia Allen's research is exemplary, and her collection of primary source material is vast and impressive. She has gathered together an intriguing collection of information that will delight any historian of sport and leisure. The sources are presented thoroughly and faithfully, often in the form of many long quotations, as Allen deliberately set out to keep 'comment to the minimum […] in the belief that allowing the eighteenth century its own voice was the way to give it immediacy' (p.4).

The downside of this is that, at times, the length of the quotations is so vast that the narrative of Allen's chapters becomes lost among them and the reader is left to perform the analysis of them by themselves. This is a shame because there are many good conclusions to be made from Allen's work, but these points are not always fully made in the text. This is perhaps best indicated by the brief, two-page conclusion, in the title of which Allen admits 'nothing is concluded' (p.279).

Allen's stated intention was to write a book that compliments existing sports histories. She has certainly

achieved this, and has shone a light on 'some "obscure recesses" of eighteenth-century life, which if not "hitherto undivined" do tend to be left out of, or overlooked in more general histories' (p.279). It is common that general histories ignore sport as a cultural construct worthy of analysis, but it is also a common inadequacy of sports histories to fail to give due consideration to the wider, contextual history of the periods in which these sports are situated. Here, Allen replicates this inadequacy, preferring to focus narrowly on the sports and activities in isolation of each other and the broader social and cultural landscape. The result is that the chapters in part two can be read individually and nothing is lost from reading them as individual essays.

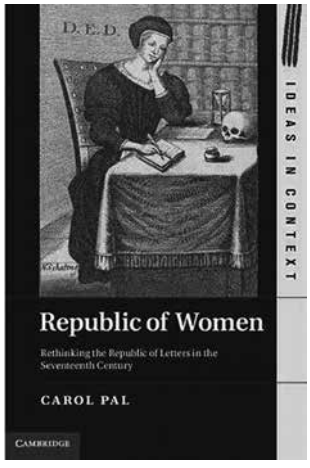
Allen's inclusion of Mrs Thrale serves the dual purpose of being a source of information about the physicality of the celebrated dictionary writer, and allows Allen to include some welcome insight and discussion about female inclusion/exclusion from physical activity during the period. Allen's work also communicates well that the idea of sport as a moral force did not exist in the eighteenth century, underpinning existing arguments that modern sport as moral crusade and vehicle for social good was indeed invented by the Victorians.

There is no doubt that this work is superbly researched and those 'plundering this book for information' (p.279) will agree that what Allen has achieved in its writing is the construction of a valuable, enjoyable resource that makes an excellent starting point for those wishing to further explore sport and leisure in eighteenth century England.

Carol Pal, *Republic of Women: Rethinking the Republic of Letters in the Seventeenth Century*

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
£55, ISBN 978-1-107-01821-1 (hardback), pp. xv + 316

Reviewed by Amanda L. Capern
University of Hull



Carol Pal's contribution to the *Ideas in Context* series is one of the most important books to be published in early-modern women's history in the last few years. Using collections of correspondence and private papers held in archives in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, Pal has been able to reconstruct a network of women connected with Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, all of whom were renowned for their scholarship and who were taught and/or mentored by prominent male scholars. Pal argues that the network was so self-defining that they recognised one another's scholarship, corresponded on matters of mutual intellectual interest and looked to one another for female mentoring. A key moment, she suggests, was when André Rivet, the French theologian, introduced Princess Elisabeth to the Dutch scholar, Anna Maria van Schurman, in the 1630s. Pal calls *Republic of Women* a 'collective biography of seven female scholars to construct the biography of a moment' (p. 2). If this was a key moment, The Hague, where Elisabeth grew up in exile with her parents (the Elector Palatine and Elizabeth Stuart), was also a key place. The universities of Leiden, Utrecht and Amsterdam in the Dutch Republic generated the gathering of international scholars in an atmosphere of tolerance of religious pluralism. Pal speaks of 'coalescence at one particular locality in time and space' (p. 35). A female republic of letters, according to Pal, overlapped with the male republic of letters. While male scholars communicated through association with European universities and the *perigrinatio academica*, the intellectual exchange of the women's network was forged by epistolary communication and proved crucial to the formation of new learning and ideas.

