The Uses of Humour and Parody in "Feminist Avant-Garde" Periodical Culture

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Abstract

This thesis examines the function of humour and parody in the work of five women: Ada Leverson (1862-1933), Beatrice Hastings (1879-1943), Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923), Cornelia Barns (1888-1941), and Margaret Anderson (1886-1973). Its intention is to provide an insight into the prevalence of women's humour within modernist periodicals, specifically within the periodical communities associated with 'Avant-Garde Feminism'. It argues that, collectively, these women seized upon the inherent doubleness of humour and parody to produce works which are variously uncertain, ambivalent and discomforting. Women's use of humour within modernism is an area which has been chronically neglected in modernist studies thus far. This study serves to fill a significant gap in scholarship: consolidating and expanding upon working definitions of avant-garde feminism, while at the same time also shedding light onto the hitherto neglected sphere of women's humour within modernism. Chapter One examines Ada Leverson's work for *Punch* magazine between 1893-1899*,* showing how parody enabled her to inhabit a space in which she was engaged with and yet separate from both high-art and mainstream spheres of print culture. Chapter Two looks at Beatrice Hastings' approach towards female authorship in *The New Age* between August and December 1913*,* arguing that the ambivalence of parody provided her with the means to reject singular authorial perspective in her work. Chapter Three also addresses *The New Age,* this time exploring how Katherine Mansfield's contributions to the 'Pastiche' section between 1912 and 1917 achieve an ambivalent balancing of humour and discomfort. Chapter Four looks at the visual artist Cornelia Barns who worked for *The Masses* and *The Liberator* from 1913-1924*,* showing how humour provided a mask to disguise the subversive and often troubling content of her cartoons. Chapter Five then explores Margaret Anderson's editorship of *The Little Review* (1914-1929)*,* reading her explosive editorship of the magazine through the lens of camp, and showing how the use of humour allowed her to draw upon the tactics of the mainstream media, whilst also maintaining a plausible facade of avant-garde separatism.

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Introduction: 'The Modern Woman with a Sense Of Humour'

> You have no fads on man's descent
> From something quite atomic,
> on Diet, Disestablishment,
> On Dress, Diminishing of Rent,
> Divorce or Dockyard Discontent--
> You seek for something comic.[1]

A short piece entitled 'War Impressions' by Florence Kiper Frank published in *The Little Review* (August 1915) claims that 'the men of the State were more terrified by the phenomenon of The Modern Woman with a Sense of Humor than by any phenomenon that had before confronted them.'[2] While this statement is clearly tongue-in-cheek, it reveals a very real trend for which there exists a considerable body of evidence: the idea of laughter and the female sense of humour being perceived as a potential threat to the establishment in the early twentieth century.[3] Not only were the 'men of the State' aware of the subversive power of female humour, however, so too were the female authors who wielded it. This thesis will address the periodical contributions of four authors and one cartoonist: Ada Leverson (1862-1933), Beatrice Hastings (1879-1943), Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923), Cornelia Barns (1888-1941), and Margaret Anderson (1886-1973), each of whom seized upon the power of female laughter in their work.[4] In analysing the magazine contributions of these five women, this thesis seeks to incorporate the hitherto overlooked element of humour into existing definitions of the sub-section of early twentieth century feminism which Lucy Delap terms 'The Feminist Avant-Garde'.[5]

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[1] 'To a Lady Humorist', *Punch,* (July 20th, 1895), p.25.
[2] Florence Kiper Frank, 'War Impressions', *The Little Review,* 2.5 (August 1915), pp.11-12 (p.11).
[3] Texts such as Antony Ludovici's *The Secret of Laughter* (1932) draw upon the threatening potentials of female laughter. This is something that will be discussed at greater length below.
[4] The nature of their 'work' is varied. Barns, for example, is a visual artist primarily. The others are all writers, although Mansfield, Hastings, Barns and Anderson were magazine editors as well as contributors at various points in their careers. Almost all of them wrote across different forms and genres (poetry, short stories, essays, parodies, etc.).
[5] See: Lucy Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). It is worth noting that although Delap repeatedly uses the term 'Edwardian' to situate the time-frame of her study, the figures she writes on actually published both

Not only will this thesis assert that humour and parody are integral to 'The Feminist Avant-Garde', it also seeks to explore and contextualise the deeply ambivalent nature of this humour and parody, showing how all five of these women worked to create texts which, while funny, are also variously uncertain, ambivalent, and discomforting. This thesis demonstrates the centrality of modern periodical culture in facilitating feminist avant-garde humour, looking not only to the women who authored the texts discussed, but also to the periodical cultures and communities in which they first appeared. It will discuss a broad range of periodicals published between 1890-1930 (namely *Punch, Black and White, The Yellow Book, The New Age, Rhythm, The Blue Review, The Masses, The Liberator,* and *The Little Review*), and will address the ways in which these periodicals enabled, hindered, or were at times instrumental in creating the forms of humour that this thesis will examine. Ultimately, this thesis hopes to expand upon working definitions of avant-garde feminism, while also addressing the present dearth of scholarship on women's humour within modern periodical culture. It argues that Leverson, Hastings, Mansfield, Barns, and Anderson exemplify an existent subculture of humour production present within feminist avant-garde periodical culture: one which draws upon the inherently ambivalent modes of parody and humour as a means to navigate the often contradictory nature of their personal, aesthetic and political identities.

The term 'Feminist Avant-Garde', as defined by Lucy Delap in her monograph *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century* (2009), refers to a strand of transatlantic early twentieth-century feminism separate from and often in opposition to the mainstream women's movement. While the mainstream women's movement of the Edwardian era set out to achieve concrete legislative goals such as gaining women's suffrage, avant-garde feminism sought to bring about women's emancipation through a process of personal development, beginning with an internal transformation of the female psyche.[6] Where I use the term 'avant-garde feminism' or 'feminist avant-garde' throughout this thesis, I refer to the term as it is deployed throughout Delap's work, where it refers to this specific branch of early twentieth century feminist thought. When used outside

before and after the reign of Edward VII (1901-1910). In fact *The Freewoman*—the magazine which forms the majority basis of Delap's study—ran from 1911-1913 (and then, as *The Egoist* until 1919). Delap also makes it clear that avant-garde feminism is a transatlantic movement which extends to both the UK and the USA.

[6] Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde,* pp.19-20.

of this context, 'avant-garde' is a broad and disputed term which can refer to multiple distinct categories of political and aesthetic experimentation taking place across various art forms throughout the twentieth century.[7] There is some capacity for overlap between the feminist avant-garde and the avant-garde more broadly: some of the key figures of avant-garde feminism may also be considered avant-garde in their approach to art and literature, but where the term 'avant-garde feminism' appears throughout this thesis, it is this specific sub-category of early twenty-first century feminism that is being discussed.

Delap outlines the primary tenets of avant-garde feminism as follows: a move towards introspection and internal transformation, a commitment to egoism, individualism and anti-statism, and a radical deconstruction of the established ideals of femininity, motherhood and the family unit (ideals which were often reinforced by the more liberal agenda of the mainstream suffrage movement). Influenced by the works of Max Stirner and Friedrich Nietzsche, avant-garde feminism is primarily interested in the betterment and liberation of the woman as individual, in contrast to the more collectivist goals of the wider suffrage movement. In spite of its individualistic agenda, however, the avant-garde feminist movement was also deeply entrenched within the periodical communities of the era, with Delap describing feminism in the early twentieth century as 'very centrally a reading experience'.[8] Periodicals named by Delap as being instrumental in the formation of avant-garde feminism include *The Freewoman, The New Age, The Masses, Mother Earth,* and *The Little Review.*[9]

The apparent contradiction of a community of women with a shared adherence to the tenets of individualism is indicative of the feminist avant-garde movement as whole. Avant-garde feminism is fundamentally grounded in ambivalence and paradox, with many competing facets and ideologies vying for space within its ethos. Delap highlights the futility

[7] The term 'avant-garde' is variously disputed and can refer to historically 'avant-garde' movements (eg. Futurism, vorticism, dada) or the practice of radical experimentation within more contemporary art. For a fuller account of the term 'avant-garde' as it appears elsewhere see: Peter Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* trans. Michael Shaw (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); Renato Poggioli, *Theory of the Avant-Garde,* trans. Gerald Fitzgerald (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968); Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan 1988).
[8] Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde,* p.4.
[9] See: Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde,* pp.44-56.

of attempting to plot the avant-garde feminist movement according to a simplistic left-right political spectrum, arguing that these labels fail to 'adequately convey the complexities of affiliation within Edwardian feminism', a movement that combines apparently incompatible ideologies from across the political spectrum.[10] The paradoxes embodied by avant-garde feminism are several. At first, there is a conflict between the two apparently incompatible ideologies of feminism and individualism. As Delap points out, both Nietzsche and Stirner tended towards a definition of the individual as a man by default, and much individualist and egoist writing is openly hostile towards women.[11] While there is a logical pathway of thought which allows the masculinist ideologies of Stirner and Nietzsche to be adapted to fit a feminist blueprint, there is nevertheless a need to reconcile two apparently oppositional modes of thinking in order to do so. There is also an inherent contradiction in the idea of a movement or a collective whose primary focus is on the development of the self. Avant-garde feminism promotes the psychological development of individual women, but it achieves this via a public platform and inevitably relies on community in order to do so. It is true that avant-garde feminism reached only a relatively small demographic, but the means through which it was disseminated—namely via periodicals—nevertheless relied upon the modes of mass production which gave way to communities and networks of women. This was not a private conversation between like-minded friends, but rather a public discourse relying upon at least some degree of collectivism.

Coming from this place of contradiction, it is fitting that avant-garde feminists gravitated towards humour and parody, both modes which rely on doubleness to varying degrees. Doubleness of meaning is inherent to almost all types of humour: forming the basis of puns, word-play and double-entendre. Sigmund Freud states that 'nothing distinguishes jokes more clearly from all other physical structures than this double-sidedness and this duplicity in speech.'[12] Mikhail Bakhtin names 'comic, ironic or parodic discourse', as falling under the definition of 'double-voiced discourse': that is, discourse which 'serves two

[10] Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde*, p.3. Delap uses the terms 'Edwardian feminism', 'advanced feminism' and 'vanguard feminism' interchangeably with 'avant-garde feminism', however, for the sake of clarity, I will only be using the terms 'avant-garde feminism' or 'feminist avant-garde'.
[11] Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde,* p.118.
[12] Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* (London: Penguin, 1986), p.230.

speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions'.[13] This thesis will draw upon relevant aspects of laughter theory, being alert in particular to the doubleness which accompanies most forms of humour, and the ways in which this can be played upon to create feelings of intense uncertainty and discomfort in the reader. Alfie Bown, in the introduction to his recent study *In the Event of Laughter: Psychoanalysis, Literature and Comedy* (2018) refers to the 'Uneasy doubleness' of laughter, describing laughter as 'simultaneously horrifying and full of delight.'[14] It is this, he argues, 'that makes laughter so difficult to study and so elusive and hard to pin down. […] so paradoxically worrying and pleasurable'.[15] It is precisely this sense of unease and ambivalence that characterises the texts which this thesis will address. Some of the types of humour that will be encountered throughout include multi-layered meanings, parodies-within-parodies, dark and disturbing humour that destabilises and interrogates what we think of as funny, and countless instances of humour being used in such a way that the reader is left unsure of whether or not they have 'got' the joke, or whether there is even a joke to get. Rarely is it possible to determine a singular, straightforward meaning or message in any of the texts addressed and many of them defy clear generic classification. But it is this deep engagement with the ambivalence and uncertainty of laughter which makes feminist avant-garde humour so distinctive, and so compelling.[16]

Delap's focus is an historical one, taking its primary source material mainly from polemic and overtly political writing, and perhaps for this reason, her study does not fully acknowledge the deep strain of humour, irony and irreverence which lays at the heart of the literary outputs produced by many of the key players of avant-garde feminism.[17] And yet, the

[13] Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays,* ed. Michael Holquist, Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp.259-422 (p.324).
[14] Alfie Bown, *In the Event of Laughter: Psychoanalysis, Literature and Comedy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), p.1.
[15] Bown, *In the Event of Laughter,* p.1.
[16] In addition to linguistic doubleness, there is also a political ambivalence which accompanies many types of humour, particularly parody. Linda Hutcheon says of parody that it is 'fundamentally double and divided; its ambivalence stems from the dual drives of conservative and revolutionary forces that are inherent in its nature as authorized transgression.' Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985), p.26.
[17] By 'literary outputs' I refer to the straightforwardly literary works such as fiction, plays, poetry and explicit works of parody which form the basis of this study, as opposed to the essays and polemics which form the primary basis of Delap's.

use of humour can be observed in the work of many different feminist avant-garde authors. Often this is explicit, as in the countless parodic works produced by Beatrice Hastings in *The New Age,* while other times humour is more subtly deployed, as in the wry editorial voice of Rebecca West or Margaret Anderson. It is the aim of this study to expand upon Delap's definition of avant-garde feminism by incorporating the overlooked element of humour into the working understanding of the feminist avant-garde. This study will demonstrate how humour and parody form an integral part of the feminist avant-garde movement, proving that humour in avant-garde feminism is not merely incidental but fundamental.

The centrality of humour to the credo of the feminist avant-garde is outlined by the actor and avant-garde feminist Florence Farr in an article in *The New Age* (July 1907).[18] Farr writes of the human brain as harbouring a 'Jester Critic': a character, part-critic and part-jester, who 'sits in our skulls' and represents the most human, civilised and cerebral part of ourselves.[19] The article writes in praise of 'introspection' and of the development of the intellect and ego over that of the body: a concept familiar to much avant-garde feminist discourse. What is significant about this piece, however, is Farr's conception of the 'deified critic'-figure as a jester.[20] She writes that 'Our real god thereafter is this Jester Critic who shatters ideals as lightning rends the sky and who thunders peals of derisive laughter,' placing laughter and the sense of humour at the forefront of her plea for intellectual self-improvement.[21] Farr closes her article by stating:

> The real ally women should pray for is the Jester Critic. Let them prepare their brains carefully for his reception, and there is little doubt that he will clear the way for them and—to invert the witty saying of one of our great actresses—when women have a sense of humour, they will laugh at men instead of loving them.[22]

[18] Florence Farr is one of the figures mentioned by Delap as being centrally involved in feminist avant-garde politics before her early death in 1917. An actor, director, and writer, Farr contributed to both *The New Age* and *The Freewoman,* and was a co-founder of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (See: Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde,* p.264, p.275).
[19] Florence Farr, 'The Shrine of the Jester Critic', *New Age,* 1.10 (July 4th 1907), pp. 150-151 (p.150).
[20] Farr, 'The Shrine of the Jester Critic', p.150.
[21] Farr, 'The Shrine of the Jester Critic', p.150.
[22] Farr, 'The Shrine of the Jester Critic', p.151.

This article sets a precedent for many of the things this thesis will come to discuss. We see an early instance of derisive laughter—of laughing at, as opposed to laughing with—something which will recur as a theme throughout this thesis. We also see a curious dynamic which sees the jester critic gendered as male, imagined as a masculine force which exists outside of women's brains and must be allowed in. This sometimes baffling approach to the gendering of humour is something which will re-occur, particularly in Chapter Two of this thesis. What is most significant about this passage, however, is that it posits the ability to laugh, at ourselves and at others, as one of the central things which elevates humanity above the 'natural law' of animalistic behaviour and base bodily function.[23] The sense of humour is presented here as something which women must not only cultivate but place upon a shrine: Farr suggests that women must prepare their brains reverently in anticipation of its arrival. Statements such as Farr's demonstrate a clear theoretical pull in avant-garde feminism towards the development and cultivation of the sense of humour as a means to achieve the psychological transformation which forms the cornerstone of avant-garde feminism. By looking at the magazine contributions of five authors whose works are heavily informed by the so-called 'Jester Critic', this thesis will demonstrate the presence of humour and parody at the forefront of the avant-garde feminist movement. It aims to show how humour is not just an incidental but a fundamental component of the programme of psychological and spiritual development which underpins avant-garde feminism.

In addition to advancing to the current understandings of humour and the feminist avant-garde, this study also engages with far broader debates relating to the use of parody and humour by women in general. The misconception that women are simply not funny is long since established and still prevails to this day. In *The History of* Punch (1895)*,* M.H. Spielmann argues that women 'are humorists neither born nor made'.[24] A full century later, Barry Sanders' 1995 history of laughter makes a similar claim, arguing that, across all of Western culture, 'the joke is alien to women'.[25] Even as recently as 2019, a study from Aberystwyth University made newspaper headlines by making the contentious claim that

[23] Farr, 'The Shrine of the Jester Critic', p.150.
[24] M.H. Spielmann, *The History of Punch* (New York: Cassell, 1895), p.392.
[25] Barry Sanders, *Sudden Glory: Laughter as Subversive History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), p.26.

women are objectively less funny than men.[26] There is of course a now well-established counter-movement of feminist scholarship designed to address this presumption, with feminist critics such as Regina Barecca and Nancy Walker working to re-assert the existence and importance of women's humour.[27] Both Sophie Blanch and Nancy Walker point to a bias in some feminist scholarship, however, whereby comic works are overlooked in order that women's writing might be 'taken seriously'.[28] Whatever the reason, there does not yet exist any extensive study of women's humour within modern periodical culture, or within modernist studies more generally. This is a gap which this thesis hopes to go some way towards bridging. It is the first study of its kind to address the role of humour within feminist avant-garde periodical culture, and as such forms part of a far broader effort to recover the hitherto overlooked presence of humour in women's writing in general.

Much of the scholarship that does address humour in relation to the early manifestations of feminism in the twenty-first century focuses on the ways in which humour was used to ridicule and defame women who dared to participate in the public sphere. The use of comedy in attacks on the New Woman or the suffragette was commonplace. According to Patricia Marks, humour was used to 'tame the rambunctious feminist spirit and return it to its domestic sphere'.[29] What is less well-documented, and yet just as prevalent, however, is the use of humour *by* women within the suffrage movement. The Women's Social and

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[26] Gil Greengross, Paul J. Silva, Emily C. Nusbaum, 'Sex Differences in Humor Production Ability: A Meta-Analysis', *Journal of Research in Personality,* 84 (2019), pp.1-17. This study was widely reported in the mainstream press upon publication: Moya Lothian-McLean, 'Comedians Dismiss 'F**King Ignorant' Study that Claims Men are Funnier than Women', *The Independent* (Wednesday 30th October 2019) <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/study-men-are-funnier-than-women-comedian-a9177401.html> [accessed 29/11/2019]; Rhys Blakely, 'Men Funnier than Women? It's no Joke, Researchers Say', *The Times* (Wednesday 30th October 2019) <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/men-funnier-than-women-its-no-joke-researchers-say-w69r2q2p5#> [accessed 29/11/2019].

[27] See: Judy Little*, Comedy and the Woman Writer: Woolf, Spark and Feminism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); Nancy Walker, *A Very Serious Thing: Women's Humor and American Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1988); Regina Barreca, *Last Laughs: Perspectives on Women and Comedy* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1988); Linda Morris, ed. *American Women Humorists: Critical Essays* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993); Regina Barreca, *ed. Untamed and Unabashed: Essays on Women and Humor in British Literature* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994). For a more recent genealogy of feminist humour see also: Cynthia Willett, Julie Willett and Yael D Sherman, 'The Seriously Erotic Politics of Feminist Laughter', *Social Research,* 79.1 (2012), pp.217-246.

[28] Sophie Blanch, 'Women and Comedy' in *The History of British Women's Writing 1920-1945* ed. by Maroula Joannou (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.112-128 (p.112); Walker, *A Very Serious Thing,* pp.4-5.

[29] Patricia Marks, *Bicycles, Bangs, and Bloomers: The New Woman in the Popular Press* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), p.2. See also: Margaret Stetz, W*omen's Comic Fiction, 1890-1990: Not Drowning, but Laughing* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).

Political Union (WSPU) and its American equivalent The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) played host to all kinds of humorous creativity. Sophie Blanch describes how, 'Through satirical commentary, visual and lyrical lampooning, caricature, punning, gendered word-play, specially commissioned comic plays, and ironic stereotyping of both themselves and their anti-suffrage opponents, large numbers of articulate, well educated women were openly engaged in comic performance and production for political ends.'[30] The use of humour pervaded the public demonstrations enacted by the suffragettes, as well as being present in their literary works.[31] Comic literary texts by women affiliated with the suffrage movement include Cicely Hamilton's book of illustrated comic poetry *Beware! A Warning to Suffragists* (1908) and her play *How the Vote Was Won* (1909), Evelyn Sharp's short story collection *Rebel Woman* (1910), and Alice Duer Miller's collection of satirical suffrage poetry *Are Women People* (1915), first published in the *New York Tribune.*

There are notable differences in the types of humour employed by the suffragettes and by the avant-garde feminists who form the basis of this study, however. Firstly, collectivism and a sense of camaraderie was at the heart of suffrage humour writing. Krista Cowman points out that, in addition to underpinning various forms of protest, 'within the WSPU itself, humour also played a vital but less self-conscious role in uniting women together through difficult circumstances.'[32] And, although avant-garde feminist humour does to some degree rely on a community in order to function, it also operates within the framework of individualism. The second crucial difference between the two is that suffrage humour-writing, and suffrage writing in general, is often characterised by its rejection of literary modernism.

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[30] Blanch, 'Women and Comedy', p.113. See also: Susan Carlson, 'Comic Militancy: The Politics of Suffrage Drama', *Women, Theatre and Performance: New Histories, New Historiographies* ed. Maggie Gale and Vivien Gardner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

[31] Stunts by women in the WSPU included two suffragettes having themselves posted to parliament by the Royal Mail, or another two disrupting a meeting from inside of an organ, where they had hidden overnight. For more on these forms of disruptive comic performance, see: Krista Cowman, 'Doing Something Silly: The Uses of Humour by the Women's Social and Political Union, 1903-1914', *International Review of Social History,* 52.1 (2007), pp.259-274. See also: Zita Dresner, 'Heterodite Humor: Alice Duer Miller and Florence Guy Seabury', *American Women Humorists: Critical Essays,* ed. Linda Morris (New York: Garland, 1994), pp. 311-326.

[32] Cowman, 'Doing Something Silly, p.272. Deborah Tyler-Bennett also points to this feeling of comradery; in her study of suffragette poetry, she states that a poem by Edith Aubrey Wingrove 'uses the motif of a college song, transforming the prison into a women's college, thus once more subverting the notion of imprisonment as a solitary punishment.' Deborah Tyler-Bennett, 'Suffrage and Poetry: Radical Women's Voices' in Maroula Joannou and June Purvis, ed. *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp.117-126 (p.121).

Both Barbara Green and Maroula Joannou note the ways in which it diverges from the roughly contemporaneous movement of literary modernism. Green notes that the suffragettes 'maintained an investment in the qualities literary modernism is said to have rejected: experience, realist form, sentiment, and the alignment of feelings and politics', while Joannou argues that suffragette novelists, unlike modernist writers, 'usually eschewed irony, parody, any extended use of symbolic language and elaborate narrative structures.'[33] This thesis, however, is interested in addressing the use of humour in direct conjunction with literary modernism.

Lucy Delap acknowledges that the 'introspective turn' which is distinctive of the feminist avant-garde 'cannot be understood without the contextualisation provided' by the modernist movement, and many of the magazines she mentions as foundational to avant-garde feminism were also instrumental in the formation of literary modernism, for example *The Little Review, The New Age* and *The Freewoman* (later *The Egoist*).[34] Thus, while the figures selected for this thesis have been chosen on the basis of their contribution to 'avant-garde feminist periodical culture', the their work must also be understood in the context of literary modernism. Most of the works covered over the course of this thesis exist somewhere towards the margins of the modernist movement. Some of its subjects, like Katherine Mansfield and Margaret Anderson, are widely accepted modernist figures, while others, such as Ada Leverson and Cornelia Barns, can be less easily labelled as such. Several of the case studies discussed fall on the earliest end of the timeframe usually associated with literary modernism, and almost all of them defy the ostensibly polarised categories of 'high' and 'low' print culture. For this reason, I have adopted the more permissive and expansive definition of modernism suggested by Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz in their model of the 'New Modernist Studies'.

[33] Barbara Green, *Spectacular Confessions: Autobiography, Performative Activism, and the Sites of Suffrage 1905-1938* (London: Macmillan 1997), p.14; Maroula Joannou, 'Suffragette Fiction', *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives,* pp.101-116 (p.106).

[34] Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde,* p.8. Many of the key players of avant-garde feminism are better known as literary figures, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Olive Schreiner and Rebecca West. Although avant-garde feminism is foremost a political movement, it is also one with profound and inextricable ties to literature, and especially to periodicals.

'New Modernist Studies' seeks to expand the boundaries of what can be included within modernist scholarship, creating space for works and authors which fall outside of the standard time-frame, geographies and cultural hierarchies which have hitherto been considered conventionally 'modernist'.[35] This thesis hopes to contribute to the ongoing expansion of modernist studies, not only by focusing on lesser-known women writers, but also by using periodical studies as a route into interrogating the relationship between modernist and mainstream print cultures. In the vein of scholars such as Mark Morrisson and Faith Binckes, this thesis is interested in the periodical as a space that disrupts the ostensible hierarchies between modernism and the mainstream and creates new possibilities for understanding modernism.[36]

Another way in which this project diverges from the traditional remit of modernist studies is in its focus on women's humour. Humour is a facet that is often overlooked in modernist studies in general, but is ignored in women's modernist literature to an even greater extent. When humour and modernism have been addressed together, it is nearly always in the context of male, canonical modernist writers (with the occasional addition of Virginia Woolf).[37] *Mock Modernism,* a 2014 anthology of parodies from 1910-1935, contains only nine contributions by women, compared with one hundred by men.[38] This bias is not due to a lack of viable candidates for study. There are countless female modernists who utilise humour throughout their work. These include female poets such as Edith Sitwell and Mina Loy, as well as novelists such as Virginia Woolf and Djuna Barnes, each of whom have produced multiple works that are both aggressively modernist and inarguably funny.[39]

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[35] Douglas Mao, Rebecca Walkowitz, 'The New Modernist Studies', *PMLA,* 123.3 (2008), pp.737-748 (p.738).
[36] See: Mark Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception 1905-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000); Faith Binckes *Modernism, Magazines, and the British Avant-Garde: Reading* Rhythm*, 1910-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[37] See: Lisa Colletta, *Dark Humor and Social Satire in the Modern British Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003); Sarah Davison, 'Parody and Modernism: The Practice of Parody and Pastiche in Early Twentieth-Century Literature' (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Oxford, 2009); Sara Crangle, *Prosaic Desires: Modernist Knowledge, Boredom, Laughter, and Anticipation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010); Jonathan Greenberg, *Modernism, Satire and the Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Matthew Stratton, *The Politics of Irony in American Modernism* (New York : Fordham University Press, 2014); Leonard Diepeveen, *Modernist Fraud: Hoax, Parody, Deception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
[38] Leonard Diepeveen, *Mock Modernism: An Anthology of Parodies, Travesties, Frauds, 1910-1935* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).
[39] Barns' *Ladies Almanack, Nightwood* and *Ryder* all contain various instances of satire and parody, while Woolf described her 1928 novel *Orlando* as 'too long for a joke, & too frivolous for a serious book' [*The Diaries of*

Gertrude Stein, Katherine Mansfield, Beatrice Hastings, and Edna St Vincent Millay were all engaged in writing parodies at various points in their careers, and there are no doubt countless examples of women humourists whose work is yet to be discovered.[40] Studies of these individual women writers have often noted the presence of humour in their work, but a large-scale study of modernist women's humour is yet to have been attempted.[41] This thesis hopes to go some way towards bridging this gap in scholarship. It offers an important and timely contribution to modernist studies, consolidating and expanding upon the ways humour functions within modernism, as well as demonstrating the intrinsic and central role of female humour specifically.

Finally, this project builds on and contributes to the field of periodical studies. Building on existing periodical studies methodologies which seek to study periodicals as 'autonomous objects of study' as opposed to 'containers of discrete bits of information', this thesis will argue that modern periodical culture is not merely the backdrop to, but a central and integral factor in the development of the 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour'.[42] The coterie environments and external communities which surround little magazine production mean that the little magazine is a particularly fertile environment with regards to humour. The small readership of the little magazine makes it conducive to in-jokes and parodies of little-known works as well as instances of humour that are shared and sustained over multiple issues. A number of critics including Alan Golding and Ann Ardis have noted the ways in which little magazines destabilise the expected author-reader-relationship of mainstream publications, and this dialogism actively promotes playfulness and allows contributors to parody each other

Virginia Woolf, Volume 3: 1925-1930, ed. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie (New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1981), p.177].

[40] Hastings and Mansfield actually co-published a work of parody together, published in *The New Age* ("B.H. and K.M.", 'A P.S.A.', *New Age,* 9.4 (May 25th 1911), p.95). St Vincent Millay wrote parodies under the pseudonym Nancy Boyd.

[41] Studies include: Little, *Comedy and the Woman Writer*; Holly Laird, 'Laughter and Nonsense in the Making and (Postmodern) Remaking of Modernism', *The Future of Modernism*, ed. Hugh Witemeyer (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp.79-100; Melissa C. Johnson, 'The Muse Writes Back: Vivien Eliot's Response to High Modernism', *Philological Quarterly*, 84.4 (2005), pp.451-478; Elisabeth A. Frost, 'Replacing the Noun – Fetishism, Parody & Gertrude Stein's Tender Buttons', *The Feminist Avant-Garde in American Poetry*, (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2005); Sara Crangle, 'Desires Dissolvent: How Mina Loy Exceeds Georges Bataille', *Journal of Philosophy*, 6.13 (2010), pp.41-53.

[42] Sean Latham and Robert Scholes, 'The Rise of Periodical Studies', *PMLA*, 121. 2 (2006), pp. 517-531 (p.518, p.517).

and to sustain jokes across different issues of the same magazine (or in the case of Hastings, in the same issue of the same magazine).[43] What is more, the impulse towards newness and experimentation in modernist magazines means that editors are open to publishing work that promotes an unusual brand of humour, or which defies generic convention (something which will become an important factor in Chapter Three, when this thesis will discuss Katherine Mansfield's contributions to *The New Age*). Scholarship has already begun to reveal modernist 'little' magazine culture as a fertile breeding-ground for humour. Suzanne Churchill demonstrates how the format of the modernist magazine *Others* facilitated the famous 'Spectra' Hoax of 1917.[44] There have also been two journal articles published on the subject of women's humour within modern periodical culture specifically, both of which take *The New Age* as their point of focus: Ann Ardis' 'The Dialogics of Modernism(s) in the New Age' (2007) and Carey Snyder's 'Katherine Mansfield and the *New Age* School of Satire' (2010).[45] Both of these studies will inform this project in a number of important ways, however this thesis also serves to contextualise these studies more fully. By reading these instances of humour in the context of avant-garde feminist periodical culture, this thesis will argue that they are not isolated examples from exceptional individuals, but are instead evidence of a wider network of women humourists operating across a range of periodicals on both sides of the Atlantic, and within the broader context of avant-garde feminism.

Laughter, Humour and 'The Great Divide': Theorising Laughter in the Twentieth Century

The dominating characteristic of the types of humour this thesis will discuss is its ambivalence: something which undoubtedly has to do with the conflicting ways in which laughter and humour were understood in the early twentieth century. The complex nature of

[43] See: Alan Golding, '*The Dial, The Little Review* and the Dialogics of Modernism' in *Little Magazines & Modernism: New Approaches* ed. Adam McKible and Suzanne Churchill (London: Routledge, 2007), pp.67-82; Jayne Marek, E., 'Reader Critics' in *Women Editing Modernism: "Little" Magazines and Literary History* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1995); Ann Ardis, 'The Dialogics of Modernism(s) in the *New Age', Modernism/Modernity,* 14.3 (2007), 407-434.

[44] Suzanne Churchill, 'The Lying Game: *Others* and the Great Spectra Hoax of 1917', *American Periodicals*, 15.1 (2005), pp.23-41.

[45] Ardis, 'The Dialogics of Modernism(s) in the *New Age'*; Carey Snyder, 'Katherine Mansfield and the *New Age* School of Satire', *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 1.2 (2010), 125-158.

laughter came under the microscope of philosophical re-appraisal from the late nineteenth century onwards, with a sudden influx of new material addressing the question of how and why we laugh.[46] From the solitary laughter of Nietzsche's protagonist in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1885) to Bergson's influential study *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (1910), laughter became a common feature of some of the defining intellectual works of the era. Studies of laughter spanned the various disciplines of psychology, philosophy and anthropology, all with a shared goal to characterise and categorise the elusive quantity known as modern laughter. Not all of these studies of laughter were unanimous in defining the qualities of laughter and the comic, however. In fact, an examination of some of the seminal works of laughter theory produced during the early decades of the twentieth century reveals a dichotomy which emerges between, on the one hand, base and aggressive 'laughter', and on the other hand, 'humour', which is considered the mark of intelligence, elevation, and the highly-developed ego.

A considerable number of the studies of laughter produced in the early twentieth century focus on its potential to humiliate, isolate and exclude. Of course, a fear or distrust of laughter is not unique to the modern era, and in fact dates back to one of the earliest studies of comedy, which appears in Plato's *Philebus* (circa 400 BC). Plato propounds a theory of laughter as potentially malicious and harmful, affirming that 'ignorance, and what is termed clownishness, are surely an evil'.[47] But while not unique to the modernists, the fear or distrust of laughter was certainly something which regained a renewed and distinct attention in the early twentieth century. One of the first twentieth century studies of laughter to identify the threatening potential of laughter is Sigmund Freud's *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905). In it, Freud discusses the notion of the hostile or 'tendentious joke'. He posits that in civilised society, where acts of outright violence are taboo, we instead use

[46] See: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* Trans. Thomas Common (New York: The Modern Library, 2006); James Sully, *An Essay on Laughter, Its Forms, Its Causes, Its Development and Its Value* (London: Longmans, Green and co., 1902); Freud, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious;* Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (1910), trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (United States: Dodo Press, 2007), Boris Sidis, *The Psychology of Laughter* (New York: Appleton and co., 1913); Max Eastman, *The Sense of Humor* (USA: Charles Scribner's Sons 1921); J.Y.T. Greig, *The Psychology of Laughter and Comedy* (London: George, Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1923); W.C. Kimmins, *The Springs of Laughter* (London: Methuen, 1928); Anthony Ludovici, *The Secret of Laughter* (London: Constable & co., 1932).

[47] Plato, *Philebus,* trans. Benjamin Jowett (Blacksburg: Virginia Tech, 2001), p.42.

jokes to satisfy our suppressed feelings of aggression: thus, 'by making our enemy small, inferior, despicable or comic, we achieve in a roundabout way the enjoyment of overcoming him'.[48] While Freud does not posit that laughter is inherently evil, he nevertheless sees it as an outlet for aggression, cruelty and violence. In a similar vein, Henri Bergson's *Le Rire,* or *Laughter* (1910) discusses the function of laughter as a social corrective, serving to suppress individual difference in society. His study focuses on the relationship between laughter and humiliation, claiming that laughter serves to 'convert rigidity into plasticity, to readapt the individual to the whole, in short, to round off the corners wherever they are met with.'[49] While there is far greater complexity to both of these studies, their prevailing view of laughter is one of an unkind, aggressive evolutionary response, one which is necessary to mediate a society which might otherwise descend into acts of outright violence.

This view of aggressive laughter is then something which would later come to inform the work of 'conservative modernist' Anthony Ludovici, whose 1932 book *The Secret of Laughter* takes the view of tendentious or aggressive laughter one step further.[50] Ludovici portrays all forms of laughter as 'sinister', putting forward a theory that what he perceives as a modern fascination with the comic signals moral and societal decay.[51] For him, it is because of humanity's inferiority and alienation in the modern machine age that they are driven to laughter to mask their feelings of insecurity in what Ludovici terms 'the age of humiliation'.[52] *The Secret of Laughter* also betrays a deep anxiety towards the possibility that laughter—a tool of social correction and conformity—could become weaponised by marginalised groups, serving not to enforce the existing hegemony but to undermine it.[53] The association of laughter with marginalised groups is commonplace throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both Ludovici's work and many others participate in a clear grouping which sees laughter portrayed as the domain of the other, whether this be through race,

[48] Freud, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious,* p.147.
[49] Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic,* p.78.
[50] For more on the concept of 'Conservative Modernists', see: Christos Hadjiyiannis, *Conservative Modernists: Literature and Tory Politics in Britain, 1900–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). Ludovici is one of Hadjiyiannis' key case studies.
[51] Ludovici, *The Secret of Laughter,* p.17.
[52] Ludovici, *The Secret of Laughter,* p.112.
[53] Ludovici, *The Secret of Laughter,* p.54.

class or gender.[54] The racist conception of laughter which flourished at this time is no doubt a rich enough topic for a book-length study of its own, but what is more relevant for the purposes of this thesis is the conflation of women, laughter, and popular culture.

The conflation of mass culture and femininity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is discussed at length by Andreas Huyssen in *After the Great Divide* (1986), and this is a phenomenon which comes to be epitomised in the trope of the laughing woman. The growth of mass production and popular culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century gave rise to increased anxieties about the threatening potential of the masses. While this view was wide-reaching and diverse, it is perhaps best expressed in the influential and alarmist rhetoric of Gustave LeBon's *The Crowd* (1896)*,* which states: 'While all our ancient beliefs are tottering and disappearing, while the old pillars of society are giving way one by one, the power of the crowd is the only force that nothing menaces, and of which the prestige is continually on the increase'.[55] In *After the Great Divide,* Huyssen observes the way in which this rhetoric is often gendered, arguing that 'the political, psychological and aesthetic discourse around the turn of the century consistently and obsessively genders mass culture and the masses as feminine, while high culture, whether traditional or modern, clearly remains the privileged realm of male activities.'[56] While this apparent dichotomy has since been nuanced, qualified and re-configured in subsequent studies of gender and modernity, it nonetheless hits upon a basic truth that 'the masses knocking at the gate were also women'.[57]

The notion of a feminised mass culture is certainly a guiding factor for *The Secret of Laughter,* which opens with this: 'guided by their newspapers and their modern books, the average man and woman (particularly the latter), without any idea or thought of what

[54] Ludovici claims, for instance, that practical jokes are popular among 'savages', as well as 'among the working classes, schoolboys of all classes, [and] the Chinese', Ludovici, *The Secret of Laughter,* p.54. Another of his contemporaries, the psychologist C.W. Kimmins argues that 'the humor of the coloured differs widely from that of the white child' and that 'savages delight in teasing and practical jokes', Kimmins, *The Springs of Laughter,* p.5, p.38.). For further analysis of how laughter is associated with marginalised people, see: Crangle, *Prosaic Desires,* p.113.

[55] Gustave Le Bon*, The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896), p.15.

[56] Huyssen, *After the Great Divide,* p.47.

[57] Huyssen, *After the Great Divide,* p.47. More recent studies such as Rita Felski's *Gender and Modernity* (1995) and Celia Marshik and Allison Pease's *Modernism, Sex, and Gender* (2018) have further nuanced Huyssen's model of feminised mass culture, but the basic premise remains valid.

laughter really is, cling tenaciously to the view that humour is good and desirable'.[58] Immediately we see laughter treated as the domain of the masses, linked to popular culture, and 'particularly' to women. The popular entertainments of cinema, music hall, and vaudeville were all conducive to laughter, and it is therefore unsurprising that in the imaginations of conservative thinkers, the masses are often conceived of as a perpetually laughing mob. An explicitly gendered version of this is exemplified in the poem 'The Laughing Woman' (1913) by William Rose Benét. As if in testament to modernism's endless capacity for contradiction, this poem first appeared in *The Masses,* a socialist-leaning publication edited by Max Eastman who himself applauded laughter in his 1921 book *The Sense of Humour* as 'a celebration of social pleasure, a blessing without which our lives would be but the spare outline of what they are'.[59] The view of laughter espoused in this poem, however, is quite different.

In 'The Laughing Woman' Benét seizes upon the notions of malicious, threatening, and even monstrous laughter variously discussed in the works of Freud, Bergson and Ludovici, applying it to a laughing woman in a dance hall. The poem begins:

> Once I heard a woman laughing—
> Not like laughter of the women you have heard;
> Syllables whose beauty blinds you, and reminds you
> Of a brook in sunlight, or a sweet, leaf-hidden bird.
> There is laughter that is human
> Though shot through with notes of pain—
> And then there is that laughter of an old, old, evil woman ,
> Raising red and burning mists within the brain.[60]

Each stanza follows this refrain, comparing regular 'human' laughter to the laughter of the demonised subject of the poem, the laughing woman whose laughter, we are told, is 'Worse

[58] Ludovici, *The Secret of Laughter*, p.7.
[59] Eastman, *The Sense of Humor,* p.5. Despite adopting a positive view on laughter, Eastman also acknowledges that etymology for 'sarcasm' and 'sardonic' derives from the showing of teeth in dogs, and acknowledges the potential for laughter to be threatening (*The Sense of Humor* p.7). His own study, however, focuses solely on non-threatening, non-aggressive types of laughter.
[60] William Rose Benét, 'The Laughing Woman', *Masses* 5.1 (October 1913), p.14.

than all the ghastly nightmares known to sleep.'[61] The links between the laughing woman and popular culture are overt throughout this poem. While ordinary human laughter is described with the pastoral imagery of 'a brook in sunlight, or a sweet, leaf-hidden bird', the laughing woman is explicitly situated within a gritty, urban setting. She appears in a 'mad, gin-reeking dance-hall', laughing amongst the 'brainless oaths and shrieks' of its fellow patrons and the 'swinish, acrid incense' of 'stale tobacco'.[62] The other people in the dance hall feature only as an indistinguishable and faceless mass. We are told that 'dancers swarmed' around the laughing woman like insects.[63] They are described as 'swinish' and 'beastly', and later compared to 'maggots', bereft of any individual identity.[64] The 'Laughing Woman' of this poem is the monstrous symbol of the morally bankrupt and sexually deviant modern world she inhabits: a human version of 'the world's white banner dragged and trampled in the dust!'.[65]

But if, on the one hand, laughter is associated with a (deeply threatening) feminized mass culture and the decline of cultural standards, there is also evidence for *humour* being conceptualised as the antithesis to this. More than twenty years after the publication of *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious,* Freud revised and expanded upon his earlier work in a short essay entitled 'Humour' (1927). In this text, Freud expands upon his definition of humour, stating that 'Like jokes and the comic, humour has something liberating about it; but it also has something of grandeur and elevation, which is lacking in the other two ways of obtaining pleasure from intellectual activity.'[66] He posits humour as 'a rare and precious gift' only accessible to a select few who are intellectually capable of possessing a sense of humour. This version of humour as elite and elevated is further epitomised a decade later in André Breton's preface to *Anthologie de l'humour noir* (1939), an anthology of 45 artists and authors in which Breton describes humour as 'the only deluxe intellectual commerce'.[67] Far

[61] Benét, 'The Laughing Woman', p.14.
[62] Benét, 'The Laughing Woman', p.14.
[63] Benét, 'The Laughing Woman', p.14.
[64] Benét, 'The Laughing Woman', p.14.
[65] Benét, 'The Laughing Woman', p.14.
[66] Sigmund Freud, 'Humour', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud vol. 21 1927-1931: The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and its Discontents and Other Works,* ed. James Strachey and Anna Freud (London: Hogarth Press, 1972), pp.161-166.
[67] André Breton, 'Preface', *Anthologie de l'humour noi*r (1939), trans. Elinor S. Miller, republished in *Black Humor: Critical Essays* ed. Alan R. Pratt (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), pp.11-18 (p.12).

from denigrating humour, Breton places it on a pedestal, arguing that 'we have the sense of a hierarchy whose highest degree would be assured to the man with an integral possession of humour.'[68] Echoing Freud, this view of humour as elevated and elite certainly differs from the ideas of mob laughter and societal decay we find in the work of Benét and Ludovici. It is important to note, however, that when Breton refers to 'humour', he does not use it as a synonym for all types of comic production. Being sure to differentiate it from what he terms 'mere caricature', Breton states that 'Black humor is bounded by too many things, such as stupidity, sceptical irony, joking without seriousness… (the enumeration would be long), but it is pre-eminently the mortal enemy of sentimentality with its air of being perpetually at bay.'[69] Significantly, Breton's view of humour does not preclude or invalidate the ideas of harmful mob laughter put forward by Ludovici and others, it simply places his vision of black humour as being a distinct phenomenon which operates separately and in direct opposition to other forms of humour.

What we see forming here, then, is a dichotomy between *laughter*, with its associations of base animal aggression, popular culture, the masses and the feminine, and *humour*, which is accessible only to an elite few and signifies, according to Freud, 'the triumph of narcissism, the victorious assertion of the ego's invulnerability.'[70] At first glance, it appears that this version of advanced 'humour' is the most evidently in keeping with avant-garde feminism's adoption of humour and parody. Informed by the same models of individualism and egoism that we find throughout avant-garde feminist rhetoric, this is clearly a model of humour for which Farr's 'Jester Critic' was an early forerunner. Where there is a conflict, however, is in the gendering of 'humour'. Breton's decision to define black humour as 'the mortal enemy' of sentimentality carries an undoubtable weight with regards to gender. Much has been written on the fractious relationship between modernism and sentimentality, as well as on the implicit gendering of sentimentality as feminine.[71] If in need of further persuasion as to Breton's gendering of sentimentality in this instance, he then goes on to

[68] Breton, 'Preface', p.12.
[69] Breton, Preface, p.17.
[70] Freud, 'Humour', p.162.
[71] See: Suzanne Clarke, *Sentimental Modernism: Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

personify sentimental poetry as a 'slut', and of the 45 artists and authors featured in his anthology of black humour, only two are women (the visual artists Leonora Carrington and Gisèle Prassinos).[72]

The five women this thesis will discuss, then, sit in between these two iterations of comic production. The individualist nature of avant-garde feminism situates them, in theory, as being on one side of the so-called 'Great Divide', while their status as laughing women place them on the other. This thesis will argue, however, that while its subjects fit neatly into neither camp, it is precisely this in-between status which is conducive to their distinctive and ambivalent adoption of humour. While their use of humour often builds upon the notions of elevation, egoism and modernist separatism which accompany their avant-garde feminist politics, they are also gleefully aware of their status as 'laughing women', products of the popular sphere, and of all the subversive and threatening potential which comes with it.

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In order to execute its exploration into the ambivalent use of humour in the feminist avant-garde, this thesis looks to five different case studies of female authors, writing in magazines published between the 1890s and the 1920s: these dates roughly mapping onto what can be considered a Golden Age of print culture. The texts discussed throughout this thesis vary in type: incorporating poetry, stories, cartoons, short play scripts, and editorial pieces, but are all united by the shared fact that they contain instances of parody and humour. The terms 'parody' and 'humour' are both variously disputed and potentially problematic. The term humour is both more subjective and less clearly defined than the term parody. First used in its modern sense by the Earl of Shaftesbury in 'An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour' (1711), The Oxford English Dictionary now defines humour as 'the capacity to elicit laughter or amusement'.[73] This thesis is alert to the fact that the term 'humour' takes on a specific set of meanings in the works of Freud and Breton, but I will not be using the term 'humour' in this way. Instead, this thesis will use the term 'humour' in the

[72] Breton, Preface, p.17.
[73] 'Humour' (9b), *Oxford English Dictionary Online* < https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/89416?rskey=6mJK5T&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 19/08/20].

broader sense, using it as an umbrella term, encompassing any work that is comic in nature, has the potential to be, or could be conceived of as funny, or likely to elicit laughter in the reader. The individual manifestations of humour discussed in each chapter will be more precisely defined, but this broad categorisation allows for an inclusive approach which is, I hope, more representative than a study of parody alone. Innovation and experimentation lie at the heart of literary modernism, and to exclude works on the basis that they do not fit a particular formula or meet a set of conventions would be to miss out some of this thesis's most compelling primary texts. The open-ended definition of humour, therefore, works best for the nature of this project.

While the term 'humour' is potentially overly-vague, the term parody has been subject to a multitude of conflicting definitions. Often conflated with related terms such as pastiche, travesty, or burlesque, parody nonetheless takes on its own specific set of meanings as variously defined throughout history. The definition of the ancient use of the term *parodia* given by Fred W. Householder, is of: 'a narrative poem of moderate length, in epic meter, using epic vocabulary, and treating a light, satirical or mock-heroic subject'.[74] In modern usage, the term takes on broader meaning, however, referring, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, to 'A literary composition modelled on and imitating another work, esp. a composition in which the characteristic style and themes of a particular author or genre are satirized by being applied to inappropriate or unlikely subjects, or are otherwise exaggerated for comic effect.'[75] The definitions given of parody and its related terms by the *OED* are imperfect however, in that they involve slippage between terms.[76] More expansive critical definitions of parody exist, although these often see parody defined more broadly still, not being limited to literary works or the necessity for 'comic effect.' Linda Hutcheon extends the definition of parody to include any number of forms, including film and architecture, and allows it 'a range of intent—from the ironic and playful to the scornful and ridiculing'.[77] This

[74] Fred W. Householder, Jr., ' Π ΑΡΩ ΙΔ ΙΑ', *Classical Philology,* 39.1 (1944), 1-9 (p.3).
[75] 'Parody', *Oxford English Dictionary Online* http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/138059?rskey=3hIkxq&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid [accessed 29/01/2018].
[76] The definitions for 'pastiche' and 'burlesque' both use the term 'parody', while the definition for 'travesty' uses the word 'burlesque' and vice versa, with both terms being described as types of caricature.
[77] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985), p.6.

thesis tends in general towards the more open-ended definition offered by Hutcheon, but is also indebted to Margaret Rose's qualification that parody denotes a 'Structural use of *comic* incongruity' (my emphasis).[78] I wish to maintain parody's affiliation to the comic within this thesis, thus distinguishing it from related terms such as intertextuality or allusion.