The seven women in this collective intellectual biography became known for different areas of scholarship and interest. Elisabeth, for example, corresponded about philosophy and mathematics with René Descartes throughout the 1640s and he dedicated *Principia* to her, commenting that 'you are the only person I have so far found who has completely understood all my previously published works' (p. 45). Anna Maria van Schurman, a strict Calvinist, was a poet and historicist whose work, *Dissertatio*, of 1641 not only argued that studying was an appropriate pastime for Christian women, it also positioned her as a potential model for other female scholars to follow (p. 67-8). Marie le Jars de Gournay was a literary critic who edited the essays of Montaigne and wrote a *querelle des femmes* text on the *egalité* of women with men. Marie du Moulin and Bathsua Makin were educators interested in pedagogy. Katherine Jones, Lady Ranelagh, 'was involved in politics, ethics, education, medicine, and godly reform', and became 'a "hub" [in the tolerant realm of Cromwell's London] in her own right' (p. 144). Dorothy Moore, who was Anglo-Irish, shared with du Moulin contacts with the Hartlib circle and, like Samuel Hartlib, John Dury and others, she was driven by the ecumenical desire to establish Protestant unity. Both du Moulin and Moore were in The Hague in the 1630s with Princess Elizabeth and van Schurman. Ranelagh was in contact with the Hartlib circle and the Invisible College from the 1640s.

The *Republic of Women* is less concerned with detailing the scholarly publications of the seven women than revealing the collegial nature of their connections and their involvement in shaking up the intellectual paradigms of their day. For example, Pal notes that du Moulin chose van Schurman as her Hebrew mentor and that Ranelagh worked empirically, even if it cut across her religious beliefs. Gournay was especially active in promoting female intellectual alliances – *mère d'alliance* and *fille d'alliance* – and she also attempted to use Montaigne as a lever to disrupt the old certainties of humanist learning.

Pal's main point is that despite contemporary descriptions of the singular, exceptional and incomparable nature of all of the women individually, they were not, in fact, isolated and 'their gendered alterity and their membership in the republic of letters … has important implications for understanding larger issues of gender and knowledge in early-modern Britain and Europe' (p. 5). Thus, the *Republic of Women* definitively leaves behind the old terminology of

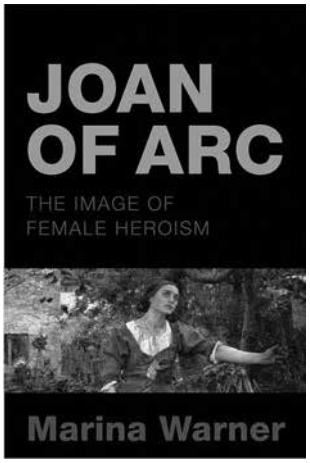
'the learned lady', or the idea of the lone female intellectual pursuing learning alongside other more general feminine accomplishments. Pal argues that what entitles the seven women to the label 'republic of women' is that they all clearly identified their individual area of intellectual interest while simultaneously contributing to what might loosely be termed a rationalist alliance. There are interesting parallels in this book with Sarah Apetrei's work on the connection between female religiosity and the rationalism of the early enlightenment from which Mary Astell was to spring. Pal's conclusion anticipates this connection by arguing that the seven women 'were trying to reconcile the new learning with their understanding of God', though she also suggests that the enlightenment was something different again and led to an association of female learning with arts and literature that has subsequently made her female scholars 'impossible to place' (p. 283). There are also connections between Pal's approach and that of James Daybell (on women's epistolary networks), Gemma Allen (on the letters of the Cooke sisters), Elaine Leong (on women's household medicine) and Susan Broomhall (on women's gift exchange in the royal courts). Taken together, new works on early-modern women's history mark a shift in the historiography towards an emphasis on the way in which women's networks reveal their patronage, property acquisition, social power and intellectual capital. These were the things, of course, that oiled the wheels of landed and mercantile elite business and politics, both of which relied heavily on the *famille d'alliance*. The *Republic of Women*, with its focus on a busy world of female knowledge exchange, is not, in the end, about women who lived in the more prosaic world of farms and shops and markets.

This book represents the best kind of prosopography, but has some of the limitations that come with that approach. The penultimate chapter is called 'Endings: the closing of doors' and serves to tie up the biographical loose ends. There is a slightly unsatisfying argument about how the surviving female scholars of the network at the end of the seventeenth century were left with the question 'what do we do *now*?', but this is followed by wonderful stories about van Schurman and the Labadists and Princess Elisabeth – who had spent her whole life as 'royalty without a realm' (p. 254) – becoming the Calvinist abbess of the Lutheran abbey at Herford. It is a book filled with rich, lovely detail that cannot be done justice in a review. What Elisabeth did in her bathrobe and slippers in Herford in 1679 is a heart-lifting tale not to be missed. However, there are even greater reasons not to miss this book. Its network methodology has wider application in women's history, even for women outside the world of the political and intellectual elite. Hints of network theory are visible in the use of terminology like 'hub' and 'layers of horizontal and vertical traffic', not to mention the description of London as a 'virtual Venn diagram' (pp. 6, 12, 161). Importantly, Pal treats the movement and exchange of ideas as if they were 'embodied phenomena' that could not exist outside the overlapping networks that generated and modified them. In this way, the book pushes the history of ideas approach into the realm of cultural anthropology. Pal is also concerned to reveal the way in which both the scholarship and the religious reformism of her seven women were 'dually gendered' enterprises. The concept of 'dual gendering' is enormously important. It promotes a new way of working historically that has the potential to break down the professional divide existing between women's history and histories that claim a 'mainstream' position. If *all* analyses of the past became dually-gendered, despite the queer and transgender problematic that would arise, mainstream history would be radically and enjoyably transformed.

Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism*

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, New edition (first published 1981), £25, ISBN 0199639930 (hardback), pp. xxxix + 345

Reviewed by Elizabeth Norton
King's College, London



The sudden appearance of Joan of Arc in 1429 has defied explanation for centuries, with the real woman remaining an enigmatic figure. Marina Warner first published her definitive account of Joan's life and afterlife in 1981. This new edition, published by Oxford University Press includes a new introduction, with Warner stating that her reason for revisiting her work was to some extent due to a need to rebut some of the more recent attempts by groups to claim Joan. As Warner sets out, 'the claim on Joan of Arc as the guiding force of reaction and racism demands vigorous rebuttal' (p. xix).

The point central to Warner's work is that stories continue and change according to the wants and needs of others. In part 1 of the book, Warner attempts to restore Joan to her own context, with chapters setting out the known facts of her life. From this, we are given the known details of her age and appearance, as well as a consideration of the truth behind the claims that she never achieved menarche. The analysis is thoughtful, for example, in regard to the consideration of whether Joan was aware of prophecies foretelling a virgin saviour of France before she began her mission.

Warner relies heavily on the records of Joan's trial and the detail that she gives of Joan's life can be considered thematic rather than chronological. Due to this there are, on a number of occasions, tantalising mentions of aspects of Joan's life that leave the reader wanting more. For example, how Joan, a peasant girl, was able to actually meet with the Dauphin is not really detailed, although the meeting itself is comprehensively considered. Similarly, although there is a good account of Joan's home village in the hundred years' war, there could be more background detail on the conflict itself. These are, however, small points given the fact that the book is not, first and foremost, a biography.

The second, and more interesting part, considers posthumous portrayals and how Joan and her story have been transformed and used over the centuries. The chapters in this section are roughly chronological, beginning first with the restitution hearings ordered by King Charles some

years after her death, as well as her commemoration in Orleans. The analysis then moves forward to an interesting discussion of the origin of her name 'Jeanne D'Arc,' which can mean bow and linked her to the Amazons. Her actual name, if she had one at all, was either 'Dare' or 'Rommee'. She was also later adopted as a personification of virtue. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Warner identifies a growing cult of Joan's childlikeness which corresponds with the development of the cult of the child Jesus. In 1961 a statue was erected in the home village of Joan's mother showing mother and child with the inscription: 'Behind every saint, look for the mother'.