The five key authors whose work is discussed in this thesis are by no means the only examples of female humourists active in periodical communities during this period but have been chosen on the basis of their prolificacy, their affinity towards the feminist avant-garde, and for the complex, often contradictory nature of their humour. There are certainly limitations to the case studies I am using. All five of the women are white, upper-middle class, and writing within a transatlantic modernist network which is in no way representative of modernism as a whole.[79] What is more, their feminism is inevitably imperfect, at best forgetting to extend its reaches to the liberation of all women and at worst, actively refusing.[80] This thesis does not claim, therefore, to speak for the entirety of women's humour within this era, but rather seeks to provide an in-depth and rigorous study of this particular iteration of female humour and parody, of this particular group of women, at this particular moment in time. Furthermore, where it describes works as having a feminist or proto-feminist element, it does so with the proviso that this feminism is inevitably flawed. This thesis has no interest in trying to salvage the reputations of the women it examines, or hold their politics up for scrutiny against modern standards. Instead, it seeks to produce an accurate study of their politics: one which neither praises nor condemns.

Although this thesis takes Delap's notion of the feminist avant-garde as a starting-point, it also differs from her study in a number of important ways. It extends beyond the

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[78] Margaret Rose, *Parody Ancient, Modern and Postmodern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.31.

[79] Katherine Mansfield and Beatrice Hastings are in fact from New Zealand and South Africa respectively, however they were nonetheless based in London and published by a British magazine at the point in which this thesis addresses them.

[80] Delap acknowledges that many of the ideas discussed in avant-garde feminist circles were 'unashamedly elitist' (p.87). Dora Marsden states in her opening manifesto-piece to the first issue of *The Freewoman* that 'Most women, as far back as we have any record' are 'Bondwomen': 'women who are not separate spiritual entities who are not individuals. They are complements merely' (Marsden, 'Bondwomen', p.1), and this elitist rhetoric underpins a large proportion of avant-garde feminist discourse. For more on the discourse of bondwomen versus superwomen, see: Dora Marsden, 'Bondwomen', *The Freewoman* 1.1 (November 23rd, 1911), pp.1-2. For more on the concept of the 'Freewoman' see also: Anne Fernihough, *Freewomen and Supermen: Edwardian Radicals and Literary Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

timeframe set by her (1910-1917), and focuses on a mixture of different women, some identified as being a part of the movement, and others not. But this loose approach seems to fit with her own admission that avant-garde feminism is less a cohesive movement and more a way of grouping individuals, each with their own set of overlapping and often conflicting views.[81] In terms of their affinity to the concept of the feminist avant-garde, the figures who make up the body of this thesis conform to Delap's definition of this movement to varying degrees. While Beatrice Hastings and Margaret Anderson are named explicitly by Delap as being key figures of the movement, the other three women I will address are not. All five of the women discussed throughout this thesis can undoubtedly be observed as holding radical feminist beliefs which diverge from the state-oriented and concrete goals outlined by the suffrage movement, however. These include a strong belief in the tenets of individualism; a hostility towards maternity, the state, and the family unit; and a belief in the psychological emancipation of women and a commitment to the exploration of the female psyche, often enacted within their adoption of modernist literature. I assert that their commitment to these tenets of avant-garde feminism, along with their presence within the periodical communities described by Delap, make 'avant-garde feminist' a fitting and useful term with which to describe them.

This thesis has a roughly chronological structure, starting with 1890s female parodist, Ada Leverson. If we are to take 1890s periodicals such as *The Yellow Book* as precursors to modernist little magazines, then it also follows that Leverson—with her individualist politics and defining feature of humour—should be the logical precursor to the 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour'.[82] Leverson is widely regarded as the most prolific and successful female parodist of the *fin de siècle*, having produced parodies of Oscar Wilde, Max Beerbohm, Aubrey Beardsley and George Moore, among others. Chapter One will consider the precarious position occupied by Leverson—being both part of, and yet also separate from both the

[81] See: Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde,* p.6.

[82] Ada Leverson is perhaps the furthest removed from the movement, owing to the fact that her work pre-dates the time period stated by Delap. I would argue, however, that she can be seen as a precursor to what would later become the avant-garde feminist movement: a figure in whom many of the trends established and discussed throughout this thesis can be seen to originate. Leverson was a fierce proponent of Individualism, who felt no affinity towards the existing women's movement of her era, and her use of humour also has much in common with the other figures discussed throughout this thesis.

aestheticist and mainstream spheres. It looks at a selection of Leverson's work from *Punch* magazine, focusing in particular on how Leverson used her *Punch* contributions to parody and make fun of her aestheticist peers. It considers not only how Leverson was able to use her role of parodist to shape and cultivate the public image of figures such as Wilde and Beerbohm, but also how her own reputation was shaped via her parodies. This chapter will look to 'The Minx', (Leverson's parody of Wilde's 1894 poem 'The Sphinx'), arguing that this text succeeds in delivering a feminist riposte to the gender dynamics of the original poem, while also exposing the interrelated nature of the aestheticist movement and the popular press, and offering a metatextual commentary on Leverson and Wilde's own relationship. This chapter introduces a number of themes that will become recurring features of this thesis: most centrally, the conflict between avant-garde and popular art, the treatment of female parodists within in print culture, and the idea of "laughing alone".

The second chapter moves from the 1890s to the 1910s, and introduces the magazine *The New Age*, and one of its editors and contributors, Beatrice Hastings. Like Leverson, Hastings was a prolific parodist, contributing a wealth of material to the magazine under a series of different pseudonyms. Owing to the prolificacy of Hastings' work for the *New Age,* this chapter will focus on a very narrow window of her career: the work she produced between August and December 1913, during which time her work repeatedly returns to issues surrounding female authorship and the role of women in the public sphere. This chapter will show how Hastings' experiments with the twin techniques of pseudonym and parody allowed her to push the boundaries of her own authorial role, resisting the fixed perspective of singular authorship and instead seeming to occupy multiple authorial identities at once. Hastings' approach towards female authorship is deeply contradictory, and yet parody and pseudonym allowed her to exist within an ambivalent space which catered to this contradiction. This chapter addresses a mixture of Hastings' essays, published correspondence and literary works, some of which are previously undiscussed in scholarship on Hastings, such as her parody of Keats' 'Belle Dame Sans Merci' (entitled 'La Belle Dame Sans Beaute'), and her poem 'Apologia: A Reply'. Ultimately, this chapter will argue that, for Hastings, the magazine medium served as a means for her to conquer the difficulties she

herself identifies as facing female authors, allowing her instead to experiment with multiple authorial personas at once via her use of parody and pseudonym.

The third chapter will continue this thesis' interest in *The New Age,* looking at Katherine Mansfield's comic contributions to the magazine. Katherine Mansfield is a figure who very clearly conforms to the remit of avant-garde feminism. Although she is not named explicitly by Delap, the views which she expressed during this phase in her career, particularly with regards to motherhood and female sexuality, closely echo some of Hastings' most explicitly avant-garde feminist writing.[83] This chapter looks at Mansfield's contributions to *The New Age's* 'Pastiche' section, an area of the magazine usually reserved for short poems, parodies, fragments and texts of indeterminate form, to which Mansfield contributed three times in 1912 and again in 1917. Mansfield's magazine contributions often incorporate elements that are dark, unsettling or disturbing, and in her 'Pastiche' contributions particularly, she uses humour in order to create works which are both formally and thematically discomforting. This chapter will contextualise this discomfort, showing how Mansfield's 'Pastiche' contributions form part of a wider dialogue between Mansfield and *The New Age's* editor A.R. Orage. It considers her parodies 'Puzzle: Find the Book' and 'Green Goggles' as a feminist riposte to the character assassination Mansfield received in Orage's 'Tales for Men Only', using the fractious relationship between Mansfield and Orage as a means to understand her discomforting approach towards humour. Ultimately, this chapter shows how the 'Pastiche' section served a paradoxical function for Mansfield: facilitating her experimental approach to humour, even as she used that humour to bolster her criticisms of the magazine itself.

[83] Evidence of Mansfield's sympathies towards avant-garde feminism are evident from both her private journals and her literary works. In a journal entry dated 1908 for instance, she comments that women 'are firmly held with the self-fashioned chains of slavery. Yes, now I see that they *are* self-fashioned, and must be self-removed', a view which forms the basis of Hastings's work *Woman's Worst Enemy: Woman,* published the following year [*Katherine Mansfield: Letters and Journals* ed. by C.K. Stead (London: Penguin, 1977), p.35]. Pamela Dunbar comments on Mansfield's unflinching attitude towards sexuality and her radical questioning of the family unit: both of which are named by Delap as being defining goals of *Avant-Garde* Feminism [Pamela Dunbar, *Radical Katherine Mansfield: Double Discourse in Katherine Mansfield's Short Stories* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997)]. Similarly, Lee Garver argues that Mansfield's pension sketches 'played a pivotal if still unrecognized part in the reformulation of mainstream Edwardian feminism, one that preceded the more celebrated contributions of Marsden by over a year.' [Lee Garver, 'The Political Katherine Mansfield' in *Modernism/Modernity* 8.2 (2001) pp. 225-243 (p.232)].

The fourth chapter of this thesis then moves from Britain to the United States and from literary to visual humour: focussing on Cornelia Barns, an artist who produced cartoons and cover art for *The Masses* (later, *The Liberator*) between 1914 and 1924. A largely forgotten figure, Barns was nevertheless a key part of *The Masses,* serving as its art editor as well as contributing over seventy of her own cartoons to the magazine over the course of her employment. This chapter seeks to redefine Barns from a minor artist whose significance is tied directly to *The Masses,* resituating her within the broader context of the 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour', and re-evaluating her work in relation to the notion of the feminist avant-garde. It looks at a selection of her cartoons, roughly grouped into three categories: her satire on the figure of the foolish young man, her dark approach to sex and war-time, and finally her take on the phenomenon of the 'Cover Girl'. It argues that the dark humour that is present in many of her cartoons shares much in common with the discomforting humour of Katherine Mansfield's *New Age* contributions, as well as being politically aligned with many of the other commentators and artists working in *The Masses* at that time. By reading Barns' work in the context of the feminist avant-garde, this chapter sheds new light on Barns as an artist and makes the case for a far more radical feminist politics within her work than she has thus far been attributed with.

The fifth and final chapter takes as its subject *The Little Review* editor Margaret Anderson, who is in many ways the literal embodiment of the 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour'*.* Anderson's sense of humour resonates with her aggressively modernist aesthetic, forming a part of her wider performance of irreverent and youthful modernity. This chapter considers Anderson's vibrant and performative editorship of the *Review* through the lens of camp. It begins by looking at the notion of Anderson as celebrity, building on work by critics such as Matthew Hannah and Mark Morrisson who have demonstrated Anderson's profound engagement with the tactics of popular culture. It argues, however, that Anderson's engagement with popular culture takes the form of a camp parody, one which simultaneously denounces and celebrates the tools upon which it relies. It looks to some of the magazine's most iconic issues, starting with the infamous blank issue and the cartoon 'Light Occupations of the Editor while there was nothing to Edit', before going on to discuss its 'Vers Libre Poetry Contest', and finally the magazine's unique 'Final Issue', showing how each of these issues

serves to parody a facet of popular culture and/or celebrity. Much like Ada Leverson in her engagement with *Punch*, Anderson's relationship towards popular media is highly ambivalent, and this chapter argues that her adoption of a camp editorial persona provides the means for her to reconcile that ambivalence: benefiting from the techniques of popular culture while at the same time still maintaining her status as avant-garde provocateur.

This thesis will assert the prevalence of humour amongst women writing within modern periodical culture. Seizing on notions of ambivalence and doubleness in the work of the authors featured, it will demonstrate how tactics such as parody, dark humour and camp provided them with a means to resist a singular perspective and to explore various possibilities and multiple contradictions in their work, a process which was integral both to their feminist avant-garde politics and their modernist literary aesthetics. Furthermore, it will demonstrate how the modernist little magazine provided a space for this experimentation by facilitating the diverse and often discomforting humour produced by these women. Studying the development of the 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour' over time, this thesis reveals the ways in which innovations in print culture and editorial strategy bred new forms of humour and resulted in greater freedoms for women writers, of the kind which culminated in Margaret Anderson's truly unique and empowered editorship of *The Little Review.* Modern periodical culture created a space in which women could be not only funny but also thoughtful, creative and politically motivated in their humour, and recognising this overlooked sub-section of women humourists serves to enrich and expand upon our present understanding of avant-garde feminism, modernism and modernity.

Chapter One

'The Muse with her Tongue in her Cheek': Ada Leverson's Parodies of Aestheticism in *Punch or, The London Charivari* (1893-1899)

Ada Leverson (1862 –1933) was among the most prolific parodists of the 1890s, and this chapter will show how the doubleness of parody allowed her to navigate the complex intersections of *fin de siècle* print culture. Leverson is perhaps most widely remembered for her friendship with and support of Oscar Wilde, having famously lent him her home during the period of social exile he experienced upon his release from prison.[1] And yet, this famous friendship threatens to overshadow Leverson's own prolific writing career. Leverson began to publish her work in the 1890s, during which time she was an active participant within periodical culture, contributing short stories, reviews, interviews and (most crucially for this chapter) parodies, to several different newspapers and magazines. She would also go on to produce a series of successful novels during the 1910s, but it is her 1890s periodical contributions which form the basis of this chapter.[2] During the 1890s, Leverson was deeply embedded in the social milieu of the aesthetes. She maintained close friendships not only with Oscar Wilde, but also with Alfred Douglass, Max Beerbohm, Aubrey Beardsley, Robert Ross, and George Moore (with whom she had an affair).[3] She also had two stories published in the infamous *Yellow Book:* 'Suggestion' (January 1895), and 'A Quest of Sorrow' (January 1896).[4] The vast majority of Leverson's work during the 1890s, however, appeared not in

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[1] Eleanor Fitzsimmons, *Wilde's Women: How Oscar Wilde was Shaped by the Women he Knew* (London: Duckworth Overlook, 2015); Charles Burkhart, 'Ada Leverson and Oscar Wilde'*, English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 13.3 (1970), pp. 193-200. Even two of the three biographies of Leverson take their titles from the nickname given to her by Wilde, 'The Sphinx': Violet Wyndham, *The Sphinx and her Circle: A Memoir of Ada Leverson by her Daughter* (Kent: Tonbridge Printers, 1963)*;* Julie Speedie, *Wonderful Sphinx: The Biography of Ada Leverson* (London: Virago, 1993).

[2] She wrote a total of nine novels in her lifetime. The first, *The Twelfth Hour*, was published in 1907.

[3] Speedie, *Wonderful Sphinx,* pp.38-39. In addition to these, Speedie also notes that Leverson was acquainted with Reginald Turner, John Lane, Frank Harris, Walter Sickert, John Singer Sargent, Charles Ricketts, and others (*Wonderful Sphinx,* p.42).

[4] Ada Leverson, 'Suggestion', *Yellow Book* vol. V (April 1895), pp.249-257; Ada Leverson, 'A Quest of Sorrow', *Yellow Book* vol. VIII (January 1896), pp.325-340.

aestheticist periodicals, but in mainstream weeklies including *Punch, The Sketch, The Saturday Review, St Stephen's Review* and *Black and White.*[5] This chapter will look to the parodies of the aesthetic movement which Leverson published in the popular humour magazine *Punch or, The London Charivari* between 1893-1899, as the place where these two worlds collided. These parodies are of particular interest because they see Leverson combine elements of the ostensibly opposed spheres of print culture, parodying the works of her aestheticist companions and publishing them in what can be considered a bastion of mainstream print culture, *Punch* magazine.

Leverson produced a great number of parodies of the aesthetes during the 1890s, including several parodies of her close friends Oscar Wilde and Max Beerbohm. Her parodies differed from the majority of those published in *Punch,* however, and this chapter will show how Leverson was able to use her skills as a parodist in order to shape both the public perception and lasting legacies of her aestheticist peers. It looks first at her parody 'From Queer and Yellow Book' (February 2nd 1895). This text is comprised of two separate parodies: '1894' and 'Tooraloora: A Fragment' (parodies of Max Beerbohm's '1880' and Victoria Cross's 'Theodora: A Fragment', respectively), and this chapter will show how each of these parodies differ from the standard treatment of aestheticism in *Punch* in a number of important ways. This chapter will also establish a self-reflexive element to Leverson's parodies, showing how Leverson conceived of her own role as parodist as well as that of her peers. This chapter will then go on to consider this idea as it applies to a further parody, 'The Minx' (July 21st 1894), which parodies Wilde's poem 'The Sphinx'. This parody is even more explicitly concerned with the relationship between high art and popular print culture, and also with Leverson's own role as parodist and journalist. Ultimately, this chapter will show how Leverson used the inherent ambivalence of parody to negotiate her simultaneous allegiances towards both mainstream and aestheticist print culture, as well as her deeply ambivalent relationship to each.

Leverson's parodies, especially those of Wilde, have invited some critical attention, although there remains a tendency to see them as a form of literary training.[6] We see this

[5] Speedie, *Wonderful Sphinx,* p.51.
[6] See: Margaret Debelius, 'Countering a Counterpoetics: Ada Leverson and Oscar Wilde', *Women and British Aestheticism,* ed. Talia Schaffer and Kathy Alexis Psomiades (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999),

implied for instance in Julie Speedie's claim that Leverson's Wilde parodies 'were instrumental in forming her mature prose style', as well as in William Harrison's designation of Leverson's parodies as a 'precursor' to the stories she published in *The Yellow Book*.[7] Leverson's parodies are commonly dismissed on the grounds that they represent little else beyond being loving tributes to the authors whose works they imitate, a view that is compounded by Oscar Wilde's famous claim that 'One's disciples can parody one—nobody else.'[8] Other critics, however, have resisted the notion that Leverson's parodies are simply affectionate tributes to her friend and mentor, arguing for a more critical and proto-feminist element at play within Leverson's work.[9] This chapter will explore some of the feminist resonances present within Leverson's parodies, however it also pays credit to the fact that, like almost all of the women discussed throughout this thesis, Leverson's gender politics are decidedly ambivalent.

On the one hand, her lifestyle was far more varied and unconventional than we might expect from a bourgeois woman born in 1862. In addition to her extra-marital affairs, Leverson flouted the rules of propriety, taking pleasure in dressing up in the latest fashions, dining out, visiting the theatre, and associating with Wilde and his circle of friends.[10] And yet Leverson was by no means a straightforwardly proto-feminist character. Her social circle was predominantly male, and she did not identify with any of the contemporary women's movements.[11] Although Leverson has often been described as a proto-feminist character, it is unlikely that she would have defined herself as such had the language been available to do

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pp.192-210; Corinna Sundarajan Rohse, 'The Sphinx Goes Wild(e): Ada Leverson, Oscar Wilde, and the Gender Equipollence of Parody', *Look Who's Laughing: Gender and Comedy*, ed. Gail Finney (Langhorne: Gordon and Breach, 1994), pp.119-138.

[7] Speedie, *Wonderful Sphinx,* p. 66; William Harrison, 'Ada Leverson's Wild(e.) Yellow Book Stories', *Victorian Newsletter,* 96 (1999), pp.21-28 (p.21).

[8] Oscar Wilde, Letter to Walter Hamilton, January 29th 1889, *The Letters of Oscar Wilde* ed. by Rupert Hart-Davis (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World inc., 1962), p.239.

[9] See: Jane Eldridge Miller, *Rebel Women: Feminism, Modernism and the Edwardian Novel* (London: Virago, 1994); Debelius, 'Countering a Counterpoetics'; Sally Ledger, 'Wilde Women and The Yellow Book: The Sexual Politics of Aestheticism and Decadence', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920,* 50.1 (2007), pp.5-26; Amanda Tinder Smith, '"A Keen Sense of the Ridiculous": Humor in *Fin de Siècle* Feminist Fiction' (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Connecticut, 2012).

[10] Julie Speedie points out that, 'in dining out – dining anywhere in exclusively male company—and wearing even the slightest hint of make-up, Ada was behaving in a manner that was definitely "fast"', (Speedie, *Wonderful Sphinx,* p.45).

[11] See: Wyndham, The *Sphinx and her Circle,* p.35. Julia Speedie also notes that Leverson was known to make fun of the 'New Woman' alongside Max Beerbohm (Speedie, *Wonderful Sphinx,* p.85). Her conflicted attitude towards other women is also in keeping with the subject of the next chapter, Beatrice Hastings.

so. She did not subscribe to the views of any fixed political movement or ideology. Instead, she preferred to juggle her own set of ambivalent and often contradictory beliefs, upholding an individualism that is consistent with her avant-garde feminist successors.

Margaret Debelius perhaps articulates Leverson's ambivalence best, when she argues that 'parodically rewriting Wilde allowed Leverson both to stand beside her friend and to stand counter to him. For all that her parodies grew out of a sincere affection for Wilde, they also display a revisionary impulse.'[12] This view is also echoed in Dennis Denisoff's assertion that, while being a part of the aestheticist community, Leverson was also 'one of its sharpest critics.'[13] This chapter will build upon this notion of Leverson operating 'beside' and yet also 'counter' to the aesthetic movement, whilst adding to Debelius's study a further analysis of the ways in which Leverson's parodies engage with 1890s print culture, arguing that she positions herself as 'beside' and yet 'counter' to mainstream culture also. Leverson's parodies reveal a deep investment in the complex relationships between popular and high-art cultures, and this chapter will investigate the ways in which her role as parodist situated her on the margins of both spheres, not truly adhering to either.

'The Great Divide': *Punch, The Yellow Book,* and 1890s Print Culture

Before discussing Leverson's parodies themselves, it is first necessary to briefly contextualise the fraught world of *fin de siècle* print culture in which she was writing. The 1890s saw a cultural clash between mainstream and high-art print culture which laid the blueprints for many of the trends which we will see develop throughout this thesis. On the one hand, this decade saw the rise of New Journalism: the term applied to the emerging field of journalism established during the 1880s and 1890s, characterised by 'bold headlines, gossip columns, interviews, sports reporting, pictures, and "news stories" whose appeal derived from a subjective interest in the evolving human drama.'[14] New Journalism was

[12] Debelius, 'Countering a Counterpoetics', p.196.
[13] Dennis Denisoff, *Aestheticism and Sexual Parody 1840-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.104.
[14] Joel H. Wiener, ed. *Papers for the Millions: The New Journalism in Britain, 1850s to 1914* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), p.xii. See also: Laurel Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges: Journalism, Gender and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), pp.83-84; pp.92-102.

marketed towards a mass readership and, as such, invited heated debates surrounding the value (and devaluation) of cultural production, with Matthew Arnold famously terming the new style of journalism 'feather-brained' in 1887.[15] Alongside the rise of New Journalism, the 1880s and 1890s also saw the formation of the aestheticist movement in art and literature, and with it a reaction against the idea of cheap, disposable print culture. The aesthetes, inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement and the concept of the 'book beautiful', adopted the notion of the magazine as art object. This credo informed many *fin de siècle* 'little magazines', including *The Chameleon* and *The Savoy,* but is best epitomised by the most iconic periodical of the 1890s, *The Yellow Book,* which ran from 1894-1897.[16] *The Yellow Book* sought to distance itself from the notion of print media as disposable and short-lived, self-consciously marketing itself as a valuable commodity. With its hard covers, beautiful engravings, and high production value, Laurel Brake describes *The Yellow Book* as a precursor to the modern "coffee-table book".[17] Despite the fact that the aesthetes attempted to portray themselves as distinct from popular print media, the extent to which they truly rejected the conventions of the mainstream journalism is debatable. There is a considerable body of scholarship which shows the extent to which aestheticism was in fact deeply engaged with and reliant upon mainstream culture, while still maintaining the pretence of being separate from it. [18]

With a weekly readership in excess of 100,000, *Punch* magazine was a staple of mainstream British print culture.[19] In the 1880s and 1890s, *Punch* was renowned for its parodies of the aesthetes, as well as its parodies of the New Woman, and Leverson, as a

[15] See: Matthew Arnold's denigration of 'New Journalism' in 'Up To Easter' in *Ninteenth Century CXXIII* (May 1887) pp. 629-643 (p.639).
[16] Andrew Thacker and Peter Brooker, ed. *Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines Vol.1: Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.71. See also: William Morris, *The Ideal Book: Essays and Lectures on the Arts of the Book* (California: California University Press, 1982).
[17] Laurel Brake, 'Endgames: The Politics of *The Yellow Book* or Decadence, Gender and the New Journalism', *The Endings of Epochs*, ed. Laurel Brake (Cambridge: DS Brewer, 1995), pp.38-64 (p.51).
[18] See: Regina Gagnier, *Idylls of the Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1987); Brake, 'Endgames: The Politics of *The Yellow Book*'; Koenraad Claes, *The Late-Victorian Little Magazine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).
[19] Exact figures for *Punch's* circulation in the 1890s are difficult to come by. Richard D. Altick attributes it with an initial sale of 100,000, and places its circulation at around 165,000 in the year 1850, though he does not state its 1890s readership. [Richard D. Altick, *Punch: The Lively Youth of a British Institution, 1841-1851* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1997), p.36, p.38.]. M.H. Spielman's *A History of Punch* is more conservative, placing initial sales closer to 90,000 (Spielman, *History of Punch,* p.33).

female member of the aesthetic movement, was thus publishing in an environment that was doubly hostile to her.[20] In spite of this, Leverson's contributions to *Punch* often fit this same mould at least insofar as the targets of her satire are almost always either women or aesthetes.[21] And yet, Leverson's work does differ from the majority of work published in *Punch* in a number of important ways. Particularly after Wilde was tried for gross indecency, Leverson shied away from depictions of the aesthetes as sexually deviant or morally dubious in any way. Instead of emphasising their otherness, Leverson's *Punch* parodies tended to portray the aesthetes as comically ordinary, downplaying their status as Other. Kostas Boyiopoulos calls Leverson's Wilde parodies 'gentle' and 'benign', in comparison to the 'caustic lampooneries' usually featured in Punch.[22] I would argue, however, that although Leverson's parodies avoid many of the common tropes and stereotypes usually drawn upon in *Punch's* representation of the aesthetes, this does not mean that her parodies are any less sardonic or critical. As Denisoff and Debelius have indicated, in spite of Leverson's loyalties to her friends within the aesthetic movement, her work remains internally critical of the movement itself, particularly with regards to its gender politics.[23] What we do see in Leverson's *Punch* parodies, however, is Leverson seizing upon the dualistic nature of parody in order to create works which serve a mixed audience, made up of the aesthetes themselves, as well as their detractors.

[20] For more on how the New Woman was routinely vilified by *Punch, see:* Margaret D Stetz, *British Women's Comic Fiction, 1890-1990: Not Drowning, but Laughing* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2001); Patricia Marks, *Bicycles, Bangs, and Bloomers: The New Woman in the Popular Press* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990).

[21] While most of Leverson's contributions to *Punch* took the form of free-standing literary parodies of individual works, usually drawn from her aesthete peers, she also produced a series of fictionalised letters between 'Gladys' and 'Marjorie' which first appeared in *Punch*, May 26th 1894, entitled 'Letters to a Debutante' (later, 'Letters to a Fiancée'). Through the characters of Gladys and Marjorie, Leverson satirises both the superficiality and naiveté of the society ladies, and the reactionary politics and flagrant sexism of Gladys's fiancé Arthur, who is described in relation to 'his great dislike to modern ideas' ['Letters of a Fiancée', *Punch* (October 5th 1895), p.159].

[22] Kostas Boyiopoulos, 'Brilliancy and Mimicry: Epigrammatic Wit in Oscar Wilde, Max Beerbohm and Ada Leverson', *Aphoristic Modernity: 1880 to the Present,* ed. Kostas Boyiopoulos and Michael Shallcross (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp.79-93 (p.91).

[23] See: Debelius, 'Countering a Counterpoetics' and Dennisoff, *Aestheticism and Sexual Parody.*

Punch's attacks on the aesthete began in the 1880s, and are best exemplified by cartoonist George DuMaurier's characters Jellaby Postlethwaite and his friend Maudle. These characters are a composite of various aestheticist stereotypes and are not meant as substitutes for any one real-life person, although the similarities between Postlethwaite and Oscar Wilde are unmistakable. A typical example of these cartoons, 'An Aesthetic Midday Meal', appears in *Punch* (July 17th 1880). The caption reads: 'at the luncheon hour, Jellaby Postlethwaite enters a Pastrycook's and calls for a glass of Water, into which he puts a freshly-cut Lily, and loses himself in contemplation thereof.' (see: fig.1). When asked if he would like to order food, Postlethwaite responds: 'Thanks, no! I have all I require, and shall soon have done!'[24] The accompanying image shows Postlethwaite seated in an effeminate pose, legs crossed, gazing intently at a flower, while onlookers regard him with a mixture of shock and suspicion. He is dressed jauntily, in high-heeled shoes and a top hat and has long hair and no beard, unlike the other three men pictured. This long-haired appearance not only flies in the face of contemporary fashion, but also links the figure implicitly to Wilde, whose own long-hair formed part of his iconic public image. Wilde's long hair became the source of much ridicule in the popular press, and Nikhil Gupta demonstrates how long hair on a man evokes both gendered and racial indeterminacy within a *fin de siècle* context.[25] The source of the humour in this cartoon, then, derives from Postlethwaite's difference: namely, his failure to perform the expected social etiquette, and his apparent lack of fundamental human needs and

AN ÆSTHETIC MIDDAY MEAL.

At the Luncheon hour, Jellaby Postlethwaite enters a Pastrycook's and calls for a glass of Water, into which he puts a freshly-cut Lily, and loses himself in contemplation thereof.

Waiter. "SHALL I BRING YOU ANYTHING ELSE, SIR?"

Jellaby Postlethwaite. "THANKS, NO! I HAVE ALL I REQUIRE, AND SHALL SOON HAVE DONE!"

Figure 1. George Du Maurier, 'An Aesthetic Midday Meal', *Punch* (July 17th, 1880), p.17.

[24] George Du Maurier, 'An Aesthetic Midday Meal', *Punch* (July 17th, 1880), p.17.

[25] Nikhil Gupta, 'Oscar Wilde's Hair: Phobic Reactions and Novel Self-Fashioning at the Turn of the Century', *Modernism/Modernity* 25.1 (2018), pp.73-91.

behaviours. Postlethwaite does not need food, but merely art, for sustenance. He does not behave as his fellow restaurant patrons do, and is thus perceived by them as being strange and incomprehensible. The jokes at the aesthete's expense made in magazines like *Punch* are almost always derived from their status as Other. They often make implicit connections with Eastern cultures and—particularly following the 1895 trial of Oscar Wilde—with transgressive and deviant sexuality.[26] But while *Punch* usually played on the strangeness and deviancy of the aesthete, Leverson's *Punch* parodies frequently emphasised their normality, playing down many of the connotations of queerness and difference which surrounded the figure of the aesthete.

One example of a text in which Leverson deconstructs the mythology of the strange and Othered aesthete is the poem titled 'Be it Cosiness', published under the moniker 'Max Meerboom' in December 1895. Far from othering the aesthetes, this poem instead pokes fun at Max Beerbohm for abandoning his exotic and artistic life among the aesthetes in favour of suburban comforts:

> King George I chaffed, and lightly laughed
> At 1880s crazes,
> In dainty prose I wrote of hose,
> And sang a dandy's praises.
>
> Now London Gay I leave for aye,
> A villa I've been buying,
> A life-long lease—to live in peace
> The life for which I'm sighing.
>
> Not prince nor czar, nor shah-zada
> (Though gaudy be his turban),
> Nor Royal boy can know the joy
> Of cosiness suburban.[27]

While the poem mocks Beerbohm, it does not do so in the usual register of effeminacy and difference which the aesthetes ordinarily received from parodists in *Punch.* In fact, if

[26] See: Dominic Janes, *Oscar Wilde Prefigured: Queer Fashioning and Caricature 1750-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).
[27] 'Be it Cosiness' *Punch* (21st December 1895), p.297.

anything, the poem serves to emphasise Beerbohm's conservatism, and his affinity to the 'normal' and to mainstream life and culture. It is suggested in this poem that despite his affiliation with the aesthetic movement, Beerbohm's true desire is 'to live in peace' in the mundane and familiar setting of suburban London. The Eastern exoticism referenced by the 'shah-zada' and his 'gaudy' 'turban' are shown to be rejected by Mereboom in this poem in favour of 'cosiness suburban', and the idea of the aesthete as exotic Other is thus undermined. In fact, texts like this, with their depiction of the aesthetes as comically mundane, seem poised to make fun of *Punch's* overblown Othering of the aesthete, as much as they make fun of the aesthetes themselves.

The reason for Leverson's benign portrayal of the aesthetes is no doubt in part due to the fact of its combined audience. In addition to being consumed by *Punch's* usual readership, Leverson's parodies were also consumed by the aesthetes themselves. Wilde is especially vocal about being an avid reader of Leverson's *Punch* parodies, often writing to praise her work. In 1894 he wrote to Leverson: 'Your article in *Punch* I read with joy, and detected you, of course, before you sent it to me'.[28] This letter shows not only that Wilde was a regular reader of *Punch* himself, but that Leverson shared her parodies with their targets privately, as well. Leverson's parodies, in turn, demonstrate an awareness of this joint readership. They often make oblique references to private affairs and in-jokes shared between herself and her friends, using the public platform of the magazine to conduct a private discourse between herself and her fellow aesthetes. For example, 'Our Condensed Fairy Tales', also published under the pseudonym 'Max Meerboom', makes reference to a phrase allegedly used by Wilde to describe Max Beerbohm. According to Leverson's 'Reminiscences' published in *Letters to a Sphinx,* Wilde asked of Leverson, 'When you are alone with him [Beerbohm], Sphinx, does he take off his face and reveal his mask?'[29] This phrase then appears in Leverson's parody: 'Beast throws away his face and reveals his mask'.[30] Whether this joke was intended to resonate with Wilde or Beerbohm or both, it is

[28] Letter from Oscar Wilde to Ada Leverson (1894) republished in *Letters to the Sphinx from Oscar Wilde, with Reminiscences of the Author,* ed. Ada Leverson (Adelaide: Michael Walmer, 2015), p.53.
[29] Leverson, *Letters to the Sphinx*, p.42
[30] "Max Meerboom" [Ada Leverson], 'Our Condensed Fairy Tales: Beauty and the Beast Or the Yellow Dwarf', *Punch* (November 7th 1896), p.219.

clear that the parody is operating on a secondary level, one which is imperceptible to the casual reader. And yet their appearance in such a public forum implies that they were meant to be consumed and enjoyed by readers outside of this private circle, also.

Not only did many of Leverson's subjects read her parodies of their work, many of them also afforded themselves a certain degree of creative control over what she published, sometimes making suggestions for changes to the parodies prior to publication. The above poem 'Be it Cosiness', is one example of a piece that was first edited to incorporate the target's own corrections. Perhaps in an effort to avoid association with the effeminacy of the aesthetes in the eyes of the public, Beerbohm asked for certain aspects of the poem to be removed, which they then were. He wrote to Leverson: 'My dear Mrs Leverson, It has just struck me that the last stanza of your delightful verses would rather suggest to people at large that I use rouge– *could* you in some way alter it or *could* the poem end with the last stanza but one?'.[31] The poem was then published with the reference to rouge omitted. The fact that many of Leverson's parodies were published following prior involvement from their subjects is significant when considering the purpose and intention of these parodies. Wilde himself commented in a letter to Leverson that 'no other voice but yours is musical enough to echo my music. I rely on you to misrepresent me.'[32] This is suggestive of a dynamic in which Leverson takes on the role of (mis)representing the aesthetes in the public eye, in terms dictated by the subjects themselves.

At the same time, Leverson also had to contend with the demands of *Punch* editor FC Burnand if she wanted her work to be published at all. According to Julia Speedie, Burnand greatly admired Leverson. He asked for first refusal of everything she wrote, but also sought a level of creative control over her parodies, and soon 'began to suggest ideas for Ada to work on.'[33] Speedie suggests that it was on Burnand's request that Leverson created her 'Queer and Yellow Book' parody which will be discussed below, stating that he provided 'a

[31] Letter quoted in Julie Speedie, *Wonderful Sphinx,* p. 98. I have been unable to find an original draft of this poem, but it is possible that the reference had something to do with Beerbohm's essay 'In Defence of Cosmetics' published in the first volume of *The Yellow Book.*
[32] Letter from Wilde to Leverson (1894), *Letters to the Sphinx*, p.55.
[33] Speedie, *Wonderful Sphinx,* p.63.

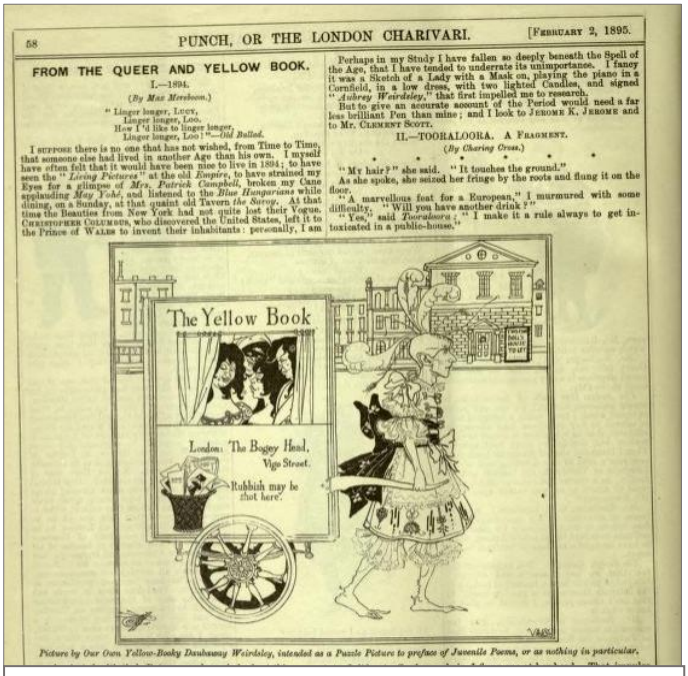
detailed synopsis for a parody of 'Theodora', specifically.[34] Burnand also encouraged Leverson to avoid writing parodies of little-known or obscure authors, writing to her in one instance: 'Do not do *too much parody* for the simple reason that *in the future* its value (unless the parodied work becomes a standard one and ranks very high) is lost'.[35] Given that she had to mediate between these two sets of editorial demands, it may appear as though Leverson herself in fact had very little authorial autonomy. It would be possible to read Leverson as the passive agent of the male literary marketplace: torn between producing profitable content for Burnand, while at the same time helping to shape her friends' representation in the popular media, according to their own specification. A reading of the parodies themselves, however, gives a markedly different impression, one in which Leverson is invested in constructing not only the legacies of those around her, but also her own. The figure of the parodist appears several times throughout Leverson's *Punch* contributions and at no point are they portrayed as the helpless conduit of other minds. Rather, Leverson constructs the female parodist as an autonomous and commanding figure, responsible for shaping and constructing the reputations of those around her.

'The Queer and Yellow Book'

One example of a text in which Leverson capitalises on her status as parodist is in her parody '1894', which appears as part of a parody of the recently published fourth volume of the *Yellow Book:* 'From The Queer and Yellow Book' (February 1895). This piece, which appeared in the months leading up to Wilde's arrest on the 6th April 1895, appears at a first glance to be a fairly standard *Punch* portrayal of aestheticism which relies on many of the same tropes we see elsewhere in the magazine. The title: 'From the Queer and Yellow Book' immediately sets up a precedent of strangeness, which is further emphasised by the changing of Aubrey Beardsley's name to 'Daubury Weirdsley'. The word 'queer' is particularly significant, given its association of non-normative sexuality. Although not in common use at this time, the first recorded use of 'Queer' in relation to homosexuality was first used by the Marquess of

[34] Speedie, *Wonderful Sphinx,* p.73.
[35] F.C. Burnand quoted in Speedie *Wonderful Sphinx,* p.66.

Queensberry in an 1894 letter in direct relation to the Wilde scandal.[36] This word choice, although perhaps only a subtle reference to the sexual deviance associated with the aesthetic movement, is nonetheless significant. The image that accompanies the parody also plays up to this idea of difference. Drawn in the style of Beardsley, it shows a giant copy of *The Yellow Book* being pulled along in a rickshaw by a man (whose thin-faced appearance and large nose may be meant to evoke Beardsley's own distinctive profile), wearing a plumed hat and bizarre outfit (see fig.2). He is adorned with enormous ribbons, feathers and bows. These are surely meant to evoke the aesthetes' love of artifice, but also carry inescapable connotations of effeminacy. The rickshaw, in turn, carries with it associations of Orientalism and Eastern culture, while simultaneously evoking the palanquins used by Royalty and Aristocrats: either image serving to emphasise the elevated and separate status of those being carried. As such, it functions as yet another marker of difference. The strange and somewhat ridiculous attire worn by the man pulling the carriage further this sense of difference, and the figures shown peering from the front of the magazine cover, drawn in Beardsley's iconic style, evoke a scene of debauchery or hedonism. They are positioned behind a curtain, implying a degree of separation from us as readers. We are placed on the outside, looking in at a scene which is partially concealed from view. The figures are grotesquely depicted, and wear eighteenth century wigs and beauty marks. One figure wears a Venetian-style mask, furthering the sense of mystery and unknowability of the figures, and the genders of the figures are for the most part ambiguous and indeterminate. The most visible figure, however,


58 PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI. [FEBRUARY 2, 1895.

FROM THE QUEER AND YELLOW BOOK.

I.—1894.

(*By Miss Marchson.*)

"Linger longer, Lucy,
Linger longer, Loo.
How I 'd like to linger longer,
Linger longer, Loo!"—*Old Ballad.*

I SUPPOSE there is no one that has not wished, from Time to Time, that someone else had lived in another Age than his own. I myself have often felt that it would have been nice to live in 1894; to have seen the "*Living Pictures*" at the old *Empire*, to have strained my Eyes for a glimpse of *Mrs. Patrick Campbell*, broken my Cane applauding *May Yohé*, and listened to the *Blue Hungarians* while dining, on a Sunday, at that quaint old Tavern *the Savoy*. At that time the Beauties from New York had not quite lost their Vogue. CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, who discovered the United States, left it to the Prince of WALES to invent their inhabitants: personally, I am

Perhaps in my Study I have fallen so deeply beneath the Spell of the Age, that I have tended to underrate its unimportance. I fancy it was a Sketch of a Lady with a Mask on, playing the piano in a Cornfield, in a low dress, with two lighted Candles, and signed "*Aubrey Weirdsley*," that first impelled me to research.

But to give an accurate account of the Period would need a far less brilliant Pen than mine; and I look to JEROME K. JEROME and to Mr. CLEMENT SCOTT.

II.—TOORALOORA. A FRAGMENT.

(*By Charing Cross.*)

* * * * * *

"MY hair?" she said. "It touches the ground."

As she spoke, she seized her fringe by the roots and flung it on the floor.

"A marvellous feat for a European," I murmured with some difficulty. "Will you have another drink?"

"Yes," said *Tooraloora*; "I make it a rule always to get intoxicated in a public-house."

The Yellow Book

London: The Bogey Head, Vigo Street.

Rubbish may be shot here.

Picture by Our Own Yellow-Booky Daubaway Weirdsley, intended as a Puzzle Picture to preface of Juvenile Poems, or as nothing in particular.

Figure 2. 'From the Queer and Yellow Book', *Punch* (February 2nd 1895), p.58

[36] 'Queer', *Oxford English Dictionary Online* < https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/156235?rskey=gt3Xv2&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [Accessed 20/05/20].

is a woman in a low-cut dress, who is smirking lasciviously towards the reader. Certainly, this image, then, plays into the notion of the abnormal and acutely sexualised 'queer' *Yellow Book.*

There is a marked disconnect here, however, between the image and text of this piece. Although the title, 'From the Queer and Yellow Book', and the image accompanying it, play off the associations of Otherness and difference usually associated with aestheticism, the actual content of the parody does no such thing. In this parody, Leverson focuses on two of the texts which appear in the fourth volume of *The Yellow Book,* published January 1895: '1880' by Max Beerbohm, and 'Theodora: A Fragment', by Victoria Cross (pseudonym of Annie Sophie Cory 1868-1952). I will first address the parody of 'Theodora', a text which signals a marked departure from *Punch's* usual characterisation of the aesthete, while also undermining the sense of exotic mystery present within the original texts. Leverson's parody of 'Theodora' is a prime example of where she can be seen to stand 'beside' and yet 'counter' to her aestheticist peers. I will then move on to discuss the parody of '1880', a text in which Leverson's reflections on her own status as parodist come to bear on her parody.

'Theodora: A Fragment' is described by Sally Ledger as 'The most challenging exploration of sexual desire and eroticism to be found in the pages of *The Yellow Book'*.[37] It is a fragment of a later novel, *The Six Chapters of a Man's Life,* which would not be published until 1903. Both the novel and the fragment describe the erotically-charged meeting between Cecil Ray, a traveller who is due to return to the East in a matter of days, and Theodora, the beautiful daughter of a prominent family who will lose possession of her fortune if she marries.[38] The fragment contrasts upper class British restraint and self-denial with an imagined Eastern exoticism in which desire can be acted upon and 'nature' is given free rein. Theodora herself represents a 'strange mingling of extremes'.[39] While outwardly she appears to be 'a typical product of our nineteenth-century civilisation', Cecil finds in her the excitement and sensuality of the East.[40] He describes Theodora as a 'hothouse gardenia', in

[37] Ledger, 'Wilde Women and *The Yellow Book'*, p.22.
[38] Victoria Cross, 'Theodora: A Fragment', *Yellow Book,* vol. IV (January 1895), pp.156-188.
[39] Cross, 'Theodora: A Fragment', p.182.
[40] Cross, 'Theodora: A Fragment', p.173

contrast to the 'humble, crooked-neck violet' of English womanhood.[41] She is bold, witty, and unconventional, with an unapologetic and rapacious sexuality to rival his own—a sexuality which is made all the more transgressive by nature of the story's quite overt homoerotic subtext.[42] With its lavish prose, eastern exoticism, overt and transgressive sexuality, and its critique of repressive structures of Victorian respectability and decorum, 'Theodora' is in many ways a quintessential example of aestheticist literature. Leverson's parody of the fragment, however, entitled 'Tooraloora: a Fragment', strips away all of the sensuality and subversion of the original, translating the story into a working class pub brawl.

In 'Theodora' it is the sexual tension between the two main characters which drives the narrative. In 'Tooraloora: A Fragment', however, the sexually-charged flirtation of the original is replaced with a comedic fight scene. Whereas the original text sees the two characters flirt through the subtle manipulation of power dynamics, employing carefully placed phrases and speaking through suggestion and double entendre, Leverson's parody sees them communicate via an outright fight, in which the sexual tensions of the original are worked out by means of slapstick violence:

> I did not offer her a chair, I flung one at her head. That impulse toward some physical demonstration, that craving for physical contact which attacks us so suddenly with its terrific impulse, and chokes and stifles us, ourselves beneath it, blinding us to all except itself, rushed upon *Tooraloora* then. And she landed me one in the eye.[43]

Because we join the scene *in media res*, it is not entirely clear why the two characters are brawling, except that they seem incapable of expressing their 'craving for physical contact' by

[41] Cross, 'Theodora: A Fragment', p.162.
[42] This homoerotic subtext and queer coding comes to have a greater bearing on the 1903 novel, in which Theodora and Cecil travel to Egypt where Theodora cross-dresses and poses as his companion Theodore. See: Shoshana Milgram Knapp, 'Revolutionary Androgyny in the Fiction of "Victoria Cross"', *Seeing Double: Revisioning Edwardian and Modernist Literature*, eds. Carola M. Kaplan and Anne B. Simpson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996); Ana Raquel Rojas, 'The Mustachioed Woman, or The Problem of Androgyny in Victoria Cross' *Six Chapters of a Man's Life', Cahiers Victoriens & Édouardiens,* 74 (2011), pp.107-121. The queer subtext is already clearly established in the fragment which appeared in *The Yellow Book,* however. In the *Yellow Book* fragment Theodora is frequently coded as masculine, being likened to 'a young fellow of nineteen' (p.167), and described as having a 'curious masculine shade upon the upper lip' (p.177).
[43] [Ada Leverson], 'Tooraloora: A Fragment', 'From The Queer and Yellow Book', *Punch* (February 2nd, 1895), p.58.

any other means. Instead of wrestling inwardly with their feelings, Leverson's parody sees the sexually frustrated couple of Victoria Cross's original text wrestle outwardly with one another. As such, the explicit nature of the original text is neutralised, making it more palatable for a late-Victorian readership. In 'Tooraloora', Leverson takes what is shocking in the original text and instead makes it ridiculous.

At the same time, however, Leverson is sure to leave hints which remind us of the original text's intentions. The fight is described in overtly sexualised language. The speaker makes reference to his face reddening and his 'pulses… beating as they do in fever'.[44] It remains a sexually-charged fight scene which retains the sadomasochistic undertones that Dierkes-Thrun argues are present in the original text.[45] The queer subtext of the original is also left in place. The brawling Tooraloora, who easily dominates our speaker in physical combat and 'make[s] it a rule always to get intoxicated in a public-house', retains the masculine characteristics which makes Theodora so beguiling to Cecil—in fact, these are exaggerated along with every other aspect of the exchange. This queer element is only noticeable, however, to a reader who is familiar with the original text and who is aware of this existent subtext. In transforming the original text into a bar fight, Leverson does not erase the transgressive sexual subtext of the original fragment, but she refuses to use this as the crux of the piece's comedy. 'Tooraloora', therefore works on multiple levels, at once normalising and de-sexualising 'Theodora', and removing the tensions that are present within the original, but at the same time leaving just enough of the original content in place to resonate with readers familiar with the original text.

'Tooraloora' also dispenses with the problematic notion that sexual freedom is the domain of an exoticised eastern culture. Shifting the setting to a British pub scene removes the connotations of orientalism and grounds the text in a gritty, mundane reality. Although we have no definite sense of place in this parody, the name Tooraloora implies a connection to Ireland, which keeps the context of Colonialism in place, but within the context of Western

[44] Leverson, 'Tooraloora: A Fragment', p.58.
[45] Petra Dierkes-Thrun, 'Victoria Cross' '*Six Chapters of a Man's Life*: Queering Middlebrow Feminism', *Middlebrow and Gender 1890-1945,* ed. Christoph Ehland and Cornelia Wächter (Brill: Leiden, 2016), pp.202-227 (p.217).

culture.[46] There is none of the upper-class British reserve and self-restraint which we find in the original text. Our characters, who are in this parody no longer at the mercy of their inhibitions, show us that the British are just as capable of the same unrestrained physicality which in 'Theodora' is reserved for Cecil's vision of exoticised Eastern culture. This take on British pub culture has possible classist undertones, but also serves to nullify the sense of Otherness attributed to Eastern cultures in the original text. Because the setting and characters in this parody are firmly British, there is no exotic east with which to contrast them, and the binary distinction between East and West which the original text relies upon no longer holds true.

'Tooraloora' does make reference to the original text's orientalism, however. It opens with a parody of an exchange in the original text in which Cecil and Theodora admire the long hair of a Sikh drawn by Cecil on one of his previous travels. Here, this exchange is evoked through Tooraloora's own comically long hair: 'As she spoke, she seized her fringe by the roots and flung it on the floor. "A marvellous feat for a European," I murmured'.[47] Whereas the original text sees Eastern culture as something strange and mysterious, this notion is made ridiculous in the parody. 'Tooraloora', then, takes a text which is steeped in the kinds of sexual transgressiveness and eastern exoticism with which the aesthetic movement is commonly associated, and subverts both of those tropes to give us a parody which is a marked departure from much of what appears in *Punch.* Just like 'Be it Cosiness', it replaces otherness with normalcy, although the transgressive elements are not entirely absent. We still have the queer-coding and sexual undertones of the original, only they have been relegated even further into subtext, legible only to readers who have picked up on these qualities within the original text. Otherness is not the butt of the joke in 'Tooraloora', but that does not mean that the text has been sanitised to the point where the otherness has been

[46] Tooraloora appears as a phrase in a number of Irish folk songs, and has since been adopted as the refrain in the Irish-American song 'Irish Lullaby' by JR Shannon in 1913. There is some dispute as to whether it has any actual meaning. It is possibly an Irish pronunciation of the anglicised term 'Tirra lirra' meaning 'A representation of the note of the skylark, or of a similar sound uttered as an exclamation of delight or gaiety': 'Tirra lirra', *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/202494?rskey=HbDtZQ&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 28/05/20].

[47] Leverson, 'Tooraloora: A Fragment', p.58.

removed. Instead, the text is a careful balancing act, which keeps the subversive elements of the text in place, without using them as ammunition for ridicule.

The other text which is parodied in 'From The Queer and Yellow Book' is Beerbohm's '1880', which Leverson parodied as '1894'. This is the text in which we can most clearly see Leverson's commentary on her own status as parodist. Beerbohm's '1880' is itself a piece of humour writing, which derives its comedy from referring to a period fifteen years prior in the tone of a historical or archaeological scholar, as though it were a bygone age, 'mobled in the mists of antiquity'.[48] Beerbohm refers to the year 1880 with a kind of tongue-in-cheek reverence, calling it the year of a 'great social renascence', though his description of the aesthetic movement echoes the characteristic conception of aesthetes as effeminate, foppish dandies:

> Into whatever ballroom you went, you would surely find, among the women in tiaras and the fops and the distinguished foreigners, half a score of comely ragamuffins in velveteen, murmuring sonnets, posturing, waving their hands. "Nincompoopiana" the craze was called at first, and later "Æstheticism."[49]

Leverson's parody follows closely along the same lines as Beerbohm's, only moving the focus to an even more contemporary time of 1894. The wording of the parody is in places identical to Beerbohm's own, only with the cultural references replaced with more contemporary ones. The actresses Lillie Langtry and Connie Gilchrist who are mentioned in Beerbohm's original, for example, are substituted for May Yohé and Mrs. Patrick Campbell (a portrait of whom, drawn by Aubrey Beardsley, appeared in the first issue of *The Yellow Book*).[50] Both pieces place Oscar Wilde at the centre of the movements they describe, and both poke gentle fun at the aesthetes' sartorial styles and public image, with Leverson referencing their 'neatly-curled fringes surmounting Button-holes of monstrous size'.[51] What makes '1894' interesting,

[48] Max Beerbohm, '1880', *The Yellow Book*, vol. IV (January 1895), pp.275-283 (p.276).
[49] Beerbohm, '1880', p.279.
[50] Leverson, '1894', p.58; Aubrey Beardsley 'Portrait of Mrs. Patrick Campbell', *Yellow Book,* vol. I (April 1894), p. 157.
[51] Leverson, '1894', p.58.

however, is what it has to say about Leverson's own role as parodist. Both Beerbohm's original text and Leverson's parody of it have a shared interest in the idea of how recent events will be historicised by later generations, and both of them reference the role of parody in cementing the legacies of the aesthetes. Beerbohm's original article actually mentions *Punch* directly, stating: 'I have been seriously handicapped by having no real material, save such newspapers of the time as *Punch, or the London Charivari, The Queen, The Lady's Newspaper*, and others.'[52] He later refers to 'The lampoons that at this period were written against' Oscar Wilde.[53]

This notion, of parodists (and by extension, Beerbohm himself) being the figures responsible for recording and constructing the legacies of the aesthetes is one which Leverson seizes upon and emphasises further in her response. She comments that 'we may learn from the Caricatures of the day what the *Decadents* were in outward semblance: from the Lampoons what was their mode of life.'[54] Although Beerbohm's '1880' is not intended as a genuine historical document, it is nonetheless significant that Beerbohm places himself very consciously in the role of historian, with his faux 'history' of the movement appearing, of course, in *The Yellow Book.* In Beerbohm's version of events, it is very clearly stated that it will be the aesthetes themselves who will be responsible for securing their own legacies. Where Leverson's parody seems to differ, however, is that in her version it is not the aesthetes who will determine how they are to be remembered in the eyes of history. Instead, it becomes the role of the parodist and the popular press. Whereas Beerbohm jokingly suggests that he leaves it to 'Professor Gardner and the Bishop of Oxford' to immortalise the aesthetes, Leverson instead suggests the popular novelists 'Jerome K Jerome and Mr. Clement Scott'.[55] In this parody Leverson, like Beerbohm, is interested in undercutting the notion of 'official' history, asserting instead the role of popular culture in shaping and influencing how the contemporary moment will be remembered. By directing our attention to the 'Caricatures' and 'Lampoons' of the day, she goes one step further than Beerbohm, suggesting that it is not only popular culture, but parodists and caricaturists specifically.

[52] Beerbohm, '1880', p.276.
[53] Beerbohm, '1880', p.278.
[54] Leverson, '1894', p.58.
[55] Beerbohm, '1880', p.283; Leverson, '1894', p.58.

Here, she references her own role: dethroning Beerbohm from his role as faux-historian and placing herself, the popular culture parodist, in his place. The reference to 'caricatures' and 'lampoons' serves as a metatextual reminder that this document is, itself, a historical artefact, and that Leverson as its author is the person responsible for (mis)representing the aesthetes, both in the present moment, and in the annals of history. While the tone of the piece is good-spirited on the whole, it nonetheless serves as a pointed revision of the narrative he has created: asserting the primacy of popular culture in shaping history, as well as an assertion of Leverson's own status as the ultimate figure responsible for immortalising the aesthetes in the public eye.

Parodying Print Cultures: 'The Minx' and 'The Sphinx'

'1894' is remarkable as a parody then not so much because of how it portrays the aesthetic movement, but for how it portrays Leverson herself as the chronicler of their legacies. This self-reflexive, meta-textual element also informs another of Leverson's parodies: 'The Minx' (1894). A parody of Wilde's poem 'The Sphinx' (1894), 'The Minx' is certainly invested in deconstructing certain elements of aestheticist ideology, but it also functions as a parallel for Leverson's own friendship with Wilde. In it, Leverson triumphantly situates herself as the person in control of cementing Wilde's legacy, and not only that, she does so as an agent of the popular press. 'The Minx' transforms Wilde's original poem into a magazine-style interview between an anonymous 'Poet' and a Sphinx who is not the immortal *femme fatale* of ancient Egypt, but rather an ageing socialite with a salacious past. This poem speaks volumes as to the debates surrounding periodicals and print media at the *fin de siècle.* Through the medium of interview, this poem exposes the aesthetes' dependency on the popular press to construct and disseminate their 'authorial imprimaturs' and cement their celebrity status. [56] Not only that, but it places Leverson herself (as parodist) at the forefront of the poem, acting as the figure responsible for shaping these legacies. In 'The Minx', Leverson not only deconstructs and ridicules the pretence of avant-garde separatism and

[56] The term 'authorial imprimaturs' is borrowed from Aaron Jaffe, *Modernism and the Culture of Celebrity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

non-commercialism upheld by the aesthetes, she re-writes the narrative to place herself at the centre.

Wilde's poem 'The Sphinx' was published in 1894 by the *Yellow Book* publishers Elkin Mathews and John Lane. It takes the form of a monologue, in which a young man addresses a female sphinx which appears to him in a corner of his 'student's cell', presumably a reference to his university rooms. The speaker demands that the Sphinx 'Fawn at my feet, fantastic Sphinx! and sing me all your memories!'[57] the Sphinx, however, remains silent, and the poem instead consists of the speaker's imagined version of the Sphinx's secrets, the most pressing of which pertain to her various sexual conquests. He wishes to know 'who wrestled for you in the dust?/Which was the vessel of your Lust?', and goes on to speculate at length on this matter.[58] The Sphinx's destructive and threatening sexuality, as well as the sense of mystery evoked by her silence, see her adhere almost perfectly to Pierrot's definition of the decadent *femme fatale*: 'this image of woman as an idol, at once mysterious, inaccessible, and cruel', who conformed to a contemporary fascination with the exotic by evoking 'an oriental and barbaric antiquity.'[59] Like the dualistic mother-monster sphinx described by Bram Djikstra, Wilde's Sphinx is an 'exquisite grotesque', riddled with internal contradiction.[60] Significantly, however, in Wilde's poem the Sphinx herself never actually speaks. What we see instead throughout the poem is the speaker's imaginings of the Sphinx's past, while the Sphinx herself remains 'Inviolate and immobile', neither confirming nor denying his projections.[61] In spite of the power she is invested by the speaker, the Sphinx herself is bereft of voice or agency, and therefore functions as a passive presence onto which the speaker projects his own thoughts and sexual fantasies.

In Leverson's parody, however, this monologue is transformed into a dialogue in which the Sphinx herself is able to speak. The interview format allows the Sphinx a voice,

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[57] Oscar Wilde, 'The Sphinx', *Oscar Wilde: Complete Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2009), pp.142-151 (p.144)
[58] Wilde, 'The Sphinx', p.144.
[59] Jean Pierrot, *The Decadent Imagination 1880-1990,* trans. Derek Coltman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p.38.
[60] Bram Dijskra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin De Siecle Culture* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1986).
[61] Wilde, 'The Sphinx', p.142.

and once she does speak, we realise that she is not such a great mystery at all. Much like 'Be it Cosiness' and 'The Queer and Yellow Book', some of the comedy of this piece is derived from a substitution of the extraordinary in favour of the everyday. Instead of the exotic and mystical East, we have a bleak colonial reality in which 'The hotels at Cairo are so dreadfully expensive'.[62] Hadrian and Antinous, symbols of transgressive sexual identity, are simply members of a 'smart set', their gilded barge 'merely a shabby sort of punt. It would have had no effect whatever at the Henley Regatta.'[63] By shifting the tone away from the mysterious and exotic, Leverson demystifies Wilde's original poem, including the references to taboo sexuality that are littered throughout. The Sphinx's liaisons (with everyone from Gods to animals to dead pharaohs) are treated with an air of cool nonchalance. Debelius notes that, by substituting the mystical for the commonplace, Leverson is able to diffuse the threatening potentials of the *femme fatale*, and demonstrate 'that femininity is much less strange and dangerous than decadent poets imagine'.[64]

What is most interesting about this parody, however, are the ways in which it engages with contemporary print culture. Rather than attempt to reproduce the lavish poetry of Wilde's original, Leverson's parody takes on the blunt, question-and-answer format we would expect from a newspaper interview, a form with which Leverson was intimately acquainted, given that she herself conducted interviews for *Black and White* and *The Sketch*.[65] The interview format was an import from the United States, not appearing in the British press until the 1880s and being associated with New Journalism and a burgeoning celebrity culture.[66] It was also a mode which was associated with female journalists, in particular. Rebecca Roach argues that 'While women had historically been excluded from newspaper journalism, interviewing was increasingly seen to offer them a path into the profession'.[67] This is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, because it calls into question

[62] [Ada Leverson], 'The Minx', *Punch* (July 21st 1894), p.33.
[63] Leverson, 'The Minx', p.33.
[64] Debelius, 'Countering a Counterpoetics', p.203.
[65] See: Ada Leverson, 'A Talk with a Russian Nihilist', *Black and White*, (September 9th 1893), pp.320-321; Leverson, 'A Talk with an Actor Manager', *Black and White*, (March 18th 1893), pp.320-321; Leverson, 'A Few Words with Mr. Max Beerbohm', *The Sketch,* (January 2nd, 1895), p.439.
[66] Rebecca Roach, 'The Lady Interviewer and her Methods: Chatter, Celebrity, and Reading Communities', *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain 1918-1939: The Interwar Period,* ed. Catherine Clay, Maria Di Cenzo, Barbara Green, Fiona Hackney (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), pp.170-184 (p.172).
[67] Roach, 'The Lady Interviewer', p.172.

the gender of the interviewing 'Poet' and thus alters the gendered dynamics of Wilde's original poem. In 'The Sphinx', Wilde's speaker is clearly demarcated as being male. What is more, the exchange between himself and the Sphinx takes place in his university rooms: a private, male-only collegiate setting, and, although the Sphinx herself is female, the speaker's interrogation of her takes the form of a masculine academic quest for knowledge. The gender of Leverson's 'Poet', however, is never specified. Given the prevalence of female interviewers at this time, the 'Poet' is just as likely to be female as male, and the exchange between 'Poet' and 'Sphinx' is not a private conversation but a public interview, designed for consumption by a diverse readership. The change to interview format is particularly significant given the relationship between the aesthetic movement and mainstream celebrity culture.

As already stated, the aesthetes were heavily reliant upon mainstream culture, in spite of their pretended disdain for the popular, and Wilde is perhaps the most blatant example of this. Regina Gagnier and Jonathan Goldman both elucidate on the ways in which Wilde—far from rejecting mainstream culture—was in fact a careful and conscious self-promoter, whose authorial self-fashioning is tantamount to celebrity.[68] From 1888 to 1890 he also edited *Woman's World,* a magazine aimed at a mainstream female readership which regularly featured interviews, gossip and fashion columns, as well as other facets of New Journalism.[69] This is not something Wilde wanted publicly known, however. When Wilde published 'The Sphinx' he had it published in a small print run, lavishly illustrated by Charles Ricketts. It is clear from Wilde's correspondence that his intentions for the text were to market it as a rarefied art object, not meant for popular consumption. He stipulated in a letter to John Lane that 'no such thing as a popular or cheap edition is to be brought out'.[70] Wilde also refused to have the poem reviewed in the mainstream press, stating in the same letter that 'A book of this kind—very rare and curious—must not be thrown into the gutter of

[68] See: Gagnier, *Idylls of the Marketplace*; Jonathan Goldman, *Modernism is the Literature of Celebrity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012). See also: David Friedman, *Wilde in America: Oscar Wilde and the Invention of Modern Celebrity* (London: Norton, 2014).
[69] For more on *Woman's World's* cultural standing see: Laurel Brake, 'Oscar Wilde and the *Woman's World*' in *Subjugated Knowledges: Journalism, Gender and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (pp.127-147).
[70] Oscar Wilde, Letter to John Lane, July 1892, *The Letters of Oscar Wilde,* pp.318-319 (p.319).

English journalism'.[71] 'Ordinary English newspapers', he argued, 'are not merely valueless, but would do harm, just as they are trying in every way to harm *Salome'.*[72] From this letter it would appear that Wilde's intentions were to establish his text as an exclusive art object to be kept separate from the mainstream. There is clearly a tension here, with Wilde's reliance upon mass culture being in competition with his desire to be seen as separate from and disdainful towards it.

In many ways, Leverson's parody does exactly what Wilde had feared—throwing his beloved 'Sphinx' into the 'gutter of English journalism', not only by transforming it into a newspaper interview, but publishing it in the mainstream weekly *Punch.* And yet of course, this was something Wilde wholeheartedly approved of. Upon hearing that Leverson intended to parody the poem in *Punch*, Wilde wrote her the following: 'Dear Sphinx, Your letter was wonderful and delightful. The "Minx" I long to read. It is a brilliant title.'[73] Having read it, he elaborated: '*Punch* is delightful and the drawing a masterpiece of clever caricature. I am afraid she really was a minx after all. You are the only Sphinx.'[74] Despite Wilde's insistence that he wished for 'The Sphinx' to remain separate from the mainstream media, he was clearly happy to receive the publicity and notoriety that comes from being featured in the popular press. Whether we consider this hypocrisy or canny self-marketing, it was undoubtedly one of the factors that allowed Wilde to become so successful as an author and public figure.

'The Minx' is a parody which is heavily invested in exploring the relationship between aestheticism and popular culture. Leverson, acutely aware of Wilde's status as covertly reliant upon popular culture, plays upon this in her parody in a number of ways. By catapulting the mystical and rarefied Sphinx directly into the world of popular journalism, Leverson strips away the pretence that aestheticism and journalism are two separate and incompatible modes. Wilde's speaker appears pure and noble with his frantic yearning for ancient knowledge, and yet it is remarkable how easily his questions seamlessly adapt to the form of

[71] Wilde, Letter to John Lane, July 1892, *The Letters of Oscar Wilde,* p.318.
[72] Wilde, Letter to John Lane, July 1892, *The Letters of Oscar Wilde,* p.319.
[73] Oscar Wilde, Letter to Ada Leverson, July 1894, *The Letters of Oscar Wilde,* p.357.
[74] Wilde, Letter to Ada Leverson, July 20th 1894, *The Letters of Oscar Wilde,* p.357.

a salacious celebrity interview ('What was that story about the Tyrian?' 'Is it true you went tunny-fishing with Antony?'), leading us to question whether his fascination with the Sphinx was ever academic in the first place.[75] Given Wilde's speaker's fixation on the Sphinx's past sexual liaisons, his transformation into a gossip-hungry interviewer is surprisingly fitting. With the speaker's hunger for knowledge equated to the voyeuristic curiosity of celebrity culture, we begin to see the apparent distinctions between popular journalism and the aesthetic movement become eroded.

'The Minx' also begins to pick apart some of the established ideals pertaining to the notion of immortality and the transcendent nature of art in contrast to a popular print culture which is cheap and disposable. Immortality is a prominent theme in Wilde's original poem. Throughout the poem, the Sphinx's immortality is compared with the speaker's comparative youth, her 'thousand weary centuries' held in contrast to his own 'twenty summers'.[76] She is ancient and powerful and has survived the fall of many empires. In a scene reminiscent of Shelley's 'Ozymandias', we see the Sphinx return to a statue of her former lover Ammon which now lies scattered across the desert, 'his giant granite hand still clenched in/impotent despair'.[77] The Sphinx's ageless immortality is here contrasted with the comparative frailty of human life and achievement. In Leverson's version of the poem however, everything is shown to be ephemeral, including the Sphinx herself. There is no suggestion that Leverson's 'Minx' is ageless or, indeed, immortal. In fact, the term 'Minx' has specific associations with the concept of youth. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term minx refers to 'A pert, sly, or boldly flirtatious young woman', specifically.[78] The Minx which we see here, however, has by her own admission, 'seen better days'.[79] All of her stories are in the past tense, and the 'Poet' suggests 'You must have led a most interesting life', the use of the past tense used once again here to suggest that this life must now be drawing to a close.

[75] Leverson, 'The Minx', p.33.
[76] Wilde, 'The Sphinx', p.143.
[77] Wilde, 'The Sphinx', p.148.
[78] 'Minx', *Oxford English Dictionary Online* < http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/119017?rskey=LcOEq9&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 20/02/2019].
[79] Leverson, 'The Minx', p.33.

In the dialogue between the two poems, we get a commentary on the relationship between art and immortality. 'The Sphinx' suggests that, through art, humans can attain to immortality, despite the fact that their individual lives are short and insignificant. Wilde draws on the Ancient Egyptian monoliths as art objects which have succeeded in outliving their creators by thousands of years:

> But these, thy lovers, are not dead. Still by the
>
> hundred-cubit gate
>
> Dog-faced Anubis sits in state with lotus-lilies
>
> for thy head[80]

The Sphinx herself is, in some ways an example of this: the image of the Egyptian Sphinx having been preserved over the centuries via sculpture and art, including Wilde's poem itself. Leverson's 'Minx', however, represents the opposite. She is a figure who belongs not to the world of Great Art, but to the world of print media, an ageing socialite, poised on the brink of irrelevancy. In some ways, then this text is a kind of mirror-image inversion of Wilde's: while his is designed as a piece of art which itself announces the lasting impacts of art, Leverson's is a piece of journalism, designed to emphasise journalistic ephemerality. However, the poem also speaks to the notion of the newspaper interviewer as a figure with the power to immortalise their subject. Leverson's interviewer is a 'Poet', who is given the lofty task of representing her subject through language, and in that sense the ageing 'Minx' will live on. This is an especially pertinent point when we think back to Leverson's '1880' parody, in which she situates herself as the figure responsible for immortalising the legacies of the aesthetes. By constructing the magazine journalist-come-parodist as the 'Poet' responsible for immortalising the 'Minx', Leverson appears to refute the idea that mainstream print culture is simply cheap, disposable, and ephemeral. Instead, she situates journalism as one of the ways in which lasting legacy can be achieved.

[80] Wilde, 'The Sphinx', p. 149.

If 'The Minx' sets out to make a generalised commentary on the nature of print culture, though, it also speaks directly to Wilde and Leverson's own relationship. Both Debelius and Gagnier offer a reading of the Sphinx in Wilde's original poem being a proxy for Wilde himself, with the student speaker of the poem being based on its dedicatee, Marcel Schwob.[81] Taking this reading further, they state also that Leverson's parody shows an awareness of this reading, and suggest that in Leverson's parody, her 'Minx' refers to Wilde as well.[82] They do not, however, comment on who the 'Poet' of Leverson's version represents. I wish to suggest that, if the Sphinx represents Wilde, then the 'Poet' interviewing him must represent Leverson herself. As a newspaper interviewer herself, and the person responsible for translating Wilde's works into widely consumed parodies, Leverson—the actual author of this 'poem in prose', must surely be the 'Poet' in question. The usual dynamic which sees Wilde as the poet and Leverson his 'Sphinx' is deliberately reversed here, with Leverson playing the poet and Wilde the Sphinx. If we read the poem as such, then it serves not only to expose Wilde's reliance on the popular press, but also to the role Leverson herself plays in this process.

The 'Poet' in 'The Minx' takes the form of a newspaper interviewer, who is responsible for cementing and publicising the public image of the Sphinx. In constructing this image, Leverson plays upon some of the negative connotations associated with both the female interviewer and New Journalism as a whole in this parody.[83] The Lady Interviewer as a type, Roach argues, as she emerged during the *fin de siècle,* was originally portrayed as 'an independent, glamorous, and determined figure', but she later came to be associated with salacious gossip and stories of scandal and sexual impropriety.[84] And even Rosemary VanArsdel, whose argument centres around the interview as a form of feminist role-modelling concedes that the interview form also rested upon '"human interest" element—showing Mrs. So-and-So "at home" and offering special, gossipy, behind-the-scenes glimpses of her private

[81] See: Debelius, 'Countering a Counterpoetics', p.203; Regina Gagnier, *Idylls of the Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1987), p.45.
[82] Gagnier, *Idylls of the Marketplace,* p.45.
[83] See: Matthew Arnold's denigration of 'New Journalism' in 'Up To Easter', *Ninteenth Century CXXIII* (May 1887), pp.629-643.
[84] Roach, 'The Lady Interviewer', p.172; p.179.

life to intrigue and to tantalize'.[85] Leverson certainly plays upon these associations in 'The Minx'. Her 'poet', described by the Sphinx as 'very inquisitive and extremely indiscreet', is especially fixated on the Sphinx's love interests. Like Wilde's speaker, Leverson's 'Poet' subjects the Sphinx to a barrage of questions surrounding her past lovers, which the Sphinx brushes aside:

> '[Poet:] What was that story about the Tyrian?
>
> *Sphinx.* Merely gossip. There was nothing in it, I assure you.
>
> *Poet.* And Apis?
>
> *Sphinx.* Oh, he sent me some flowers, and there were paragraphs about it—in hieroglyphs—in the society papers. That was all. But they were contradicted.
>
> *Poet.* You knew AMMON very well, I believe?'[86]

The interviewing style is aggressive and relentless, continually bringing the subject back to the Sphinx's past lovers. At times, in fact, it reads more like an interrogation than an interview. But there are also moments where we are able to infer Sphinx's complicity with this process. Although she refuses to confirm any of the interviewer's suggestions about her past trysts, her answers are coquettishly vague, and she rarely outright refutes any of them either. In another instance, she goes so far as to encourage the interviewer, stating 'I have always carefully avoided being interviewed. However, go on.'[87] There is a kind of subtle collusion between the two characters, and we get the impression that in spite of her objections, the Sphinx very much wants to be a part of this process. For example, in the following passage, stage direction is used to imply a subtext which we as readers are not privy to:

> Poet. Dear me! Is it true you played golf among the Pyramids?

[85] Rosemary VanArsdel, 'Women's Periodicals and the New Journalism', *Papers for the Millions: The New Journalism in Britain, 1850s to 1914,* ed. Joel H. Wiener (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), pp.243-256 (p.246).
[86] Leverson, 'The Minx', p.33.
[87] Leverson, 'The Minx', p.33.

> Sphinx (*emphatically*). Perfectly untrue. You see what absurd reports get about!
>
> Poet (*softly*). They do. What was that story about the Tyrian?[88]

The fact that the Sphinx becomes more 'emphatic' at the suggestion that she played golf among the pyramids, than at any of the suggestions about her love life, implies that the half-hearted denials she makes elsewhere are not entirely genuine. What is more, the Poet's soft 'they do' reads as an admission of guilt. The poet, as a gossip journalist, is the very reason that these 'absurd reports get about', and in this passage they seem to demonstrate an awareness and complicity of this process shared by both Poet and Sphinx.

The dynamic of Poet and Sphinx certainly mirrors that of Wilde and Leverson in many ways. The Sphinx, though pretending a sense of superior disinterest in the world of celebrity and mass media, is nonetheless shown to be reliant upon the newspaper interviewer. We know that she has consented to the interview, and she answers the interviewer's questions in a 'courteous way', allowing the interviewer to play up and speculate upon the salacious elements of her life. Just like Wilde relies upon Leverson to '(mis)represent' him by means of her parodies, the Sphinx aids the interviewer, giving them the license to portray her by means of the published text. Significantly, 'The Minx' is not a monologue like Wilde's original poem, but a dialogue, where both interviewer and interviewee have a hand in constructing the myth of the Sphinx. As such, Leverson constructs Wilde as actively involved in constructing his image in the popular imagination.

It is no coincidence that Leverson uses the word 'Poet' rather than 'Interviewer' to describe herself. Portraying herself as a poet rather than a journalist sees her elevate her position, shaping herself not as the passive agent of Wilde, but as the poet responsible for securing his immortality. Like many of her other *Punch* parodies, 'The Minx' has a combined target, satirising both the aesthetic movement, and the mainstream media in one fell swoop. On the one hand, Leverson plays on the reputation of magazine and newspaper interviews as salacious and shallow, but on the other hand she also strips away the notion that the

[88] Leverson, 'The Minx', p.33.

aesthetic movement is any less shallow, revealing shared values and commonalities between the two modes. This parody also serves to expose the deep-seated reliance which the aesthetic movement has upon the popular press. In the figure of the 'Minx', Leverson epitomises the snobbish aesthete who refuses to acknowledge their engagement with popular culture, even as they are transparently reliant upon it. Leverson exposes the dynamic through which the aesthetes received recognition and fame, placing herself as parodist at the centre of this process, as the 'Poet' responsible for (mis)representing the aesthetes in the popular press.

Ada Leverson is a unique figure in a number of ways. She wrote for the popular press, but cannot accurately be described as a journalist. She wrote for *The Yellow Book* and was friends with Wilde, yet cannot be considered a true member of the aesthetic movement. She was critical of both spheres of print culture and yet also betrays a distinct fondness for those very same things she criticised. Her friend Osbert Sitwell described Leverson 'quite alone, but shaking with quiet, irrepressible laughter', and in many ways this is the perfect assessment of her character: always laughing, and yet in some senses quite alone.[89] Leverson was an individual in the truest sense, always existing on the margins of overlapping spheres, and yet her role as parodist allowed her to thrive in this position. Rather than becoming paralysed by her conflicted loyalties, Leverson drew upon the doubleness of parody as a means to occupy multiple roles at once and refuse to commit to a single identity. Leverson's parodies are deceptively complex. Unlike some of the other parodies of aestheticism that appeared in *Punch,* they do not simply ridicule the aesthetes for their flamboyant dress sense or apparent Otherness. But nor are they loving and 'gentle' tributes to the writers they address. Instead, they work on multiple levels, catering to a combined audience comprised both of the aesthetes and of their detractors, and remarkably managing to please both at once.

Many of Leverson's parodies serve to deconstruct the innate similarities between the popular and aestheticist spheres of print media, shattering the illusory notion of separateness between the two and exposing the aesthetes' profound reliance on popular culture. Rather

[89] Osbert Sitwell, *Noble Essences or Courteous Revelations: An Autobiography* (London: Macmillan, 1950), p.136.

than constructing the aesthete as Other, Leverson ridicules their sameness, grounding their works firmly in the world of the mundane and the popular. In doing so, she is able to resist the usual types of stereotyping of the aesthete commonly found in *Punch* and create her own unique style of comedy. What is most remarkable about Leverson's parodies, however, is not the way she portrays her aesthetic peers but how she simultaneously constructs her own public image as a female parodist: inserting herself into her parodies as a powerful and autonomous authorial figure responsible for shaping the legacies of those around her. Through her parodies, Leverson constructed an image of herself as an empowered and autonomous poet responsible for gatekeeping the annals of history, choosing who would be remembered and how. In this role, the moniker Wilde chose for her is fitting: she is the 'Sphinx' who guards the gates of history. But, just like the Sphinx of Wilde's poem, her true degree of autonomy is debatable. Arguably, Leverson's primary role within *fin de siècle* print culture was to act as a conduit for the male voices that surrounded her. The fact that she is now predominantly remembered as the friend to more influential male authors speaks volumes.

Leverson can be seen as the precursor to the 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour' for a number of reasons: certainly her conflicted gender politics anticipate those of the women who will be discussed over the next four chapters of this thesis, as does her precarious position between multiple spheres of print culture. The main reason Leverson can be seen as a 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour', however, is because of the ambivalent nature of her parodies, and the ways in which she uses humour to stand 'beside' and yet 'counter' to her friends. It is impossible to reconcile a version of Leverson as either the powerful and autonomous shaper of legacies that she projects within her own parodies, or indeed as the powerless conduit of other people's voices. She is simultaneously both and neither of these things, her humour providing the means through which she is able to exist within this ambivalence. The following chapter will show how a similar type of ambivalence plays out in Beatrice Hastings' contributions to British weekly *The New Age.* Hastings also used parody as a means to shape her own authorial identity, and the following chapter will show how her experiments into parody and pseudonym allowed her to resist authorial singularity and speak from multiple voices, both male and female, simultaneously.

Chapter Two

'A Feminine Talent this, and Quite Proper': Parody, Pseudonym and Female Authorship in Beatrice Hastings' Contributions to *The New Age* (August-December 1913)

This chapter looks at Beatrice Hastings, contributor to and co-editor of *The New Age* from 1907 and 1920. Hastings has much in common with the subject of the previous chapter, Ada Leverson. For one thing, Hastings also risks being a forgotten figure, defined primarily by her relationships to more famous men. If not for her 1936 book *The Old New Age,* most of her work on the magazine would have gone unattributed and she would have been best known as the model for the artist Amedeo Modigliani, for whom she sat in Paris from 1914-16.[1] But more crucially for the purposes of this thesis, Hastings was also a talented literary ventriloquist, using her platform in *The New Age* to write under a multitude of different personae, a feat which she accomplished through the twin mediums of parody and pseudonym. Hastings used her contributions to *The New Age* in order to cultivate ambivalence, contradiction, and paradox. She wrote under a plethora of different personae through which she expressed a multitude of different opinions, many of which were at odds with Hastings' own views, and with one another.[2] Throughout her contributions to *The New Age* we see her tackle a number of feminist issues, from motherhood to the "White Slave Trade", to the pitfalls of suffrage feminism.[3] This chapter, though, focuses specifically on how parody and pseudonym facilitate Hastings' investigation into the issue of female authorship in a debate which spanned several months and preceded Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* by over a decade.

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[1] Stephen Gray, *Beatrice Hastings: A Literary Life* (London: Viking, 2004), p.376.

[2] For further discussion of how Hastings' pseudonyms appeared to interact with one another, see: Carey Snyder, 'Beatrice Hastings's Sparring Pseudonyms, Feminism, and the *New Age*', *Beatrice Hastings: On the Life and Work of a Lost Modern Master,* ed. Benjamin Johnson and Erika Jo Brown (Texas: Pleiades Press & Gulf Coast, 2016), pp.170-187.

[3] Examples include: Beatrice Tina, 'Woman as State Creditor', *New Age,* 3.9 (June 27th, 1908), p.169; Beatrice Hastings, 'The White Slave Traffic', *New Age,* 12.4 (November 28th, 1912), p.92; D. Triformis [Beatrice Hastings], 'The Whys of the WSPU', *New Age,* 6.15 (February 10th, 1910), pp.344-346.

Hastings was a staggeringly prolific contributor, often contributing multiple times to any given issue of *The New Age,* which was published weekly. For this reason, this chapter has the narrowest timespan of any of the chapters of this thesis, focusing on the months between August and December 1913. During these months Hastings' parodies, poetry, editorials, and letters repeatedly return to the idea of female authorial identity and the role of women in the public sphere. This chapter will show how parody and pseudonym provided the means through which Hastings was able to explore the concept of female authorship without the necessity of arriving at a teleological conclusion or end-point. It will begin by looking at some of the correspondence pieces Hastings submitted to *The New Age* around this time, presenting them as evidence of Hastings' conflicted and often contradictory standpoint on female authorship. It will then address the ways in which Hastings' ambivalent approach to women's role within poetry is handled in a poem published September 4th, 1913, entitled 'Apologia: A Reply', before finally turning its attention to how Hastings' attitudes toward female authorship inform all three of her contributions to a single issue of the magazine. The issue of *The New Age* published 16th October 1913 contains three different contributions by Hastings, all published under different pseudonyms: the fifth instalment of her ongoing series of Pound parodies, 'All except Anything', which appears on page 733, signed "T.K.L"; A Keats parody 'La Belle Dame Sans Beaute', published under the pseudonym "G.Whiz" which appears on page 737; and 'Women in Public' by "Edward Stafford", which appears in the letters section, on page 741. This chapter will argue that these apparently discrete items, when read together, form part of a wider narrative on female authorial identity and the reception of women in the public eye.

A relatively niche figure, Hastings' contributions to literary modernism have often been overlooked, although more recently she has begun to receive due scholarly attention, a fact owing in part to the rise of modern periodical studies.[4] In recent years, some of the works of parody she submitted to *The New Age* have formed the basis of several studies, with

[4] See: Ann Ardis, 'Debating Feminism, Modernism, Socialism: Beatrice Hastings's Voices in *The New Age*", *Gender in Modernism: New Geographies, Complex Intersections,* ed. Bonnie Kime Scott (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2007), pp. 160-185; *Beatrice Hastings: On the Life and Work of a Lost Modern Master* ed. Benjamin Johnson and Erika Jo Brown (Texas: Pleiades Press & Gulf Coast, 2016).

her parodies of Ezra Pound being of particular interest.[5] This chapter will look to a number of Hastings' magazine contributions, several of which have never previously been discussed in scholarship, showing how her approach to parody and pseudonym relates to her avant-garde feminist politics and, more specifically, her approach to female authorship. Carey Snyder makes a convincing argument for the feminist potentials of Hastings' use of parody, and this chapter is particularly indebted to her 2016 reading of 'the periodical as a playful, even emancipatory, realm where she [Hastings] could cast off her flesh-and-blood identity, donning a variety of disguises of different genders, rhetorical styles, and political persuasions', and the pseudonym as a means to reject 'fixed style or perspective'.[6] This chapter will build upon this notion of periodical publishing as an emancipatory space for Hastings, demonstrating how she was able, through the use of parody and pseudonym, to transcend the limitations of her own authorial identity, while at the same time commenting upon the difficulties faced by female authors and women in the public sphere more generally.

In many ways, Hastings' refusal to commit to a singular static opinion on any given topic made her the perfect figurehead for *The New Age.* Originally an organ of the Christian Socialist movement, *The New Age* was purchased in 1907 by Holbrook Jackson and A.R. Orage, who reinvented it as 'An Independent Socialist Review of Politics Literature, and Art'.[7] Published weekly, the magazine is widely acknowledged to have played an important role in both the political and artistic developments of the modernist era.[8] Broadly defined as endorsing a version of Fabian-influenced guild socialism, the magazine's exact political stance is hard to pin down—especially due to its policy of publishing conflicting content, and supporting the work of various artists whose political and aesthetic approaches were at odds with one another. Its manifesto claims that:

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[5] See: Ann Ardis, 'The Dialogics of Modernism(s) in the *New Age'* Modernism/Modernity 14.3 (2007), pp. 407-34; Sunny Stalter-Pace, '"The English Talent for Adopting": Imitation, Translation, and Parody in Beatrice Hastings's *New Age* Essays', *Beatrice Hastings: On the Life and Work of a Lost Modern Master*, pp.204-218.
[6] Snyder, 'Beatrice Hastings's Sparring Pseudonyms', p.170, p.171. See also: Carey Snyder, 'Katherine Mansfield and the *New Age* School of Satire', *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies,* 1.2 (2010), pp.125-158.
[7] A.R. Orage, 'The Future of the "New Age"', *New Age,* 1.1 (May 2nd, 1907), p.8.
[8] See: Wallace Martin, *The New Age under Orage: Chapters in English Cultural History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967); Ann Ardis, 'Democracy and Modernism: *The New Age* Under A.R. Orage' in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Volume I: Britain and Ireland 1880-1955,* ed. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) pp.205-225.

> The new Editors will aim at rallying round themselves the services of the "men of good intent" of every shade of opinion. Far from confining the pages of the Review to dogmatic statements of a too hastily formulated Socialism, they will maintain the right of intelligence to challenge and revise any existing formulation[9]

Perhaps owing to this policy, the magazine invited not only a mixed readership but also a diverse mix of opinions within its contributions and editorials, fostering an intellectual environment which encouraged debate between its contributors.[10] Hastings embodied this spirit of constant challenge and revision, using her pseudonyms to spark debate not only among contributors, but with herself: most famously in the case of a 1910 altercation between two of Hastings' personae, "D. Triformis" and "Beatrice Tina".[11] The range of different pseudonyms employed by Hastings during her time at *The New Age* is impressively vast. 'Beatrice Hastings' is itself an alias in fact: Hastings was born 'Emily Alice Beatrice Haigh' and died 'Mrs. Lachlan Thomson'.[12] During her time at the *New Age* she published under the names 'Beatrice Hastings', 'D. Triformis', 'Beatrice Tina', 'Alice Morning', 'Edward Stafford', 'Sydney Robert West', as well as 'G. Whiz', 'J. Wilson' 'Pagan', 'Cynius', 'Robert á Field', 'Annette Doorly', 'Hastings Lloyd' and 'Mrs. Malaprop'. She also wrote under the initialisms 'B.H.', 'A.M.A.', 'T.W.', 'V.M.', 'E.H.', 'B.L.H.', and 'T.K.L.'.[13] The range of viewpoints and opinions addressed by Hastings under the guise of her various pseudonyms is

[9] Orage, **'**The Future of the "New Age."', p.8.
[10] See: Ardis, 'Democracy and Modernism: *The New Age*', p.215.
[11] "D. Triformis" [Beatrice Hastings] 'Women and Freedom', *New Age,* 7.2 (May 12th 1910), pp.29-30; "Beatrice Tina Hastings", 'Women and Freedom', *New Age,* 7.3 (May 19th, 1910), p.69. In this exchange, Hastings has her two personae disagree, with D. Triformis referring to a line of prose written by Beatrice Tina as 'one of the most foolish fancies of the average thoughtless woman' [D. Triformis, 'Women and Freedom', p.30]. Snyder refers to this exchange in 'Beatrice Hastings' Sparring Pseudonyms', pp.178-180.
[12] Benjamin Johnson and Erika Jo Brown, ed. *Beatrice Hastings: On the Life and Work of a Lost Modern Master* ed. (Texas: Pleiades Press & Gulf Coast, 2016), p.15.
[13] Taken from a working list of Hastings' pseudonyms provided by Robert Scholes for the Modernist Journals Project: <http://modjourn.org/render.php?view=mjp_object&id=mjp.2005.01.021> [accessed 21/01/2019] however this list is by no means exhaustive. Stephen Gray also provides one in his biography of Hastings *Beatrice Hastings: A Literary Life* (p.676). Both of these lists are derived from the incomplete list of her own pseudonyms provided by Hastings in *The Old New Age: Orage and Others* (London: Blue Moon Press, 1936). In addition to these pseudonyms, Hastings claims to have submitted various pieces to the magazine anonymously, and to create a full list of her contributions to *The New Age* would be an almost unachievable task.

seemingly endless: ranging from the feminist polemics produced by 'Beatrice Tina', to the outright misogyny of 'Edward Stafford'.[14]

But her pseudonyms are only one way that Hastings experimented with multiple personas. As a parodist, Hastings was constantly evoking the voices of other authors, real or imagined, and these two techniques were often used in tandem. Many of Hastings' pseudonyms had distinct personalities attributed to them, functioning much like the 'Heteronyms' employed by Fernando Pessoa.[15] As such, she could use the twin modes of parody and pseudonym simultaneously to embody multiple voices at once—writing, for example, as the character 'T.K.L.', writing in the style of Ezra Pound. Hastings' experiment in multiple selves can be interpreted as a modernist exploration into notions of self as 'pluralist, heterogeneous and discontinuous'.[16] Certainly, some of her experiments into multiple perspectives and fragmentation anticipates later modernist works, most famously Eliot's *The Waste Land* (originally titled 'He do the Police in Different Voices').[17] Hastings' experiments in writing with multiple voices also pertain to her engagement with the literary canon, however. Hastings' experiments in polyvocality see her experiment with a range of different voices, real and imagined, from across literary history, although crucially for the purposes of this chapter, the vast majority of these voices are male.[18] Contrary to Virginia Woolf's suggestion that 'we think back through our mothers if we are women', Hastings' experiments in polyvocality see her think back primarily through a masculine literary tradition.[19] This chapter will examine Hastings' conflicted relationship to the gendered status of literary production, exploring why she so often chose to imitate male voices in her work, and how the issue of female authorship informs her authorial and editorial practice.

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[14] See: "Beatrice Tina" [Hastings], 'The Case of the Anti-Feminists', *New Age,* 3.18 (August 29th 1908), p.349; "Edward Stafford" [Beatrice Hastings], 'Women in Public', *New Age,* 13.24 (October 9th 1913), pp.709-710.
[15] Richard Zenith, 'Fernando Pessoa and the Theatre of His Self', *Performing Arts Journal,* 15.2 (1993), pp. 47-49 (p.48).
[16] Dennis Brown, *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature: A Study in Self-Fragmentation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), p.2.
[17] T.S. Eliot, *Waste Land: A Facsimile & Transcript of the Original Drafts, Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber, 1971), p.4.
[18] While many of her pseudonyms are female (eg. Beatrice Tina, Alice Morning), her parodies tend to foreground male voices, both classical and contemporary. Her poetry is also steeped in classical allusion and influence, something which will be discussed in more detail below.
[19] Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.99.

One of the key texts in which we get a sense of Hastings' conflicted opinions on female authorship, as well as her own status as parodist, comes from a book review published under her own name, which appeared on October 23rd, 1913. It is a review of *First Aid to the Servantless* by Mrs J.G. Frazer: a book published in 1912 and intended as a guide to instruct middle-class women in how to manage a house without servants.[20] The review begins, however, with a reflection on Hastings' own approach to authorship and parody. Skirting dangerously close to being a parody itself, this review posits that 'a woman-artist is an accident, often a most unhappy one', arguing that, while parody and humour are both the acceptable remits of women, the creation of art is solely a male endeavour.[21] Hastings writes that:

> I am a minor poet of the first class. I have never created anything; but my work is dutifully sound after the traditions of the creative artists. […] I am a formidable critic-because I consult the masters of criticism; my consistent taste is my only title to apply the canon of these masters. The same taste permits me to engage in satire safely even on subjects where I am not profoundly grounded. Also I can parody with anybody, a feminine talent, this, and quite proper.[22]

The notion of being able to 'engage in satire safely' and Hastings' description of parody as 'a feminine talent this, and quite proper' read as out of keeping with the usual rhetoric of the outspoken Hastings, who is unlikely to wish to be perceived as either 'safe' or 'proper', and suggest that this may itself be a work of satire, although Hastings does not give us quite enough evidence to be sure of this. Regardless, this notion of parody as a 'feminine talent' bears some further analysis. On the one hand, it could suggest that Hastings relied on parody as an acceptably feminine mode to inhabit, given that she was as a woman and thus incapable of being a true creative artist in her own right. Hastings claims that her criticism is successful because she emulates 'the masters of criticism', a term which explicitly genders

[20] Lilly Grove Frazer, *First Aid to the Servantless* (London: W. Heffer & Sons Limited, 1913).
[21] Beatrice Hastings, 'Two Reviews', *The New Age,* 13.26 (October 23rd, 1913), p.759.
[22] Hastings, 'Two Reviews', p.759.

the true critics as masculine.[23] Hastings, as a female critic, can only emulate them. The notion that 'I have never created anything; but my work is dutifully sound after the traditions of the creative artists' sets up a troubling dichotomy by which (male) artists create, and (female) parodists and critics imitate.

This review also sees Hastings set herself apart from other women writers, however. She claims that to be a 'formidable critic' is 'very freakish in a woman', positing herself as separate from other women writers by the nature of her own formidability.[24] In this review, Hastings locates the majority of women's writing derisively within a mass-market audience and commercial context. Playing into the stereotype of a feminised mass culture, she situates women's writing as belonging to the 'daily press and the novel market' as opposed to the realm of true literature.[25] Hastings' dismissive treatment of women's writing closely echoes contemporary attitudes surrounding the notion of professional writing as a 'trade' as opposed to an art-form.[26] She writes of the 'spectacle of women writers and complemental male writers filling the daily press and the novel market with all species of spiderish woman myths', and, in a letter published in the letters section of the same issue, she accuses Rebecca West of writing 'hot and hasty' 'journalese'.[27] She sets her own work apart from this category however, portraying herself as a critic and an (admittedly minor) 'poet of the first class'.[28]

This notion of exceptionality is one which finds echoes in avant-garde feminist discourse, especially that which is concerned with notions such as egoism, genius and the

[23] Hastings, 'Two Reviews', p.759.
[24] Hastings, 'Two Reviews', p.759.
[25] Hastings, 'Two Reviews', p.759.
[26] For more on how the nineteenth century literary marketplace created these hierarchies between commodity and artistic writing, see: Lee Erickson, *The Economy of Literary Form: English Literature and the Industrialization of Publishing, 1800-1850* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996); Linda H. Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths of Authorship and Facts of the Victorian Market* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Alexis Easley, *Literary Celebrity, Gender, and Victorian Authorship, 1850-1914* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011).
[27] Hastings, 'Two Reviews', p.759; Beatrice Hastings, 'The New Freewoman', *New Age,* 13.26 (October 23rd 1913), p.775. The following month, Hastings also applies the term 'journalese' to several female contributors to *New Statesman.* See: Beatrice Hastings, 'The Awakening of Women', *New Age,* 14.1 (November 6th, 1913), pp.12-14.
[28] Hastings, 'Two Reviews', p.759.

'superwoman'.[29] Lucy Delap states that 'some feminists had a genuine belief that progress would only arise from exceptionality', and therefore they concerned themselves not with the assertion of equality for all women, but instead with 'the question of genius, and desire to rise above the "vulgar" crowd'.[30] There are clear echoes of this rhetoric in Hastings' assertion of herself as separate from the majority of women writers. What is particularly significant here, however, is that it is Hastings' sense of humour which she isolates as a key feature that distinguishes her from other women writers. Although Hastings refers to parody as a 'feminine talent', and refers to her comic abilities as her 'humble humour', she also posits humour as a major factor that sets her apart from the majority of female writers. She makes reference to 'Mary Wollstonecraft, noble in all but a lack of humour, and George Eliot, of whom the same and worst must be said'.[31] Hastings' talents in imitating her masculine forefathers, along with her ability to 'engage in satire safely' and 'parody with anybody', it appears, are what set her apart from the 'scribbling semi-women' of which she speaks so derisively throughout the review.[32]

Hastings continues her line of inquiry over the next few months, returning again and again to the subject of the female author. In other instances Hastings is arguably less negative in the way she writes about female authors, however she continues to articulate the difficulty for women writers to achieve the same level of literary greatness and recognition as their male counterparts. In November 1913, for example, she suggests that female authors should stick to feminine forms. In this instance she is referring not to journalism but to autobiography. Hastings writes that 'Sappho's poetry was purely feminine, all about herself and her loves and observations. When women write excellently, the subject is always autobiographical.'[33] This notion is then echoed in the following issue. In a response to a male feminist J.A. Frome Wilkinson in December 1913, Hastings writes:

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[29] See: Anne Fernihough, *Freewomen and Supermen: Edwardian Radicals and Literary Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Lucy Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[30] Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde,* p.250, p.266.
[31] Hastings, 'Two Reviews', p.759.
[32] Hastings, 'Two Reviews', p.759.
[33] Beatrice Hastings, 'The Awakening of Women' [Letter], *New Age* 14.4 (November 27th, 1913), pp.125-6 (p.126).