The final chapter entitled 'Saint or Patriot?' deals with the conflicting claims on her by the church and the state, as each sought to make her their own. This culminated in attempts to secure her canonisation, which was finally granted in 1920.

Warner's work is highly readable, with her analysis in the second part of the book greatly innovative and fascinating. In demonstrating Joan's continuing relevance to disparate groups of people, she also makes a very strong case for the need for further analysis of Joan. However, the reissue of the book could have benefitted from updated content on Joan's adoption by far-right groups in France. Warner identifies this in the new introduction but it is not covered in the main text.

Warner ends her book with the comment on Joan that 'she has been set up as a stable monolith in an unstable world, and yet all the different uses to which she has been put proves only the vanity of our widespread refusal to accept that it is impossible to trap the idea of virtue within boundaries that will not alter' (p. 257). In her highly insightful and detailed study of Joan's life and afterlife, Warner demonstrates this aptly. Her Joan is grounded as a historical figure, but the facts of her life and the enduring attraction of her story allow many interpretations, none of which succeed in capturing the real Joan of Arc.

BOOKS RECEIVED AND CALL FOR REVIEWERS

The following titles are available so if you would like to review any of the titles listed below, please email **bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org**

Pamela Horn, *Country House Society* (Amberley)

Christopher Richardson, *A City of Light: Socialism, Chartism and Co-operation in Nottingham 1844* (Loaf on a Stick Press)

Sue Tate, *Pauline Body: Pop Artist and Woman* (Wolverhampton Art Gallery)

Sean Ward (ed) *Memoirs of Sophia of Hanover 1630-1680* (University of Toronto)

The following titles are still available from the lists published in the 2013 issues of the Magazine.

Crescy Cannan, *The Iron House: Jane Cannan and the rush to Melbourne* (Bugloss)

Maud F. Davies, *Life in an English Village* (Hobnob Press) [first published 1909, introduction by Jane Howells]

Elizabeth R. Escobedo, *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits: the Lives of Mexican American Women on the World War II Home Front* (University of North Carolina Press)

Christina Laffin, *Rewriting Medieval Japanese Women: Politics, Personality and Literary Production in the Life of Nun Abutsu* (University of Hawaii Press)

Catherine Lee, *Policing Prostitution, 1856-1886: Deviance, Surveillance and Morality* (Pickering and Chatto)

Nina Reid-Marony, *The Reverend Jennie Johnson and African Canadian History, 1868-1967* (University of Rochester Press)

Nancy C. Unger, *Beyond Nature's Housekeepers: American Women in Environmental History* (Oxford University Press)

Marc E. Vargo, *Women of the Resistance* (McFarland)

If you are interested in reviewing any of these please contact Anne Logan, Book Reviews Editor, via **bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org**

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.

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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

Getting to Know Each Other

Name: Lesley Hall

Position: Senior Archivist, Wellcome Library, Honorary Lecturer in History of Medicine, UCL.

How long have you been a WHN member?

Pretty much since its foundation, to the best of my recollection.

What inspired your enthusiasm for women's history?

Quite possibly those stories of the lives of important women in history in the girls' comics of my youth - the insidious feminism of the 1950s. Plus, working in archives, one realises how many amazing stories of amazing women and their organisations have **not** been told.

What are your special interests?

My main area of interest is the history of sexuality, predominantly nineteenth and twentieth century UK, within which I've worked on birth control and eugenics, advice literature, sexology, same-sex relations, activism, sexually-transmitted diseases and sex education, among other aspects. However, I'm also interested, perhaps coming at this from the archive point of view, in women in medicine and science, where we can find so many of the untold stories I referred to above. I am also interested in middlebrow women writers of the interwar period, particularly in Naomi Mitchison.

Who is your heroine from history and why?