> Mr. Frome Wilkinson cannot endow women with a masculine physique, and, without this, his attempt to plaster masculine qualities on women is no service to us. We have already gone all wrong in imitating men's education and works. We acquire the education, but we cannot use it in works-a miserable pretension. It seems to me quite possible that there may be a feminine culture as well as a masculine one, and our efforts should go to discover it.[34]

Here she advocates once again that women seek to discover their own 'feminine culture' rather than attempting to imitate their canonical forefathers, prefiguring the claim that would be made by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* that the 'man's sentence' is 'unsuited for a woman's use' and her suggestion that instead of replicating male forms, women writers ought to work towards forging their own means of expression.[35] The contradictory thing about this letter by Hastings, however, is that while Hastings suggests that women should set about discovering their own literary traditions, her own work sees her do the opposite. Hastings herself avoided autobiographical forms and the mainstay of her literary influence came from classicism and the hyper-masculine culture of Ancient Greece.[36] This letter, then, seems to be yet another instance in which she seeks to set herself apart from other women. The claim that women 'have already gone all wrong in imitating men's education and works' does not, apparently, apply to Hastings herself. Her role as parodist sees her pursuing imitation over creation.

Parody as a form deliberately resists the simplistic dichotomy of creation and imitation, however, residing in the overlapping area of these two things. Parody is, in

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[34] Beatrice Hastings, Reply to Untitled Letter, *New Age*, 14.5 (December 4th 1913), pp. 158-9 (p.159).
[35] Woolf, *A Room of One's Own,* p.100.
[36] These include 'Three Poems' (June 9th, 1910); 'An Idyll' (November 30th, 1911); 'The Consecrated' (December 7th, 1911); 'Runes' (December 14th, 1911), 'Echo' (January 18th, 1912), and 'Ariadne in Nysa' (May 9th, 1912). These poems are not direct parodies of Greek works, but rather involve the adoption of classical themes and forms, often with a modern twist which incorporates elements of Hastings's feminism. For more on how the cultures of Ancient Greece were appropriated by twentieth century feminists see: Ruth Hoberman, *Gendering Classicism: The Ancient World in Twentieth-Century Women's Historical Fiction* (New York: SUNY Press, 1997); Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde* p.217, p.222.

essence, a form of creative imitation: as Hutcheon puts it, 'repetition with critical distance'.[37] The critical dimension of parody is something Hastings discusses directly in a much later article, published in *The Straight Thinker* (February 1932). In this article Hastings, writing as "TKL", articulates the following: 'Parody is not imitation; it corresponds to caricature in art, and just as in art, if you merely imitate a man's face, you make his portrait, so, if you imitate a poem, you make its portrait and nothing more.'[38] Evidently, Hastings was acutely aware of the status of the parodist as someone who does not replicate or imitate a pre-existing work exactly, but rather distorts and alters its target text in the same way that caricature distorts the appearance of its subject. Hastings' contributions to *The New Age* are an act of profound creativity, even as they take their basis in imitation. What we see throughout Hastings' *New Age* contributions over the course of these months is an experiment into parody as a mode through which to overcome the difficulties of writing as a female author. Through parody and pseudonym Hastings abandons her identity as a female author and instead writes in the voices of various male authors, combining influences from Ancient Greece and Rome, along with the voices of her contemporary male authors. In parodying these various male voices from across history, however, Hastings own voice is also clearly perceptible. Her parodies are an act of creative imitation at the centre of which is Hastings herself. Through her use of parody, Hastings constructs herself as the exceptional female author whose mastery of the 'male sentence' is made evident throughout the pages of the magazine, along with her own distinct authorial voice.

The Battle of the Sexes in 'Apologia: A Reply'

We see Hastings address the status of her own authorial identity again in a poem titled 'Apologia: A Reply', which appeared in *The New Age's* 'Pastiche' section in September, 1913. In this poem Hastings depicts a struggle to reconcile her engagement with the masculine sphere of classical education and ancient Greek culture with her own feminine gender expression. The poem was written in response to a poem entitled 'To B.H.' by her

[37] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985), p.6.
[38] "TKL" [Beatrice Hastings], 'Pastiche', *The Straight Thinker,* 1.2 (February 6th, 1932), p.16.

New Age rival Arthur Hood, which was published immediately above it on the page. Hood's poem serves to ridicule Hastings, portraying her engagement with fashion and the domestic sphere as being incompatible with the masculine world of classical education and poetry. Hood's poem was written in response to a letter by Hastings published in the previous issue—a deliberate divergence from Hastings' usual fierce polemic style, in which she claims: 'it may be for sheer lack of stimulating abuse—I am at the end of my immediate literary interest in the subject of feminism.'[39] In this article she instead picks up on a series of trivial topics apparently addressed to her in letters from readers, including 'how to restore one's youthful energy? Whether I am religious? What is the personal touch in dress?'.[40] In his poem published in the following issue, Hood creates a mocking image of Hastings as a kind of mythic poet figure, playing off the classical influences which saturate much of Hastings' poetry. He writes: 'Ne'er in garments framed by fashion/Did my fancy ever guess her;/Fairies, nymphs and gargoyled monsters/Wore the robes in which to dress her!'[41] Hood then expresses false dismay at the fact that this image of Hastings has been shattered by her discussion of such mundane and earthly subjects as fashion: 'Cruel Priestess! harsh Cassandra!/ Soft imagery thus to crush./Can I vision Sibyl strutting/In a scarlet coat of plush?'.[42]

Hood was a long-standing critic of Hastings and would frequently write to the magazine in response to the essays, letters and poems she submitted to *The New Age.* For instance, upon publication of her poem 'Runes', he responded in a mocking letter published on the 28th December 1911, which describes her poetry as being 'as difficult to comprehend as Picasso's picture proved to be'.[43] They locked horns a number of times, and occasionally Hood seems to show Hastings a begrudging respect, although where he does so, his compliments are often tinged with misogyny. He writes in one instance: 'When Mrs. Beatrice Hastings is at her best, that is to say, when she is not replying to illogical letters from irate

[39] Hastings, Untitled Letter, *New Age*, 13.18, (August 28th, 1913), p.527.
[40] Hastings, Untitled Letter (August 28th), p.527.
[41] Arthur Hood, 'To "B. H." in "THE NEW AGE," August 28', *New Age,* 13.19 (September 4th, 1913), p.555.
[42] Hood, 'To "B.H."', p.555. The 'coat of scarlet plush' to which Hood refers is a red housecoat mentioned by Hastings in the aforementioned letter.
[43] Arthur Hood, 'Runes' [letter], *New Age,* 10.9 (December 28th, 1911), p.212.

females-she writes the truth.'[44] Hood's contributions to the *New Age* repeatedly show a dislike towards women, and in particular, to the female artist. In one letter he claims that:

> The influence of women upon literature has proved itself to be wholly bad. There can never have been any period in which so enormous a mass of vulgarity, folly, and utter rubbish was issued from the printing presses since women as a class, and not as gifted exceptions, took to writing.[45]

It is worth noting that this letter's description of women's writing as 'vulgarity, folly, and utter rubbish', and the notion that the only women who should be writing are the 'gifted exceptions', while clearly problematic, are actually not too far from the views on female authorship Hastings herself expressed in 'Two Reviews'. Hood's occasional respect for Hastings also seems to derive from these same notions of exceptionality, and although he would readily criticise Hastings, it is important to acknowledge that their views on female authorship were in fact uncomfortably similar.

Hood's poem 'To B.H.' is without a doubt malicious in its intent, however. Its primary purpose is to undermine Hastings' status and legitimacy as an author, and it carries an unmistakably misogynistic undertone. Its first line, for example, evokes the loaded term 'poetess', which carries a number of associations pertaining to the inferiority or marginal status of women's poetry in comparison with men's.[46] Jane Dowson discusses how female poets 'constructed themselves antithetically to the mythologised poetess of the nineteenth century and popular verse', and Hood, by casting Hastings as the mythologised 'Poetess' directly undermines her standing as an accomplished modern poet.[47] Furthermore, the poem is implicitly gendered in its fixation with fashion. Hastings discussed several subjects in the letter which Hood is referring to, but it is this significantly feminine pursuit which he seizes on

[44] Arthur Hood, Untitled Letter, *New Age,* 13.1 (May 1st, 1913), pp.19-20 (p.19).
[45] Arthur Hood, Untitled Letter, p.20. See also: Arthur Hood, 'Is Woman Awake?', *New Age,* 14.2 (November 13th 1913), p.63, in which Hood compares a woman attempting to write with a cow attempting to run a steeplechase.
[46] See: Jane Dowson, *Women, Modernism and British Poetry, 1910-1939: Resisting Femininity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).
[47] Dowson, *Women, Modernism and British Poetry,* p.viii.

as being comically incompatible to the cerebral world of poetry and the classics with which Hastings is usually associated. Ultimately the poem reads as a chastisement of Hastings for her attempts to engage in the masculine world of poetry and the arts, particularly within a classical tradition, while also maintaining her links to fashion and femininity.

Hastings' response, 'Apologia: A Reply', is written in her typically ambivalent style. It does not offer a straightforward rebuttal to Hood's attack, but instead uses his poem as a springboard for a more nuanced discussion of female authorship and the classical canon. Hastings poem, like Hood's, draws on classical tropes. In it, she uses a series of figures from classical mythology to dramatize the necessity of adopting a feminine gender identity in order to fit in and be accepted. She demonstrates how figures associated with beauty and sexuality (Helen and Phryne) traditionally fare better than the more cerebral figures (Sappho, Cassandra and Sybil), showing how their feminine wiles ultimately prove effective in achieving their goals. For example, in stanza four Hastings alludes to the story of Phryne, a courtesan who appears in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae.* In this text Phryne is tried on 'a capital charge' and is defended by the orator Hypereides. When it seemed as though she was going to lose the case, Hypereides stripped off her clothes and the jury, upon seeing her beauty, decided to acquit her.[48] Hastings draws on this story as an example in which Phryne's beauty and sexuality prove more powerful than the oratory skill and logic of Hypereides:

> Not more the sacred webs in Sybil's cave
> Pursuaded men than Phryne's gaudsome veil,
> Which slow-withdrawn coerced a senate grave
> And made a law of her two moons-vermeil.[49]

It is worth mentioning that, in this example, Phryne is placed at the mercy of the 'senate grave' and can only achieve her goal through coercion and manipulation of the men who in fact hold the real power. There is a sense throughout the poem that Hastings' adoption of fashion and femininity is born of necessity: something she would rather not do but must in

[48] *Athenaeus: The Deipnosophists* 59*,* (Book 13, pp. 589-599), trans. C.D.Yonge (1854), <http://www.attalus.org/old/athenaeus13c.html#590> [accessed 09/04/2020].
[49] "B.H." [Beatrice Hastings], 'Apologia: A Reply', *New Age,* 13.19 (September 4th, 1913)*,* p.555.

order to be successful within a patriarchal power structure. The line 'vain shall mortals of success partake/Unless they be in folly's dress disguised' is particularly telling in this respect, suggesting not choice but necessity.[50]

'Apologia: A Reply' is deeply ambivalent in its message throughout. The poem's first line, 'Useful is fitting—Folly, veil my brow!', is open to multiple contradictory readings.[51] This line is ambiguous even on a linguistic level and could be read in several different ways, depending on which word we take to be the verb and which the noun: It could mean that 'fitting' is 'useful', or that the term 'useful' is 'fitting', or even that useful is 'fitting-folly', with the dash functioning as a hyphen. The line immediately suggests that something is being hidden, or 'veiled', but the 'folly' to which Hastings refers is left ambiguous here and throughout the poem. If we take 'folly' in the context of this poem to mean, broadly, the trappings of femininity, mass culture, and clothing, then the idea of veiling a brow with folly is clear. It suggests that fashion and femininity are the means through which the speaker's mind and intellect—though always present— are concealed or disguised. If we read the poem as such, Hastings is suggesting that the 'folly' of fashion and adornment is a necessary evil which women must adopt in order to exist within a patriarchal society. It is left deliberately ambiguous what this 'folly' refers to, however, and a polarised reading is equally possible. If we take 'folly' to instead mean adherence to literary pretension and imitation of the classical canon then this poem could in fact be about Hastings' need to hide or disguise her own innate femininity by veiling her poetry in layers of classical allusion in order that it might gain the respect of male critics such as Hood. Dowson discusses how female poets of this era often replicated traditionally masculine forms of writing in order to legitimise their own work; demonstrating how female poets 'needed to show mastery of form to be associated with the literary traditions they sought to enter'.[52] This need often resulted in poetry that is artificially decorated in the trappings of classicism and formal traditionalism. It is just as likely, then, that the 'folly' to which Hastings is referring here is not femininity, but a blind adherence to a masculine literary tradition. In allowing for this ambiguity, it may be that Hastings is equating

[50] Hastings, 'Apologia: A Reply', p.555.
[51] Hastings, 'Apologia: A Reply', p.555.
[52] Dowson, *Women, Modernism and British Poetry,* p.25.

the two, suggesting that the adoption of classical allusion and traditional form in writing are no less of a superficial 'disguise' than the adoption of fashion and femininity.

This same ambiguity is maintained throughout the poem. The second couplet of the first stanza, for instance, reads: 'The which when Nature blindest binds o'er sense,/Most must we say we wore it of prepense' is once again open to two polarised readings.[53] The term 'sense' is here incredibly loaded, in that it could be taken to mean sense as in reason, rationality and sensibleness, *or* sense as in sensation, which suggests the opposite: bodily sensation, and instinctual feeling as opposed to reason or intellect. The implicit gendering of these two meanings is also inescapable, seemingly evoking femininity or masculinity respectively. Throughout the poem, Hastings revels in the ambiguity of language, balancing these two oppositional arguments simultaneously. In the fifth stanza, we see this ambiguity expressed once more. In this stanza, Hastings casts herself as Achilles, disguising himself as a woman in the court of Skyros:

> The dress Achilles wore among the women
> would scarce have saved that warrior-loon exempt
> From jealous rules forbidding any *him* in
> Had it been made of nought but "calm contempt"[54]

The last line contains a direct quotation from Hood's poem, where he credits Hastings with 'Singing, Babbling, Slinging Lightning,/Calm contempt in every feature'.[55] It is a curious story to reference in the poem, as it requires Hastings to identify herself with a male hero who must disguise himself as a woman in order to gain access to a female-only space. It is possible that, in identifying herself as such, Hastings suggests that underneath her disguise, she is the same as a man, but must adopt a kind of drag-performance of artificial femininity in order to conform to expectation. As a person who lives in a female body, literary adeptness and 'calm contempt' are not all that is required to survive in the world, and she must, like Achilles, disguise herself in the trappings of femininity in order to 'fit'. But again, the reverse

[53] Hastings, 'Apologia: A Reply', p.555.
[54] Hastings, 'Apologia: A Reply', p.555.
[55] Hood, 'To "B.H."', p.555.

is also possible. The 'jealous rules forbidding any *him* in' could equally speak to the literary world in which Hastings finds herself, with the genders reversed. It is entirely possible that the 'disguise' which Hastings is describing is one of masculinity which she must adopt in order to be accepted by the 'jealous rules' of an exclusionary literary marketplace. It is impossible to say for sure, however, as the poem refuses to reconcile itself to a singular position.

The final stanza goes some way of reconciling these conflicting viewpoints, suggesting that in fact Hastings must tailor her authorial identity to different audiences—requiring one identity for a male audience, and another when confronted by the 'female crew':

> Let sirens tire in seaweed, sylphs in dew,
> Such robes the comments of mere men may hush,-
> But when I venture 'mong the female crew,
> Grant me my conquering coat of scarlet plush![56]

This again speaks to an image of Hastings as uniquely able to traverse both masculine and feminine spheres with ease. It seems to suggest that, owing to Hastings' mastery of disguise, she is able to effectively and successfully adapt herself to either mode of being and writing, as the situation requires. This poem situates both femininity and masculinity as convenient costumes which Hastings is able to adopt at will in her writing. Instead of needing to 'veil' herself and her writing in order to gain acceptance, Hastings uses these various disguises at will, in order to suit her own ends.

That Hastings situates herself as the one in control in this poem is clear from the fact that the poem is itself an exercise in literary skill which reads as a conscious attempt to out-perform Hood. Hood's poem is simplistic in form, consisting of five stanzas, each with a straightforward AB rhyme scheme. It makes reference to classical figures, but only in passing, and a knowledge of the classics is not required in order for a reader to gain a full comprehension of the poem. Hastings' poem on the other hand is far more stylistically accomplished. It consists of six stanzas of iambic pentameter, the first rhyming AABB, and

[56] Hastings, 'Apologia: A Reply', p.555.

the subsequent five rhyming ABAB. Her language is more ambiguous than Hood's, and her meaning less clear. Whereas Hood merely names figures from classical mythology, Hastings makes more oblique references to the content of classical works, and demands at least some prior knowledge on the part of the reader in order to fully grasp the poem's meaning. In several instances word orders are reversed, or archaic terms are used ('prepense', 'vermeil' and 'gaudsome' all being in non-standard use), all of which make this poem less readily-understood than Hood's poem. There is an implicit irony then, within this poem. It makes a statement about the limitations of the cerebral in comparison to the material, and the necessity of conforming to feminine norms, while at the same time being almost aggressively committed to achieving a more complex and accomplished poetics than Hood's original poem. It is possible that 'Apologia' serves to reconcile its own internal contradictions, being simultaneously a defence of femininity *and* a demonstration of poetic skill, showing that the two are not mutually exclusive. It also clearly situates Hastings as the master of her own poetic abilities, being a more accomplished poet than Hood, *as well as* being able to exist and succeed in both the feminine and masculine spheres.

The theme of disguise which runs throughout this poem undoubtedly, on some level, speaks to Hastings' use of pseudonym. It is through the use of parody and pseudonym that Hastings is able to achieve the feat that she professes to be capable of in her poem: traversing both masculine and feminine forms and in so doing, becoming the master of disguise. Veiling her true identity is not the primary purpose of Hastings' pseudonyms. Were Hastings simply interested in securing her anonymity, she could have used a single, more innocuous pseudonym or left her work unsigned. There is an inherently performative and deliberate element to the way in which Hastings used her pseudonyms—some obvious and some not—throughout the magazine. They are less disguises and more costumes, which Hastings is able to adopt at will. Thus, Hastings' adoption of male voices is not simply imitative, but creative as well. This chapter will now go on to show how Hastings' use of parodic male pseudonyms across a specific issue of the magazine serve not to disguise her own identity, but rather to investigate the identities of the male voices she embodies. The October 16th 1913 issue of *The New Age* sees Hastings continue to explore the issue of female authorship and women's reception in the public sphere, through the performative use

of pseudonym to vocalise and parody men's misogynistic attitudes towards women in the public eye.

The Many Voices of Beatrice Hastings in *The New Age* October 16th, 1913

In her contributions to the October 16th 1913 issue of *The New Age,* Hastings does not comment on female authorship as overtly as she does elsewhere. Instead, this issue sees her adopt a series of male personae, which she uses to comment more broadly on male attitudes towards women in the public sphere. Within this single issue Hastings writes as a number of different speakers from across literary history, all of them male.[57] There is: 'T.K.L.', writing in the style of Ezra Pound; 'G.Whizz' writing as an undefined number of male speakers in the style of John Keats, and finally 'Edward Stafford' writing as himself. These voices each make discrete points and address slightly different issues, but what we see when we read the three texts together is a narrative beginning to form, pertaining to issues of women in the arts, and in the public sphere more generally. This issue sees Hastings parody the ways in which men write and speak about women, using her own distorted male voice as a means of holding male writers up to the microscope of female scrutiny.

The first of Hastings' contributions to appear in this issue, 'All except Anything', is a response to Ezra Pound's 'Approach to Paris' series. This series of articles pertaining to modern French literature ran in *The New Age* over the course of several weeks, with the final instalment also appearing in this same issue (October 16th 1913). For each instalment of 'Approach to Paris' Hastings produced a parody in retaliation under her pseudonym 'T.K.L.'. 'All except Anything' is the fifth of these: a direct response to Pound's 'Approach to Paris IV' which appeared in the previous issue and discussed the French poet Francis Jammes.[58] 'All except Anything' is typical of Hastings' Pound parodies in many regards. It satirises Pound's Francophile attitude towards literature and his fawning praise of Jammes, as well as satirising the modernist tendency for coining new movements and 'isms': 'Shall I therefore call

[57] 'T.K.L's gender is never explicitly specified by Hastings, however in a letter published in *The New Age* around this time Ezra Pound falsely assumes him to be male, and Hastings never corrects this mistake. ('"T. K. L." has been wholly successful; he has invoked […]', Ezra Pound, 'The Approach to Paris' [letter], *New Age* 13.22, (September 25th, 1913), p.647.

[58] Ezra Pound, 'Approach to Paris IV', *New Age,* 13.24 (October 9th, 1913), pp. 694-696.

Monsieur Jammes a Naturaliste? Why not? He is a Naturaliste. He mentions everything. He is a Mentionaliste. He is a part of our normal life. He is a Normaliste […]'.[59] The piece has a dual target in Pound and Jammes, simultaneously satirising Pound as the voice of cultural snobbery and faddishness, while also submitting Jammes' work to a cutting critique of its own. While her Pound-persona praises Jammes as a genius and visionary, each of his claims are laden with irony and we as readers are given a very different sense of his work:

> Some think of Jammes as the dullest dog that ever wrote anywhere but in England, as of an incessant and pretentious talker, talking in verse, talking of the obvious, talking, talking, talking, dropping his rhymes like a dude dropping his aitches, […] as of a rude, intrusive, eavesdropping, scandalous, relentless bore. Personally, I find that he gives me distinct pleasure.[60]

We are meant to infer from the long list of insults that "T.K.L." in fact agrees with the consensus that Jammes is in fact 'an incessant and pretentious talker' and a 'relentless bore'. By dropping in the punchline 'Personally, I find that he gives me distinct pleasure', we are then returned to Pound's point of view, but with the implied caveat that Pound's view of Jammes is the wrong one.

But it is not just for being boring and pretentious that Hastings attacked Jammes. She also uses this parody to highlight the misogyny which is apparent in Jammes' work—an accusation directed mainly at Jammes himself, but also implicitly at Pound as his promoter. Jammes' 'Novels in Verse' appear from this article to predominantly have female subjects, and Hastings opens the piece by highlighting this, commenting that 'every one [of Jammes' poems] sings of the commonplace, the ordinary you and the ordinary me, and particularly of the ordinary young female person'.[61] Hastings quotes some of the titles of his works as: "The Life of a Passionate Young Girl," and the paradoxically named "The Life of an Ancient Young

[59] "T.K.L." [Beatrice Hastings], 'All except Anything', *New Age,* 13.25 (October 16th, 1913), pp.733-734 (p.734). Hastings' parody of Pound's Francophile attitude and pseudo-academic tone throughout this series is something Ann Ardis discusses in 'The Dialogics of Modernism(s)', p.416.
[60] Hastings, 'All except Anything', p.734.
[61] Hastings, 'All except Anything', p.733.

Girl." Hastings' critique of Jammes' gender politics echoes some of the comments she made about her male contemporaries in 'A P.S.A.', the series of parodies she produced alongside Katherine Mansfield in 1911.[62] Hastings quotes from Jammes' poetry at length in order to highlight his exploitative attitudes towards his working class female subjects. She comments that Jammes 'sees, like all modern poets, an immature female person', and goes on to quote from a passage of his poem 'Existences':

> This child will be stupid
> As these other folk, like her father and mother,
> And yet she has an infinite grace.
> In her is the intelligence of beauty.
> How delicious! her breast that does not exist,
> Her back and her feet. But she will be stupid
> As a goose in two years from now. [63]

While other of Hastings' Pound parodies contain parodic translations of certain works, this passage is translated accurately from the original.[64] By including it, Hastings exposes Jammes' objectification of the female subject, along with a pointed suggestion that this is a common theme in the works of 'all modern poets'. In this particularly unpleasant passage, we see Jammes' speaker sexualise an apparently pre-pubescent child, commenting on 'her breast that does not exist', as well as her 'delicious' back and feet.[65] The speaker is interested only in the child's physicality, attributing her with the 'intelligence of beauty', while acknowledging that she will be 'stupid/As a goose' in two years' time.[66] Hastings then goes on to include a sample of the text in its original, to prove the veracity of her translation: '"*Elle sera bête comme une oie deux ans d'ici*." [she will be stupid as a goose two years from now]

[62] 'BH and KM' [Beatrice Hastings and Katherine Mansfield], 'A P.S.A.', *New Age,* 9.4 (May 25th, 1911), p.95. For more on the gender dynamics of these parodies, see: Snyder, 'Katherine Mansfield and the *New Age* School of Satire', 136-140.
[63] Hastings, 'All except Anything', p.734.
[64] Francis Jammes, 'Existences' in *Le Triomphe de la Vie 1900-1901 Third Edition* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1911), p.182.
[65] Hastings, 'All except Anything', p.734.
[66] Hastings, 'All except Anything', p.734.

You see I have not absurdly exalted the poet in translating him', Hastings comments.[67] By signalling this, it is as though Hastings wishes to demonstrate that the poetry is so bad it does not need to be parodied in order to make it both laughable and offensive. Hastings does not just accuse Pound and Jammes with literary faddishness and snobbery, then, but also of quite transparent misogyny. Pulling this 'stupid as a goose' quotation and replicating it in its original reveals the deeply unpleasant undertones to Jammes' work, and in turn, to Pound's unquestioning support of Jammes. We begin to get a sense from 'All except Anything' that the writing, consumption and criticism of poetry all falls within the domain of men, while the subjects of the poetry in question are often decorative and voiceless young women.

This is something which takes on an even greater significance when read alongside the rest of Hastings' contributions to this issue. The next piece by Hastings to appear in the issue is her parody of Keats's 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci', which appears only three pages later, on page 737. The two pieces are immediately linked by the opening line of 'La Belle Dame Sans Beaute': 'I tell my novelette,/As the fashion is,/In verse'. The 'novel in verse form' attributed to Jammes is mentioned repeatedly in 'All except Anything'. In fact, Hastings uses the phrase three times in the space of a single paragraph ('Jammes has written a novel in verse', 'To write a novel in verse', 'Jammes, nevertheless, writes his novel in verse.').[68] When we see the phrase 'novelette in verse' repeated at the start of this poem, then, along with a French title and a reference to the literary 'fashion', we are immediately primed to expect a further satire on literary pretension, continuing in the same vein as 'All except Anything'. If we have just read 'All except Anything' we may even find ourselves wondering if this poem is a parody of Jammes himself. But if one of the poem's goals is to parody the 'novel in verse' form lauded by Pound and disparaged by Hastings, this is by no means the poem's only target.

'La Belle Dame Sans Beaute', appeared under the pseudonym 'G.Whiz'—a pseudonym that Hastings used only once. The poem is, as its title suggests, a parody of Keats's 'Belle Dame Sans Merci', but unlike her parodies of contemporary authors, Keats is not the target

[67] Hastings, 'All except Anything', p.734.
[68] Hastings, 'All except Anything', p.734.

of this poem's satire. Instead, she borrows from his style in order to direct her satire at another target: London-based socialist and suffragist Dora Montefiore. While Montefiore is not named in this poem, we can identify her from various other signifiers. We have the name Larkin, which refers to the Irish trade unionist James Larkin. We also have references to the 'Memorial Hall', along with the date, all of which lead the reader to deduce that the poem is referring to a specific incident that took place in the week prior to its publication: Montefiore's suggestion of a 'kiddies' scheme' which would involve the transportation of children from Dublin to England as a solution to the heightened levels of poverty brought about by the 1913 Dublin Lockout.[69] This scheme was suggested by Montefiore at a meeting led by Larkin in London's Memorial Hall on the 10th October 1913, and was viewed by many as idealistic and impractical: not least by another of Hastings' pseudonyms, Edward Stafford.[70] Benjamin Johnson in his introduction to *Beatrice Hastings: On the Life and Work of a Lost Modern Master* acknowledges that 'timeliness is often the enemy of timelessness', and this poem is one of many examples of Hastings' works that, owing to its specificity, has been forgotten about or overlooked.[71] However, in addition to addressing a very literal and specific instance of political history, this poem also serves as a further portrayal of the difficulties faced by women in the public sphere. Here, however, it is not the female author Hastings is addressing, but rather the female politician.

While a sudden interest in Irish politics is out of step with Hastings' usual subject matter, her interest in the reception of women in the public sphere is a familiar one, especially within this immediate timeframe. In this poem, Hastings seizes upon the terrifying *femme fatale* of Keats's original poem as the perfect stand-in for her demonised version of the woman in public. At first glance, 'La Belle Dame Sans Beaute' reads as a condemnation of Montefiore, and of women in the public sphere in general. Montefiore is subjected to

[69] The Dublin Lockout is the name given to an industrial dispute which took place between August 26th 1913 and January 18th 1914. During this dispute, employers would "lock-out" and refuse work to unionised workers. One of the offshoots of this in the already poverty-stricken city of Dublin was an increase in cases of starvation and preventable disease, with babies and children among the groups worst affected.

[70] Stafford refers to Montefiore both in this issue (pp.741-2), and again the following week: Edward Stafford, 'Women in Public', *New Age* 13.26, (October 23rd, 1913) pp.774-775.

[71] Johnson, introduction to *Beatrice Hastings: On the Life and Work of a Lost Modern Master,* p.24.

personal attacks, described as a 'wretched hag' and a 'serpent of Old Labour'.[72] Her age is repeatedly mentioned (Montefiore was 62 at the time of this meeting) and so is her sexuality. In 1905, almost a decade prior to the publication of this poem, Montefiore had an affair with a married man, Labour Party Organiser George Belt, which resulted in him losing his position within the party.[73] This is something which Hastings plays on heavily in the poem, describing Montefiore as the 'Confidant of Rosebery, Hostess of Hearst,' and the 'sink of Many a reputation'.[74] Underlying the poem as a whole is the implication that Montefiore has succeeded in politics by seducing powerful men, and that her presence at the meeting is born out of a desire to do the same to James Larkin: hence the speaker's claim that "La Belle Dame sans Beaute/Is at her usual games, this time with you!".[75]

But while this appears to be the speaker's view of Montefiore, it is not necessarily the poet's. From the opening line of the poem, the speaker has been implicitly linked to Pound and Jammes, whom we have already heard described as 'the dullest dog that ever wrote anywhere but in England', and this, combined with the obvious pseudonym of 'G.Whiz' makes it easy to imagine that the views of the speaker may not be the author's own. [76] Crucially we never hear Montefiore's voice, or even hear her referred to by name. Much like Wilde's Sphinx discussed in the previous chapter, both Keats's Belle Dame sans Merci *and* Hastings' Belle Dame sans Beaute are blank figures onto whom the narrator's desires and fears are projected. And, whereas Leverson changes her source text in order to allow her 'Minx' to speak, Hastings has her *femme fatale* remain as silent as she is in the original poem. This silence may serve a secondary purpose for Hastings, however. Crucially, nothing that Montefiore does in the poem inspires our collusion with the speaker's views: she simply enters the room and '[takes] the vacant chair amidst faint applause'.[77] We have only the speaker's word for it that she is the 'bad fairy' of his imagination, and his vehement abuse of Montefiore perhaps says more about him, and his views on women, than it does about her.

[72] "G. Whiz" [Beatrice Hastings] 'La Belle Dame Sans Beaute', *The New Age,* 13.25 (October 16th 1913), p.737.
[73] Christine Collette, 'Socialism and Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the Early Labour Movement', *History Workshop,* 23 (1987), pp. 102-111 (p.103).
[74] Hastings, 'La Belle Dame Sans Beaute', p.737.
[75] Hastings, 'La Belle Dame Sans Beaute', p.737.
[76] Hastings, 'All except Anything', p.734.
[77] Hastings, 'La Belle Dame Sans Beaute', p.737.

Instead of a poem written to attack Montefiore, then, this poem could equally be seen as a depiction of the hostile environment faced by a female in the public sphere—using a polyvocal narrative voice to reflect the sea of anonymous voices women in public are subjected to, mostly consisting of personal slurs pertaining to her age and sexuality. It is impossible to say whether 'La Belle Dame Sans Beaute' aims to satirise Montefiore herself, or, whether its true target is the speaker or speakers of the poem, whose fragile masculinity appears so threatened by the existence of this female public figure. But the latter appears more likely when we consider the context of misogyny within the arts that has already been established in 'All except Anything': a context which has now been extended to also apply to women in the political sphere.

The source text, Keats's 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' remains relevant to this reading. It is not simply the stock-figure of the *femme-fatale* Hastings borrows from Keats' original, after all, there are hundreds of different *femme-fatales* throughout literature that Hastings could draw upon. Hastings' engagement with Keats's original source text goes far deeper than this. There are several points of comparison between Keats and Hastings, including their approach to authorial identity. In a letter dated October 27th 1818, Keats famously described the poet as a chameleon-like figure, who takes on the various identities of his subjects but does not possess an identity of his own. He writes: 'A Poet is the most unpoetical of any thing in existence; because he has no Identity---he is continually in for---and filling some other Body---The Sun, the Moon, the Sea and Men and Women'.[78] Keats goes on to explain that the poetic figure transcends all facets of identity, including gender: Keats uses the pronoun 'it' to describe the 'camelion [*sic*] poet', and claims that 'It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen.'[79] It is not hard to see how this understanding of identity maps onto Hastings with her chameleonesque use of pseudonyms and the literary ventriloquism that she achieved through her use of parody.

[78] John Keats, Letter to Richard Woodhouse, October 27th 1818, *The Letters of John Keats Vol. 1 (1814-1818),* ed. by Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), pp.386-388 (p.387).
[79] Keats, Letter to Richard Woodhouse, October 27th 1818, p.387. Keats himself also experimented with pseudonyms throughout his short life, signing his work and letters variously as 'John Keats', 'J.K.', and 'Junkets': Nicholas Roe, *John Keats: A New Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p.82, p.178.

Furthermore, while it is true that 'La Belle Dame Sans Beaute' has more in common formally with modern free verse poetry, or the 'novel in verse' form favoured by Jammes, it also retains a number of Keatsian elements, the most central being its ambiguity. Keats' 'La Belle Dame' is relentlessly ambiguous, in part due to its continually shifting and uncertain narrative voice. In Keats' original poem, just like in Hastings' parody of it, we are faced with several overlapping voices, none of which can be taken as wholly reliable. The poem at first appears to be a dialogue between a nameless narrator and a 'knight-at-arms', which shifts from the first speaker to the second in the third stanza. As Susan Wolfson points out, however, the poem could equally be a depiction of the interior monologue of a single speaker, or of a single divided consciousness.[80] There are no speech marks separating the two speakers' voices, and in the final stanza, the second speaker reiterates the words of the first speaker: 'Alone and palely loitering,/Though the sedge is withered from the lake,/And no birds sing.'[81] The knight-at-arms, who is described as feverish and who seems to conflate dream and reality, can easily be read as being in the throes of insanity, or, as Barbara Johnson terms him, a 'male-hysteric'.[82] Both he and the first narrator (if they are indeed separate speakers) are distinctly unreliable, and the reported speech in the poem, which we receive through them, is thus even more so.[83] Much like Wilde's Sphinx, the Belle Dame of Keats' original poem is a silent and unknowable entity, whom we only experience through the lens of our unreliable narrator(s). Keats's 'Belle Dame' has long been subject to readings that the Belle Dame herself is the true victim of the poem. Critics such as Karen Swann have read the poem as a story of the narrator's entrapment and abuse of the 'Faery's Child' (or 'belle dame'): a figure onto which the narrator projects his own thoughts and impressions, but whose own voice we never hear.[84] A parallel reading of Hastings' text, which sees Montefiore

[80] Susan J. Wolfson, 'The Language of Interpretation in Romantic Poetry: "A Strong Working of the Mind"', *Romanticism and Language*, ed. Arden Reed (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp.22-49.
[81] John Keats, 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci: A Ballad', *John Keats: The Complete Poems, Third ed.* (London: Penguin, 1988), pp.334-335 (p.334).
[82] Barbara Johnson, 'Gender Theory and the Yale School', *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader*, 3rd edition eds. Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh, (London: Routledge, 1996), p.221.
[83] The poem contains just one instance of reported speech from the 'faery's child' who may or may not also be the terrifying 'Belle Dame' of the poem's title, and this is spoken 'in language strange', but reported in English: 'And sure in language strange she said--/ 'I love thee true' (Keats, 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci', p.335).
[84] See: Karen Swann, 'Harassing the Muse', *Romanticism and Feminism,* ed. Anne K. Mellor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp.81-92.

(the 'Belle Dame' of the poem) posited as the poem's true victim, therefore takes on a greater resonance when we consider this reading of the original.

The ambiguity of Keats's original poem, brought about by its shifting unreliable speakers, is also mirrored in Hastings' parody. We first have the speaker—perhaps 'G.Whiz' himself—who opens the poem 'I tell my novelette,/As the fashion is,/In verse.'[85] This is set back from the rest of the text by means of a paragraph break. We are then confronted with another poetic "I", which could be another speaker, or a continuation of the same one: 'Well, I sat/In the Memorial Hall, Waiting to hear Larkin/Speak.' The references to James Larkin who was leading the meeting, and to the Memorial Hall situate the informed reader, but still leave the poem's context relatively vague, with Montefiore herself never mentioned by name. A number of different voices can be heard throughout the poem, although it is hard to gauge exactly where the narrative voice shifts. At times, the poem takes on an archaic register akin to Keats's, describing Montefiore for example as 'Wretched hag of the nobility', 'Bad Fairy' and 'serpent of Old Labour', but it switches constantly between this and a more colloquial, modern mode of speech, using phrases such as 'War's war, old lady!' and 'Don't you think you'd better/Hook it?', suggesting at least two speakers, although the poem leaves it ambiguous as to which voice we are hearing at any given time. For example, the final line of the poem 'She looked so… there, poor old girl!' shows an expression of sympathy for Montefiore which offers a contrast to the poem's earlier vitriol, and could perhaps suggest a separate speaker, but it also uses a repetition of the term 'old girl' that is used earlier in the poem, possibly suggesting that it is the same speaker as before. Throughout the poem we seem to hear a number of different voices, but it is never clear how many or who they belong to, with the divisions between different speakers never made clear. There are three instances of reported speech within the poem, but it is always uttered 'Between my teeth'; 'silently', or 'sotto voce' by the speaker of the poem, and it is unclear as to whether the reported speech is meant to represent the speakers' internal monologue throughout the meeting, or whether he is actually speaking to someone else. It is also difficult to tell whether each iteration of 'I said' refers to the same speaker, given that the register switches each time. Possibly the

[85] Hastings, 'La Belle Dame Sans Beaute', p.737.

reported speech is meant to represent the various other voices in the room, reacting to the events of the meeting, with the 'I' representing a new speaker each time. This poem can therefore be understood as a micro-level example of the experiments with polyvocality that Hastings undertakes throughout *The New Age:* speaking through a cacophony of often anonymous male voices, none of which can be trusted as authentic or true.

As already mentioned, the phrase 'novelette in verse' immediately situates the poem as being in dialogue with 'All except Anything', and it is also explicitly linked to the final text published by Hastings in this issue: 'Women in Public', which appears on page 741 of this issue under the pseudonym Edward Stafford and mentions Montefiore by name. Like 'All except Anything', this piece was part of a series. 'Women in Public' first appeared in the October 9th issue of 1913 and ran over the course of four issues. It appeared in the letters section of the magazine, but functioned more like an opinion column, always titled 'Women in Public'. Each week it would highlight a few women—often those involved in the suffrage movement, like Cicely Hamilton and Dora Montefiore—whom Stafford would berate in an attempt to expose 'the hopeless mental obscurity and tastelessness of the modern angel.'[86] At times, the extreme misogynist views expressed by Stafford in this column border on the ridiculous, for instance when he states: 'All nations at their manliest have "kept their women down." It is no easy task, this, but is perpetual fight against enervation!'[87]

It would be possible to present an argument for Stafford as a parody of the misogynist male contributors to the magazine such has Hood, but we cannot know for sure that this was Hastings' intention. As Carey Snyder points out, the views expressed by Stafford are often 'remarkably close to the views expressed in Hastings's signed writings from this period'.[88] What we do know is that other readers did not understand Stafford as a parodic character, as is evident from the reply he received from *New Age* reader Pallister Barkas. Barkas responded to Stafford's column in earnest and it is clear from his letter not only that

[86] Edward Stafford, 'Women in Public', *New Age,* 13.24 (October 9th, 1913), pp.709-710 (p.709).
[87] Stafford, 'Women in Public', *New Age,* 13.24 (October 9th, 1913), p.709.
[88] Snyder, 'Beatrice Hastings's Sparring Pseudonyms', p.181.

he takes Stafford's claims seriously, but also that he has no doubts as to the fact that Edward Stafford is a real existing man and not one of Hastings' pseudonyms. He writes:

> It is surely absurd to look at so small and confessedly ridiculous a section of womankind through the microscope of Mr. Stafford's "manly" disapproval, forgetting the millions of decent wholesome women; one of the signs of whose virtue is that no one hears of them, since they are busy with all sorts of more important matters-one of them darning Mr. Stafford's socks at this moment, as likely as not.[89]

Hastings then goes on to perpetuate this belief, responding to Barkas (still under the guise of Stafford) 'My laundress, who darns my socks, and I come to a perfect understanding at certain specified periods'.[90]

The October 16th 'Women in Public' letter discusses the same subject matter as the poem: Montefiore's "Kiddies Scheme", which was suggested at the meeting portrayed in 'La Belle Dame'. Whereas the critique offered in 'La Belle Dame' is limited to personal attacks on Montefiore, however, this article offers a more reasoned rebuttal of her proposal, outlining its impracticality on the grounds that 'Heaps of the children would be sick on passage, […] Many children would be utterly miserable among strange persons and surroundings, and the only certain beneficiaries would be the railway companies'.[91] This commentary is an unexpected departure from the view of Montefiore offered in 'La Belle Dame'. The poem does not at any point mention the "Kiddie's Scheme" itself, only that Montefiore attended the meeting, whereas the letter appears uninterested as Montefiore as a character, and is more interested in critiquing her ideas. It is undeniable that the format of the 'Women in Public' letters is inherently misogynistic, given that its purpose is to publicly shame women who have, in Stafford's view, said or done something ridiculous in the past week, although Stafford's critique of Montefiore in the October 16th issue is surprisingly reasoned and justifiable—far more so than the speakers of the 'Belle Dame' parody. The following week, however, Stafford

[89] Pallister Barkas, 'Women in Public', *New Age,* 13.27 (October 30th 1913), p.802.
[90] Edward Stafford, response to Pallister Barkas, 'Women in Public', *New Age,* 13.27 (October 30th 1913), p.802.
[91] Edward Stafford, 'Women in Public', *New Age,* 13.25 (October 16th 1913), pp.741-2 (p.742).

includes Montefiore in his 'Women in Public' letter again and this time his critiques are more explicitly related to her gender. He claims that 'she writes with all the ineffable bliss of a bustling female'.[92] When read on its own, this 'Women in 'Public' is simply a rebuttal of the Kiddie's Scheme, but by including a reference to Montefiore in her Edward Stafford letter as well as in 'La Belle Dame', Hastings creates a parallel between Stafford and the speaker(s) of the poem. When we read the two pieces together we are made to see Stafford as a further example of a male voice raised in mockery of Montefiore, showing that the speaker(s) of the poem have real life equivalents to be found in the letters pages of magazines like *The New Age.* These two items, placed a few pages apart contextualises Stafford's dislike of Montefiore, making him no longer a single disgruntled voice, and instead a component part of a wider and pointedly gendered campaign against Montefiore, and the figure of the public woman as a whole.

The October 16th issue of *The New Age* is a testament to Hastings' continual desire to write within an ambiguous space, to refuse singularity and to relish in the ambiguous nature of language. The three pieces she submitted to this issue exist in an ambiguous space, their meaning continually shifting depending on the order in which we encounter them, our knowledge of Hastings' pseudonyms, and how we choose to read them. This issue represents an experiment in polyvocality which is both playful and political: speaking both to Hastings' desire to experiment with form and language, and her continued resistance to authorial singularity. Parody and pseudonym provide a means for Hastings to write with multiple voices simultaneously, resisting the necessity to occupy a single authorial identity whether it be male or female. Hastings' work is at its core characterised by conflict, ambivalence and paradox, and parody provides the perfect means to explore these concepts without the necessity of reaching a firm or fixed conclusion. When read together, and within the broader context of the surrounding issues, these three contributions can be read as a collective parody of male attitudes toward women in the public eye. While the subject of these pieces are women, the speakers are men, and it is they who form the basis of Hastings' ridicule. Over the course of the issue Hastings shows us a series of flawed men whose misogyny

[92] Stafford, 'Women in Public', *New Age,* 13.26 (October 23rd 1913), p.775.

makes them appear ridiculous. We have Pound, the fawning sycophant, Jammes the misogynist bore, the speakers of 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' who appear to us as insecure gossips, and finally the ignorant loudmouth Edward Stafford. This is not simply direct imitation of male voices and literary form, but rather imitation with critical distance, or creative imitation.

The months between August and December 1913 saw Hastings examine her own status as author and imitator, in addition to contemplating the role of women in the arts more generally. While her correspondence pieces from this time often see her draw surprisingly anti-feminist conclusions as to the status of female authorship, Hastings positions herself, in her role as parodist, as uniquely immune to what she perceives to be the usual pitfalls of female authorship. She situates her work as superior to that of her contemporaries, both female and male, conceiving of her own authorial identity in similar terms to how Keats speaks of the 'camelion poet': as a figure who is neither male nor female, but can instead embody either gender at will. Hastings uses these skills of polyvocality in her October 16th parodies, an issue in which she not only imitates but parodies the voices of her male contemporaries in order to satirise their outdated and prejudiced views towards women. The subtleties and complexities of Hastings' experiments are certain to be missed by the casual reader but when examined they show how Hastings used parody to hit back against the hostility she encountered in a male-dominated literary marketplace, responding to the many contributors (including Hood) who continually speak out to decry and defame women in the public sphere. In this issue, as in others, Hastings used the magazine medium in a way that was both creative and innovative, linking items across issues and within single issues to create a broader narrative, in a move which was both formally innovative and politically resonant. The next chapter addresses Hastings' one-time friend and collaborator, Katherine Mansfield, although the period addressed (1912-1917) corresponds to the deterioration of their relationship. It will show how Mansfield, like Hastings, used humour to navigate the dialogic and often hostile environment of *The New Age,* though often in markedly different ways.

Chapter Three

'Twin Wellsprings of Laughter and Tears': The Discomforting Laughter of Katherine Mansfield's 'Pastiche' Contributions in *The New Age* (1912-1917)

The most well-known and canonical writer to be featured in this thesis, Katherine Mansfield is rarely discussed in relation to humour or the comic. And yet, humour was an ongoing fascination throughout her life and works. A journal entry dated 1922, at which point Mansfield was terminally ill and aware of her approaching death, makes the assertion that 'To be wildly enthusiastic, or deadly serious— both are wrong. Both pass. One must keep ever present a sense of humour.'[1] Between 1910 and 1917, *The New Age* became the primary venue through which Mansfield explored her sense of humour. The contributions she made to *The New Age* include her darkly satirical 'pension' stories, several parodies and comic dialogues, as well as several pieces which defy clear formal or generic categorisation. Significantly, the contributions she made to other magazines around the same time bear little of this same comic influence. It has been suggested by Jenny McDonnell that Mansfield's adoption of humour in *The New Age* is evidence 'of the influence of the editorial policies of both Orage and Hastings', being an attempt on Mansfield's part to tailor her work to fit the magazine's demands.[2] While there is some weight to this claim, this chapter will look more closely into Mansfield's use of humour in the magazine, arguing that Mansfield's engagement with humour was more significant than merely being an attempt to conform to Orage and Hastings' editorial tastes.

This chapter will look in particular at the pieces Mansfield submitted to the 'Pastiche' section of *The New Age*: an area at the back of the magazine often reserved for formally ambiguous or comic pieces. Of the thirty-six signed contributions she made to *The New Age* between 1910 and 1917, only five appeared in this section: 'At the Club' (1912), 'Puzzle: Find

[1] Katherine Mansfield, *Katherine Mansfield: Letters and Journal* ed. C.K. Stead (London: Penguin, 1977), p.280.
[2] Jenny McDonnell, *Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Marketplace: At the Mercy of the Public* (London: Macmillan, 2010), p.35.

the Book' (1912), 'Green Goggles' (1912), 'Fragments' (1917), and 'Miss Elizabeth Smith' (1917). While all of these pieces draw on humour in some way, none of them are straightforwardly funny. Instead, they subvert our expectations of comic writing, delivering a particular mode of humour which is unsettling, confusing, and discomforting. This chapter will begin by contextualising Mansfield's ambivalent approach to laughter, as it is evidenced in a letter she submitted to *The New Age's* correspondence section in 1910, entitled 'A Paper Chase'. It will then go on to address the ways in which this ambivalence is made manifest in her 'Pastiche' contributions of 1912, arguing that Mansfield used these contributions to cultivate a profound sense of discomfort in her readers. It will also read her 'Pastiche' contributions within the context of their publication, showing how they formed part of a dialogue with the magazine's editors, as well as with her own contemporaneous contributions to the magazine *Rhythm.* This chapter will then conclude by looking at 'Fragments', one of Mansfield's very last contributions to *The New Age,* published in 1917, in which she returns to the notion of ambivalence and doubleness in laughter. Reading Mansfield's works in the context of their original publication, this chapter argues that *The New Age's* 'Pastiche' section served as a platform through which Mansfield could explore and experiment with discomforting forms of humour, benefiting from the format of the magazine, while at the same time often remaining internally critical of its ethos.

The short story collection which is most often discussed in relation to Mansfield and the comic is her first published volume, *In a German Pension* (1911). The stories which make up this collection in fact first appeared in *The New Age* in 1910 before being published as a collection. The critical reception of Mansfield's German Pension stories is decidedly mixed. In a review that appeared in *The New Age* in 1911, following the publication of the stories as a single volume, it is Mansfield's 'unquenchable humour' which is praised as her greatest merit, while the less obviously satirical stories of the collection are dismissed as being guilty of 'lachrymose sentimentality'.[3] The reviewer praises what they see as 'The advance made from the morbidistic "Child who was Tired" to "The Modern Soul,"' calling the latter story 'a

[3] '*In a German Pension*' [Review]*, New Age,* 10.8 (December 21st, 1911), unsigned, attributed by Jenny McDonnell as Beatrice Hastings (*Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Marketplace,* p. 34).

triumph of humour'.[4] A similar appraisal can be found in a 1912 letter to *The Freewoman,* where the author (signed only as M.A.F.) praises Mansfield's 'genius', before commenting 'Oh, for a saving sense of humour, especially in the advanced women of to-day!'[5] The initial reaction to the collection, particularly within 'advanced' circles of the time, saw Mansfield conceived of as a breakthrough satirical talent first and foremost. This initial response to the collection differs quite startlingly to the way it is often received by critics today, however. The least-loved works of Mansfield's oeuvre, her pension stories have frequently been dismissed not only by critics, but also by the author herself, who would later described them as 'positively juvenile'.[6] Variously described as 'unforgivingly satirical' (Horrock) 'spiteful' and 'malicious' (O'Connor) and driven by hatred and a 'naked, undisguised spite' (Bennett) they are often seen, even now, as the formative predecessors to her well-respected later works, often criticised for their use of dark humour and the grotesque, and for the ways in which they draw on xenophobic stereotypes.[7]

But while Mansfield's use of humour in her traditionally published works is rarely mentioned and almost never celebrated, her periodical contributions tell a different story. Of the thirty-six signed contributions she made to *The New Age* over a seven year period, over two thirds contain at least some element of humour, ranging from the grim satire of her pension sketches, to her parodies ('A P.S.A.', 'Festival of the Coronation', 'Love Cycle'), and the two darkly comic play-scripts she published in 1915 and 1917 ('Stay-Laces' and 'Two Tuppeny Ones, Please').[8] This is something which is only now beginning to be addressed in scholarship. Carey Snyder has drawn attention to Beatrice Hastings and Katherine Mansfield's

[4] '*In a German Pension'* [Review]*,* p.188.
[5] 'M.A.F.', 'Our Great Solemnity', *The Freewoman*, 1.20 (April 4th, 1912), p.399.
[6] Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott, ed. *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield Volume 3: 1919-1920* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p.206.
[7] John Horrock, '"In their Nakeds": Katherine Mansfield, Freud and Neurasthenia at Bad Wörishofen', *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 32.2 (2014), pp. 121-142 (p.122); Frank O'Connor, 'An Author in search of a Subject', *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story* (London: Macmillan, 1962), p.129; Andrew Bennett, *Katherine Mansfield* (Tavistock: Northcote House, 2002), p.9. See also: Andrew Bennett, 'Hating Katherine Mansfield', *ANGELAKI,* 7.3 (2002), pp.3-16.
[8] "K.M. and B.H" [Katherine Mansfield and Beatrice Hastings], 'A P.S.A.', *New Age*, 9.4 (May 25th 1911), p.95; Katherine Mansfield, 'The Festival of the Coronation (With Apologies to Theocritus)', *New Age,* 9.9 (June 29th 1911), p.196; Katherine Mansfield, 'Love Cycle', *New Age*, 9.25 (Oct 19, 1911), p.586; Katherine Mansfield, 'Stay-laces', *New Age*, 18.1 (November 4th 1915), pp.14-15; Katherine Mansfield, 'Two Tuppeny Ones, Please', *New Age,* 21.1 (May 3rd, 1917), pp.13-14.

jointly-authored parodies of contemporary male authors, collectively titled 'A P.S.A.', which appeared in *The New Age* in 1911.[9] More recently, Chris Mourant has also identified a parodic element in her contributions to the magazine *Rhythm.*[10] Little has been written on Mansfield's 'Pastiche' contributions, however, aside from some occasional mentions in more general studies of Mansfield and periodical culture.[11] This is probably, at least in part, due to their peculiarity. None of Mansfield's 'Pastiche' contributions can be easily defined in terms of clear generic or formal categories, and they are markedly different from the other contributions Mansfield published around this time. While they all contain some element of humour, not one of them is straightforwardly funny. Often instances of humour are off-set by troubling or disturbing themes, or are made discomforting simply by their formal instability. Sometimes it is difficult to tell if there is even a joke to be found, with punchlines falling flat or never arriving at all. Quite probably this formal instability and off-beat humour is partly responsible for Mansfield's 'Pastiche' pieces having been largely overlooked in scholarship up until now. This chapter, however, will make a case for the significance of these contributions not in spite of but because of their ambivalent, discomforting use of humour.

The Ambivalent Laughter of Katherine Mansfield

It is not only Mansfield's 'Pastiche' contributions that approach the subject of laughter with a resounding sense of ambivalence. In her work more broadly, laughter and comedic elements are often combined with dark or disturbing themes. From the 'cruel little laugh' of Eve in 'The Carnation' (1918) to the thoughtless cruelty of the girl who laughs at the titular character in 'Miss Brill' (1920), laughter in Mansfield's short stories is very often shown to be malicious or threatening, and there is an ever-present ambivalence and tension with regards to laughter that haunts many of her works. C.K. Stead articulates this tension as it appears in *In a German Pension*, stating that the collection's humour 'skates on very thin ice. It is

[9] Carey Snyder, 'Katherine Mansfield and the New Age School of Satire', *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 1.2 (2010), pp.125-158.
[10] Chris Mourant, 'Parodic Translation: Katherine Mansfield and the "Boris Petrovsky" Pseudonym', *Katherine Mansfield and Translation* ed. Claire Davison, Gerri Kimber and W. Todd Martin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp.15-30.
[11] They are referred to in Anthony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (New York: Viking Press, 1980). Chris Mourant also discusses them briefly in *Katherine Mansfield and Periodical Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

laughter right at the brink of hysteria, tears, revulsion and hatred'.[12] Often, Mansfield's use of biting satire borders on what we would call dark, or black humour. Alan R. Pratt defines black humour as 'the humorous treatment of what is grotesque, morbid, or terrifying', and it is undoubtable that Mansfield's comic work often centres around grotesque and morbid themes.[13] Throughout her *New Age* contributions, we see Mansfield repeatedly return to themes of violence, sexual predation, death, and colonialism, all handled through a darkly comic lens. Mansfield's works bear an especially strong similarity to the mode of interwar dark humour described by Lisa Colletta.[14] Despite being published almost a decade prior to the texts which form the basis of Colletta's study, the use of humour in Mansfield's *New Age* contributions often closely adheres to the type of humour she describes, retaining many of the qualities of literary modernism such as fragmentation and uncertainty, while also remaining darkly satirical.[15] At other times, however, Mansfield's work is not dark *per se*, but merely unsettling, producing in the reader a profound sense of discomfort which sits somewhere between pity and revulsion, and acts as a barrier to straightforward laughter. Jennifer Cooke perhaps comes the closest to articulating this notion of discomfort in her discussion of 'The Carnation': 'Mansfield, I believe, is giving us something to laugh at, but the laughter is uncomfortable [...] because we are dimly aware that we are being made to laugh at ourselves.'[16] This chapter therefore uses the term 'discomfort', rather than dark humour in referring to Mansfield's works.

Mansfield's ambivalence towards laughter and the sense of humour is evidenced in a letter, submitted to *The New Age* correspondence section in 1910. The letter, entitled 'A Paper Chase', forms one of three pieces of correspondence published in this issue which discuss the hanging of Dr. Crippen, who was apprehended by Scotland Yard on charges of murdering his wife in July 1910, a few weeks prior to this issue's publication. All three of the letters pertaining to Crippen are critical of capital punishment, with Mansfield's letter and the

[12] C.K. Stead, 'Katherine Mansfield: The Art of the "Fiction"' (1977), *Kin of Place: 20 Essays on New Zealand Writers* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2013), pp.8-28 (p.10).
[13] Alan R. Pratt, ed. *Black Humour: Critical Essays*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), p.xix.
[14] Lisa Colletta, *Dark Humor and Social Satire in the Modern British Novel* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
[15] Colletta, *Dark Humor and Social Satire,* p.2.
[16] Jennifer Cooke, 'Katherine Mansfield's Ventriloquism and the Faux-Ecstasy of All Manner of Flora', *Literature Interpretation Theory,* 19.1 (2008), pp.79–94 (p.81).

one above it ('The Case of Crippen' by R. Dimsdale Stocker) commenting specifically on the treatment of the case in the popular press. The Crippen case was rife with sensation, which was unsurprising given its unusual nature. Having murdered his wife, American 'music-hall artiste' Cora Crippen,[17] Dr. Crippen and his former typist and mistress, twenty-seven year old Ethel Le Neve tried to escape to Canada, but were recognised and detained *en route* by the captain of the ship on which they were travelling. They were in disguise, with Crippen posing as a clergyman, and Le Neve pretending to be his son.[18] The press seized on the story and followed it closely for obvious reasons. The connections to music hall, disguise and cross-dressing, as well as the draw of a gruesome and bloody murder gave the story multiple layers of shock and intrigue. (False) rumours circulated in the press about Le Neve allegedly committing suicide in a French hotel, and these added a further level of scandal to the story.[19]

The first letter published in the August issue of *The New Age* pertaining to the Crippen case also comments on the heavy-handed way the case was dealt with in the press, arguing that: 'Crippen is as good as hanged-- convicted, condemned, and sentenced to death, as far as the public are concerned. And the press has done it!'[20] Mansfield's criticism of the press is more pointed, however. In her letter, she writes:

> A rabbit nibbling a lettuce leaf one moment before it becomes a python's dinner is hardly a spectacle for universal and ironic laughter-whatever crimes the rabbit may have committed, whatever just hunger the python may feel. And yet if we are to believe the Little Fathers of Fleet Street the whole world has been bursting its sides over Crippen stroking a newly-grown beard and Miss Le Neve with her trousers safety-pinned on confronted by the Inspector from Scotland Yard…[21]

[17] [Author Unknown], 'Question in the Commons', *London Daily News* (July 28th 1910), p.7.
[18] 'The Capture of Crippen: Dramatic Scene on the "Montrose", *Gloucestershire Echo* (July 26th 1910), p.3.
[19] 'Is it Le Neve? Strange Suicide at Bourqe', *London Daily News* (July 22nd 1910), p.7.
[20] R. Dimsdale Stocker, 'The Case of Crippen', *New Age,* 7.15 (August 11th 1910), p.354.
[21] Katherine Mansfield, 'A Paper Chase', *New Age*, 7.15 (August 11th 1910), pp.354-355 (p.355).

The letter evokes a sympathetic response towards Crippen in likening him to a soon-to-be-consumed rabbit, as well as demonstrating Mansfield's obvious disdain for the 'Little Fathers of Fleet Street', by which name she refers to the popular press. She echoes the works of conservative thinkers around the same time who draw upon similar tropes of the laughing mob.[22] The press and the public are here united in their mockery of Crippen and Le Neve, and their laughter is seen to be in very poor taste by Mansfield. By portraying Crippen sympathetically, Mansfield exposes the cruelty implicit in their laughter, and in doing so she condemns both the popular press and their readership for making the lives of the Crippens a source for popular entertainment and spectacle. And yet, even in this description she herself produces a comic image of the beard-stroking Crippen and Le Neve in too-big trousers: an image derived not from any account of the arrest in the popular press, but one drawn from her own imagination. Even as she condemns the public for 'bursting its sides' at the Crippen case, Mansfield participates in further caricaturing its subjects. She goes on to liken the hunt for Crippen to game hunting and other blood-sports, commenting that: 'Captain Kendall, […] has become the latest national hero, and I have no doubt but that he will be publicly presented with Miss Le Neve's outfit of boy's clothing to grace his pretty little country home in the vicinity of Pinner.'[23] This image of Le Neve's disguise mounted like an animal skin in Kendall's country home is both comic and disturbing, revealing the dark undertones which, according to this letter, underlie the easy laughter of the press. This letter shows Mansfield's characteristic ambivalence towards laughter. In it, she utilises humour as the cornerstone of her own attack, even as she underlines its problematic status and its affiliation with the worst aspects of popular culture.

Mansfield's difficulty in reconciling a sense of disdain for coarse and distasteful laughter with her own penchant for humour plays out visibly in a number of her *New Age* contributions. In 'Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding' (*New Age,* July 21st, 1910), for example, we see a further instance of aggressive mob-laughter, in the crowd of wedding

[22] Eg. Anthony Ludovici, who writes that 'guided by their newspapers and their modern books, the average man and woman (particularly the latter), […] cling tenaciously to the view that humour is good and desirable' (*The Secret of Laughter,* p.7). For more on how laughter is attributed to the "Mob", see the introduction to this thesis. Ludovici was a regular *New Age* contributor.
[23] Mansfield, 'A Paper Chase', p.355.

guests laughing at a bride, which horrifies the titular character, Frau Brechenmacher.[24] In 'At "Lehmann's"' (*New Age* July 7th, 1910) this experiment into aggressive laughter is taken even further, as the reader is made complicit in laughing at the naiveté of the protagonist, Sabina, who is unwittingly seduced by a customer at the café where she works. That is, until the final scene where Sabina and the customer are laughing together in the back room and the gravity and danger of the situation are brought home to the reader when suddenly the customer's attitude changes. He becomes forceful with Sabina, and we are told that 'Laughter ceased. She looked up at him once, then down at the floor, and began breathing like a frightened little animal.'[25] The blunt narrative interruption of 'laughter ceased' silences not only Sabina's laughter but our own as well, and she is compared (in terms strongly echoing those with which Mansfield describes Dr. Crippen) to a 'frightened little animal'.[26] The potential for sexual violence which has been present in the subtext of the story throughout is now made overt, becoming apparent to Sabina herself as well as the reader, and we as readers are reprimanded for our prior amusement. Throughout her *New Age* contributions Mansfield seems quick to assert the harmful power of laughter, often seeing it conflated with mass culture and the 'mob'. And yet, it is a mode she returns to again and again in her own work.

The 1912 'Pastiche' Contributions

It is in Mansfield's 'Pastiche' contributions that her experiments into discomforting laughter are most fully realised. These contributions, while undoubtedly comic, disallow the kinds of easy punchlines and straightforward humour commonly associated with 'Mob' humour. They often require mental labour from the reader, and in certain instances require an in-depth knowledge of the people and debates taking place in the magazine at the time. The laughter to be found in Mansfield's 'Pastiche' contributions was not laughter for the mob, but for a select personalised audience. The 'Pastiche' contributions Mansfield submitted to *The New Age* in 1912 coincide almost exactly with the deterioration of her relationship with the magazine's editors. It was in 1912 that Mansfield met John Middleton Murry and began to

[24] Katherine Mansfield, 'Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding', *New Age*, 7.12 (July 21st 1910), pp.273-275.
[25] Katherine Mansfield, 'At "Lehmann's"', *New Age,* 7.10 (July 7th 1910), pp.225-227 (p.226).
[26] Mansfield, 'At "Lehmann's"', p.227.

publish in the newly-established magazine *Rhythm,* which they both helped to edit. It was this shift in allegiances which led to a falling out between Mansfield and *The New Age* editors Orage and Hastings. According to Murry's autobiography, 'Katherine had been presented with a kind of ultimatum, calling upon her to choose between the two journals, and she chose *Rhythm.'*[27] This is not entirely accurate, however. Although Mansfield's contributions to the *New Age* became more sporadic, she continued to submit work to the magazine's 'Pastiche' section right up until 1917. The damaged relationship between Mansfield and *The New Age* editors does come heavily to bear on the work she submitted to *The New Age* from 1912 onwards, however. Although she continues to contribute to the magazine, it is clear that her loyalties have shifted and her 1912 'Pastiche' contributions see her respond to the conflict with Orage by satirising many of the ideas and journalistic conventions which he himself espoused.

The New Age's 'Pastiche' section was introduced in 1912. According to Wallace Martin's study of *The New Age,* the 'Pastiche' section was reserved for *The New Age's* 'young and inexperienced' contributors:

> It was set in small type in order to afford space for the works of as many promising aspirants as possible. As they improved, their contributions would be promoted to the larger type of the front part of the magazine. Thus a distinction between the editorial literary standards and the unequal but interesting works of the young was maintained, and an incentive for further effort added.[28]

This account is not entirely accurate, however. It is true that the 'Pastiche' contributions were set back from the rest of the magazine—appearing at the back of the periodical, and set in smaller type. It was not just the young and inexperienced who appeared in the 'Pastiche' section, however. Regular contributors such as Beatrice Hastings and C.E. Bechhoefer would often appear there, while also continuing to publish in the main body of the magazine and, in the case of Mansfield, her first works to appear in *The New Age* were her pension sketches,

[27] John Middleton Murry, *Between Two Worlds* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935), p.204.
[28] Wallace Martin, *The New Age Under Orage: Chapters in English Cultural History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), p.51.

which appeared in the main body of the magazine in February 1910. It was not until 1912 that her works began to appear in the 'Pastiche' section, by which point she was by no means a 'promising aspirant', having one collection of short stories already in print, and regularly publishing work in both *The New Age* and in *Rhythm.* Rather than separating literary works from the 'unequal' offerings of literary ingénues, the 'Pastiche' section more often featured works that defied easy categorisation, or which did not fit in elsewhere in the magazine. Typical content would be fragments, parodies or short satirical poems, often published anonymously. As well as allowing new contributors to see their work featured in the pages of *The New Age,* the 'Pastiche' section also constituted a place where established contributors could publish works-in-progress, unconventional works, or more playful contributions such as parodies.

'Pastiche' was perhaps a fitting term for the section, meaning both 'A novel, poem, painting, etc., incorporating several different styles, or made up of parts drawn from a variety of sources' and 'an imitation or parody of a particular style or artist.'[29] The 'Pastiche' section, too, can be seen as a collage of different works encompassing a number of different genres, artists and styles, or as a space *for* pastiche, in which playfulness, parody and imitation are welcome. Similar columns can be found in other periodicals of the era. *The Masses,* for instance, had several different versions of this format, starting with 'The Way You Look at it', introduced in May 1911, and both *The New Statesman* and later *Time and Tide* had 'Miscellany' sections which served similar purposes.[30] The 'Pastiche' section had no clear defining logic as to the types of material it featured, and has been seen by some as a page-filler space for lesser works. Stephen Gray, for example, describes one of Mansfield's parodic contributions to the 'Pastiche' section as 'one of a hundred such lampoons giving no quarter which, quarantined to the back pages, bubbled up to infect the rest of Orage's pure weekly.'[31] But while the 'Pastiche' section may have been used as a means to differentiate between 'pure' works and those of less significance, the section also provided a space which allowed

[29] 'Pastiche', *Oxford English Dictionary Online* < http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/138594?rskey=sHkOKa&result=1#eid> [accessed 12/12/2018].
[30] Catherine Clay, *Time and Tide: The Feminist and Cultural Politics of a Modern Magazine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), p.179.
[31] Gray, *Beatrice Hastings a Literary Life,* p.232.

for more generic instability and creative freedom than was permitted by the main body of the magazine.

Mansfield's first contribution to the 'Pastiche' section appeared in the March 7th 1912 issue of *The New Age* and was titled 'At the Club'.[32] It is a formally ambiguous piece set in an elite-seeming social club which, like several of Mansfield's other *New Age* contributions, takes the form of a series of overheard conversations, often between women.[33] 'At the Club' is a text which continually disarms the reader, switching from one speaker to the next without any clear indication to the reader, in a style which anticipates a kind of high modernist stream-of-consciousness. It opens with the phrase 'Viewed from the drawing-room door, the members of the "Advanced" presented a fantastic appearance…', meaning that from the outset, the reader is situated in a liminal position, neither a part of the action within nor completely removed from it. We find ourselves in an almost voyeuristic position in relation to the club patrons, placed on the peripheries of the scene, trying to keep up with the various overlapping conversations.[34] By placing the word advanced in quotation marks, we immediately get a sense that the narrator considers themself separate from the club patrons, and we as readers are in turn distanced from them. We get very little in the way of identifying features from any of the club patrons. They are all described only in terms of their clothing, such as 'a lady decorated with red quills', or 'a lady in a grey motor veil', who later becomes simply 'the motor veil'. As well as perhaps being a comment on the superficiality of this social setting, or on the fragility of the characters' identities, this also has the effect of creating a partial image in the mind of the reader which prevents them from gaining a clear visual impression of either character or setting.

What we do learn, from references to their copies of 'Votes for Women' and their conversations about the poet John Masefield, is that the patrons of this club appear to be a part of a cultural and intellectual, as well as a social, elite. This type of setting would have been familiar to many *New Age* readers and contributors, many of whom belonged to clubs

[32] Katherine Mansfield, 'At the Club', *New Age,* 10.19 (March 7, 1912), pp.229-450.
[33] We see this trope in her two comic dialogues, 'Stay-Laces' (1915) and 'Two Tuppeny Ones Please' (1917), and also in 'Festival of the Coronation', a parody of Theocritus's Fifteenth Idyll in which two women, in between mis-quoting Kipling and bemoaning public transport, inadvertently miss the Coronation of George V.
[34] Mansfield, 'At the Club', p.449.

and societies such as the Leeds Arts Club, the Fabian Arts Group and the Coefficients dining club.[35] Whether Mansfield had a particular club or group in mind when she wrote her satire is unclear, but the fictionalised club patrons who populate 'At the Club' are certainly evocative of the same type of educated, 'advanced' demographic who populate both the pages of *The New Age* and its overlapping in-person milieu.[36] The comedy of this piece, however, is drawn from the fact that, rather than intellectualised discussions of art and literature, we find the club patrons fixated on discussions primarily to do with sex and bodily functions: a fact which is crystallised by the closing remarks of the piece, made by a 'Laughing Voice', who exclaims: '"just imagine if we sat here in chintz-covered chairs and talked about nothing but men all the afternoon! Pooh, they're not worth it! Preposterous idea!"'[37] Even when the poet Masefield is brought up, no serious discussion of his work is attempted. Instead, the club patrons quickly skim over the poetry itself and move on to discussing a photograph of the poet: '"Have you read Masefield's last poem? Isn't it marvellous?" "Yes, simply wonderful. Did you see that picture of him? I don't know why, but it reminds me of a dandelion."[38] It is possible, then, that this piece could be intended as a satire on the *New Age* crowd in response to Mansfield's souring relationships with its editors. The conversations we overhear seem to suggest a level of superficiality and pseudo-intellectualism which could be directed toward Orage and his circle, although this would be impossible to prove.

[35] There were a number of overlapping clubs, societies, groups and collectives in both London and Leeds not officially affiliated with *The New Age* but with a shared audience of local intelligentsia. These also included the Leeds Theosophical Society, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and the Clarion Club. Orage also held informal meetings with his contributors in the A.B.C. Tearooms on Chancery Lane, which Mansfield herself attended (See: Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield,* p.114). For more on *The New Age* and its in-person milieu, see: Steele, Tom, *Alfred Orage and the Leeds Arts Club, 1893-1923* (Mitcham: Orage Press, 2009); Wallace Martin, *The New Age Under Orage.*

[36] Ann Ardis discusses how *The New Age* invited a mixed and diverse readership comprised of '"the leading literary and political figures of the day"' as well as 'the socialist autodidacts and left-leaning graduates of Mechanics Institutes, working men's colleges, teacher training colleges, extension lecture programs, and provincial universities.' [Ardis, 'Democracy and Modernism: The New Age under A. R. Orage (1907–22)', p.210]. Diverse though the magazine's readership was, their shared interest in politics, art and literature meant that many of them would likely be familiar with the type of predominantly middle class intelligentsia setting described by 'At the Club'.

[37] Mansfield, 'At the Club', p.450.

[38] Mansfield, 'At the Club', p.449. Beatrice Hastings published a similar piece satirising pretentious literary clubs/societies which appeared in the 'Pastiche' section two months later ["T.K.L.", 'Creative Artists, Please Note!', *New Age,* 11.4 (May 23rd, 1912), p.92]. Whether or not this was intended to be in dialogue with this text of Mansfield's is unclear, although it also contains a reference to the poet John Masefield.

But while on the surface, 'At the Club' is a fairly benign satire of middle class superficiality, it also contains far more discomforting elements. 'At the Club' opens on a depiction of the predatory sexual intentions of a club patron towards a maid, a theme which recurs in several of Mansfield's *New Age* contributions.[39] We are told that: 'one man stood in an upright position guarding the fire, his eyes following a little maidservant who wandered familiarly among the tables'.[40] Although sex is often the punchline of 'At the Club', we also have a sense of a much graver sexual subtext. The scene quickly moves to a conversation between the 'lady decorated with red quills' and a 'tense companion', which goes as follows:

> "Oh, they're much worse abroad." Tense companion: "Are they?" "My dear, you can't go out of your hotel in comfort. Followed everywhere. And the eyes! There really is only one word to describe them." "But," leaning forward, "I suppose they never make any definite…?" The red quills quivered. "Of course they do. I was walking underneath a railway bridge..."—followed by a whisper proper, on receipt of which the tense companion fell back into her chair. "No!" "Perfectly true, my dear; you can imagine my horror."[41]

The use of ellipsis and indirect language make whatever took place beneath the railway bridge sound all the more sinister. Everything in this conversation is shrouded in an air of mystery. It is only after a moment that we are able to deduce that the 'they' of the conversation are men. The lady with red quills says that there is only one word to describe them, but does not say what this word is. We see here the failure of discourse to convey the experiences being described. Neither of the women can properly articulate the commonplace harassment they experience, and the entire conversation is shrouded in secrecy and shame. While on the surface, this piece is a satire on a crowd of sex-obsessed pseudo-intellectuals, it also carries a decidedly discomforting subtext which does not feel quite so funny. 'At the

[39] In 'At "Lehman's"', for example, the protagonist is a young woman who is vulnerable to the sexual advances of the 'Young Man' who visits her place of work. In 'Germans at Meat', a hotel guest stares at the narrator with 'an expression which suggested a thousand premeditated invasions' ('Germans at Meat', *New Age* 4.18 (March 3rd, 1910) pp.419-420). A subtext of sexual violence hangs heavy over many of the pension stories.
[40] Mansfield, 'At the Club', p.449.
[41] Mansfield, 'At the Club', p.449.

Club' shows us the ubiquity and insidiousness of sexual harassment of women, as well as women's inability to articulate this harassment, even in this intimate private setting. The use of ellipsis demonstrates the failure of discourse to adequately convey these women's experience, even as we are made aware (by the roaming eyes of the fireguard) just how commonplace an experience this is.

What makes this exchange even more discomforting is the fact that it is not the male perpetrators of sexual violence who are the butt of the joke here, but rather the women discussing them. The 'tense companion' appears faintly ridiculous in this exchange owing to her apparently permanent state of shock, while the lady with the 'red quills' is seemingly complicit in her own harassment. She follows up her story of 'horror' by stating that the man beneath the railway bridge was 'frightfully good-looking', a comment that seems to imply that her pretence of disgust is merely a thinly-veiled disguise for the fact that she welcomes or enjoys harassment owing to her own heightened sexuality.[42] The two women also appear somewhat ridiculous to the reader owing to their obliviousness. They both seem to view harassment as the domain of foreign travel, and yet we as readers have already been made aware of the roaming eyes of the man 'guarding the fire' in the very room in which they sit. The two women, by assuming that sexual harassment is unique to foreign hotels, inadvertently come across to the reader as provincial and un-worldly, as well as comically oblivious to the same dynamics taking place right under their nose. This piece is discomforting then not only because it deals with a heavy subject matter in drawing our attention to insidious acts of sexual aggression, but also because it risks making us complicit in laughing or sneering at the victims of these acts.

The form of 'At the Club' also contributes to the growing sense of discomfort we get while reading. The piece continually skips between speakers, making it difficult for the reader to keep up: a technique which requires a certain degree of mental labour from the reader and makes for a somewhat disorientating reading experience. In *Jokes and Their Relationship to the Unconscious,* Freud states that jokes must 'observe the condition of being easy to

[42] Mansfield, 'At the Club', p.449. This is the same view voiced by another of Mansfield's *New Age* characters, Tilly in 'Festival of the Coronation', who insists that 'humming is complimentary' (Mansfield, 'Festival of the Coronation', p.196.

understand; as soon as they call for intellectual work […] they would endanger their effect not only by the unavoidable expenditure of thought but also by the awakening of attention.'[43] If this is true then Mansfield's humour in 'At the Club' fails as a joke because the joke's meaning is obscured by the ambiguous and uncertain form of the piece. 'At the Club' is published as a single block of text with no line breaks, with the effect that it is often difficult to tell where different conversations begin and end. For example, a conversation between 'two young green things without collars' bleeds into that of a group of women discussing 'the Sex Question':

> "There is only seed cake in this tray. Do you hate it?" "Not me!"
> Exclaimed an elderly lady with a moustache. "They think they have
> but they haven't, and I don't think they ever will. […].[44]

Upon first reading the "Not me!" appears to be in answer to the question about seed cake, and when the 'elderly lady with a moustache' is revealed as the speaker, the reader must go back and re-orientate themselves with who is speaking to whom. A good deal of mental labour is required from the reader at the level of comprehension, meaning that the jokes often fall flat. It is only after a second read through of the text that a reader can approach it with any confident comprehension: an effect which makes for a feeling of confusion or unease. This is furthered by the fact that the text appears in the 'Pastiche' Section, titled only 'At the Club', without a subheading or further explanation. Because the 'Pastiche' section publishes contributions in any number of different forms, as well as some which, like this one, seem to resist classification altogether, the reader has no preconceived notions of what this text is or how it should be received. And rather than help situate the reader and make them feel at ease, this text seems determined to do the opposite.

By way of comparison, another text by Mansfield appears in the main body of this very same issue, and is far more conventional in form. The piece, which appears on pages 447-448, is titled 'A Marriage of Passion'. The two pieces have several thematic similarities—both centre around the sexual politics of a group of middle class men and women—but it is in

[43] Freud, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious,* p. 205.
[44] Mansfield, 'At the Club', p.449.

their form that they differ. 'A Marriage of Passion' is written in straightforward realist prose, which makes the reader aware of the exact context and setting from the very first sentence:

> On the stroke of nine o'clock Mr. and Mrs. De Voted took their places on either side of the drawing-room fire, in attitudes of gracefully combined hospitality and unconcern, Vivian De Voted wearing a black beard and black velvet jacket buttoned over his Bohemian bosom, his lady in a flowering purple gown embroidered in divers appropriate places with pomegranates and their leaves.[45]

This introductory sentence gives the reader clear signifiers of setting, character and tone from the outset, unlike 'At the Club' where we are constantly struggling to orientate ourselves and never feel quite sure of where we are or who is talking. While 'At the Club' keeps its reader on the periphery, positioned by the door and only ever overhearing snatches of conversation, 'A Marriage of Passion' allows us, through its omniscient narrator, to observe events clearly and lucidly. In both texts clothing and artifice are used to describe the characters, but in 'At the Club' Mansfield takes this one step further, using synecdoche so that the characters *become* their outfits and are thus impossible to imagine except as pieces of clothing ('grey motor veil' and 'red quills', for example). The characters in 'A Marriage of Passion', however, are given allegorical names such as 'Mr and Mrs De Voted' and 'Madame Seductress' which give a clear signal to the reader not only what character tropes these characters are likely to perform, but also provide a straightforward affirmation that this is a comedy. Whereas the unfamiliar form of 'At the Club' leaves the reader unsure of exactly how to receive it, 'A Marriage of Passion' is familiar almost to the point of cliché and immediately recognisable as a comic piece. A comparison between these two pieces shows how the 'Pastiche' section allows for a greater degree of formal ambiguity and discomfort than we tend to see in the main body of the magazine.

Mansfield's next 'Pastiche' contribution, 'Puzzle: Find the Book', appeared three months after 'At the Club', in June 1912. By this point Mansfield's relationship to *The New Age* had begun to seriously deteriorate, and it is in this piece that her souring relationship

[45] Katherine Mansfield, 'A Marriage of Passion', *New Age,* 10.19 (March 7th, 1912), pp.447-448 (p.447).

with its editors becomes most clearly apparent. It is of course possible that the club patrons in 'At the Club' are intended as an unkind representation of the readership of *The New Age,* but this is far less explicit than what we see in 'Puzzle: Find the Book'. It was during the spring and summer months of 1912, when Mansfield first began to contribute to *Rhythm*, that the eroding relationship between Orage and Mansfield began to impact upon the magazine. *The New Age's* initial verdict on *Rhythm* was fairly benign: it was first mentioned by Arnold Bennet under his pseudonym Jacob Tonson in the Reviews section in August 1911. Bennet described the magazine as 'an agreeably produced brochure, printed in a good character, with good and original initial letters and ornaments, and some interesting postimpressionist illustrations.'[46] The next review of *Rhythm* to appear in *The New Age,* however, was quite different. On March 28th 1912, *Rhythm* was featured in the 'Present- Day Criticism' section of *The New Age*, where the author (probably Orage) accuses Murry of plagiarism, and states that 'In the whole volume, if we except the picture of the baby, and a reproduction of a painting by Mr. T. D. Fergusson, there is no single page that is not stupid, or crazed, or vulgar-and most are all three.'[47] Mansfield is amongst those contributors criticised in this article: the author comments that 'Miss Mansfield abandons her salt furrow and in two stanzas lies flapping and wappering', and goes on to criticise her poems 'Very Early Spring' and 'The Awakening River', the latter of which is then parodied by C.E. Bechoffer in the following issue.[48]

The hostility shown towards Mansfield and *Rhythm* in the *New Age* did not relent over time, but rather intensified. Hastings satirised Mansfield twice: in 'Echo' (Jan 18th 1912), and in 'The Changeling' (Jan 2nd 1913), and the editors reviewed *Rhythm's* newer incarnation *The Blue Review* as scathingly as its predecessor. In the first of these reviews, Mansfield mostly escapes mention, achieving the somewhat backhanded compliment that 'Her sketch "Pension Seguin" is the best work she has done since she left us for an editorial feather to stick in her

[46] Jacob Tonson [Arnold Bennett], 'Books and Persons', *New Age,* 9.14 (August 3rd, 1911), p.327-8 (p.327).
[47] Unsigned, 'Present-Day Criticism', *New Age,* 10.22 (March 28th, 1912), pp.519-20 (p.519).
[48] C. E. Bechhoefer, 'The Practical Journalist. A Vade-Mecum for Aspirants', *New Age,* 10.23 (April 4, 1912) p.548. In Bechhoefer's version, rather than being translated from the Russian by Katherine Mansfield, the poem is ''Translated from the Phlegmish by Thomasine Molefield'.

cap.'[49] But the following month, this is followed up by the following review of Mansfield's work:

> It seems to be true that women's talents are as fleeting as their beauty, and as little under their own control. There was in Miss Mansfield's first epilogue a momentary poise upon the gay good-humour which balanced her best early work; without this quality she becomes as in her two present sketches, either coarsely cynical or coarsely sentimental, inartistic.[50]

The most damning appraisal of Mansfield to appear in the pages of *The New Age,* however, is probably Orage's satirical *Roman a Clef* portrait of Mansfield in 'Fourth Tale for Men Only', which appeared in serial form in the spring and summer of 1912. In this series, Mansfield appeared a number of times, reimagined as the character 'Mrs. Fosiacre'. In one instalment of this series Orage has the character Tremayne (based, according to Antony Alpers, on J.M. Kennedy)[51] praise "Mrs. Fosiacre"'s 'extraordinary gift of satire', stating that 'Her letters are full of wonderful thumb-nail sketches of people and places.'[52] However, in the following issue, the character meant to represent Orage, R.H. Congreve, describes 'Mrs. Fosiacre' as a 'chameleon', who shifts her style of writing to fit her audience.[53] He tells Tremayne:

> She probably discovered quite early in your acquaintance that satire amused you and produced in you a flattering estimate of herself. What more natural, then, than that she should wear satire in your company and forswear sentimentality? But I dare guess that in other circles she forswears satire with as much conviction. Each, in her opinion, is convenient on occasion; nor has she the least realisation that the two are inharmonious[54]

[49] Unsigned, 'Reviews: *The Blue Review', New Age,* 13.3 (May 15th, 1913), p.64.
[50] Unsigned, 'Reviews: *The Blue Review', New Age,* 13.9 (June 26th, 1913), p.237.
[51] Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield*, p.141.
[52] "R.H. Congreve" [A.R. Orage], 'A Fourth Tale for Men Only II', *New Age,* 11.2 (May 9th, 1912), pp.38-39 (p.39).
[53] "R.H. Congreve" [A.R. Orage], 'A Fourth Tale for Men Only III', *New Age,* 11.3 (May 16th, 1912), pp.61-62 (p.61).
[54] "R.H. Congreve" [A.R. Orage], 'A Fourth Tale for Men Only III', p.62.

It is not difficult to see how this critique can be interpreted as being directed towards Mansfield's ongoing relationship with both *The New Age* and *Rhythm,* with sentiment and satire being played off against one another as the defining features of Mansfield's contributions to each. In case there was any doubt as to which is the better style of writing, Congreve follows up this speech with the assurance that 'for the first-rate sentimentality is offensive, and for the second-rate, satire.'[55] It is perhaps unsurprising, given the title of the piece ('Tales for Men Only') that Orage's satire of Mansfield is misogynistic in tone.[56] He begins by discussing 'the insoluble problem of promiscuity' in relation to Mrs. Fosiacre: first addressing her perceived sexual promiscuity before then equating this to a kind of literary promiscuity, whereby Mrs. Fosiacre delivers different styles of writing to a number of different audiences and different magazines. This notion of literary promiscuity is later echoed by Beatrice Hastings, who claims in a review of *The Blue Review* (in which Mansfield is explicitly mentioned) that most modern writers 'contribute promiscuously, according to the cheque-book.'[57]

'Puzzle: Find the Book', Mansfield's second foray into the 'Pastiche' section, appears on the 13th of June 1912, taking the form of a parodic review of the invented travel book *From Sewer to Cathedral Spire* by 'Professor Rattyscum'.[58] Significantly, Orage's 'Fourth Tale for Men Only' appeared the previous month, in the May 16th issue, and there is an argument to be made that 'Puzzle: Find the Book' is Mansfield's response to the character assassination he made of her the month before. Just as in 'At the Club', part of what makes this piece discomforting is its unusual form. If, as the title suggests, this is supposed to be a parody of a specific real-life book and author which the reader must try to figure out, it is not one that can easily be identified by the modern reader. The piece opens with a comically long and rambling sentence which functions to establish the reviewer's tedious prose style, but which

[55] "R.H. Congreve" [A.R. Orage], 'A Fourth Tale for Men Only III', p.62. Sentimentality is of course a loaded term at this point in time, carrying connotations not only of poor quality literature, but having very clear associations with femininity as well.
[56] In this same instalment, Congreve claims that 'At bottom she is, like the feminine nature wherever it appears, whether in philosophy or in flesh, a mere looking-glass of man. Herself and in herself nothing, absolutely nothing, but reflection, she reveals to each beholder that which he desires to see reflected in her.' (p.62).
[57] 'Reviews: *The Blue Review*' (May 15th, 1913), p.64.
[58] Katherine Mansfield, 'Puzzle: Find the Book', *New Age,* 11.7 (June 13th 1912), p.165.

is also distinctly off-putting to a would-be reader. This is especially true given that the piece appears in the 'Pastiche' section and the reader is thus given no assurance by the editor of the piece's importance or quality prior to reading it. Confronted with an ambiguous title followed by a lengthy and confusing sixty-two word sentence, it is likely that many readers would simply skip over the piece, moving straight to the familiar 'Our Contemporaries' piece which immediately follows it.[59] The reader then encounters the title of a book which sounds as though it could plausibly be real, followed shortly by the name of the author which confirms that it is not. We are unsure if we definitely "get" the joke, whether we are missing something, and whether we have identified the target text correctly. Once again, we find Mansfield deviating from the parameters for a successful joke laid out by Freud. Freud argues that a joke ceases to be funny at the point at which it requires 'intellectual expenditure' and this text frames itself as just that – a puzzle.

But despite its initially off-putting and deliberately destabilising form, there is a lot to unpack within this short parody. 'Puzzle: Find the Book' in fact serves as a parody of two separate genres of writing, namely travel writing and the book review. The first target of Mansfield's parody is the sentimentalising and sexist travel writer, embodied in the character of fictional travel writer Professor Rattyscum. Travel writing was exceedingly popular in *The New Age* at this time. Eager to capitalise on its status as an internationally-engaged magazine, *The New Age* published a number of different travel accounts, including two pieces by Mansfield herself.[60] Much of the travel writing published in *The New Age* sought to distance itself from many of the established conventions of the genre, however, particularly Beatrice Hastings's long-running 'Impressions of Paris' series, which she produced under the pseudonym Alice Morning. This series made use of an innovative, impressionistic style of travel journalism which her biographer Stephen Gray describes as 'the new female style: broken, adept at shifting tone'.[61] We get the sense, however, that *From Sewer to Cathedral*

[59] Bechhofer's 'Our Contemporaries' was an ongoing parody series which first appeared in the 'Pastiche' Section May 2nd 1912. Unlike Mansfield's 'Puzzle', 'Our Contemporaries' had a formulaic structure and clear headings naming the works parodied.
[60] Mansfield contributed two pieces of semi-fictionalised travel writing to *The New Age* in August and September 1911: 'The Journey to Bruges', *New Age,* 9.17 (August 24th, 1911), pp.401-402 and 'Being a Truthful Adventure', *New Age,* 9.19 (September 7th, 1911), pp.450-452.
[61] Gray, *Beatrice Hastings,* p.182.

Spire is of the old-guard of travel writing. Professor Rattyscum is the quintessential imperialist travel writer who 'girdles the earth with his pen point for the reader's delight, keeping ever in motion those twin wellsprings of laughter and tears'.[62] We can infer from the brief extracts included in the review that his writing is sentimental and sanitising, but also reveals a deep undertone of imperialism. The book is 'lavishly illustrated', suggesting a high production value, and perhaps evoking bestselling nineteenth century illustrated travelogues such as David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (1857) or HM Stanley's *Through the Dark Continent* (1878).[63] The book has an implausible scope, with at least '976' pages, and the reviewer claims that it permeates 'every sewer, lighting upon and uplifted by every Cathedral spire of every country where such things are'.[64] If 'Impressions of Paris' represents what is modern and innovative in travel writing, *From Sewer to Cathedral Spire* represents its polar opposite.

We see from the excerpts of the book provided by the reviewer that *From Sewer to Cathedral Spire* is excessively sentimental in tone, and Rattyscum himself is likened to German Romantic poet Heinrich Hein.[65] But this sentimentality is plainly revealed as being a thinly-veiled disguise for the Professor's imperialist and racist attitudes. Nearly all of the people referenced in the review are either cannibals or savages when viewed through the Professor's narrow world-view, and yet the reviewer praises his ability to make these 'primitive' people palatable and even beautiful to his white European readership. The Professor is praised by the reviewer for his ability to achieve 'intimate probing of the psychology of the cannibal heart on the one hand, or writing in rainbow prose the lonely loveliness of mountains at sunrise on the other'.[66] Native peoples are reduced to an aesthetic feature to be rhapsodized over, much like a mountain or a sunrise. Elsewhere, we learn that Rattyscum gives a scene pertaining to 'the beating of a girl-child in the open roadway' the title: "Street Idyll in Wang-Thang."[67] The experiences of these native people, even when

[62] Mansfield, 'Puzzle: Find the Book', p.165.
[63] For more on illustration in colonialist travel narratives, see: Leila Koivunen, *Visualizing Africa in Nineteenth-Century British Travel Accounts* (London: Routledge, 2008).
[64] Mansfield, 'Puzzle: Find the Book', p.165.
[65] Mansfield, 'Puzzle: Find the Book', p.165.
[66] Mansfield, 'Puzzle: Find the Book', p.165.
[67] Mansfield, 'Puzzle: Find the Book', p.165.

violent or horrifying, are treated as a subject to be idealised. This is not an unusual quality of travel writing, particularly that of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Mary Louise Pratt describes how sentimental writing allowed travel writers of this era to construct themselves as the 'non-hero of an anti-conquest', portrayed (misleadingly) as 'a noninterventionist European presence', and this appears to be exactly the way the reviewer perceives Rattyscum.[68] We as readers of Mansfield's parody, however, are given sufficient clues to allow us to perceive the deeply problematic undertones present in Rattyscum's imagined work.

This 'Pastiche' contribution appeared around the same time that Mansfield's other work was beginning to address the subject of colonialism, and we see several parallels between the ideas addressed in 'Puzzle: Find the Book' and those present in her contributions to *Rhythm*. In 1912 *Rhythm* became the site of the first of her 'New Zealand Stories': 'The Woman at the Store' (Spring 1912), 'How Pearl Button was Kidnapped' (September 1912) and 'Ole Underwood' (January 1913), which draw upon her own experiences growing up in New Zealand. Much has been written on how these stories engage with their colonial context.[69] For example, Chris Mourant demonstrates how Mansfield's New Zealand stories 'disrupt visual representations of women and land in *Rhythm,* challenging and subverting the masculine colonial gaze of the quest narrative' which thrives in other contributions to the magazine.[70] He points out in particular how Mansfield's stories forego the implicitly gendered trope of the 'metropolitan idealisation of the colonial frontier as a place of abundance, a "virgin territory" to be penetrated', and this is a trope which we also see her directly satirise in 'Puzzle: Find the Book'.[71] In the reviewer's claim that that Rattyscum 'girdles the earth with his pen point', we can easily see how the version of imperialism which is being satirised in this piece is a gendered one. While the verb 'to girdle' can be used in relation to travel, the word also carries inescapable connotations to the item of female clothing with the same

[68] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.78.
[69] See: Carey Snyder, 'Katherine Mansfield, Rhythm, and Metropolitan Primitivism', *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies,* 5.2 (2014), pp.139-160; Janet Wilson, Gerri Kimber and Delia da Sousa Correa, ed. *Katherine Mansfield and the (post)colonial* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).
[70] Mourant, *Katherine Mansfield and Periodical Culture,* p.158.
[71] Mourant, *Katherine Mansfield and Periodical Culture,* p.149.

name.[72] I would argue that this is a deliberate pun, with Rattyscum 'girdling' the earth in both senses of the word. This metaphor conjures up images of Rattyscum subjugating a feminised planet by forcing it into a girdle: an item of clothing designed to restrict and re-shape the female body into a shape more palatable to the male gaze. It is also significant that he 'girdles' the earth by means of the phallic 'pen point'. Although 'Puzzle: Find the Book' may feel infinitely different to Mansfield's New Zealand Stories, it in fact contains some of the same critiques of the masculine quest narrative which can be found in Mansfield's contributions to *Rhythm* made at around the same time.

The piece also has a second target, however, in the unnamed journalist or book reviewer whose perspective the piece is written from. It is in the parody of the reviewer that we can read this piece as a response to Orage's 'Tales for Men Only' published the month before. Through the reviewer's fawning praise of Rattyscum, we as readers are made witness to both his poor and outmoded taste in literature *and* his comically over-written prose-style:

> In this restricted space I can give you only the cup without the cold water, the quiver without the arrows. You must deepen over the pages until your very eyes seem to fasten on to this vivid colour, to sharpen in it—until you fancy that the book might glow in the dark—you might rise from your bed and see it phosphorescent, luminous, afloat on your table […]

His prose is littered with overblown simile and, of course, reeks of the sentimental—which, as Orage made clear in 'Tales for Men Only', is the favoured style of only 'second-rate' publications.[73] In tones that recall Hastings' parody of Ezra Pound in 'All except Anything', Mansfield satirises the literary reviewer as tasteless, pretentious and implicitly misogynistic, having him replicate Rattyscum's own sexist and imperialist attitudes approvingly and without censure. In her adoption of this persona, Mansfield targets not only Orage personally, but also the standards of his editorial practice and magazine. If it is true that Mansfield had 'Tales

[72] 'Girdle', *Oxford English Dictionary Online* < https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/78469?rskey=9NdZxh&result=3&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 03/03/2020].
[73] "R.H. Congreve" [A.R.Orage], 'Fourth Tale for Men Only III', p.62.

for Men Only' on her mind when she wrote 'Puzzle: Find the Book', then her decision to publish this piece in *The New Age* rather than *Rhythm* reads as an act of defiant and deliberate literary 'promiscuity', turning her biting use of satire on Orage himself, via a satiric parody of the male reviewer published in his very own periodical.

'Puzzle: Find the Book' also serves as a broader satire on the gendered valuation of creative production more generally. The review opens by including, 'in their short entirety', the words of dedication penned by Professor Rattyscum to his artist wife 'to whom we are indebted for the generous profusion of "quarter and half-quarter tone" water colours'. The dedication reads:

> While I did write, thy busy fingers, dabbler,
> Painted the page;
> The verdant prattle of thy child-heart, babbler,
> Sweet'ning the sage
> Words of my virile tongue
> As herbs are hung
> In Juicy breast of roasted farmyard gabbler![74]

The tone of condescension adopted in this supposed extract is clearly intended to satirise the attitudes to female artists espoused by the educated male gatekeepers of the Arts. The poem contains familiar accusations of amateurism suggested by the term 'dabbler', and infantilises the female artist by attributing her with a 'child-heart'. It also describes her speech as 'verdant prattle', which is then in turn contrasted with the 'sage/Words' of her husband's 'virile tongue', setting out a clear contrast between their gender roles and the value of their creative outputs. This piece speaks to the unequal valuation of women's and men's creative outputs in the art industry. The parodic, poor quality of the poem (including the clumsy rhyme of 'dabbler', 'babbler', 'gabbler') adds a further dimension of ironic humour to the piece, with readers being made witness to the fact that Rattyscum is in fact not the 'sage' and gifted man of letters that both he and the reviewer believe him to be.

[74] Mansfield, 'Puzzle: Find the Book', p.165.

The inclusion of Rattyscum's dedication in many ways echoes Mansfield and Hastings' satire of their male contemporaries' attitudes to gender in 'A P.S.A.', which appeared in *The New Age* the previous year.[75] It takes on particular resonance, however, when read in conjunction with the previous month's instalment of 'Tales for Men Only'. We see in Mr and Mrs. Rattyscum a dynamic not dissimilar to the one Orage describes in relation to Mrs. Fosiacre. He writes that: 'At bottom she is, like the feminine nature whether it appears, whether in philosophy or in flesh, a mere looking-glass of man. Herself and in herself nothing, absolutely nothing, but reflection, she reveals to each beholder that which he desires to see reflected in her.'[76] This is the same dynamic we can are made witness to in Mr. and Mrs. Rattyscum's relationship, whereby Mrs. Rattyscum serves as a mirror that reflects back the talents of the true Artist, Professor Rattyscum, and provides him with inspiration and companionship while he produces his "Art". In the character of Mrs. Rattyscum, Mansfield parodies the notion of the idealised 'chaste wife' whose lap provides a 'permanent pillow' for her husband.[77] We can infer from this piece the ways in which Mrs Rattyscum continually moulds herself to her husband's needs, always placing his work ahead of her own. 'Puzzle: Find the Book', then, is a fascinating piece: one which manages to simultaneously satirise sentimentality, imperialism and sexism within the arts, as well as making a subtle dig at Orage himself. It is certainly discomforting: both in its initially confusing form, and in terms of its subject matter, but it is also an incredibly effective piece of satire, albeit one which is only accessible to a select audience, with the subtle digs at Orage being easily missed by the casual reader.