This is a very difficult one to answer! I think it has to be Stella Browne, whose biography I wrote. One has to admire her persistence with an unpopular campaign in the face of personal adversities, and I did end up having dedicated over a decade of my life to her still liking her and finding her interesting, which is not always the case with biographers and their subjects.

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 2013 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 2013 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 womenshistorynetwork.org OR by emailing membership@womenshistorynetwork.org OR by mail to Imaobong Umoren, St Cross College, St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LZ.

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 that 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 in 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 2014.

Entries (books published during 2013) should be submitted via the publisher by 31 March 2014

For further information please contact June Hannam, chair of the panel of judges.
Email: **bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org**

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.

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 31st May 2014. 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.

For further information and before you apply please email Ann Hughes **hia21@keele.ac.uk**

WHN Community History Prize – sponsored by the History Press

An annual £500 prize for a Community History Project which has led to a documentary, pamphlet, book, exhibition, artefact or event completed between the 1st of January 2013 and 31st May 2014.

To be eligible for the award the project must focus on History by, about, or for Women in a local or community setting. Candidates must submit both evidence of the project in written or photographic form and a 500-1,000 word supporting statement explaining the aims and outcomes of the project.

Individuals or groups can nominate themselves or someone else by 31 May 2014; for further guidance or advice on the application process email Professor Maggie Andrews **maggie.andrews@worc.ac.uk**

Committee News

The Steering Committee met on Saturday 16th November 2013. New members were welcomed: Aurelia Annat, Gillian Beattie-Smith, Meleisa Ono-George and Rachael Rich. New committee roles were assigned. Barbara Bush, our current convenor, will be leaving and it was proposed that she be replaced by June Purvis from next September; this will need ratifying at the AGM next September. Jane Burney, the current charity representative, is also standing down. Gillian Beattie-Smith will take over, although she is also interested in the schools' liaison role, currently unfilled. Rachel Rich will join the magazine group. The publicity role is becoming vacant and needs to be filled. Meleisa Ono-George has taken on the newsletter and Aurelia Annat has taken over as treasurer.

It was reported that membership is buoyant (with 453 members) although some members are not paying yet still receiving the magazine, and not all eligible members are ticking the gift aid box. There was a long debate about the best way for members to pay: standing order, paypal or direct debit. Aurelia will investigate the option of setting up direct debit as the key means of paying. The 2014 conference at Worcester was discussed and it was pointed out that the rate will be cheaper than the 2013 conference since it will not be another huge joint event (see elsewhere in this magazine for details of the next conference). The title of the *Women's History Magazine* was debated and it was agreed that it would come over as more academic and hopefully more attractive to potential contributors if the title was changed to simply 'Women's History'.

Meetings of the Steering Committee take place at Senate House, University of London. Members are welcome to attend meetings of the committee and can email **convenor@womenshistorynetwork** for further details or visit **www.womenshistorynetwork.org/steering.html.**

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.womenshistorynetwork.org/whnmagazine/authorguide.html

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, Imaobong Umoren:
membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

or write to her at St Cross College, St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LZ

Finance, Aurelia Annat:
treasurer@womenshistorynetwork.org

Committee Convenor, Barbara Bush:
convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Web Team:
web@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Book Prize, Chair, June Hannam:
bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

UK Representative for International Federation for Research into Women's History, June Purvis:
ifrwh@womenshistorynetwork.org

Charity Representative, Jane Berney:
charityrep@womenshistorynetwork.org

Newsletter Editor, Melesia Ono-George:
newsletter@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Blog, Jocelynne A. Scutt:
womenshistorynetwork.org/blog/

Magazine Team:

Editors: Katie Barclay, Sue Hawkins, Anne Logan, Emma Robertson, Kate Murphy, Lucy Bland, Rachel Rich:
editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

For Magazine submissions, steering committee and peer review:
editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

For book reviews: Anne Logan:
bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

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

For magazine back issues and queries please email:
editor@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 44 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: *Imaobong Umoren, St Cross College, St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LZ*
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____

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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: ____