Just as Ada Leverson's *Punch* contributions operate on multiple levels depending on the reader's familiarity with the author and her social circle, so too are aspects of Mansfield's 'Pastiche' contributions imperceptible to the casual reader. The same is true of the next piece to appear in the 'Pastiche' section, 'Green Goggles'. This piece is actually not quite so discomforting as the other two. Published a month later, on July 4th 1912, 'Green Goggles' is a parody of a Russian novel. Given the reference to goggles in the title, it has

[75] "K.M." and "B.H." [Katherine Mansfield and Beatrice Hastings], 'A P.S.A.'. For more on the feminist implications of this set of parodies, see: Snyder, 'Katherine Mansfield and the *New Age* School of Satire'.
[76] "R.H. Congreve" [A.R. Orage], 'A Fourth Tale for Men Only III', p.62.
[77] Mansfield, 'Puzzle: Find the Book', p.165.

usually been interpreted as a Nikolai Gogol parody, although it is not stated anywhere in the text exactly what author or text is being parodied.[78] Both *The New Age* and *Rhythm* were just beginning to incorporate Russian literature into their magazines at this time. *Rhythm* were perhaps slightly ahead of the game, publishing Mansfield's own Boris Petrovsky poems in the Spring 1912 issue.[79] The July 1912 issue carried an article on the Russian Ballet and the October 1912 issue contains a translation of 'The Present' by Leonide Andreiff.[80] *The New Age,* though slightly behind the curve, were also beginning to pay attention to Russian literature at this time, and the same issue in which 'Green Goggles' appears also contains a translation of Chekov's 'In Search of Information', translated by P. Selver.[81] These translations by Selver would become a regular feature of the magazine, but up until this point there had been very little Russian literature discussed or published in the magazine. Mansfield, however, was obsessed with Russia, occasionally referring to herself with Russian versions of her own name such as 'Katerina' or 'Katoushka', as well as by the pseudonym Boris Petrovsky which she used in *Rhythm*.[82] The Boris Petrovsky pseudonym is particularly significant here because 'Green Goggles' seems to make a direct reference to the Petrovsky pseudonym which Mansfield had recently used in *Rhythm*. The 'young man' who features in the text unmasks himself, revealing himself to in fact be 'Olga Petrovska', a woman in disguise. With the name 'Petrovska' being so close to Mansfield's own pseudonym Petrovsky, Mourant reads this piece as an unmasking of Mansfield herself, with Olga Petrovska being 'a distorted self-portrait of Mansfield, an enigmatic and radical female "outsider" confronting an uncertain exile'.[83]

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[78] Alpers states that it could be 'almost any Russian writer, from Gogol to Chekhov' (p.393). Chris Mourant reads it as a definite Gogol parody.

[79] "Boris Petrovsky" [Katherine Mansfield], 'Very Early Spring' and 'The Awakening River', *Rhythm,* 1.4 (Spring 1912), p.30.

[80] George Banks, 'Petrouchka: The Russian Ballet', *Rhythm,* 2.6 (July, 1912), pp.57-63; Leonide Andreiff [alternative spelling of Leonid Andreyev], 'The Present', *Rhythm,* 2.9 (October, 1912), pp.207-213.

[81] P. Selver, trans. 'In Search of Information by Anton Tchekov' [alternative spelling of Anton Chekhov], *New Age,* 11.10 (July 4th, 1912), pp.229-230.

[82] Mourant, *Katherine Mansfield and Periodical Culture,* p.116; see also: Galya Diment, Gerri Kimber and Todd Martin, ed. *Katherine Mansfield and Russia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).

[83] Mourant, *Katherine Mansfield and Periodical Culture,* p.127 (see also: Chris Mourant, 'Parodic Translation: Katherine Mansfield and the "Boris Petrovsky" Pseudonym', *Katherine Mansfield and Translation*. Olga Petrovska's smile is also described as 'miraculous, as the unfolding of a lily on a desolate sea', perhaps referencing one of Mansfield's other pseudonyms, Lili Heron, which did not appear in *Rhythm* until the September 1912 issue.

It is true that 'Green Goggles' parodies the dramatic plot twists and meandering realist style of the Russian novel but the real butt of the joke is its central character, the absurd and pompous Dimitri Tchernikofskoi. Dimitri is a character who feels familiar to many of Mansfield's *New Age* contributions, particularly 'Puzzle: Find the Book'. Dimitri is uptight, his starched collar so tight that he feels 'as though the starch were permeating his skin and stiffening the throat muscles.'[84] 'Green Goggles' satirises his pseudo-intellectualism. He is constantly returning to 'deep' (but ultimately meaningless) platitudes concerning 'the values and revalues and supervalues of good and evil'.[85] When he makes a comment about the child-rearing standards in Russia, he congratulates himself by thinking 'Yes, that was deep!'[86] Pretentious and egotistical, he has his servant refer to him as 'Little Father', a term usually used in relation to a Tzar.[87] Dimitri, like Rattyscum and the book reviewer in 'Puzzle: Find the Book', is a further satire on the pretentious and egotistical public intellectual. What is different in this instance, however, is the fact that Dimitri is comically enamoured by the (largely indifferent) Olga Petrovska. Mansfield writes: 'He felt her tears falling—her tears on his hands. "Ah," he thought with a fierce, intense joy, "they must never be washed again. They are purified.'[88] In Dimitri Tchernikofskoi, Mansfield takes her satire of the pseudo-intellectual patriarch one step further by having him worship at the feet of her own author-insert character.

It is impossible to say whether Mansfield had Orage himself in mind when penning this satire of the absurd and pompous Dimitri, although it is significant that when we meet him, he is contemplating the fact that: 'it is impossible to speak of a concrete ideal […] in the first place, concrete is a composition. It is not a pure substance. Therefore it must be divided against itself."'[89] Orage's chief complaint in 'Tales of Men Only' is that "Fosiacre"'s 'very nature is irreducibly mixed'.[90] She refuses to conform to a single set of ideals, or choose

[84] Katherine Mansfield, 'Green Goggles', *New Age,* 11.10 (July 4th 1912), p.237.
[85] Mansfield, 'Green Goggles', p.237.
[86] Mansfield, 'Green Goggles', p.237.
[87] This is also, interestingly, the term Mansfield uses to refer to the 'Little Fathers of Fleet Street' in her letter 'A Paper Chase' (Mansfield, 'A Paper Chase', p.355).
[88] Mansfield, 'Green Goggles', p.237.
[89] Mansfield, 'Green Goggles', p.237.
[90] Orage, 'Tales for Men Only', p.61.

between the apparently 'inharmonious' modes of satire and sentiment.[91] Because of this, Congreve declares her to be promiscuous and superficial, switching her ideals and allegiances according to the company she is in. It is interesting, then, that this piece published only two months later opens with a pretentious pseudo-intellectual slowly coming to the realisation that even the most concrete idea contains internal contradiction, is 'divided against itself'.[92]

Mansfield's 1912 'Pastiche' contributions, then, while each distinct, have a number of themes in common. All three of them satirise the pseudo-intellectualism of a self-professed cultural elite (an elite which, in light of the animosity between Mansfield and Orage, may very well be based upon an imagined readership of *The New Age,* or indeed, on Orage himself). In 'Puzzle: Find the Book' and 'Green Goggles', this takes the specific form of a patriarchal figure in the notably similar characters of Professor Rattyscum and Dimitri Tchernikofskoi. Mansfield's 'Pastiche' contributions differ from those she made to other periodical contributions around the same time—those published in the main body of *The New Age* and in *Rhythm*—by the nature of their formal instability, which renders the process of reading them often difficult or confusing. Upon closer reading, though, it becomes clear that Mansfield's 'Pastiche' contributions in fact engage with similar themes to the work she submitted to *Rhythm* at the same time, though they are approached in a markedly different manner. All three 'Pastiche' contributions contain critiques of sex and gender relations, and all three demonstrate an awareness of their colonial context.[93] While on the one hand these 1912 contributions can be seen as a means for Mansfield to respond to Orage's attacks on her character in 'Tales for Men Only', they also serve a purpose beyond this, allowing her to experiment with humour as a means to explore some of the same themes which populate her more famous works.

[91] Orage, 'Tales for Men Only', p.62.
[92] Mansfield, 'Green Goggles', p.237.
[93] From a 'Bright Creature' in 'At the Club' exclaiming that 'we can't lie about on Persian pillows nowadays and kiss our loves between mouthfuls of Turkish delight', to Mansfield's own association of her own identity with that of the exiled Russian outlaw Olga Petrovska. (For more on the colonial subtext in 'Green Goggles', see: Mourant, *Katherine Mansfield and Periodical Culture,* p.127).

'Fragments' (1917)

Mansfield's work did not appear in the 'Pastiche' section again until 1917, when she contributed twice more, with 'Fragments' in April and 'Miss Elizabeth Smith' in December.[94] 'Miss Elizabeth Smith' was not only Mansfield's final 'Pastiche' contribution, but her final *New Age* contribution entirely. It responds to a passage from Thomas de Quincey in which he congratulates his acquaintance the talented linguist and translator Elizabeth Smith for producing a currant tart in adverse conditions.[95] 'Fragments', published a few months earlier in April 1917 is probably the more interesting of these two pieces, however. This piece is far less straightforwardly comic than Mansfield's other 'Pastiche' contributions. The reason for this may seem obvious from a biographical standpoint: by 1917 Mansfield had undergone a considerable amount of personal trauma. In 1915 she lost her brother to the First World War, and in the autumn of 1917 she would be diagnosed with the tuberculosis which would eventually lead to her early death.[96] When these fragments were written, Mansfield was living alone in a flat in Chelsea. Commenting on this time in a letter, she writes that: 'I am a recluse at present and do nothing but write and read and read and write—seeing nobody and going nowhere.'[97] We see some of her boredom and loneliness inform the heavily autobiographical 'Fragments'. Of all Mansfield's *New Age* contributions, this is the one most explicitly based on her real life. One fragment refers to "L.M." (the name by which Mansfield refers to her friend Ida Baker throughout her letters and journals) and the name Katherine is also used. Although they take the form of separate fragments, there is a sense of narrative throughout: one which tells of a woman living alone, as is suggested by the titles of the individual fragments '*Alors je Pars'* [So, I leave], 'Living Alone', and 'Beware of the Rain' (in

[94] The reason for the five-year hiatus is unclear, although Alpers suggests that Mansfield may have published 'Fragments' at Orage's request. Many of his usual contributors were away at war, and Beatrice Hastings had gone to Paris, so he was short on content (Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield,* pp.237-238).
[95] See: David Masson, ed. *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey, Vol. II* (London: A. & C. Black, 1896), pp.403-418 (p.412).
[96] Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield,* p.237. At the point at which she wrote these 'Fragments', Mansfield had not yet been formally diagnosed, but we can see from clues in the fragments themselves that her health was failing and that she was acutely aware of this fact.
[97] Katherine Mansfield, letter to Bertrand Russell, 24th February 1917, reprinted in Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield,* p.236.

which the character remarks: 'I am twenty-eight, and I have chosen, but absolutely deliberately chosen, to live quite alone for ever.'[98]).

While the tone of the piece is overwhelmingly sad, these fragments are still not entirely divorced from humour. 'Living Alone', for example, reads, in its entirety: 'Even if I should, by some awful chance, find a hair upon my bread and honey—at any rate, it is my own hair.'[99] In 'Beware of the Rain!' the lamp-lit street after the rain 'Looks like a very bad illustration out of a Dickens novel.'[100] These pithy observations are interspersed with haunting reminders of the speaker's failing physical and mental health. She describes, for instance, 'walking up the ample, difficult staircase, taking breath upon the little landings, struggling up the narrow ways', a passage which now reads as particularly haunting in light of Mansfield's encroaching illness.[101] These fragments take the juxtaposition of comedy and dark or upsetting themes which we see throughout Mansfield's works to its extreme. In the fragmented, disjointed form of this piece we see horribly sad personal reflections on loneliness and mortality juxtaposed with jaunty comments on the authors Mansfield was reading at the time ('E.M. Forster never gets any further than warming the teapot. […] is it not beautifully warm? Yes, but there ain't going to be no tea.'[102]).

Not only do these 'Fragments' combine comic and disturbing elements, they also signal to the reader that they are doing so. Themes of doubleness pervade the fragments. 'Beware of the Rain!', for example, sees the fictionalised 'Katherine' confronting herself in the mirror, revealing the two parts to her personality. One Katherine laughs, and the other chastises her:

> The creature in the glass gives a short laugh and says: "C'est pour rire, ça." But you reply severely: "Don't speak French if you're English; it's a vulgar habit."[103]

[98] Katherine Mansfield, 'Fragments: Beware of the Rain!', *New Age,* 20.25 (April 19th, 1917), p.595. Twenty-eight is also the age Mansfield would have been at this point, further suggesting that these fragments are autobiographical in nature.
[99] Mansfield, 'Fragments: Living Alone', p.595.
[100] Mansfield, 'Fragments: Beware of the Rain!', p.595.
[101] Mansfield, 'Fragments: Cephalus', p.595.
[102] Mansfield, 'Fragments: E.M. Forster', p.595.
[103] Mansfield, 'Fragments: Beware of the Rain!', p.595.

From this, we gain a sense of the narrator experiencing a dividedness of identity. In the same fragment, Mansfield then goes on to write that: 'Two little roof gutters flow into the garden. In the dark they sound like two women sobbing and laughing, talking together and complaining and laughing, out in the wet garden.'[104] This simile seems to sum up the piece as a whole, the tone being caught somewhere between sobbing and laughing. When 'Congreve' accused 'Mrs. Fosiacre' as not having 'the least realisation' that satire and sentiment are 'inharmonious', it was almost as though Mansfield set out to prove him right. What we see throughout her 'Pastiche' contributions is an exploration, rather than an attempt to reconcile, the ambivalence of laughter. Her 'Pastiche' contributions show not a harmonious relationship between the two exactly, but certainly a refusal to see satire and sentiment as mutually exclusive. Her work in *The New Age* continually combines dark or upsetting themes with humour, continually treading the fine line between humour and discomfort: a tactic which finds its ultimate realisation in the ambivalent and deeply discomforting 'Fragments' published in 1917.

It is somewhat ironic, given the magazine's hostile treatment of Mansfield from 1912 onwards, that *The New Age* provided the perfect forum in which to explore these contradictions. The format of *The New Age* facilitated Mansfield's experiments in humour perfectly: this was in part due to the 'Pastiche' section's suitability to formally unstable and discomforting texts, and in part due to the magazine's openness to publishing diverse content—including pieces which serve to attack its own contributors or editor. *The New Age,* for all its faults, provided an ideal format to facilitate Mansfield's experiments with humour, as well as her early engagement with formal modernism. Perhaps Mansfield's continued engagement with the magazine in 1912 onwards can best be described as a kind of symbiosis, with Mansfield and Orage both benefitting from the relationship, despite their mutual hostility. While Orage was quick to criticise Mansfield, he was also quick to publish her work (nearly all of her 'Pastiche' contributions are the first item to appear in the section, and he nearly always features her name in the table of contents when she appears). Despite

[104] Mansfield, 'Fragments: Beware of the Rain!', p.595.

making his bigoted views about Mansfield public, he was also not choosy about profiting from her increasingly famous name.

As for Mansfield, *The New Age's* 'Pastiche' section formed a means through which she could interrogate and critique the tension between the comic and the traumatic, laughter and violence. Publishing here meant that her work was less vulnerable to the kinds of biting critique she received from the pieces she submitted to *Rhythm,* going largely unnoticed even now. This afforded Mansfield a level of creative freedom which she seized upon in these contributions, many of which evidence significant formal experimentation. At times the formal instability of the pieces inhibits their capacity for humour but there is certainly a case to be made that this is intentional: disallowing the easy and thoughtless mob-laughter of which Mansfield was so often critical. They seem to embrace and revel in their own ambivalence, refusing to see satire and sentiment as fundamentally opposed. The next chapter of this thesis will address American cartoonist Cornelia Barns whose work bears some surprising similarities to Mansfield's. It will explore how dark and discomforting humour informed Barns' work, and how her cartoons interrogate many of the same themes as Mansfield's, including sexual violence, laughter and the mob.

Chapter Four

'A Sense of Humor and no Respect for the Respectable': Cornelia Barns' Cartoons and Cover Art for *The Masses* and *The Liberator* (1913-1924)

This chapter introduces the first and only visual artist this thesis will discuss: Cornelia Barns (1888–1941), a cartoonist who worked for *The Masses* (later, *The Liberator*) between 1913 and 1924. Barns was a prolific contributor to the magazine, and is remarkable for being one of very few women who contributed to the magazine's cartoon culture, but is often overlooked or forgotten. She is seldom credited as being political in her work, and yet, a lifelong member of the socialist party, Barns' views on feminism, socialism and women's suffrage can be repeatedly seen to influence her work, to varying degrees of overtness. This chapter is interested in reassessing Barns as a political artist, whose work reveals greater commonality to the avant-garde feminists discussed throughout this thesis than to the other female artists publishing in *The Masses,* amongst whom she is commonly grouped. Unlike her fellow contributors Alice Beach Winter or Josephine Nivison, Barns did not draw in the realist or sentimental mode, but rather adopted humour as her main defining mode of expression. This chapter will argue that Barns' cartoons possess a greater degree of complexity than they are usually given credit for. It will examine a selection of her contributions to *The Masses* and *The Liberator,* starting with some of her early cartoons in *The Masses*, which serve to highlight the constructed and performative nature of gender. It will then uncover the undertones of sexual violence in some of the cartoons Barns published during World War One, before moving on to her cover art for *The Liberator,* showing how Barns subverted the trope of the 'Cover Girl', to produce images that were both complex and ambivalent.

The Masses, established in New York in 1911, was a monthly publication dedicated to the cause of socialism, distinctive in its collaborative editorial methods and striking use of

illustration.[1] *The Masses* placed a great importance on the visual arts from the moment of its inception. The manifesto published in its first issue proclaims it to be 'a general ILLUSTRATED magazine of art, literature, politics and science', and goes on to state that it 'will print cartoons and illustrations of the text by the best artists of the country, on a quality of paper that will really reproduce them.'[2] The magazine is hailed as the birthplace of the 'Ashcan School' of art, as well as being notable for its publication of political cartoons by well-known artists such as Art Young, John Sloan, Maurice Becker and K.R. Chamberlain.[3] Not only did *The Masses* seek to publish a high volume of visual art, it also placed great importance on the production value of the images it published: the need for high quality reproductions on good paper being described in its manifesto piece as 'a necessary luxury'.[4] This respect for and attention to the visual arts, established from its very first issue, was something *The Masses* maintained under the editorship of Max Eastman (who took over the magazine from August 1912) and also when it was rebranded as *The Liberator* in 1918.[5]

Under the direction of its contributing editors, cartoons were never seen as separate from or lesser than the more traditional artwork published by the magazine. In fact, *The Masses* went out of its way to advertise its sense of humour as one of the things that made the magazine distinctive and, ultimately, successful.[6] Rebecca Zurier describes a shift in values as taking place in 1912, under the editorship of Eastman, wherein a renewed emphasis on satire and humour was actively sought after by the editors. She states that

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[1] The editorship of *The Masses* was collaborative in that submissions for content were selected and voted upon by a team of editors, each of whom were equally responsible for ensuring the quality of contributions. For more on this see: Benoît Tadié, 'The Masses Speak: *The Masses* (1911-17)*; The Liberator* (1918-24)*; New Masses* (1926-48)*;* and *Masses & Mainstream* (1948-63)', *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines, Vol.II: North America 1894-1960,* ed. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[2] 'The *Masses', Masses,* 1.1 (January 1911), p.3.

[3] For more on this, see: Rebecca Zurier, *Art for The Masses: A Radical Magazine and its Graphics, 1911-1917* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988)*,* Rebecca Zurier, *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2006).

[4] 'The *Masses',* p.3.

[5] *The Masses* ceased publication in 1917, owing to multiple lawsuits and the US Government barring it from circulation by post. It reformed as *The Liberator* in March 1918 with the same editorial staff and format. There are some significant differences in terms of the ownership of these magazines (*The Liberator* being owned as well as edited by Max and Crystal Eastman) but for the purposes of this chapter I will be considering *The Liberator* as a re-formation of *The Masses* under a different name*,* rather than as a discrete publication.

[6] It was also a cartoon by Art Young that led to him, along with Max Eastman and John Reed, being tried for Treason in 1917. See: William L O'Neill, *Echoes of Revolt: The Masses, 1911-1917* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966), p.21.

'Rather than preaching at their readers, as [the previous editor] Vlagand Weeks had done, the editors meant to "appeal … to the masses" by entertaining them.'[7] The masthead which appeared at the top of each issue of the magazine from February 1913 onward declared *The Masses* 'A MAGAZINE WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR AND NO RESPECT FOR THE RESPECTABLE'.[8] Max Eastman, in his memoir, describes *The Masses* as 'a model of the combination of fervor and fun', listing cartoonist Art Young as one of the magazine's 'chief assets.'[9] Cartoons were therefore as much a part of the magazine's image and branding as the more traditional artworks that it published. But this culture of humour and cartoon publishing was one of the more male-dominated areas of *The Masses.* In fact, the only female cartoonist who published regularly in the magazine is Barns herself.

The Masses was, from its outset, supportive of women's rights. Its interest in feminist issues went beyond simply supporting women's suffrage, with the magazine dedicating significant page space to the discussion of topics as diverse as birth control, prostitution, "free love", women and socialism, motherhood, and equal pay.[10] It is worth mentioning that a large proportion of the feminist discourse to appear in *The Masses* was written by men.[11] *The Masses* also published a significant number of women writers and artists, including polemicists such as Inez Haynes Gillmore and poets such as Lydia Gibson and Helen Hoyt. As mentioned above, there were also female visual artists who worked for *The Masses,* however very few of these women contributors engaged in the magazine's humour culture. It was not that the magazine's twin cultures of feminism and humour were seen as incompatible. K.R. Chamberlain, a male cartoonist, produced some powerful feminist images and cartoons, as did several other male contributors.[12] But there was a distinct lack of cartoons published *by*

[7] Zurier, *Art for The Masses,* p.36.
[8] *Masses,* 4.5 (February 1913), p.2.
[9] Max Eastman, *Love and Revolution: My Journey through an Epoch* (New York: Random House, 1964), p.74.
[10] See: The 'Women's Number', *Masses,* 1.12 (December 1911), which contains articles such as 'Women and Socialism' (p.3) and Lena Morrow Lewis, 'The Sex and Woman Questions' (p.7). *The Masses* is also mentioned by Lucy Delap as being one of the birthplaces of Avant-Garde Feminism.
[11] William L O'Neill*, Echoes of Revolt: The Masses, 1911-1917* (Chicago: Elephant, 1989), p.179.
[12] *See:* K.R. Chamberlain, 'Woman's Sphere', *Masses,* 7.1 (October-November 1915), p.28; K.R. Chamberlain 'T. Atkins, Who Believes That Woman's Place Is in the Home…', *Masses,* 8.12 (October 1916), p.13; K.R. Chamberlain, 'Your Man Called to the Front, Mrs. 'Awkins?', *Masses,* 9.3 (January 1917), p.13. See Also: HJ Turner, 'Oh, Hello, Nellie', *Masses,* 4.5 (February 1913), p.14; Stuart Davis, 'Types of Anti-Suffragists', *Masses,* 7.1 (October-November 1915), pp.14-15; Maurice Becker, 'They ain't our equals yet', *Masses,* 9.3 (January, 1917), p.19.

women. Mary Gruening contributed a single cartoon to the October 1914 issue.[13] Ethel Plummer and Dorothy Fuller each contributed a single cartoon image for the magazine in 1917.[14] Elizabeth Grieg (also spelt Greig) published several images in *The Masses,* although whether or not they are cartoons is debatable: they are more realist in style than many of the other cartoons published by *The Masses,* but were published along with humorous captions in what became *The Masses'* standard cartoon format.[15] The captions alone cannot be said to cement Grieg's status as a cartoonist, however, as Max Eastman states that image captions in *The Masses* were 'a supplemental element— often, in fact, supplied by the editors in the office.'[16] Certainly Grieg is the closest thing to another regular female cartoonist *The Masses* produced other than Barns, but Barns still markedly outstrips her in terms of prolificacy. Barns was a regular contributor from 1913 onwards, and went on to become a Contributing Art Editor of both *The Masses* and *The Liberator.* She produced a total of 78 images for the magazines over this eleven year period, including captioned cartoons, cover designs and full-page drawings, and is named by Margaret Jones as one of the eleven women she regards as being 'central to the life of *The Masses*'.[17] And yet Barns is now an almost forgotten figure, usually remembered only as a footnote in *The Masses'* grand narrative.

What little scholarship there is on Barns tends to consist of passing mentions in larger works on *The Masses* as a whole.[18] She is generally regarded as a fairly minor figure with a sharp eye for comic observation, whose politics are little reflected in her work.[19] This is

[13] Mary Gruening, 'Fine Pig, Eh?', *Masses,* 6.1 (October 1914), p.19.
[14] Dorothy Fuller, 'Good News', *Masses,* 9.9 (July 1917), p.31; Ethel Plummer, 'Onlookers', *Masses,* 10.1 (November-December 1917), p.16.
[15] Elizabeth Greig, 'At the City Hospital', *Masses,* 5.5 (February 1914), p.13; Elizabeth Greig, 'At Meunier's Sculptures of Labor', *Masses,* 5.7 (April 1914), p.11; Elizabeth Grieg, 'What Every Young Woman Ought to Have Known', *Masses,* 6.7 (April 1915), p.23; Elizabeth Grieg, 'Look at that Suffragette', *Masses,* 7.1 (October-November, 1915), p.19; Elizabeth Grieg, 'Clinic Doctor to Patient', *Masses,* 8.10 (August 1916), p.11; Elizabeth Grieg, 'When can I get my ten cents back?', *Masses,* 8.11 (September 1916), p.25.
[16] Max Eastman, *The Enjoyment of Laughter* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1936), p.113.
[17] Margaret C. Jones, *Heretics and Hellraisers: Women Contributors to The Masses, 1911-1917 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993),* p.136.
[18] See: Zurier, *Art for The Masses,* p.101, p.147, p.155.; Rachel Schreiber, *Gender and Activism in a Little Magazine: The Modern Figures of the Masses* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), p.6; Alice Sheppard, *Cartooning for Suffrage* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993) p.205.
[19] See: Zurier, *Art for the Masses,* p.101; Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt, 'Art on the Political Front in America: From *The Liberator* to *Art Front*', *Art Journal,* 52.1 (1993), p.72-81 (p.73).

something which is probably not helped by Max Eastman's description of Barns that appeared in his 1960 memoir:

> Cornelia possessed an instinct for the comic in pictorial art that few American artists have ever surpassed. She was a gentle brown-eyed girl with soft hair sleeked down around a comely and quiet face. She had no ambition or aggression in her nature, and came/through the open door of the *Masses* like a child into a playroom, moved only by her liking for what she saw there.[20]

Barns, age 24 at the time she first appeared in *The Masses,* is described by Eastman as a 'girl' rather than a woman, and likened to a 'child into a playroom'. He concentrates on her physical appearance over her artistic ability, and describes her in terms of stereotypical femininity: as being 'gentle', 'quiet', and lacking in 'ambition or aggression'. This conception of Barns as soft, gentle and ultimately harmless is one which prevails even in more recent scholarship. In 1988 Rebecca Zurier claimed that Barns' cartoons 'refrained from any serious social analysis' and attributes her as engaging in a 'gentler kind of joshing'.[21] In 1993, Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt described Barns' *Liberator* cartoons as '*mildly* critical or satirical' (my emphasis).[22] This impression of Barns as mild and gentle is not in keeping with the previous three women discussed in this thesis, each of whom have been described as cuttingly satirical and sometimes even cruel in their use of humour. Barns held staunch political convictions in her personal life, being a member of the Socialist Party, and contributing to feminist periodicals like *The Suffragist, The Woman Voter* and *The Birth Control Review.*[23] And yet, while there is a clear consensus that Barns' *Masses* cartoons were successful in their use of humour, it is not so well-established that this humour went hand-in-hand with an overt political intent.

[20] Eastman, *Love and Revolution,* pp.23-4.
[21] Zurier, *Art for the Masses,* p.101.
[22] Marquardt, 'Art on the Political Front', p.73.
[23] Chris Petteys, *Dictionary of Women Artists: An International Dictionary of Women Artists Born Before 1900* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1985), p.45.

An article by Edward Mckenna published in *Masses* June 1915, however, contradicts this impression of Barns as gentle and unassuming. He quips: 'If the feminists had a vivid sense of Humor, they would make Cornelia Barns a queen and raise a triple crown upon her head. But the feminists haven't, so we men are safe for a while, God wot.'[24] It is significant that, even while making a case for Barns' status as a feminist figure, Mckenna also gestures to the fact that she was not commonly seen in this way. Certainly many of Barns' cartoons lack a straightforward political stance or aggressive intent, but as a complete body of work they reveal patterns of feminist and socialist critique which place Barns in clear parallel to the other women discussed by this thesis. This chapter is interested in further exploring Barns' approach to both art and politics, considering whether there was, in fact, a latent 'ambitious' or 'aggressive' element to her work, and if so, why this element is so readily dismissed by scholars.

Feminism, Suffragism and the Foolish Young Man

In order to scrutinise the subtly disguised strain of radical feminism in Barns' work, I will first look to her earliest contributions to *The Masses,* and what is also some of her best-known work: her cartoons of young men, published around 1912-13. These cartoons feature in Alice Sheppard's *Cartooning for Suffrage* and in Margaret Jones' *Heretics and Hellraisers*, as well as being given a specific mention in Edmond McKenna's article, discussed above. He writes that Barns 'saw the young American Male, callow, sallow, silly. She made pictures of this Lord of all he leered at and sneered at.'[25] We see the trope of the foolish young man in

[24] Edmond McKenna, 'Art and Humor', *Masses*, 6.9 (June 1915), pp.10-12 (p.11).
[25] McKenna, 'Art and Humor', p.11.

the first cartoon by Barns to appear in *The Masses:* 'Anti-Suffrage Argument no.187' (See Fig.1). This cartoon shows a group of men transfixed by a shop window displaying male fashions. The caption reads: 'Anti-Suffrage Argument no.187: "Women are too frivolous, they think about nothing but styles and fashions"'.[26] This is a relatively straightforward cartoon depicting the hypocrisy implicit within anti-suffrage rhetoric, but it is distinct from the types of pro-suffrage cartoons that commonly appeared during this period.

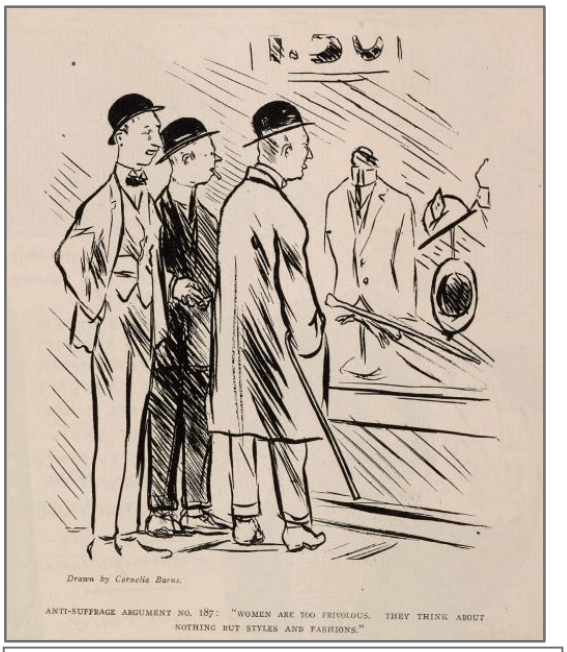

Figure 1. Cornelia Barns, 'Anti-Suffrage Argument No.187', *Masses,* 4.6 (March 1913), p.12.

A tradition of lampooning and vilifying suffragettes was well established in the mainstream media by 1912 but, actually, pro-suffrage cartoons were also becoming more prominent in US mainstream media around this time. Periodicals such as *Life* and *Puck* which had previously been strongly anti-suffrage in the majority of the content they published, began to change their stance and publish pro-suffrage issues during the 1910s.[27] What is interesting, however, is that in many cases the target of their ridicule became the anti-suffragist woman. Often she would be coded in the same way as the pro-suffrage woman had been ten years earlier: either as shrill and illogical, or domineering or severe.[28] This is something noted by Alice Sheppard, who states that often in pro-suffrage media, 'Both suffrage rhetoric and the cartoons that encapsulated that rhetoric reinforced the very prejudices that kept some old attitudes in place.'[29] Barns' images,

[26] Cornelia Barns, 'Anti-Suffrage Argument No.187', *Masses,* 4.6 (March 1913), p.12.
[27] *Life* magazine put out its 'Pro-Suffrage number' October 16th, 1913; *Puck* also followed suit, bringing out a 'Suffrage Cartoon Special' in 1915.
[28] See: 'Nightmare of an Anti-Suffragist', *Puck* 'Suffrage Cartoon Special' (February 15th, 1915), p.5; 'Madame Anti Makes her Annual Report', *Puck* (February 15th, 1915), p.6. Also, 'Some Suffrage Aphorisms', *Puck* (February 15th, 1915), p.4, which states: 'The anti should realize that the intellectual burden of the ballot would not be too heavy, even for her. She would be compelled to think only once every two years, and could play bridge the rest of the time.' The focus of this issue is strongly geared towards satirising the anti-suffrage woman (often through the use of sexist stereotypes), rather than criticising the underlying power structures that produced and maintained women's disenfranchisement.
[29] Alice Sheppard, *Cartooning for Suffrage* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), pp.10-11.

by way of contrast, succeed in playfully unpicking and de-naturalising the gender norms and stereotypes which underpinned both suffrage and anti-suffrage rhetoric alike.

The cartoon below is an example of the ways in which pro-suffrage cartoons would often reinforce gendered stereotypes. This cartoon, entitled 'Nightmare of an Anti-Suffragist', is a parody of John Trumbell's painting 'Declaration of Independence' (1817). It shows an anti-suffrage woman running in horror from the signing of the declaration of independence, crying 'Help! This is no place for me! These people are objecting to taxation without representation!'[30] The supreme irony that a woman is being held up as the figure of anti-democracy and the denial of suffrage while the (exclusively white, wealthy, male) founding fathers are used to represent fair and equal representation appears to be lost on the artist. The way the anti-suffragist woman is depicted is particularly telling. She is drawn wearing a sash that reads "The Anti", which itself visually echoes the "Votes for Women" sashes worn by members of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in the UK, and the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in the US. What is more, familiar sexist tropes are being employed in this image to depict the anti-suffrage woman as ridiculous and over-emotional. She is shown in the foreground running from the room with her hands thrown wide and her mouth gaping, providing a stark contrast with the stoic and dignified founding fathers in the rear of the image. Despite *Puck's* sudden transformation from anti to pro-suffrage, then, the focus of their satire is still on women, and they still rely on the same sexist iconography in order to get their point across. The only

Fig. 2 'Nightmare of an Anti-Suffragist', *Puck* 'Suffrage Cartoon Special' (February 15th, 1915), p.5

[30] 'Nightmare of an Anti-Suffragist', *Puck* (February 15th, 1915), p.5.

difference is that now it is the anti-suffrage woman, rather than the suffragette, who provides the target for their ridicule.

The most striking difference between Barns' cartoons and other examples of pro-suffrage cartoon is that while most suffrage cartoons produced in this period—even those in support of the suffrage movement—were focussed on comic images of women, Barns' chosen subject was the white American male. The men she portrays are comically drawn, with long bandy legs and foolish expressions, but are not depicted with any real malice. What is radical about these images is the fact that Barns refuses to subject the female figure to any further ridicule or scrutiny than she already receives: instead, she turns her lens on her male counterpart. What is more, the men she portrays are often shown as having the same characteristics commonly attributed to young women: foolishness, vanity, superficiality and silliness. The theme of male vanity introduced in 'Anti-Suffrage Argument No.187' recurs in a number of Barns' cartoons. 'Beauty Shop' for example, shows a row of men in a barber's shop being shaved and having their shoes shined, while 'Lords of Creation' (*Masses* May 1913) which will be discussed below, shows a group of men posing for a photograph (Fig.3).[31] In highlighting these traits Barns not only ridicules men, but also makes the case that the traits shown are by no means unique to the female sex.

As well as being a rejoinder to the common characterisation of young women in the media, and a pro-suffrage statement, 'Anti-Suffrage Argument No.187' also functions as a critique of masculinity more broadly. Rachel Schreibner notes that 'in the *Masses*, idealized working-class male figures were often contrasted to wealthy, "unmanly" men. […] indeed, the Masses artists often distinguish between valorized, working-class masculinity and denigrated, elite masculinity.'[32] Barns certainly draws on these tropes of the unmanly elite urban male, but does not offer us a valorised working-class alternative. Instead, her use of this stock-figure serves to contradict the notion of men as the superior or more advanced sex:

[31] Cornelia Barns, 'Lords of Creation', *Masses,* 4.8 (May 1913), p.7. 'Beauty Shop' does not seem to appear in any of the indexes or contents list for *The Liberator* or *The Masses,* but is included in the Marxist Internet Archive, with Barns' signature clearly visible: <https://www.marxists.org/subject/art/visual_arts/satire/burns/barns4.html> [accessed 28/08/20]. They cite it as appearing in the March 1918 issue, but I can only assume this is a mis-citation as the cartoon does not appear in this issue.

[32] Schreibner, *Gender and Activism in a Little Magazine,* p.21.

something which is suggested by their bodies—weak-chinned and unmuscular—as much as in their actions. The men drawn by Barns are often depicted as weak, silly and vain. They are sometimes emasculated, as in a cartoon published September 1914, which shows a thin man struggling to row a disinterested woman in a rowboat (The caption reads: '"Honestly, Julia, Which Do You Prefer—Brain or Brawn?"'[33]) but more often it is masculinity itself that is being ridiculed in these cartoons. The men depicted in Barns' cartoons are not portrayed as ridiculous for failing to perform a socially acceptable masculinity. More often they are men who are successful in performing their masculine role, and it is the masculine role itself which is portrayed as inherently ridiculous.

The men Barns depicts tend to be similarly-dressed and almost indistinguishable from one another, as in 'Anti-Suffrage Argument no. 187', 'Lords of Creation' (*Masses* May 1913), 'United We Stand' (*Masses* March 1914), and 'Voters' (*Masses* December 1915). They are typically slim, tall, and nondescript, conforming perfectly to the other members of their group in both appearance and gesture. It is not that the subjects of Barns' cartoons are ridiculed for their failure to correctly present as masculine. On the contrary, the humour derives from the fact that the actions they perform as part of this socially acceptable masculinity are revealed as having the same underlying qualities we usually only associate with the performance of femininity. They are frivolous, foolish, and—perhaps most significantly—artificial. Judith Butler describes how 'the parodic repetition of gender', whether through drag performance or other means, serves to highlight gender's status as wholly constructed and performative.[34] Many of Barns' cartoons of young men serve this purpose. As 'hyperbolic exhibitions of "the natural"', they reveal the unnatural status of gender, by bringing the performative condition of masculinity to light.[35]

A number of Barns' cartoons achieve this, but the cartoon which perhaps best exemplifies it is 'Lords of Creation' (fig. 3). The title is significant here as the image shows four men taking a photograph—in the very act of creating an image. The caption suggests that the man with the camera is calling out instructions to his subjects, making sure to frame

[33] Cornelia Barns, 'Honestly, Julia', *Masses,* 5.12 (September 1914), p.9.
[34] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 2006), p.200.
[35] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p.200.

them exactly right, however the drawing shows the moment before they have curated themselves into acceptable poses. We see how carefully their supposedly relaxed and natural appearance is in fact being 'created', as the caption implies. The sub-caption 'Moisten your lips a little—there—that's perfect!' injects an instance of humour in that the subjects are being likened once more to women— the act of wetting their lips being comically reminiscent of the application of lipstick. But the image also speaks to the supposed naturalness of masculine appearance and behaviour by revealing the amount of effort and forethought which goes into creating the 'perfect' photographic image of masculinity.

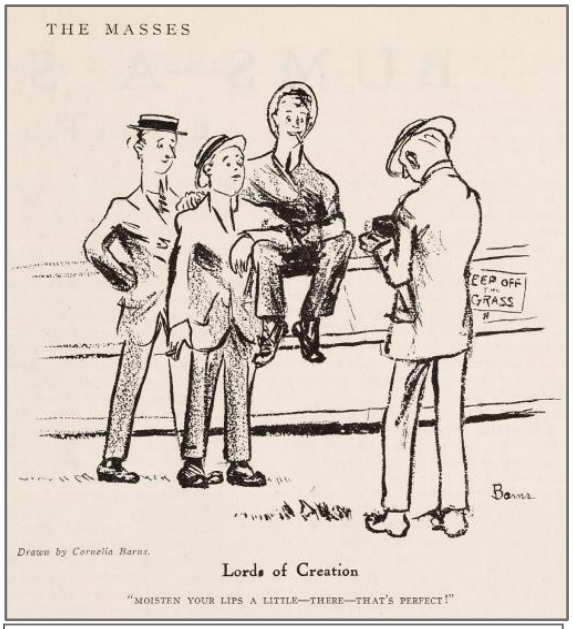

Figure 3. Cornelia Barns, 'Lords of Creation', *Masses,* 4.8 (May 1913), p.7.

The cartoon is also significant in its composition and framing. Rather than showing us the final image, we see in this cartoon the moment before the photograph is taken. As a result, all three of its subjects look slightly silly. The man on the left looks somewhat self-conscious with his overly-straight back, while the man in the middle is looking up as though startled and unready. This image, thus, removes the power attributed to the photographer as 'Lord of Creation' and transfers it instead to Barns. The angle we see this at is extremely telling. We are neither the photographer looking at the men, nor the men posing for the photograph. Instead, we are situated further back so as to be able to see the whole scene taking place. There is a sense of voyeurism in the fact that we are not in any of the men's direct line of vision. Barns places herself in the position of an unseen onlooker, who captures their image before they are ready. The image we see is not the one the photographer is trying to curate, but rather the one he inadvertently and unknowingly creates, via Barns, making her the true 'Lord of Creation' in this instance. Not only does this cartoon expose the performative nature of gender, it also subverts the gaze that we are accustomed to seeing in depictions of women throughout print media. Here, instead of the sexualised male gaze, we

are looking through the lens of a laughing female gaze, in an image where the female artist has complete control of her unknowing subjects.

It is perhaps in Barns' cartoons of foolish young men that her deconstruction of gender is at its most explicit, but they are by no means the only time in which we see evidence of this. The notion of gender as a performative, learned behaviour also informs a cartoon published in the June 1917 issue of *The Masses,* titled 'Spring', although here the message is less overt.[36] This cartoon is one of several by Barns which features a child subject, and this choice in subject matter is perhaps part of the reason for people's failure to take Barns seriously. Pictures of children are easily dismissed as being mawkish or 'sentimental': a term often used to describe one of the magazine's other significant female artists, Alice Beach Winter, whose main subject matter was images of children.[37] 'Spring' may not at first glance contain any overt political commentary and could easily be written off as forming part of the body of Barns' work described by Margaret Jones as 'exuberant, playful, without overt political purpose'.[38] But even in this seemingly innocuous image of a girl in a hat shop we can detect traces of Barns' investigation into the socially-constructed and repressive nature of gender roles. Published some five years after the majority of the young men cartoons appeared, 'Spring' reveals Barns' developing artistic style, but its subject is a throwback to the theme of performative gender which was present in her earlier work. This may be easily be overlooked, but its full-page presence in the magazine demands a greater notice. This cartoon is not as blatantly a commentary on women's equal rights as, for instance, 'Anti-Suffrage Argument No.187', which immediately signals itself as being part of the suffrage debate by nature of its captions. Instead, the critique implicit in this image is more subtle, and is also enhanced by —though not dependent upon—the other items surrounding it.

[36] Cornelia Barns, 'Spring', *Masses,* 9.8 (June 1917), p.16.
[37] The term 'Sentimental' appears in appraisals of Beach Winter's work in Hilde Hein and Carolyn Korsmeyer, ed. *Aesthetics in Feminist Perspective* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 83; Schreibner, *Gender and Activism in a Little Magazine*, p.82; Jones, *Heretics and Hellraisers*, p.12; Carolyn Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: The Origins of Visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p.83.
[38] Jones, *Heretics and Hellraisers*, p.13.

The image shows a smartly dressed young girl in a crowded hat shop. She is being handed a hat by a man—presumably the shop owner—while a woman (presumably her mother) places another hat onto her head. The girl looks up at the shop owner reproachfully. Her hands by her side, she is passively resistant, and seems to want no part in the process of purchasing a hat. The composition of this image is crucial in producing its meaning. At the centre of the image is the girl who is, significantly, shaded far more lightly than her mother, the shop owner and the background. Her skin, coat and hat are all white, not only positioning her as the focal point of this image, but also signalling a distinction between the girl and the other figures in this image. A large pile of hats (perhaps those the girl has already rejected) lies darkly shaded in the foreground, making the scene appear cramped and claustrophobic. The artificial flowers and frills of the hats, as well as the potted plant to the right of the image stand in as a comic contrast to the flowers and natural beauty that we would expect from an image titled 'Spring', as does the image's stuffy indoor setting.

What we are witnessing in this image is two authority figures instructing an unwilling participant in how to correctly perform feminine norms of behaviour: something which is depicted as stifling and artificial. Clothing takes on symbolic importance in this image. The shop owner's own bowler hat is a clear example of clothing being used to denote status. The bowler hat is emblematic of middle class masculine respectability, while the heavily decorated hats surrounding the shop owner speak to the performance of middle class femininity. In the background we see another adult woman, with her back to the reader, placing a hat on her own head. Her actions replicate that of the girl's mother, showing symbolically the trajectory which will take place over time: a progression

Figure. 4: 'Spring', *Masses,* 9.8 (June 1917), p.16

from being forced by authority figures to fulfil a certain role, to taking over that role and replicating these prescribed behaviours oneself.

The title 'Spring' may be read as being ironic. Whereas spring usually carries associations of optimism, rebirth and renewal, this image shows an indoor scene of artificiality, characterised by the fake flowers and potted plants. We are also witnessing a rather bleak and depressing scene in which a young girl is being bullied into accepting a repressive system of gender. The woman in the background, as well as the resigned expression on the face of the girl's own mother, tell us that the girl's future is already clearly laid out. However, the girl's resistance and silent refusal to take part in this process could also speak to a level of hope and optimism within the image. Unlike the easily captivated young men distracted by the shop window in 'Anti-Suffrage Argument No.187', this reluctant young girl—pure and white, in contrast to her surroundings—is singularly able to resist the temptations of consumerism and the oppressive constraints of gender conformity. It is possible that this picture speaks to a wider, societal 'Spring' which we are witnessing here on a micro-level. This image of the younger generation questioning and resisting the repressive functions of gender passed down to them by their elders speaks to the idea of societal progress, growth and renewal, in the wake of the Women's Movement. It may be that the 'Spring' referred to by the title does not refer to that specific girl in that specific hat shop, but rather to womankind as a whole.

This message stands if we look at the image alone, but it takes on a greater significance when read alongside the other works published in the surrounding pages. The theme of clothing as artifice is present in two of the other works published alongside 'Spring': a short story 'The Checked Trousers' by Phyllis Wyatt, which takes place in a tailor's shop (p.17) and a poem, 'April Night' by Florence Ripley Mastin (p.18). [39] The poem is particularly in keeping with Barns' cartoon. Reproduced here in its entirety, it reads:

> Were one wish mine on April night
> Of lilac moon and little buds tight

[39] In 'The Checked Trousers', the shop is decorated with 'an artificial foliage plant', which echoes the contrast between artificiality and nature also present within Barns' cartoon.

In the lane, this would I choose to be,
Stripped and free of cloak and shirt,—
A smooth, green blade in ecstacy
Pushing up through the rough, black dirt![40]

'Stripped and free of cloak and shirt' being a particularly telling line, the poem contrasts the repressive, restrictive nature of clothes with the comparative freedom and the 'ecstacy' [*sic*] of nature. The poem also uses imagery of resistance and unimpeded growth to describe the blade of grass 'pushing up through the rough, black dirt!'.[41] Like Barns' cartoon, the poem describes a small, seemingly delicate individual which nonetheless prevails against the 'rough, black' forces which attempt to contain it. In the cartoon, these forces are the mother and hat shop owner and the institutions they represent: in the poem, it is the dark soil through which the blade of grass emerges. When read in the context of these surrounding contributions, then, Barns' cartoon forms just one part of a wider avant-garde feminist discourse within the magazine, and indeed within periodical communities more generally.

The motif of clothing being used to represent a restrictive or oppressive civilisation recurs throughout avant-garde feminist rhetoric and literature. Frequently in feminist avant-garde writing a dichotomy is formed between the restrictive or oppressive artifice of clothing and a luxuriant and often sexually charged version of nature and akin to that of 'April Night'.[42] Taking inspiration from the British 'New Life Movement', many feminist avant-garde commentators gravitated towards ideas of simple living and naturism.[43] In *The Freewoman,* for example, we have articles such as 'Education from the Universal Standpoint IV: Simple Rules of Health for Adults' published in March 1912 which states that it is 'not natural' to wear clothes and advises readers 'To roll naked in the dew, to lie in the sun, to sleep against

[40] Florence Ripley Mastin, 'April Night', *Masses,* 9.8 (June, 1917), p.18.
[41] Ripley Mastin, 'April Night', p.18.
[42] See: Amy Lowell, 'In a Garden', *Little Review,* 1.5 (July 1914), pp.38-9; Clara Shanafelt, 'Poems', *Little Review,* 2.4. (June-July, 1915), pp.21-2; H.D., 'Late Spring' and 'Night', *Little Review,* 2.10 (January-February 1916), pp.1-2. Katherine Mansfield's 1915 play script 'Stay Laces' also fits into this theme. It is about two women shopping for corsets. See: Katherine Mansfield, 'Stay-laces', *New Age*, 18.1 (November 4th 1915), pp.14-15.
[43] For more on the philosophy of 'New Life', see: Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks, *Socialism and the New Life: The Personal and Sexual Politics of Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis* (California: Pluto Press, 1977).

a pine bole, to watch the moon and the stars'.[44] Reader letters to *The Freewoman* talk of the 'impediment of conventional female clothing' as a 'handicap'[45] and claim that 'All civilisation is a struggle against nature'.[46] This dichotomy between nature and artifice can be observed in American periodicals, also, including *The Little Review.* A good example of this is the poem 'Patterns' by Amy Lowell, published in *The Little Review* 2.5 (August, 1915). This poem depicts clothing as restrictive, contrasting it with the natural setting in which 'all the daffodils/Are blowing'.[47] The poem contains lines such as: 'my passion/Wars against the stiff brocade' and 'the softness of my body will be guarded from embrace/By each button, hook, and lace': setting clothing up as being a restrictive force which restricts the natural passion and sexuality of the female body.[48] The same issue contains an article entitled 'Nudity and the Ideal' by Will Levington Comfort, which uses the same motif, claiming that 'The human body has suffered the fate of all flesh and plant-fiber that is denied light.'[49] If we read 'Spring' in the light of these wider contexts then it fits into and draws from a broader feminist rhetoric surrounding concepts of the artificial and the natural with regards to clothing. Barns' cartoons do not just make one-note statements about women's suffrage or other topical issues. Rather, they form part of a feminist avant-garde discourse running throughout the magazine which interrogates and contradicts the notion of gender roles as fixed and innate. While the political dimensions of Barns' cartoons are often subtle, they are undeniably present: something that is made especially clear when they are read in conjunction with the other items published alongside them in the magazine, and within avant-garde feminist periodical communities more generally.

A single image of a girl in a hat shop is of course not sufficient evidence to characterise Barns as an avant-garde feminist, but her feminist motivations can be observed elsewhere as well. There are some particularly interesting dynamics at play in Barns' work pertaining to the First World War, especially in regards to the sexual politics of war time. The

[44] Philip Oyler, 'Education from the Universal Standpoint. IV.-SIMPLE RULES OF HEALTH FOR ADULTS', *Freewoman,* 1.18 (March 21st, 1912), pp.150-151 (p.150).
[45] **"**Fair Play" [author unknown], 'Saving Women First', *Freewoman*, 1.25 (May 9th, 1912), p.495.
[46] Arthur D. Lewis, 'The Single-Tax Again', *Freewoman*, 1.20 (April 4th, 1912), p.399.
[47] Amy Lowell, 'Patterns', *Little Review,* 2.5 (August, 1915), pp.6-8 (p.6).
[48] Lowell, 'Patterns', p.6, p.8.
[49] Will Levington Comfort, 'Nudity and the Ideal', *Little Review,* 2.5 (August, 1915), pp.23-26 (p.23).

best examples of this are two cartoons published a year apart (in July 1916 and August 1917) but of a related theme: 'Flight of the Innocents' and 'Army and Navy Night'. Both of these cartoons address the subject of women in war time, offering a somewhat discomforting comedic approach to violence which has much in common with Mansfield's work in *The New Age*. Rebecca Zurier says of Barns' artwork that many of her cartoons 'show a telling sense of human quirks but leave the viewer wondering, "What's the joke?"' a question which immediately recalls the sometimes off-beat humour utilised by Mansfield. [50] Also belying this off-beat humour is the fact that Barns' cartoons often feature a troubling or disturbing subtext, even as they are passed off as being light-hearted.

Dark Humour: Cornelia Barns and the Sexual Politics of World War One

The Masses was almost unanimously anti-war. Their critique of militarism can in fact be traced back to the years before the war itself began, and certainly before US involvement, continuing to intensify as the conflict progressed. Innumerable examples of anti-war poetry and rhetoric can be observed throughout *The Masses*, in addition to the many cartoons and other images expressing a pacifistic or anti-war sentiment.[51] Many of the cartoons published in *The Masses* during the war years express cynicism towards the recruitment process, or the concept of patriotism, and the disproportionately working class make-up of the front-line troops. A cartoon by Art Young (Appendix fig.1) for example, which occupied a full page in the June 1914 issue, parodies a recruitment poster, showing 'Men Wanted' on one side, and 'Dupes Wanted' on the other.[52] A cartoon by Maurice Becker which appears in the November 1914 issue shows a well-to-do couple conversing, with the caption 'You know this war comes pretty close to me. I was through all those countries in an automobile last year.'[53] Other images, such as 'Requiem' by Cornelia Barns (Appendix fig.2) are produced more in the

[50] Zurier, *Art for The Masses,* p.147.
[51] Eg: Max Endicoff, 'I Cry for War', *Masses,* 5.9 (June, 1914), p.20; Charles Erskine Scott Wood, 'A Heavenly Dialogue', *Masses,* 6.1 (October 1914), p.21; Clement Wood, 'A Breath of Life', *Masses,* 6.2 (November, 1914), p.6; [multiple authors], 'Do You Believe in Patriotism?', *Masses,* 8.5 (March 1916), pp.12-13; John Reed, 'An Heroic Pacifist', *Masses,* 9.1 (November, 1916), p.10; Max Eastman, 'The Religion of Patriotism', *Masses,* 9. 9 (July, 1917), pp.8-12; Max Eastman, 'Conscription for What?', *Masses,* 9.9 (July, 1917), pp.18-19. This list represents barely a fraction of the overall volume of anti-war content to be found in *The Masses.*
[52] Art Young, 'Take Your Choice', *Masses,* 5.9 (June 1914), p.4.
[53] Maurice Becker, Untitled, *Masses,* 6.2 (November 1914), p.4.

sentimental mode and are designed to evoke an emotional response in readers.[54] What is more interesting than either of these types of war image, however, are the ones which convey both humour and pathos in a single image. Barns produced a number of anti-war images, including 'Requiem' *Masses* 8.4 (February 1916); 'Make friends with Colonel' in *Liberator* 1.1 (March, 1918); Reinforcements in *Liberator* 3.5 (May 1920), as well as the two which will be discussed below, 'Flight of the Innocents', and 'Army and Navy Night'. These cartoons are significant both in the insight they give into the sexual politics of wartime, as well as in their discomforting brand of humour.

'Flight of the Innocents', which appeared in *The Masses,* July 1916, shows a group of women piled into a car, with the subheading: 'an alarmed patriotess has appealed to the ladies of the Boston Auxiliary of the National Security League to "register their automobiles for the purpose of carrying the virgins inland in case of invasion"' (Fig. 5).[55] It is not clear whether the caption for this image comes from a real source: it is left uncited, but the inclusion of quotation marks implies that this image is meant as an illustration of a genuine suggestion made by 'an alarmed patriotess', probably in another magazine or newspaper. The term 'patriotess' immediately aligns this cartoon with a discourse around patriotism which was commonplace in the magazine at the time. A few months earlier, for example, in March 1916, *The Masses* featured an article which invited multiple contributors to answer the question: 'Do You Believe in Patriotism?', and a critique of patriotic rhetoric was common in articles espousing the magazine's anti-war stance.[56] As Margaret Jones points out, this cartoon also forms part of a wider discourse on

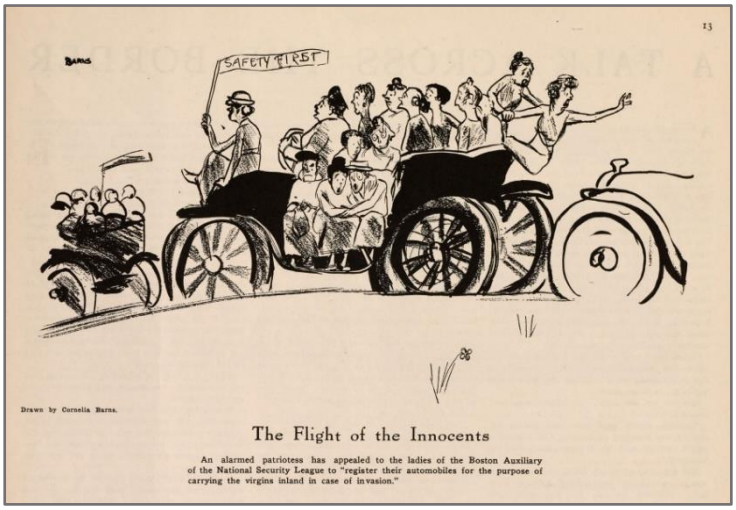

Figure 5. Cornelia Barns, 'Flight of the Innocents', *Masses* 8.9 (July 1916), p.13.

[54] Cornelia Barns, 'Requiem', *Masses,* 8.4 (February 1916), p.20.
[55] Cornelia Barns, 'Flight of the Innocents', *Masses* 8.9 (July 1916), p.13.
[56] [Multiple Authors], 'Do You Believe in Patriotism?', pp.12-13.

'Preparedness' which takes place in *The Masses* around this time.[57] The organisation named in the caption, The National Security League, was established in 1914 across a number of locations with the purpose of protecting the US against the threat of war.[58] But in addition to criticising the methods of 'preparedness' undertaken by the league, this image also has much wider comments to make about the sexual politics of the First World War.

The cartoon engages with the moral panic which took hold in the years of the First World War in response to a trend whereby young women—often from respectable backgrounds—were allegedly so attracted by the prospect of men in uniform, that they found themselves driven to act in 'immodest and even dangerous ways'.[59] In Britain, this phenomenon was termed 'Khaki Fever'.[60] Serious efforts were made to combat 'Khaki Fever', with the intention of protecting the moral wellbeing of the nation's young women, as well as preventing the spread of venereal disease among troops. The duty of controlling the spread of 'Khaki Fever' fell almost exclusively to other women. In England, female police officers were employed to patrol the streets, while in Wales the Swansea Women's Citizens Union launched a 'Purity Crusade' to 'stem the tide of immorality sweeping over the town'.[61] This bizarre initiative to recruit the ladies of the Boston Auxiliary to 'transport the virgins inland' reads as a further example of older women being recruited to control young women's sexual behaviour in wartime. The message of the image is ambivalent, however, depending on how we choose to read the frightened expressions on the women's faces. It is entirely possible to read them as being panicked by the threat of potential invasion, but it is equally possible that

[57] Jones, *Heretics and Hellraisers,* p.96.
[58] Robert D. Ward, 'The Origin and Activities of the National Security League, 1914-1919', *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* 47.1 (1960), pp. 51-65 (p.51).
[59] Angela Woollacott, 'Khaki Fever and Its Control: Gender, Class, Age and Sexual Morality on the British Homefront in the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 29.2 (1994), pp. 325-347 (p.325).
[60] This term is commonly associated with World War I but appears in the *New Age* as early as 1907. [See: *New Age* 1.3 (May 16th, 1907), p. 34; *New Age,* 2.6 (December 7th, 1907), p.104]. It probably originated during the Second Boer War, when khaki uniform was first widely used, rather than WWI. An earlier manifestation of the term, 'Scarlet Fever' was used during the 19th Century. (Woollacott, 'Khaki Fever and its Control' p.326).
[61] Lesley Hulonce, 'Hotbed of Immorality' in Lester Mason, 'Pulpits, Mutinies and 'Khaki Fever': World War One in Wales' <https://ahrc.ukri.org/research/fundedthemesandprogrammes/worldwaroneanditslegacy/world-war-one-at-home/ww1inwales/pulpitsmutinieskhakifever/> [accessed 23/04/20]. See also: Louise Jackson, *Women Police: Gender, Welfare and Surveillance in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), which discusses the women police officers dispatched to deal with 'Khaki Fever' in Birmingham and Merseyside (p.97).

they are in fact horrified by the prospect of being kidnapped by the stern older woman on the car bonnet, and driven away from all of the men. Max Eastman opts for the latter reading, stating in his memoir that 'Some of the virgins were making frantic efforts to fall off the vehicle.'[62] The image is certainly open to being read in this way. The woman on the back of the carriage can either be read as toppling off or as trying desperately to throw herself off the back of the carriage, her outstretched arm indicating her wish to remain behind. Equally, the two women at the centre of the image who are staring at the ground open-mouthed and wide-eyed could either be hanging on to one another for security, or preparing themselves to jump. This ambivalence is sustained by the word-play in the title: 'The Flight of the Innocents' which, when said aloud, could be misconstrued as 'The Flight of the Innocence', referring to the departure of sexual innocence in the young women who find themselves in the throes of Khaki Fever. This image, then, is both a commentary on the increased sexual independence of young women in comparison to their moralistic forbears, and (if we read the image in the way that Eastman does, as showing the virgins leaping from the carriage), a rebuttal of the notion that young women are passive victims in need of protection.

Women's increased sexual emancipation is something Barns returns to a number of times, for example in the image 'Submarines Notwithstanding' published in *Masses* 9.10 (August 1917), an image of an amorous couple kissing on a bench, the wartime context made clear from the title. Barns' cartoon clearly advocates for women's sexual independence, poking fun at the demonization of women's sexuality which was commonplace at the time. Her women are comic and non-threatening, presenting a marked difference from the way that many suffrage feminists treated the phenomenon of Khaki Fever. Millicent Fawcett, for example, wrote an article on Khaki Fever in *The Contemporary Review* in 1914, claiming that 'in the absence of proper control it certainly leads in very many cases to deplorable consequences'.[63] Barns seems to advocate for a far more liberal view of sex in this cartoon, however: portraying the attempts to protect and police the nation's virgins as nothing short of laughable. But there is also a barely suppressed darker element to this image. 'Flight of the Innocents' is at first glance a rather cheerful image, with the women's comically

[62] Eastman, *Love and Revolution,* p.23.
[63] Millicent Garrett Fawcett, 'Women's Work in War Time', *The Contemporary Review* (December 1914), p.780.

exaggerated expressions, and the jaunty flower which is shown in the foreground but there is also a clear subtext of sexual violence present within the image. While the visual register of the cartoon evokes imagery associated with 'khaki fever': the matronly woman on the bonnet escorting the gaggle of wayward young women to safety, the caption in fact refers to 'carrying the virgins inland in case of invasion': meaning that the threat comes not from allied troops but from invading ones. This makes the image far more sinister, speaking not to the uncontrollable sexual appetites of the nation's young women, but rather to the threat of wartime rape.

Susan Brownmiller posits rape as an inextricable facet of war: from the rape of the Sabine women to the systematic rape of civilians in Vietnam. She posits that: 'The body of a raped woman becomes a ceremonial battlefield, a parade ground for the victor's trooping of the colors. The act that is played out upon her is a message passed between men— vivid proof of victory for one and loss and defeat for the other.'[64] World War I was no exception: in fact, Brownmiller suggests that it was during this conflict that war-time rape was best documented, being used frequently in allied propaganda. [65] War-time rape was commonplace, as were military-sanctioned brothels on the fighting front, and Brownmiller describes how 'In the hands of skilled Allied manipulators, rape was successfully launched in world opinion, almost overnight, as a characteristic German crime, evidence of the "depraved Boche" penchant for warfare by atrocity.'[66] This context gives the image a much darker undertone, one which is not in keeping with its playful appearance. The term 'invasion', particularly, is resonant of a combined military and sexual invasion, and the threat of sexual violence is an intrinsic part of this image. Not only does this make the image itself troubling, but Eastman's reading of it even more so. If we are to take the virgins as 'making frantic efforts to fall off the vehicle', as Eastman suggests, then we are laughing at the women's readiness to willingly submit themselves to sexual violence at the hands of an invading army: a quite different narrative to the one which sees them leaping off the vehicle in pursuit of handsome allied soldiers. The inherent ambiguity of this image makes it particularly susceptible to troubling

[64] Susan Brownmiller, *Against our Wills: Men Women and Rape* (New York: Open Road, 2013), p.80.
[65] Brownmiller, *Against our Wills,* pp.91.
[66] Brownmiller, *Against our Wills,* pp.91-92.

readings and, like Mansfield's pension sketches, this cartoon, possesses a distinctly discomforting humour which is not in keeping with its outwardly light-hearted aspect.

The second text which engages with this notion of sexuality in wartime, is even more overtly troubling. 'Army and Navy Night', a cartoon, published in the August 1917 issue of *The Masses,* shows a line of reluctant young men being frogmarched into joining the army, for which they receive a kiss from a 'society girl', which in the image they appear extremely reluctant to receive.[67] Like 'Flight of the Innocents' this piece illustrates a quotation from a newspaper article, this one with attribution as being from the *New York Times.* This is a complex image, showing a coercive enlistment process being conflated with a coercive sexual act, in which the women are the aggressors. There is a sexual exchange taking place in this image, where kisses from 'society girls' are being used as currency, with a menacing row of police officers acting as state-sanctioned pimps. Reading this image alongside 'Flight of the Innocents' invites a commentary on the hypocritical rhetoric of patriotism. On the one hand, women are in need of having their sexual innocence protected through systematic state control, while on the other they are depicted having their sexuality exploited by the state as part of the recruitment effort. 'Army and Navy Night' shows how the female body and female sexuality has been commodified by the state, using female sex appeal as a means to encourage young men to enlist. Sexualised images of women were often used in recruitment posters and other propaganda, for instance in the case of the 'Christy Girl' who will be

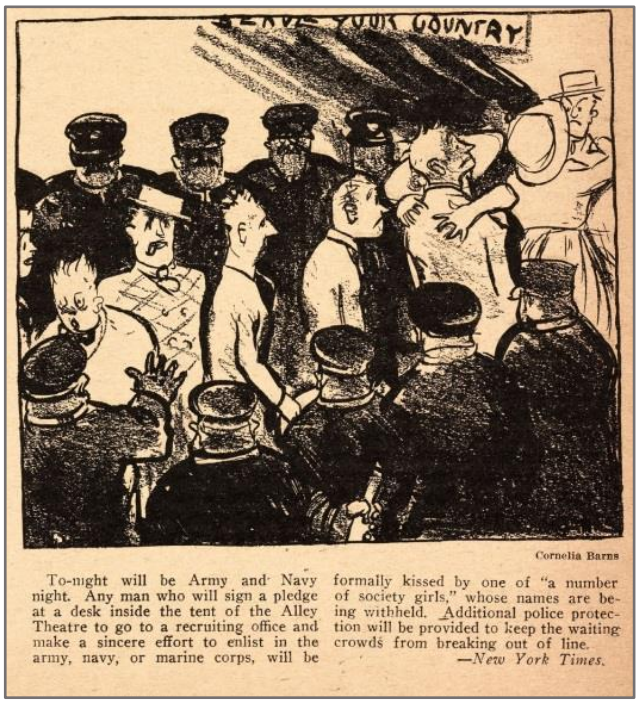

Figure 6. Cornelia Barns, 'Army and Navy Night', *Masses,* 9.10 (August 1917), p.11.

[67] Cornelia Barns, 'Army and Navy Night', *Masses,* 9.10 (August 1917), p.11.

discussed more fully below (See: Appendix fig.3).[68] 'Army and Navy Night' could perhaps provide a commentary on how female sexuality is commodified and exploited within a wartime context.

One source of humour in 'Army and Navy Night' is presumably meant to be the disparity between the rapacious sexual appetites of the keen society girls, and the reluctant enlisters: a straightforward inversion of the usual dynamic which sees men as active pursuers and women as passive recipients of sexual advances. In 'Army and Navy Night' the freeness and sexual confidence of the 'Society Girls' is contrasted to the men's discomfort and frigidity, however the image is too severe and threatening in its aesthetic for this to be the image's only message. The line of dark-coated police officers illustrating the 'additional police protection' promised in the *New York Times* article quoted beneath, read as a particularly intimidating symbol of coercion and state control. The 'increased police presence' mentioned in the article is presumably intended to prevent the virile young soldiers from becoming too rowdy, again providing an implicit reference to the risk of sexual violence. Here, however, it in fact serves to ensure that the nervous-looking and reluctant men receive their (apparently unwanted) kisses.

The men pictured in the image are clearly uncomfortable: something which is evident from their facial expressions. Margaret Jones describes them as 'the awkward, unhandsome men with their glumly resigned faces [who] look as if they were indeed lining up to be shot, rather than to be kissed'.[69] They certainly present a different manifestation of the foolish males discussed above. Whereas before the foolish young man's actions made him laughable, here he is pitiable: his foolishness resulting in his being duped and coerced into joining the army, apparently against his will. One retreating young man is actually shown being shoved back into the line by an officer. Again, we see the modern young man emasculated. He is shown to be reticent and awkward at the prospect of sexuality, but this makes him seem vulnerable rather than laughable. He is not emasculated by virtue of his 'feminine' attributes of vanity and foolishness like in the cartoons discussed above, but is instead invested with a

[68] Howard Chandler Christie, *I Want You for the Navy*, 1917, Colour Lithograph, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
[69] Jones, *Heretics and Hellraisers*, p.95.

'feminine' weakness in his inability to avoid unwanted sexual advances. It also perhaps suggests something as to the young age of the would-be soldiers that they are resistant to being kissed. They appear in this image more like boys, yet to reach sexual maturity. It is certainly difficult to find this a straightforwardly comic cartoon, given the intimidating and unsmiling line of police officers who dominate the image: their thick necks and bulky bodies making the boys in the centre of the image look especially puny. In this cartoon, Barns identifies the troubling undertones present within the article quoted in the caption—presumably intended as a light, comical story—and depicts it in a way where its disturbing subtext is made overt.

Cover Girls: Barns' Liberator Covers 1918-1924

After *The Masses* was shut down and reformed as *The Liberator* in 1918, Barns continued to serve as one of its art editors, and her artwork appeared regularly both in its pages and, increasingly, on its covers. I want to direct attention to this cover art primarily because of what it demonstrates about Barns' stance in the debate between art, propaganda and popular culture. *The Masses'* cover art has raised critical interest for a number of reasons, most often in relation to Stuart Davis' famous June 1913 cover 'Gee Mag, Think of Us Bein' on a Magazine Cover' (Appendix fig.4) which shows two plain-looking working class women, who form a marked and deliberate contrast to the recently established cultural phenomenon of the 'Cover Girl'.[70] The concept of the 'Cover Girl' began to take prominence in magazine culture in the 1900s and 1910s, most famously embodied in the iconic 'Gibson Girl' created by Charles Dana Gibson and most closely associated with *Life* Magazine. Carolyn Kitch describes the Gibson Girl as a 'tall woman with an aristocratic bearing and an upswept hairdo [who] was upscale and aloof, representing the lifestyle to which the ''rising'' classes might aspire'.[71] Beautiful, wealthy, and above all aspirational, The Gibson Girl became inseparable from notions of class and style in this era. She also sparked a number of derivations, including Harrison Fisher's 'The Fisher Girl' and Howard Chandler Christy's 'The

[70] Stuart Davis, 'Gee Mag', *Masses* 4.9 (June 1913). This cover is discussed by Mark Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception 1905-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), pp.172-3, and Carolyn Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover,* pp.85-6.
[71] Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover,* p.13.

Christy Girl'. These elegant and aspirational images of femininity were the iconic emblem of the smart magazine, in addition to being used to sell everything from soaps and hosiery to Army and Navy recruitment (See: Appendix fig. 3).[72] It was these iconic cover girls that Sloan parodied in his 'Gee Mag' cover: situating the socialist *Masses* as being firmly in opposition to these emblems of capitalist aspiration and consumption. Max Eastman also refers to the 'Gibson Girl' in his 1915 article 'What is the Matter with Magazine Art'. This article claims that the art published by mainstream magazines can only ever be 'business art' which 'aims to achieve profits in competition. And any or all of those genuinely artistic aims are subordinated to that.'[73] Eastman writes that: 'magazine art makes an ideal of monotony. "The Gibson Girl," "The Christy Girl," "The Stanlaws Girl," "The Harrison Fisher Girl"—these are features to be advertised on the front cover. And yet what is the advertisement, but an obituary notice of these men as artists?'[74] Clearly, *The Masses* and its editors wanted no part of the profit-driven iconography of mass-market magazines like *Life* or *Scribner's.* Rather, they sought to position *The Masses* as being in direct opposition to them.

As *The Masses* evolved, however, it grew to have a quite different relationship to the 'Cover Girl', starting with the bold December 1916 cover drawn by Frank Walts (Appendix fig. 5).[75] An explanatory note at the back of the magazine confirms this cover's direct and unabashed engagement with mass media, stating: 'We are indebted […] to Miss Gerda Holmes, the film-actress, who posed for the picture, and Frank Walts, who drew it.'[76] This cover was the first of many to feature film stars and images of female beauty and glamour: a stark contrast to *The Masses* traditional cover designs. Mark Morrisson responds to the *Masses'* shift in tone, commenting:

> Whereas the early *Masses* had parodied the institutions of commercial culture […] the later *Masses* turned to a cover aesthetic that not only privileged the beautiful cover girl, but also portrayed her in a slick

[72] Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover,* p.6.
[73] Max Eastman, 'What is the Matter with Magazine Art', *Masses,* 6.4 (January 1915), pp.12-16 (p.12).
[74] Eastman, 'What is the Matter with Magazine Art', p.14.
[75] Frank Walts, [Unsigned Cover Image], *Masses,* 9.2 (December 1916).
[76] [Unsigned Editorial Note] 'The Girl on the Cover', *Masses*, 9.2 (December, 1916), p.29.

> modernist style that was soon to enter the world of commodity advertising and magazine fashion.[77]

The Masses did not directly replicate the Cover Girl used in popular magazines, but rather adapted them to suit their own needs: the resultant image being a figure which simultaneously encapsulated the glamorous world of popular culture and film, paired with the sophistication of modern art through the use of abstract line and bold primary colour. This shift in aesthetic was not universally accepted, however. The issue immediately following the first of Walts' image opened with the poem 'To a Girl on a Magazine Cover', addressing the girl in the image as a 'smeared and smirking little bag' and a 'paper prostitute'.[78] What can be observed in the evolution of *The Masses'* cover art is a war of cultural values with the lines between High and Low culture, and between art, advertisement and propaganda growing increasingly blurred. At the centre of this debate was always the image of the young female 'Cover Girl': simultaneously providing a symbol of aspirational independence and of the corrupting evils of capitalism.

Barns contributed a number of cover images to both *The Masses* and *The Liberator,* and these represent a further complication to *The Masses'* already fraught aesthetic: incorporating a feminist critique into her artistic interpretation of the 'Cover Girl'. Whereas for artists such as Sloan and Gellert, the cover girl simply served as a convenient short-hand for capitalism or popular culture, Barns' 'Cover Girls' were injected with a life and personality of their own, and tell a story about female experience as well as engaging with wider narratives. The cover of the April 1924 edition of *The Liberator* (Appendix fig.6) for instance, tells a clear story: one which would no doubt have been familiar to many of *The Liberator's* female readers.[79] In it, an attractive girl is being steered awkwardly around a dance floor by another of Barns' stock figures: the foolish young man, whose face is not shown. This image borrows the 'Cover Girl' trope of having the young woman in this image lock eyes with the reader. But, whereas the traditional 'Cover Girl' will stare seductively at the reader as though inviting them in, Barns' 'Cover Girl' carries a look of pleading as she is manoeuvred around the dance

[77] Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism,* p.195.
[78] Seymour Barnard, 'To a Girl on a Magazine Cover', *Masses*, 9.3 (January, 1917), p.3.
[79] Cornelia Barns, [Untitled Cover], *Liberator,* 7.4 (April 1924).

floor. This image is a comic inversion of the 'Cover Girl' trope, but also speaks to female powerlessness, and the normalisation of unwanted sexual advances by men. The woman in this image clearly wants to get away from her dancing partner, and is appealing to the reader for help. Her body language clearly shows signs of a struggle, while her facial expression expresses clear displeasure with the situation. As is typical of many of Barns' cartoons, behind the veneer of comic light-heartedness, is a second, more discomforting narrative, pertaining to sexual dominance and lack of consent. This is especially effective in this image because we as readers are being appealed to for help that we cannot supply.

Barns' magazine covers are also distinctive in that she frequently rejected the solo female subject in favour of crowd scenes. Barns' 'Strike!' cover (Fig.7) which appeared in the April issue 1919 for instance, depicts factory workers taking part in the 1919 International Garment Workers Strike.[80] Like 'Spring', this cartoon is also concerned with the fashion industry, although in this instance it is from the point of view of the striking worker. All the figures in the image are female except for one: a sulking male police officer situated towards the left-hand side of the image. An explanatory note on the following page states: 'OUR cover design, drawn by Cornelia Barns, will carry to readers all over the country something of the spirit with which Local 25 of the International Garment Workers is conducting its strike for the 44-hour week in New York.'[81] This cover is an immediate challenge to the 'Cover Girl' trope discussed above, firstly owing to its composition. Whereas the format for a magazine cover at this time was for a single figure, recognisable to us as a 'Gibson Girl' or a 'Fisher Girl' by her familiar expression and facial conformation, Barns' cover shows a huge mass of different women, notable for the vast diversity in

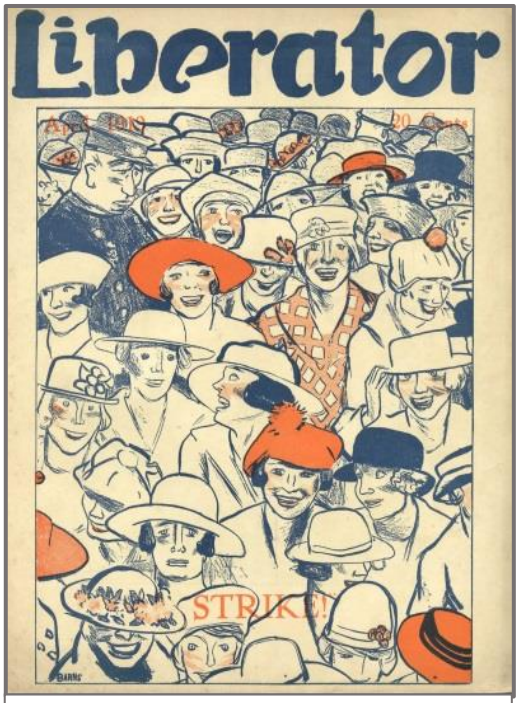

Figure 7. Cornelia Barns, 'Strike!', *Liberator,* 2.4 (April 1919).

[80] Cornelia Barns, 'Strike!', *Liberator,* 2.4 (April 1919).
[81] [Unsigned Editorial Note] 'Strike!', *Liberator* 2.4 (April 1919), p.2.

expression and individuality that each figure is afforded. As garment workers, these are the women who produce the items which go on to be modelled in fashion pages and on the front cover of mainstream magazines. Normally unseen and invisible, here Barns allows them to become 'cover girls' in their own right, displaying the workers themselves, as opposed to the items they have produced.

Far from being an emblem of consumer capitalism like the 'Christy Girl', these cover girls represent the successes of unionisation and resistance to capitalist exploitation. Seymour Barnard's attack on the Cover Girl in his poem 'To a Girl on a Magazine Cover' is mainly derived from the idea of the female form being used to turn a cheap profit. The subject, 'Who might have a Giaconda been', is being used not in the creation of art but in the generation of profit:

> And with a pittance for your price
> The lightest laggard may dethrone you;
> So little matters it, suffice
> It profits some those men that own you![82]

She is a 'paper prostitute' in the sense that her body is owned and sold at a profit by her creator. She is passively 'Displayed' on the front of magazines but lacks any life or autonomy of her own. He describes her as having an 'empty, painted body' and 'eyes imploring and unwinking'.[83] Barns' Cover Girls in the image 'Strike!' have little in common with those described by Barnard. Captured in the act of a seemingly joyful protest, they are buzzing with life and autonomy.

Although technically as much a part of a capitalist system as the Gibson Girl, their actions in this image symbolise a refusal to be passively exploited in the name of profit. Furthermore, popular culture is not vilified in Barns' image. Like the women in Sloan's 'Gee Mag' cover, these are ordinary working class women. But while Barns' women are not aspirational or glamorous, nor are they comically plain. An array of different hats and

[82] Barnard, 'To a Girl on a Magazine Cover', p.3.
[83] Barnard, 'To a Girl on a Magazine Cover', p.3.

fashions are on display in the image, with several of the hats picked out in orange ink, along with the pattern of one woman's coat. They are not hyper-sexualised like the Cover Girls referred to by Barnard but nor are they stripped of their femininity and engagement with popular culture. They are not, as garment workers, prevented from enjoying the products of their labour, but seem to take joy in the commodities they are employed to create. They are a model for the success of unionised, ethical labour, who do not carry the threatening implications often associated with 'The Mob'. Part of the anxiety surrounding mass culture is the notion that, in a crowd, the individual identity is erased. Gustave LeBon warns in *The Crowd*, for instance, that members of a crowd will automatically cease to exist as an individual, and are, as such, capable of acting in shocking and amoral ways:

> Whoever be the individuals that compose [the crowd], however like or unlike be their mode of life […] the fact that they have been transformed into a crowd puts them in possession of a sort of collective mind which makes them feel, think, and act in a manner quite different from that in which each individual of them would feel, think, and act were he in a state of isolation.[84]

In 'Strike!' though, Barns suggests the opposite, depicting a crowd in which each individual member retains their individual autonomy and identity. In this image no two women are dressed identically, and their posing suggests chatter and movement.

[84] Gustave Le Bon*, The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896), p.30.

In this respect, the crowd depicted in 'Strike!' is markedly different to another cover design Barns published only a month later in *The Suffragist* in May 17th, 1919 (Fig.8).[85] This design, titled 'Waiting' has a similar composition to 'Strike!', showing a large group of women whose mass occupies the entirety of the frame. Its effect is the polar opposite, however. The figures in 'Waiting' are positioned confrontationally, taking on the qualities of an advancing army. The piece is far more recognisable as a piece of political art, and is reminiscent in composition of the iconic painting *The Fourth Estate* by Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo circa 1900 (Appendix fig. 8).[86] The figure to the right hand side of the image who holds a baby in her arms particularly reads as a nod to this painting, which was widely reprinted and circulated within socialist circles throughout the early twentieth century.[87] Whereas in 'Strike!' it is the women's individuality of expression that gives the image its character, in 'Waiting' the faces of the women are eerily expressionless and uniform, and their eyes are all fixed challengingly on the reader. In 'Waiting', Barns seems to play upon the fears expressed by LeBon, depicting a crowd which is intentionally uniform and threatening. They are not individuals, but rather a homogenous mass, united by a shared purpose.

Figure 8. Cornelia Barns, 'Waiting' in *Suffragist* May 17th, 1919, reprinted in Alice Shepherd, *Cartooning for Suffrage,* p.214.

The work Barns produced for *The Masses,* then, was markedly different from that which she produced for exclusively political magazines like *The Suffragist,* as well as being distinct from other *Masses* and *Liberator* cover designs. In 'Strike!', Barns combines a political message with a non-threatening and visually appealing design which is influenced by popular culture. 'Strike!' is not without its discomforting undertone, however. Just like many other of

[85] Cornelia Barns, 'Waiting' in *Suffragist* May 17th, 1919, reprinted in Alice Shepherd, *Cartooning for Suffrage,* p.214.
[86] Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, *The Fourth Estate*, c. 1900, oil on canvas, Museo del Novecento, Milan.
[87] See: Dario del Puppo, '"Il Quarto Stato"', *Science & Society,* 58.2 (1994), pp.136-162.

Barns' cartoons, there is an ambivalence to 'Strike!', which sees it carry the same discomforting undertones that we get from 'Flight of the Innocents', 'Army and Navy Night' as well as on the cover of the April 1924 *Liberator*. While we can read 'Strike!' as being celebratory of both popular culture and 'The Mob', the women depicted are not all celebrating. Positioned just above the 'S' in the title is a woman whose facial expression does not match up to those around her. Like the woman on the April 1924 cover, she is looking directly at the reader with an expression of sadness or consternation. This one unhappy figure serves as a reminder of the financial and emotional toll taken on the striking workers, even in a time of celebration. Her separate expression reinforces the lack of homogeneity in the crowd, but in doing so also undermines the image's uniformly positive message, giving it a layer of complexity and ambivalence beyond that which is present in 'Waiting'. While other figures appear to be chatting to one another or sharing jokes, this one figure appears to be isolated within the group.

While this image could read as a celebration of collectivist politics and popular culture, then, it also gestures towards the familiar trope of the isolated individual surrounded by a suffocating mass of people. This sense of ambivalence is intensified by the dual focal points of the image. In looking at the image, the eye is drawn first to the triangular formation of orange ink at the centre of the image, created by the women's hats and coats, but the eye is also drawn to the face of the sad woman in the bottom left. Her face and hat are entirely monochrome, but she is circled by orange, from the hats and rosy cheeks of the women around her, and from the typeface used in the title. What is more, her eyes are fixed head-on, as if looking directly at the reader, much like the unsmiling woman on the April 1924 cover. In 'Strike!' The unsmiling woman creates a secondary focal point for the image, meaning that the reader's attention is always divided between the two areas, and between the two messages it holds: on the one hand a celebration of collectivism and the labour movement, and on the other a depiction of the isolation and angst of an individual. The ambivalence of this image, then, makes it difficult to read this image as a straightforward celebration of the collectivist dynamics of the labour movement. Rather, it seems on the one hand to celebrate the multifaceted and joyful nature of collectivist politics while simultaneously questioning its efficacy and highlighting the isolation of the individual.

The crowd scene featuring an isolated individual is a trope which re-appears in another of Barns' *Liberator* drawings: 'Home!' (Appendix fig.7) which appeared in the main body of the January 1919 issue.[88] Like 'Strike!' the image has a one-syllable title, punctuated with an exclamation mark. It shows an all-male crowd of celebrating soldiers returning home from war. While most of their expressions are joyful, there are two figures at the centre of the image who are not sharing in the spirit of celebration. One is leaning over the side of the boat as though seasick, and the other is staring directly at the reader, his arms folded in front of him, unsmiling. He is framed more prominently than the unsmiling figure in 'Strike!', and speaks to the inevitable sombreness underlying a return from war. Just as in 'Strike!', a celebratory feeling is undermined by the presence of a single unhappy individual.

Barns' 'Strike!' cover is as much a response to the notion of the Cover Girl as is Sloan's 'Gee Mag' cover, and yet it does not make fun of the notion of the Cover Girl. Instead, it introduces the possibility for a plural and community-based image of femininity to occupy a magazine cover, in which a mass of people does not necessitate the erasure of individual identity. It is neither a replica of mainstream magazine iconography, nor is it—like 'Waiting'—a straightforwardly political or propagandistic image. Instead, it combines facets from both of these genres of art to create something which is complex, thoughtful, politically motivated but also aesthetically pleasing. In her crowd scenes Barns makes space for the individual experience while at the same time espousing the merits of the group and it is impossible to say whether an image like 'Strike!' is to be taken as joyful or distressing. Much like the other women discussed throughout this thesis, Barns sits somewhere between the many intersections of political identity, refusing to wholly commit herself to the ideologies of either feminism, socialism or individualism, or indeed to align her work wholly with either the artistic, commercial, or propagandistic style of magazine art. Instead, her unique style of cartoon sits at the intersection between all of these things, resisting classification and welcoming internal contradiction and complexity.

It is undeniable that behind the jaunty exterior of Barns' cartoons there exists a highly politicised underpinning, one which situates Barns within a more radical branch of

[88] Cornelia Barns, 'Home!', *Liberator,* 2.1 (January 1919), p.4.

feminism than she is usually attributed with. Throughout her eleven year career working on *The Masses* and *The Liberator* we see her returning again and again to notions of conformity, fashion, and artifice, as well as the performative nature of gender, addressing these themes in terms which closely replicate the views of other avant-garde feminists in the magazine and elsewhere. Although her cartoons make use of symbolism, it is rarely used in a heavy-handed or straightforwardly propagandistic way. Instead, her cartoons are nuanced and complex, often lacking a clear punchline and remaining open to multiple and often ambivalent readings. Even when her images appear to convey a single straightforward message, as is the case in 'Strike!', Barns incorporates subtly dissonant elements which disrupt this message, allowing space for multiple meanings to exist within a single image. While Barns' humour sometimes appears simple and light-heated at a glance, it is often used to disguise a dark or discomforting subtext. Much like Mansfield's humorous contributions to *The New Age,* many of Barns' cartoons become deeply unsettling when submitted to scrutiny, particularly those pertaining to sexual violence. It is perhaps because of the deceptively simple nature of Barns' work that it has so often been overlooked. When considered at depth, however, and within the context of avant-garde feminism, Barns' work appears far more complex. Consistently, throughout her career on *The Masses* and *The Liberator,* Barns' work blends the political with both the modern and the popular to create images which resonate both politically and aesthetically.

Chapter Five

'Oh, oh! these newspapers!': Margaret Anderson and the Doubleness of Camp in *The Little Review* (1914-1929)

The final figure this thesis will address is Margaret Anderson, editor of *The Little Review.* With a professed readership of 2,000 readers,[1] *The Little Review* is one of the biggest and longest running 'little magazines' of its day, and made a lasting and significant impact on canonical modernism, marketing itself as 'THE MAGAZINE THAT IS READ BY THOSE WHO WRITE THE OTHERS'.[2] The most notable work to appear in the magazine was James Joyce's modernist masterpiece *Ulysses,* but the magazine was also instrumental in helping shape the Imagist movement in poetry and introducing America to the Dada movement. This chapter focuses not on *The Little Review's* many distinguished contributors, however, but on its editor. Margaret Anderson founded the magazine in 1914 and is in many ways the quintessential 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour'. Not only did she inject humour into every facet of her editorial role, she also went to every length to construct herself and her magazine as fresh, youthful, and unfailingly modern. A staunch individualist, Anderson's editorial approach could not be further from that of the collectivist *Masses.* In her memoir *My Thirty Years War,* Anderson claims: 'I can't imagine belonging to a group, a Theatre Guild for instance—cooperation, the decision of the majority, the lowest common denominator… I like monarchies, tyrants, prima donnas, the insane.'[3]

Despite the passion for artistic autonomy and disdain for the masses Anderson often expressed in editorials, research has shown how Anderson's editorial style borrows heavily

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[1] This is the figure quoted in Frederick J Hoffman, Charles Allen and Carolyn F Ulrich, *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p.57, and which also appears in Alan Golding, '*The Little Review* (1914-29)', *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Volume II, North America, 1894-1960*, ed. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp.61-84 (p.70). Other figures are quoted across different sources, but they tend to fall somewhere between 1,000 and 3,000.

[2] See: Advertisement, *Egoist,* 4.8 (September, 1917), p.128. Slogan also appears in Masthead of *The Little Review* itself from issue from issue 4.6 (October 1917).

[3] Margaret Anderson, *My Thirty Years War* (New York: Horizon Press, 1969), p.41.

from popular culture.[4] This chapter will show how Anderson was able to reconcile these two conflicting impulses via her adoption of camp humour. It will explore how, in Anderson's role as editor, she draws upon the inherent doubleness of camp in order to celebrate and repudiate popular culture simultaneously. Reading *The Little Review* alongside several mass-market magazines and newspapers of the era, this chapter shows how *The Little Review* was engaged in a parodic and self-conscious dialogue with its mass-market counterparts—a dialogue made possible through the aesthetics of camp. It will take three significant issues of *The Little Review:* the infamous 'Blank Issue' (September 1916), the '*Vers Libre* Contest' (April 1917) and the Final Issue (Spring 1929) to show how, throughout her fifteen-year editorship of *The Little Review,* Anderson's camp editorial aesthetic allowed her to benefit from the conventions and marketing tactics of mass market publications, while at the same time retaining her status as the self-proclaimed 'prima donna' of modernist art and literature.

As well as being a key periodical associated with avant-garde feminism, *The Little Review* was also avant-garde in the broader sense. In its aesthetics and in its politics, the magazine favoured shock tactics, radicalism and an iconoclastic commitment to modernity.[5] Informed by the anarchism of Emma Goldman as well as an aggressive individualism inspired by the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Anderson framed her editorship around a commitment to individual autonomy and a refusal to cater to the popular taste.[6] The manifesto which appears in *The Little Review's* first issue reads: 'since THE LITTLE REVIEW, which is neither directly nor indirectly connected in any way with any organization, society, company, cult or movement, is the personal enterprise of the editor, it shall enjoy that untrammelled liberty which is the life of Art.'[7] In Anderson's frequent editorials, her individualism is manifested in a fervent rejection of all things popular or mainstream. In an editorial published in the June-July issue of 1915, for example, she describes the majority of humanity as 'a cosmic

[4] See: Mark Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception 1905-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000); Matthew Hannah '*Photoplay*, Literary Celebrity, and *The Little Review*', *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies,* 5.2 (2015), pp. 222-243.
[5] For more on *The Little Review* and the avant-garde, see: Golding, '*The Little Review* (1914-29)'; Christopher J. La Casse, 'From the Historical Avant-Garde to Highbrow Coterie Modernism: *The Little Review's* Wartime Advances and Retreats', *Criticism,* 57.4 (2015), pp.581-608.
[6] The magazine's slogan, appearing on the masthead from June 1917 was, in fact, 'Making No Compromise with the Public Taste'.
[7] Margaret Anderson, 'Announcement', *Little Review,* 1.1 (March 1914), pp.1-2 (p.2).

squirming mass of black caterpillars moving first one way and then the other, slowly and vaguely, […] in the stunned manner peculiar to caterpillar organisms.'[8] She compares the Individual Artist to a lone butterfly smothered by the mass of caterpillars, arguing that: 'People won't be artists. Peo-pul don't change. But the individual changes, and that is the hope. Individuals are persons who can stand alone.'[9] Anderson's editorial persona is clearly heavily influenced by Nietzschean individualism and a disdain for popular culture, and yet, it is at this point well-documented that *The Little Review* was influenced by and in some cases dependent upon the commercially-driven tactics of mass market publications.

Mark Morrisson names *The Little Review* as a magazine which 'borrowed *directly* from mass market publications and advertising rhetoric,' citing the magazine's 'Sentence Reviews' and 'New York Letter'/'London Letter' as examples of formats borrowed from mainstream culture, as well as exploring in depth the magazine's engagement with a commercially driven youth culture.[10] More recently, in 2015, Matthew Hannah demonstrated the parallels between *The Little Review* and the popular film magazine *Photoplay,* and the ways in which Anderson borrowed from the techniques of early celebrity culture in her editorial approach.[11] What neither Morrisson nor Hannah address, however, is the parodic nature of Anderson's engagement with the popular. It is certain that techniques borrowed from mainstream periodical culture, such as Anderson's unusual approach to advertising, her employment of tactics such as competitions and letters pages, and her constant self-fashioning and exhibitionism did help the magazine to stay afloat. But the *way* in which Anderson incorporated these magazine conventions into *The Little Review* is significant. At no point did Anderson try to disguise her engagement with the popular: rather she placed it centre-stage, flaunting her affinity with popular culture in the pages of *The Little Review,* a move which is suggestive of an element of self-parody. Elizabeth Francis points out how *The Little Review* made visible the editorial process which is normally hidden in most magazines: 'the editorials, announcements, and letters, and its reflections on its own status, problems, and

[8] Margaret Anderson, 'The Artist in Life', *Little Review*, 2.4 (June-July, 1915), pp.18-20 (p.18).
[9] Anderson, 'The Artist in Life', p.19.
[10] Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism,* p. 134.
[11] Hannah, '*Photoplay*, Literary Celebrity, and *The Little Review*'.

triumphs.'[12] In Anderson's self-reflexive editorial style, the reader is made continually aware of the magazine as a product which has been sculpted and shaped by its editor (a factor also noted by a *Little Review* reader who wrote in to the magazine to complain that it 'does not know how to keep its machinery out of sight').[13] No part of Anderson's engagement with popular culture was kept hidden and yet she never compromised on her own status as arbiter of superior taste: a masterful act of cognitive dissonance which Anderson achieved through the adoption of a camp editorial aesthetic.

Anderson writes in her autobiography that '"sincerity" was the great test in those days. Because we could always laugh we were always suspected of being frivolous', something which we see reflected in numerous letters in the correspondence pages of the magazine.[14] One reader wrote in to say that Anderson's article 'Toward Revolution' 'is the acme of nonsense. I tried to take you seriously but I couldn't'.[15] Another reader begs that *The Little Review* 'Give us the unperverted, the natural, the "sincere."'[16] But sincerity and seriousness were never part of Anderson's plan for *The Little Review*. Throughout her time as editor she continually sought to produce the shocking and the outrageous, writing in an editorial voice which can be characterised by its hyperbolic irreverence. She would often make brash or outlandish statements. For example in one editorial, Anderson casually asks: 'why didn't some one [*sic*] shoot the governor of Utah before he could shoot Joe Hill?': a remark which resulted in the magazine losing its sponsor and a portion of its advertising revenue.[17] In another statement typical of her frivolous and irreverent tone, Anderson described her own editorial style as: 'quite outlandishly anarchistic; we have been uncritical, indiscriminate, juvenile, exuberant, chaotic, amateurish, emotional, tiresomely enthusiastic, and a lot of other things which I can't remember now'.[18] Anderson's editorial voice was

[12] Elizabeth Francis, *The Secret Treachery of Words: Feminism and Modernism in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p.62.
[13] Arthur Purdon, 'What Does It Mean?' [Letter in 'The Reader Critic'], *Little Review,* 3.7 (November 1916), pp.26-27 (p.26).
[14] Anderson, *My Thirty Years War,* p.155.
[15] M. Silverman, Untitled letter in 'The Reader Critic', *Little Review*, 2.10 (January-February 1916), p.34.
[16] I. E. P.", 'Critical Epilepsy' [Letter in 'The Reader Critic' Section], *Little Review*, 4.3 (July 1917), pp.25-26 (p.25).
[17] Margaret C. Anderson, 'Toward Revolution', *Little Review,* 2.9 (December 1915), p.5.
[18] Margaret C. Anderson, 'Our First Year', *Little Review,* 1.11 (February 1915) pp.1-6 (p.1).

certainly distinctive in tone. Characterised by exaggeration, shock value and tongue-in-cheek humour, it formed a significant part of her overall camp aesthetic.

Camp is notoriously difficult to define, perhaps due to the fact that it continually treads a fine line between ironic and non-ironic appreciation of bad taste. The first formal attempt to define camp, Susan Sontag's 1964 'Notes on Camp' is riddled with ambivalence. For example, Sontag describes camp as being simultaneously 'apolitical' and 'propagandistic', and goes on to describe her own relationship to camp by stating: 'I am strongly drawn to Camp, and almost as strongly offended by it''.[19] The term 'camp' has been nuanced and redefined countless times since Sontag's initial appraisal, but the basic tenets remain consistent. Camp is a mode of expression, born of but not exclusive to gay male culture, which relies upon exaggeration, humour and theatricality. A broad definition offered by Zimmerman's *Encyclopedia of Lesbian and Gay Histories and Cultures*, sees camp defined as: 'A cultural style or taste associated with theatricality, humor, artifice, and appropriation'.[20] More specifically, camp is a means of exposing the theatricality and artifice of the dominant culture: 'a parodic device that uses irony, exaggeration, theatricality, incongruity, and humor to question the pretext's status as "original" or "natural."[21]

The term camp may appear anachronistic to the early twentieth century, usually being a term used to describe works produced from the 1960s onwards, but it is inaccurate to assume that camp aesthetic is the sole property of the postmodern. The earliest recorded use of the term is in 1909, and the influence of Oscar Wilde and the late nineteenth-century dandy have informed camp from the age of aestheticism to the present day.[22] Nor is it accurate to assume that, because the principles of modernism in many ways contradict the love for excess, artifice and extravagance on which camp is founded, modernism is necessarily incompatible with camp expression, and in fact, there was a special issue of

[19] Susan Sontag, 'Notes on Camp', *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (London: Penguin, 2009), pp.275-292 (p.276).
[20] Bonnie Zimmerman, ed. *Lesbian Histories and Cultures: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), p.141.
[21] Katrin Horn, *Women, Camp, and Popular Culture: Serious Excess* (London: Palgrave, 2017), p.6.
[22] 'Camp', *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/26746?rskey=KepJz9&result=6&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 20/08/2019].

Modernism/Modernity devoted to 'Camp Modernism' published in January 2016.[23] As Vincent Sherry points out, modernism and decadence are not such a binary opposition as was once supposed, particularly when we look to writers from marginalised groups such as queer authors or women. Sherry writes: 'In a field of modernism far larger and more populous than the one once dominated by those identifiably straight "Men of 1914," the queer radical chic of Wilde assumes due prominence.'[24] Many female modernists, often taking their inspiration from the aesthetic movement, incorporate a camp element into their work. This is something that has been noted in the works of several American modernists, including Anderson's queer contemporaries Amy Lowell and Djuna Barnes.[25] A good deal could be said about how Anderson's use of camp informs her feminism, or resonates with her identity as a queer woman, however this chapter is primarily concerned with how it facilitates her playful interrogation of high and low culture in editorial practice.

Camp is inseparably bound to a discourse of taste, in which the popular, the bourgeois and the avant-garde are all played off against one another. Sontag situates Camp as being 'the answer to the question: How to be a dandy in the age of mass culture'.[26] She goes on to state that: 'The connoisseur of Camp has found more ingenious pleasures. Not in Latin poetry and rare wines and velvet jackets, but in the coarsest, commonest pleasures, in the art of the masses.'[27] Camp necessitates an engagement with mass culture, although this does not denote a straightforward adoption of the dominant culture's standards and ethics. Sontag posits that 'Camp taste turns its back on the good-bad axis of ordinary aesthetic judgement', instead inviting a doubleness in which things may be simultaneously serious and frivolous; at once exquisite and awful.[28] What is more, the celebration of the vulgar, the kitsch and the commonplace carries an implicit critique of the dominant models of taste. As

[23] Marsha Bryant, Douglas Mao, eds, 'Camp Modernism', *Modernism/Modernity,* 23.1 (January 2016).
[24] Vincent Sherry, *Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 25.
[25] Margaret Gillespie, '"The Triumph of the Epicene Style": *Nightwood* and Camp', *Miranda,* 12.1 (2016), pp.1-14; Patricia Smith, '"The Woman That God Forgot": Queerness, Camp, Lies, and Catholicism in Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood', Catholic Figures, Queer Narratives,* ed. Patricia Smith and Lowell Gallagher (London: Palgrave, 2006), pp.129-148; Melissa Bradshaw, 'Modernizing Excess: Amy Lowell and the Aesthetics of Camp' (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 2000).
[26] Sontag, 'Notes on Camp', p.288.
[27] Sontag, 'Notes on Camp', p.289.
[28] Sontag, 'Notes on Camp', p.286.

Andrew Ross points out, 'Camp's patronage of bad taste […] was as much an assault on the established canons of taste as Pop's eroticization of the everyday had been'.[29]

Anderson and Camp Humour

For Anderson, camp humour serves as a means through which to negotiate her own ambivalent relationship to popular culture, particularly with regards to mainstream magazine and newspaper journalism, two modes which Anderson evokes continually in her role as literary magazine editor. Mainstream magazine culture is something which haunted Anderson in her editorship of *The Little Review,* being the benchmark she defined her own magazine against, while also providing many of the editorial conventions she relied upon in order to keep the magazine afloat. It also, ironically, provides the imagery with which Anderson describes herself in her 1930 autobiography. She writes about her own good looks in a comically disparaging way: 'It would be unbecoming of me not to know that I was extravagantly pretty in those days—extravagantly and disgustingly pretty. I looked like a composite of all the most offensive magazine covers.'[30] This comment is typical of Anderson's trademark camp style. She ridicules what she perceives as the 'offensive' covers of mass market magazines, while at the same time describing her own beauty as both 'disgusting' and 'extravagant'. What is most interesting about this description, however, is the notion of Anderson as a 'composite' of different magazine cover girls. This chapter will examine the notion that *The Little Review* is just that: a camp composite of popular and high culture, one which is moulded and influenced by Anderson's ambivalent relationship to mainstream media.

Anderson's conflicted attitudes toward mainstream journalism can be encapsulated in a statement she made to the *Chicago Tribune* in 1915, in an article titled 'Little Review now has Everything but Cash'.[31] *The Tribune* was one of the city's biggest tabloids, boasting a circulation of 'over 600,000 Sunday, Over 350,000 daily'.[32] The paper's format was similar to

[29] Andrew Ross, 'Uses of Camp' (1989), *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader*, ed. Fabio Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp.308-329 (p.321).
[30] Anderson, *My Thirty Years War,* p.15.
[31] [Author Unknown] 'Little Review now has Everything but Cash', *Chicago Tribune* (Friday, August 27th, 1915), p.16.
[32] *Chicago Tribune* Masthead, Sunday 11th June 1916.

that of other tabloid dailies published at the same time, featuring heavy illustration and advertising, society pages, fashion and sports. The Sunday issues were double the length and also featured short stories, 'real love stories', advice columns, and four full-page cartoon strips. It would be easy to characterise its entertainment-focussed editorial approach as antithetical to Anderson's work in *The Little Review:* a magazine which claims to 'Make No Compromise with the Public Taste'.[33] And yet, Anderson's occasional appearances in *The Chicago Tribune* suggest otherwise. The short article 'Little Review now has Everything but Cash', which appeared in *The Tribune* in August 1915 comments on *The Little Review's* dire financial straits during a period in which the editorial staff were living in tents having been evicted from their lodgings as the result of their anarchist sympathies. It appeared in the 'News of the Commercial World' page of the paper, a page usually reserved for business announcements and news, although here Anderson adopts this space to showcase her uniquely fashioned editorial voice, as well as her characteristic camp humour. She comments: 'Our position has not been treated fairly by American journalism. I think American journalism is at a very low ebb. Oh, oh! these newspapers! However, if you hear of any subscribers, do send their names in. We need them. Oh, oh! these newspapers!'[34] Here Anderson humorously showcases her dualistic relationship to the popular press: simultaneously despairing over the 'low ebb' of American journalism, while at the same time confessing her reliance upon them by appealing for subscriptions. The fact that this article appears in a mass-circulation newspaper and contains a semi-serious plea for subscribers further encapsulates this position. The comic, over-the-top refrain of 'Oh, oh! these newspapers!' signals to readers that, while genuinely appealing to the popular presses for publicity and financial help by means of this article, Anderson is still unwilling to make a public show of seriousness in regards to her stance or situation.

Anderson's conflicted stance towards mainstream magazine culture and the popular press also informed her editorial practices directly. As editor of *The Little Review,* Anderson often combined elements from mainstream culture with elements from the world of high art. One example in which Anderson does this most blatantly is the famous 'Blank Issue'

[33] Slogan first appears *Little Review* 4.2 (June 1917).
[34] 'Little Review now has Everything but Cash', p.16.

published in September 1916. This issue came about following an announcement made in the August 1916 issue, wherein Anderson decried the lack of 'Art' in the submissions she had been receiving. Her statement opens with the same exaggerated and dramatic tone which was by this point characteristic of her editorial voice, beginning: **'**I AM afraid to write anything; I am ashamed. I have been realizing the ridiculous tragedy of The Little Review. It has been published for over two years without coming near its ideal.'[35] She goes on to announce that:

> I loathe compromise, and yet I have been compromising in every issue by putting in things that were "almost good" or "interesting enough" or "important." There will be no more of it. If there is only one really beautiful thing for the September number it shall go in and the other pages will be left blank. Come on, all of you![36]

In the following issue, Anderson followed through on her promise, producing a 'Blank Issue' containing thirteen blank pages, in the middle of which was featured a cartoon by Jane Heap titled 'Light Occupations of the Editor when there is Nothing to Edit.'[37] This issue is significant not only for its daring editorial tactics, but also because it saw the introduction of Anderson's co-editor and romantic partner, Jane Heap, the author of the 'Light Occupations' cartoon. Heap was arguably the most significant of the various co-editors who joined in Anderson's editorial mission over the years, and was certainly the most long-standing. From her introduction here in the blank issue, Heap remained a part of the magazine's editorial staff right up until the magazine's final issue, which was published long after the breakdown of her and Anderson's romantic relationship. Heap had attended art school and brought a greater visual art presence to the magazine, being instrumental in its adoption of the dada movement, and eventually taking over the day-to-day running of the magazine after it

[35] Margaret Anderson, 'A Real Magazine', *Little Review,* 3.5 (August 1916), pp.1-2 (p.1).
[36] Anderson, 'A Real Magazine', p.2.
[37] The blank issue is the most famous, though not the only example where Anderson published blank pages. In issue 3.10 (April 1917), she published an article titled 'The War' which consisted of a blank page and a parenthetical note stating 'we will probably be suppressed for this…'. Nor is the concept of a blank issue unique to Anderson. In Ada Leverson's preface to *Letters to the Sphinx,* she jokingly alludes to Wilde publishing a volume that is 'all margin', although this volume never actually came to exist.

moved to Paris in 1923. She was also Anderson's most notable partner-in-crime, helping her to achieve some of the magazine's most significant and memorable editorial feats.[38]

The Blank Issue provoked a number of varied responses from readers, and Anderson published a selection of their responses in the following issue. One particularly curious response states that: 'The September Want Ad makes me smile. The Little Review is degenerating into the newspaper class, and has become a common beggar.'[39] Given that Anderson's rationale behind publishing the cartoon was based on a demand for more elite and better quality submissions, this reader's view that the issue signals a 'degeneration' towards the conditions of the popular press is startling. The Blank Issue is generally thought of in scholarship as an act of avant-garde shock tactics and modernist innovation: Alan Golding describes it, for example, as 'part of *The Little Review's* broader tendency to use page design for the avant-garde purpose of discomfiting readers, writers, and commercial and social institutions.'[40] And yet, this contemporary reader interprets it as the polar opposite: as signalling a degeneration into the 'newspaper class'. It is worth here acknowledging the commercial dimension the Blank Issue undoubtedly had. Anderson is frequently charged as deliberately courting controversy and drama in the hopes of increasing her magazine's sales, and this could be the tactic to which this letter refers. But the 'Blank Issue' also evokes popular culture directly in a number of ways. From the cartoon that appears in the centre of the issue, to the issue's status as a parodic advertisement, the 'Blank Issue' borrows from the registers and formats of mainstream media in a way that is self-consciously and conspicuously parodic.

The cartoon that appears in the middle of the 'Blank Issue' is the only cartoon to appear in *The Little Review,* and bears further scrutiny if only for this reason. Drawn by Jane Heap, the cartoon is titled 'Light Occupations of the Editor While There is Nothing to Edit' and it shows Anderson engaged in a series of activities which read as humorous inversions of upper class leisure pursuits such as horse riding on an emaciated 'insect', and 'swimming' in

[38] For more on Heap and Anderson's editorial relationship, see: 'Reader Critics' in Jane Marek, *Women Editing Modernism: Little Magazines and Literary History* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1995).
[39] Arthur Purdon, 'What Does It Mean?' [Letter in 'The Reader Critic'], *Little Review,* 3.7 (November 1916), pp.26-27 (p.26).
[40] Golding, '*The Little Review* (1914-29)', p.71.

a hosepipe (see: fig.1).[41] The cartoon takes inspiration from Anderson's real life. Heap and Anderson were holidaying in California at the time when the issue was published and the 'occupations' described in the cartoon are based upon some of the real activities they took part in at the time.[42] But in the cartoon these real life activities are given a comedic spin, being made comically un-glamorous—something which fits into a wider culture within the magazine of the editors making jokes about the magazine's financial troubles.[43] The inclusion of a cartoon within this broader editorial protest against the diminishing standards of art makes for a jarring fusion of avant-garde rhetoric and popular media forms. The positioning of the cartoon within the magazine is extremely significant. It occupies a double page spread in the middle of the magazine, a position which mirrors that of cartoons, fashion, sport and society pages in Sunday issues of mainstream newspapers like *The New York Tribune* and *Chicago Tribune.*

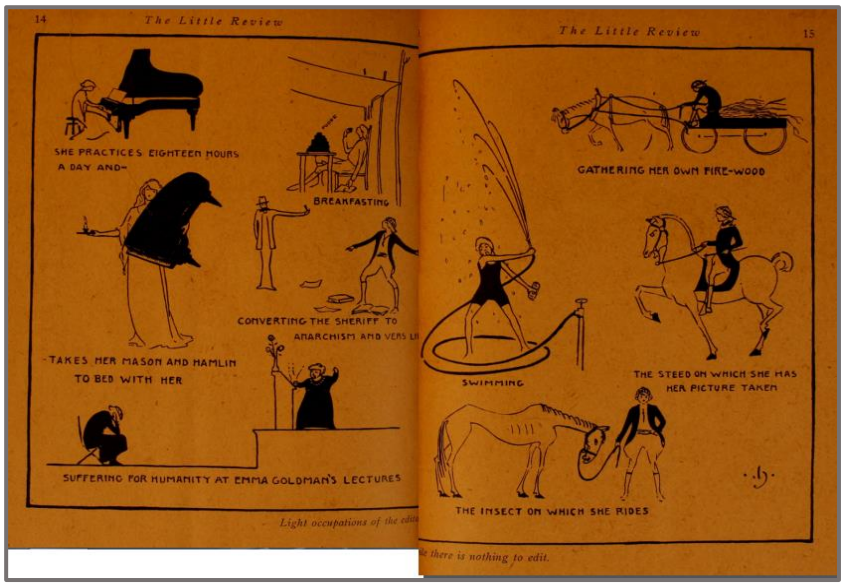

Figure 1. 'jh' [Jane Heap], 'Light Occupations of the Author while there is Nothing to Edit', *Little Review* 3.6 (September 1916), pp.14-15

Elizabeth Francis suggests that this cartoon 'parodied the photo layouts of debutantes on the society pages in newspapers and magazines'.[44] While it is true that the double page spread devoted to images recalls the layout of society papers, what the cartoon most closely resembles is a fashion page. This page from the *New York Tribune* April 22nd, 1917 (Fig.2) is an example of such a format. Just like in Heap's cartoon, this fashion page features multiple

[41] "jh" [Jane Heap], 'Light Occupations of the Editor While There is Nothing to Edit', *Little Review,* 3.6 (September 1916), pp.14-15.
[42] Anderson, *My Thirty Years War,* p.125.
[43] Anderson would frequently make jokes about the magazine's poverty-stricken status. In an editorial in the very next issue, for example, Anderson claims 'As for The Little Review, we may have to come out on tissue paper pretty soon, but we shall keep on coming out!': Anderson, 'To Our Readers', *Little Review* 3.7 (November 1916), p.21.
[44] Francis, *The Secret Treachery of Words,* p.65.


PART SIX
NEW YORK TRIBUNE

The Tribune Graphic

SUNDAY
APRIL 22, 1917

"When in Chiffons my Julia goes"

Posed by May Thompson, Marie Flynn, Barbara Valdini of the "You're In Love" Company

Photographs by Lejaren à Hiller

Figure 2. [Author Unknown] 'When in Chiffons my Julia Goes' *New-York Tribune: Graphic Tribune,* (Sunday April 22nd, 1917), p.1.

small scenes starring a single female model, accompanied by short captions explaining the scenario. The posing and layout of the two are remarkably similar—particularly the posing of the central figure in the fashion page and Anderson 'converting the sheriff to *vers libre*'. Society pages more often contain headshots and portraits, whereas fashion pages contain full-body images (like those in 'Light Occupations') in order to highlight and show off the clothing on display. The brief captions included in 'Light Occupations' are also likely a nod to the format of fashion pages. The example above has explicitly gendered captions, conjuring up an image of aspirational upper class femininity. One caption asks: 'Do you wonder that they bring a thrill to the feminine heart, such fripperies as this crepy [sic] combination, embroidered in forget-me-not wreaths…'.[45] The images show women engaging in the types of 'light occupation' parodied by Heap and Anderson in their cartoon. The caption to the image shown bottom left, for example, reads: 'It is boudoir robes like these that makes letter writing such a popular indoor sport with the ladies.'[46]

Anderson's activities in 'Light Occupations of the Editor' show a deliberate parodic departure from these types of suitably feminine activities. Instead of the delicate, ladylike activities commonly portrayed in fashion pages, in 'Light Occupations' we instead see Anderson on the left side of the cartoon engaging in the masculine spheres of politics and art ('Suffering for humanity at Emma Goldman's Lectures' and 'Converting the sheriff to *vers libre'*) and on the right side, taking part in active, physical pursuits such as swimming and

[45] [Author Unknown] 'When in Chiffons my Julia Goes', *New-York Tribune: Graphic Tribune,* (Sunday April 22nd, 1917), p.1.
[46] 'When in Chiffons my Julia Goes', p.1.

horse riding, all the time attired in her masculine outfit of riding breeches and jacket. The humour in this image derives in part from the sense of dissonance between the frivolously feminine activities of the society girls and models upheld as aspirational in the mainstream press, and the more active, exciting, politically charged existence led by the unfalteringly modern and highbrow Anderson. As such, while this cartoon sees Anderson borrow from the format of mainstream print culture, she does so in order to state her own difference to the types of women normally seen in mainstream magazines. Although the activities we see Anderson taking part in may be comically un-glamorous (see, for example, the hunched and miserable form of Anderson 'gathering her own firewood' in the top right hand image), they also see her associated with a specific type of modernity and youthful vibrancy which is held in opposition to the model of femininity celebrated by the mainstream press.

Another thing that makes the Blank Issue interesting is its status as a parodic advertisement. While fashion and society pages are not solely designed for the purpose of advertising, they do ultimately exist to showcase the latest fashions and promote various brands and designers. As Mark Morrisson points out, the early twentieth century saw a number of changes in the way print media was produced and disseminated, one of the major ones being the shift which sees advertising revenue replace subscription sales as the number one source of profit for magazines.[47] *The Little Review* did rely on advertising revenue to keep afloat, although it maintained a decidedly ambivalent approach to advertising as a concept. The blank issue opens to an explanatory note, stating: 'The Little Review hopes to become a magazine of Art. The September issue is offered as a Want Ad.' Anderson's use of the informal term 'Want Ad' introduces this issue using the language of the popular press irreverently and, we suspect, insincerely. The idea of her magazine serving as a 'Want Ad' is clearly meant to be taken as sarcasm, with a sense of implied disdain directed towards the notion of advertising. And yet, while the cartoon 'Light Occupations' can be read as a parody of the advertisement-heavy fashion pages of popular magazines, it also undeniably contains a thinly-veiled advertisement in its own right, in the form of shameless product placement for Mason and Hamlin pianos. In the two images to the left of the cartoon, subtitled 'she

[47] Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism,* p.4.

practices eighteen hours a day', 'and takes her Mason and Hamlin to bed with her', we see Anderson's piano of choice illustrated and mentioned by name.[48]

Mason and Hamlin had a long-standing relationship with *The Little Review.* In the magazine's very first issue, Anderson reviewed two pianists in an article titled 'Paderewski and the New Gods', in which she called the Mason and Hamlin a 'piano of unutterable depth and richness'.[49] The manager of Chicago's branch of the Mason and Hamlin Piano Company saw the article and struck up a deal with Anderson, which, according to her memoir, meant that she would receive a free rental piano in exchange for a yearly advertisement.[50] The summer of 1916 (in which the Blank Issue appeared) also saw Anderson successfully contact the head of the company, 'Mr. Mason', and ask for a free concert grand piano: presumably the one we see pictured in Heap's cartoon.[51] This inclusion of the branded piano in the cartoon is undeniably a form of advertisement, then. Not only does the cartoon feature the Mason and Hamlin name and image, it also sees the piano attached to Anderson's own personal brand, with its associations of modernity, irreverence and sophistication. By appearing in this cartoon, the Mason and Hamlin piano comes to be associated in the readers' minds not only with Anderson, but with the Blank Issue itself—a bold and controversial editorial choice, made by an editor so devoted to the Mason and Hamlin brand that she takes her piano to bed with her. But while there was a blatantly commercial element to Anderson's adoption of Mason and Hamlin as a kind of unofficial sponsor for the *Review,* Anderson herself refused to see this as an act of selling out. When one reader accused Anderson's support of the brand as 'a little too commercial',[52] Anderson responded by claiming: 'Of course our remarks about the Mason and Hamlin violated all journalistic traditions. But traditions are so likely to need violation, and diplomacy and caution are such uninteresting qualities!'[53] Anderson not only refused to have her support of the brand see her linked with a popular or commercial press in this way, but in fact used her relationship with Mason and Hamlin as

[48] "j.h.", 'Light Occupations', p.14.
[49] Margaret Anderson, 'Paderewski and the New Gods', *Little Review,* 1.1 (March 1914), pp.11-13 (p.13).
[50] Anderson, *My Thirty Years War,* p.67.
[51] Anderson, *My Thirty Years War,* p.121.
[52] Agnes Darrow, [Untitled Reader Letter], *Little Review,* 1.2 (April 1914), pp.49-50 (p.49).
[53] Margaret Anderson, response to Agnes Darrow, Reader Letter in issue 1.2 (April 1914) pp.49-50 (p.50).

evidence for how her magazine defies journalistic tradition, flying in the face of 'diplomacy and caution'.[54]

This shameless approach to advertising is something mirrored in another of Anderson's editorial stunts: her '"ads" we might have had in this issue, but haven't'.[55] When the magazine lost advertising revenue owing to its apparent support of the anarchist movement, Anderson ran a series of advertisements for companies who had refused to have their names associated with the magazine. An indicative example of this being her advertisement for 'A.C. McClurg and Company':

> A. C. McClurg and Company could have used this page to advantage. They have lots of books to advertise and they ought to want to advertise them in a Chicago magazine. I am willing to wager that they will: I plan to interview them once a week until they succumb.[56]

While these were parodic advertisements, published with a clear element of humour, they also function as genuine advertisements for real companies. In her autobiography Anderson admits to going around and asking for money from these businesses, albeit unsuccessfully.[57] What is more, the parodic '"ads" we might have had in this issue, but haven't' come with a note that states: 'We will give a commission of $5.00 to every one who secures a full-page "ad" for THE LITTLE REVIEW.'[58] As with almost all Anderson's actions, this ironic '"ads" we might have had' feature has a dual function: simultaneously constructing her magazine as being frivolously indifferent towards commercialism, while at the same time making a genuine bid for ad revenue or sales. It is this dual function we see at the heart of Anderson's experiments in camp. Anderson indulges in the tactics of mass culture in a way that contradicts her professed ideals, but this is legitimised by the playful way in which it is done. Camp humour and parody provide the means to reconcile the apparent contradictions between modernism and the mainstream. Throughout *The Little Review,* Anderson adopts the

[54] Anderson, response, p.50.
[55] Margaret Anderson, '"ads" we might have had in this issue, but haven't', *Little Review,* 2.4 (June-July, 1915), pp.56-62.
[56] Anderson, '"ads" we might have had in this issue, but haven't', p.60.
[57] Anderson, *My Thirty Years War,* p.80.
[58] Anderson, '"ads" we might have had in this issue, but haven't', p.56.

popular and the consumerist ironically, but ultimately does still adopt them nonetheless.

The '*Vers Libre* Contest' (1916)

Another example of this same tactic was *The Little Review's* '*Vers Libre* Prize contest'. This contest ran contemporaneously with the Blank Issue and is another example Matthew Hannah gives of how Anderson adopted mass market editorial tactics in her editorship of *The Little Review*.[59] It is true that the format of a poetry contest is one drawn directly from mass market media, and this feels at odds with the magazine's policy of only publishing the best of the best, as expressed in the 'Blank Issue''s claim that the magazine would rather print nothing than print inferior art. *The Little Review* promoted itself as the panacea to what is referred to in one article as the 'dank atmosphere of nineteenth-century commercialism'.[60] Anderson took great pains to ensure that her magazine was never associated with the commercial aspects of art and literature, but instead emphasised its dedication to an imprecise notion of greatness in art. The credo she published in the June/July 1915 issue, for instance, states:

> THE LITTLE REVIEW is a magazine that believes in Life for Art's sake, in the Individual rather than in Incomplete people, in an age of Imagination rather than of Reasonableness; a magazine that believes in Ideas even if they are not Ultimate Conclusions, and values its Ideals so greatly as to live them […][61]

And yet the *vers libre* contest appears to contradict these apparently high-minded goals. Not only does it open out the playing field to amateur (and to Anderson's mind, inferior) writers, it also puts a monetary value of $25 on the winning submissions, translating them into marketable copy: something which seems out of step with *The Little Review's* professed idealism. The title under which the contest was first announced, 'V*ers Libre* Prize Contest' places the monetary prize at the very centre of the contest, and gives it an undeniably

[59] Hannah, '*Photoplay*, Literary Celebrity, and *The Little Review*', p.234.
[60] "G.F.", 'A New Study of William Morris' [book review], *Little Review,* 1.7 (October 1914), pp.50-52 (p.50).
[61] Margaret Anderson, 'Our Credo', *Little Review,* 2.4 (June-July 1915), p.36.

commercial angle. *The Little Review* '*Vers Libre* Contest' differed from the expected conventions of a magazine poetry competition in a number of important ways, however.

Mark Morrisson discusses the importance of literary prizes to the formation of modernism, calling them a 'fast track to canonization'.[62] The types of prizes he mentions include, for example, *The Dial Prize* which in 1922 was awarded to Eliot's *The Waste Land* and came with a $2000 dollar cash prize.[63] It may have been Anderson's intention to align her own contest with this prestigious literary establishment, and yet the format of the contest was actually far more closely related to competitions held by mainstream publications of the era. Contests and competitions were a staple of mainstream newspapers and magazines in the age of New Journalism, usually offering a small cash prize and/or the opportunity for amateur authors to see their names in print. Their remit would often be poems or short stories, but would sometimes be simplified to 'limerick contests, joke and riddle competitions and 'missing word' games.'[64] Stephanie Rains, who looks at competitions in Irish magazines, points to the balancing act between making the challenge of these competitions easy enough to avoid alienating readers, but not so easy that they infringe upon anti-gambling laws.[65] Clearly, these types of contest were a world away from the literary prizes given out by *The Dial* or the Library of Congress, and yet Anderson's *'Vers Libre* Prize Contest' was inarguably in dialogue with both.

In fact, the *Little Review* contest was in direct dialogue with a specific prize contest taking place in Chicago simultaneously. The Chicago Women's Club had its own poetry competition running at the same time, publicised in the *Chicago Tribune*.[66] The format and parameters were almost identical in many ways to that of *The Little Review,* even to the extent that submissions for both competitions were to be addressed to the Fine Arts Building,

[62] Mark Morrisson, 'Nationalism and the Modern American Canon', *Cambridge Companion to American Modernism* ed. Walter Kalaidjian (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.12-35 (p.26).
[63] Morrisson, 'Nationalism and the Modern American Canon', p.27. See also: Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
[64] Stephanie Rains, '"Going in for Competitions": Active Readers and Magazine Culture, 1900–1910', *Media History*, 21.2 (2015), pp.138-149 (p.142).
[65] Rains, '"Going in for Competitions", p.142.
[66] The women's club contest was announced in *The Chicago Tribune* (Wednesday July 5th 1916), p.5, and the winners announced in the October 31st issue (*Chicago Tribune* Tuesday 31st October 1916), p.9. Anderson's contest was announced in March 1916, and the winners were due to be announced in the October 1916 issue, although this was later pushed back until April 1917.

Chicago, where *The Little Review* was then based.[67] Both competitions asked for anonymous submissions of original poetry, which would be judged by a panel of established poets, and the winning entries would receive a cash prize.[68] There were, however, a few crucial differences between the two contests, namely in the types of poetry being solicited. The Chicago Women's Club contest was held in celebration of 'the Shakespeare tercentenary', and was designed to promote traditional poetry. The advertisement in the *Tribune* states: 'Poems submitted must be written in some of the old standard poetic forms. For this first competition free verse is barred.'[69] *The Little Review* contest, by contrast, was targeted exclusively towards free verse. What is more, the advertisement for the Women's Club contest states that: 'Poems […] must be loyal American in viewpoint, whatever their subject matter may be.'[70] *The Little Review* were not only advocates of new poetic forms, but also unafraid to be seen as un-patriotic, the magazine being affiliated with anarchism, and staunchly anti-war. [71] As such, the two contests were diametrically opposed in the type of content they were soliciting, even though their formats were virtually identical.

In Anderson's *vers libre* contest she combined the modernity and cosmopolitanism associated with *vers libre* with the prize contest format made popular in mainstream magazines. It is no coincidence that *vers libre* was the chosen form for *The Little Review's* contest. At the time the contest was announced, *vers libre* was being readily discussed in magazines on both sides of the Atlantic and was virtually synonymous with all things modern, experimental and elite. Suzanne Churchill writes that 'To write free verse in the 1910s was to do something radically experimental, unconventional, individualistic'.[72] *The Little Review* itself was host to much discussion of *vers libre* in the years prior to the contest and contributed in no small part to how it came to be perceived. The poet Eunice Tietjens, for example, claims

[67] 'News of the Chicago's Women's Clubs', *Chicago Tribune* (Sunday July 9th 1916), p.45.
[68] For the Chicago Women's Club contest, this prize was 'First prize, $50; second prize, $25; third prize, $15; fourth prize, $10'. *The Little Review* offered two $25 dollar prizes for the best two entries.
[69] 'News of the Chicago's Women's Clubs' in *Chicago Tribune* (Sunday July 9th 1916), p.45.
[70] 'News of the Chicago Women's Clubs', p.45.
[71] See: Margaret Anderson, 'The Challenge of Emma Goldman', *Little Review,* 1.3 (May 1915), pp.5-9; Margaret Anderson, 'Art and Anarchism', *Little Review,* 3.1, (March 1916), pp.3-6; Florence Kiper Frank, 'War Impressions', *Little Review*, 2.5 (August 1915), pp.11-12.; Margaret Anderson, 'The War', *Little Review,* 3.10 (April 1917), p.4.
[72] Suzanne Churchill, *The Little Magazine Others and the Renovation of Modern American Poetry* (London: Routledge, 2006), p.5.

in an 1914 article that *vers libre* 'is essentially an art for the sophisticated, and the tyro will do well to avoid it.'[73] Richard Aldington's article, 'A Young American Poet' published in the March 1915 issue, sets up *vers libre* as something familiar only to an educated and cosmopolitan elite (the reader being implicitly included in this group). Twice in a single page, he asserts: 'you must remember that there are very, very few people in England who have the faintest idea of what is meant by *vers libre*' and that, in 1911 '*vers libre* was practically unheard of outside France.'[74]

The Women's Club contest and the *Little Review* contest, then, appear to have been designed according to remits which stood in direct opposition: the one representing the old guard of patriotism, traditional form and conservatism, with the other representing modernism, the radical and the avant-garde. *The Little Review* was frequently derisive towards the types of traditional, conservative literature solicited by the Chicago Women's Club, and in fact had been known to poke fun at the club in the past. In the April 1914 issue, George Soul opens his 'New York Letter' by asking: 'Is it true that a Chicago woman's club recently declared any book to be immoral which contains a character whom you wouldn't invite into your home to meet your daughter?'[75] The oppositional nature of the two competitions is something which is evident from their initial advertisements, but which is made even more apparent in the issue where *The Little Review* contest winners were announced. The whole issue feels like a parody of a poetry competition. Instead of praising the winning entries, Anderson goes through a selection of poems praised by the judges and submits them to her own negative critiques. The feature opens with a statement by Anderson which reads:

> I know very little about prize contests, but I imagine that there has never been one in the history of poetry which could boast so many really bad poems. Personally I think there are not more than four or

[73] Eunice Tietjens, 'The Spiritual Dangers of Writing Vers Libre', *Little Review,* 1.8 (November 1914), pp.25-29, (p.26).
[74] Richard Aldington, 'A Young American Poet', *Little Review,* 2.1 (March, 1915), pp.22-25 (P.22). Both Aldington and the subject of his article, H.D., were among the poets to have their work published among the winning entries from the *vers libre* contest itself, with H.D. taking first prize.
[75] George Soul, 'New York Letter'*, Little Review,* 1.2 (April 1914), pp.46-47 (p.46).

> five with any suggestion of poetry in them: the rest are either involuntarily humorous, like the one printed at the end, or pompously anachronistic.[76]

Immediately distancing herself from the competition and its associations of mainstream media by stating 'I know very little about prize contests', Anderson then goes on to ridicule and criticise the submissions she received. A poem praised by judge William Carlos Williams for its 'subtle depth of thought', she retorts: 'What or where is the subtle depth of thought? Almost every kind of person in the world has had this thought: it is not even a poetic thought. And what is there in the treatment to make it poetry?'.[77] She then goes on to call Charles Ashleigh's 'Once More—The Road' 'a very trite effort.'[78] Nearly all of the poets featured were professionals, and many had poems published in *The Little Review* both before and after. And yet Anderson has no problem publicly insulting their work, making the contest less about showcasing new literary talent and more about demonstrating Anderson's own status as the ultimate arbiter of what does and does not constitute good literature. Despite launching her own competition, Anderson showed no intention of respecting or obeying the conventions of the form, instead using the contest as an opportunity to set up her magazine as distinct from the types of publication which would typically host competitions of this kind.

In a further act of irreverence, Anderson includes, alongside the work of these professional poets, three other poems. First, she includes two poems by Tom and Fritz Peters, her nephews, 'at the age of two years and ten months' and 'three years and eight months', respectively.[79] Whether their inclusion is designed to shame the other poets featured, or simply to please her nephews, it certainly has the effect of undermining the seriousness and professionalism of the contest. Then, the last poem featured in this issue, which appears along with the winning and commended entries, is a submission by an unnamed poet which is written in rhyming metre, and with a mawkishly patriotic message. The poem, entitled 'A Mother's Sacrifice', is published underneath a note from Anderson

[76] Margaret C. Anderson, 'The *Vers Libre* Contest', *Little Review,* 3.10 (April 1917), pp.11-23 (p.11).
[77] Anderson, 'The *Vers Libre Contest',* p.14.
[78] Anderson, 'The *Vers Libre* Contest', p.14.
[79] Anderson, 'The *Vers Libre* Contest', p.20.

which reads: 'This last one may be printed as a sample of the rest of the contest, and speaks for itself. It came with a little note saying "I hope it may win one of the prizes in the contest, being original free verse and very patriotic."'[80] This somewhat unkind inclusion in particular feeds into the construction of *The Little Review's* cultural standing. It is clear from the note supplied along with the poem that the poet has misunderstood the definition of 'free verse' (Which, as Richard Aldington reminds us, 'was practically unheard of outside France' in 1911). As Matthew Hannah points out: 'Readers were invited to laugh at the woman who neither understood *vers libre* nor the political stance of the editors—while maintaining the façade of critical editors only interested in good art—which invited the audience "in the know" to feel part of the coterie group.'[81] It is entirely possible that the author of 'A Mother's Sacrifice' had intended her poem for the Chicago Women's Club contest, and that it ended up in Anderson's mailbox by mistake. Its standardised form and 'very patriotic' message certainly make it eligible for the Women's Club contest, whether or not that was its intended destination. *The Little Review's* decision to include this poem serves as a reminder that the *Little Review's vers libre* contest was not an attempt to broaden its inclusivity by allowing amateur authors a chance to see their work featured in print. Instead, it served to further alienate the un-initiated, while using humour as a tool to strengthen the sense of community in readers who were already a part of *The Little Review's* coterie readership.

Despite the fact that the contest was ultimately a commercial act designed to boost *The Little Review's* readership and reader-engagement, the way Anderson used it was to further assert herself and her magazine as being part of an elite group defined in opposition to the mainstream. Despite borrowing the contest formula from competitions held by organisations like the Chicago Women's Club, *The Little Review* sought to position itself as firmly opposed to that contest and all it stood for (even though, ironically, one of the winners of the Chicago Women's Club contest, Alice Corbin Henderson, was also a *Little Review* contributor, as well as being assistant editor of *Poetry* magazine between 1912-1916).[82]

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[80] Anderson, 'The *Vers Libre* Contest', p.23.

[81] Hannah, '*Photoplay*, Literary Celebrity, and *The Little Review',* p.234.

[82] A letter from Corbin Henderson appears in *The Little Review's* second issue, generously praising its first. [Alice C. Henderson, Untitled Letter, *Little Review,* 1.2 (April 1914), p.53]. She also published an article in the March 1916 issue [Alice Corbin Henderson, 'Don'ts for Critics', *Little Review,* 3.1 (March 1916), pp.12-14] and a series of poems apparently dictated by Henderson's eight year old daughter and transcribed by Corbin

Anderson did this by making a mockery of the conventions of the contest and handling the entries without due seriousness or respect. By taking this irreverent and humorous approach to the contest, Anderson was again able to benefit from commercial tactics of hosting a competition, without seeing her status as an idealist and a believer in 'Art for Art's Sake' compromised. This is an approach we see repeated throughout Anderson's editorship, not only in these earlier issues, but right up until the magazine's final issue which uses very similar tactics.

The Final Issue

The final issue of *The Little Review,* published in Paris in the Spring of 1929, appeared a full three years after the penultimate issue, and signalled a marked departure from the magazine's usual format. Anderson writes in her autobiography that she 'felt that it would be uninteresting to publish a conventional number, but that it might be stirring to ask the artists of the world what they were thinking and feeling about their lives and work. We drew up a list of simple but essential questions and sent them to all our contributors.'[83] The result was a full-issue feature subtitled 'Confessions and Letters: More than fifty of the foremost men in the arts tell the truth about themselves in this number.'[84] The visual register of the final issue drew heavily from the conventions of high modernism: evoking Dada in its bold typographical choices and departure from conventional linear text (see: Appendix fig. 9). Text throughout this issue of the magazine is innovatively formatted, being interspersed with thick black lines and sometimes appearing sideways on the page. Anderson sent the questionnaire out to over sixty artists and intellectuals, nearly all of them prominent modernists. The responses she received include answers from James Joyce, Ezra Pound, Tristran Tzara, Havelock Ellis, as well as an explanation that 'Einstein was ill. Mary Garden too shy. Picasso never lets his mind

Henderson appears in the August 1915 issue [Alice Oliver Henderson, 'Children's Poems', *Little Review,* 2.5 (August 1915), pp.38-42]. Corbin Henderson was also the assistant editor of *Poetry,* a magazine that was instrumental in the formation of literary modernism. Jayne Marek credits Henderson as being 'vital to *Poetry's* developments' [see: Marek, *Women Editing Modernism,* p.25]. The fact that Henderson also entered and won the *Tribune* competition while also being so deeply engaged with the modernist circles of *Poetry* and *The Little Review* speaks to how insubstantial the divisions between 'high' and 'low' spheres of artistic production were in Chicago at this time.

[83] Anderson, *My Thirty Years War,* p.271.

[84] *The Little Review,* 12.2 (Spring 1929), *Little Review 1925-1929* (New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1967), front cover.

stray from painting.'[85] The questions themselves, however, are not quite in keeping with the high modernist tone which might be expected from such an impressive line-up of the 'foremost men in the arts', and many contributors refused to answer them. They contained questions such as 'What has been the happiest moment of your life?' 'What do you like most about yourself? Dislike most?' and 'What things do you really like?', any of which we may expect to find in a mass market magazine or newspaper interview, but which one would not usually expect to find in a literary magazine of this type.[86] Melanie Micir comments that some of the questions were 'so bland one would not be surprised to encounter them in Anderson's Midwestern high school yearbook'.[87] The final issue, then, makes for a contradictory mix of high and low culture, combining an avant-garde aesthetic with the popular form of celebrity interview or 'confessional'. This incongruous mix is once again negotiated, however, through Anderson's use of camp humour.

That the final issue was commercially-driven was undeniable. It opens on the very first page with a full page advertisement for Anderson's autobiography, aimed towards soliciting publication. The advertisement uses the names of some of the contributors of this issue to emphasise Anderson's cultural capital. It boasts that the autobiography includes:

> The story of the founding of *The Little Review* by its founder; with reminiscences of the brilliant group of contemporary writers, musicians, painters, and sculptors who contributed to it, from James Joyce, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, Brancusi, Harold Bauer, Mary Garden, to Jean Cocteau and George Antheil […] IN PREPARATION READY JUNE FIRST PUBLISHER WANTED'.[88]

In fact, very few of these names are even so much as mentioned in Anderson's autobiography as it appeared in its final published form, although several of them do appear

[85] *The Little Review* Final Issue (Spring 1929), p.4.
[86] Margaret Anderson, 'Questionnaire', *The Little Review* (Spring 1929), p.5.
[87] Melanie Micir, *The Passion Projects: Modernist Women, Intimate Archives, Unfinished Lives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), p.78
[88] 'My Thirty Years War', [Advertisement], *The Little Review,* 12.2 (Spring 1929), p.1.

in this final issue of the magazine. It is as though Anderson sought to use the issue as a means to flaunt the extent of her industry connections and cement her centrality to the world of literary modernism, with the intention of securing a publisher for her autobiography. Autobiographies of literary celebrities were gaining popularity at this time, sparked by the success of Edward Bok, editor of the *Ladies Home Journal,* whose enormously popular 1920 autobiography *The Americanization of Edward Bok* went on to win a Pulitzer Prize. Examples of editor memoirs and autobiographies that followed include H.L. Menken's *The Days* trilogy (1936), Harriet Monroe's *A Poet's Life: Seventy Years in a Changing World* (1938) and Max Eastman's *Love and Revolution* (1964)*,* as well as Anderson's own three-part autobiography published between 1930 and 1969.

This fashion for autobiography feeds into a growing culture which saw magazine editors elevated to the status of celebrities. Scholars such as Aaron Jaffe and Jonathan Goldman have discussed how modernist authors were successful in manufacturing their status as literary celebrities, and the same is true for celebrity editors.[89] Several magazines in the 1910s ran articles and interviews featuring editors from other publications, such as *The New York Tribune's* 'Are the Editors in?' or *Every Week*'s 'Dear Editors'.[90] Interestingly, these articles did not discriminate between editors of mainstream and literary magazines, viewing them all as potential candidates for the cult of the celebrity editor.[91] A review of Edward Bok's autobiography published in *Scribner's* calls him 'the famous editor of the Ladies' Home Journal.' And 'the leading personality of the day.'[92] Anderson's autobiography, eventually subtitled 'by the legendary Editor of the "Little Review"', comes across as an attempt on the part of the author to fashion herself in keeping with the image of a celebrity editor.

Anderson already possessed a certain degree of mainstream notoriety by 1929. In the early days of *The Little Review,* Anderson would appear fairly regularly in the Chicago mainstream press, usually treated as a fascinating local eccentric. She appeared multiple

[89] Aaron Jaffe, *Modernism and the Culture of Celebrity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Jonathan Goldman, *Modernism is the Literature of Celebrity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012).
[90] Louise Bryant, 'Are the Editors in? They Are.' *New York Tribune* (Sunday 22nd April 1917) p.39; [Author Unknown], 'Dear Editors' *Every Week* November 15th, 1915, p.12.
[91] 'Are the Editors in?' looks at a selection of magazine editors from *Collier's* and *Ladies Home Journal* to *The Little Review,* while 'Dear Editors' looks at several magazines including *Vanity Fair* and *The Masses.*
[92] [Author Unknown], 'Book Notes', *Scribner's,* 68.3 (September, 1920), p.17.

times in *The Chicago Tribune,* most notably in a half-page feature entitled 'Ours is the Life, Others are Odd: Miss Anderson' which dedicates considerable page space to statements from Anderson and her fellow *Little Review* contributors who were at that time living in tents on the shores of Lake Michigan.[93] She is also featured in an article entitled 'How they Hate Themselves', which appeared in the Chicago weekly magazine *Every Week.* The article features a photograph of Anderson in an outfit of riding jodhpurs and jacket which is startlingly similar to the one she wearing in 'Light Occupations' (see: Appendix fig. 10).[94] This article featured photographs of several literary figures, published next to quotations in which they come across as arrogant or conceited. Even though this article is designed to poke fun at Anderson, it also affords her a level of cultural status which is implied by the very fact of her inclusion. Her photograph appears in between two notable American men of letters: Frank Harris and Walt Whitman, suggesting a certain level of equivalency between her cultural status and theirs. The 1922 *Ulysses* trial also saw Anderson and her co-editor Jane Heap catapulted into the public eye.[95] But, although Anderson was already a fairly well-known public figure within certain circles by this point, the Final Issue reads as an attempt to cement her status as a literary celebrity, in the truest sense of the word.

In her opening editorial Anderson sets out to shape the mythology of the magazine as fundamental to the development of literary modernism, with herself being its guiding force. She positions herself as the 'art arbiter' of the world, claiming that:

> The thing I wanted—would die without—was conversation. The only way to get it was to reach people with ideas. Only artists had ideas… and of course only the very good ones. So I made a magazine

[93] [Author Unknown], 'Ours is the Life, Others are Odd: Miss Anderson', *Chicago Tribune* (Monday August 9th, 1915), p.13.
[94] [Author Unknown], 'How they Hate Themselves', *Every Week* (May 4th 1918), p.11.
[95] The *Ulysses* trial is a fascinating example of camp performance in its own right. For more on the ways in which Anderson used the *Ulysses* trial to conduct a form of camp performance of self, see: Elizabeth Francis, *The Secret Treachery of Words;* Adam Parkes, *Modernism and the Theater of Censorship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Holly Baggett, '"Someone to Talk Our Language": Jane Heap, Margaret Anderson, and the Little Review in Chicago', *Modern American Queer History,* ed. Allida Mae Black (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2001) pp.24-35; and Anderson and Heap's own personal accounts, published in *The Little Review:* 'Judicial Opinion' (December 1917) 'Art and the Law' (Sept-Dec 1920) 'An Obvious Statement' (Sept-Dec 1920) and 'Ulysses in Court' (Jan-March 1921).

> exclusively for the very good artists of the time. Nothing more simple for me than to be the art arbiter of the world.[96]

The rest of the magazine then serves as a rarefied assortment of the various names and voices Anderson has selected as having sufficient cultural heft to be anthologised as a part of the 'modern literary movement'.[97] *The Little Review's* final issue in fact recalls Ada Leverson's '1894' in its interest in literary legacy-making. Melanie Micir notes how the tone and phrasing of the questionnaire itself assumes 'a retrospective positon, an understanding of oneself as having passed one's prime and entered a more mature, or even late, period', suggesting that Anderson was more interested in developing a narrative of the recent literary past than forging a literary future.[98] And that is exactly what the magazine provides: a narrative of recent events, with Anderson and her magazine situated squarely at the centre of it. Just like the Blank Issue, '"ads" we might have had in this issue, but haven't', and the Poetry Contest, the Final Issue is a blatantly commercial venture which relies on the tactics of the mass market media and celebrity, even as it seeks to present Anderson and *The Little Review* as the epicentre of a high modernist elite.

But, as always with Anderson, there is also a level of humour at work in this issue which prevents this final issue from becoming a straightforward cash-grab. Even in her opening editorial, her claim to the position of 'art arbiter of the world' feels tongue-in-cheek, and this bold pronouncement is immediately followed up with this: 'I still feel the same way—with a rather important exception. As this number will show, even the artist doesn't know what he is talking about. And I can no longer go on publishing a magazine in which no one really knows what he is talking about. It doesn't interest me.'[99] This claim strongly echoes both the Blank Issue and the Poetry Contest, wherein Anderson publicly decried the quality of her own contributors. Subverting the expected persona of the hyperbolic self-promotor who serves to exaggerate the quality of the artists featured, Anderson declares her own contributors to be sub-par. This parodic editorial voice undercuts the commercial aspect of

[96] Margaret Anderson, 'Editorial', *The Little Review,* 12.2 (Spring 1929), pp.3-4.
[97] Anderson, 'Editorial', p.3.
[98] Micir, *The Passion Projects,* p.78.
[99] Anderson, 'Editorial', p.3.

the issue, suggesting to the reader that the ruthless commercialism we have just seen is only part of a persona: a parody of the egotistical and commercially-driven, sell-out editor. With this shift in tone, we are unable to be sure of Anderson's true intentions, just as we are unsure how serious she is being later on in the editorial when she states that 'If any one feels he should like to buy *The Little Review* and go on publishing all the first-rate creative expressions of these confusions, I am perfectly willing to sell it.'[100] Because her language is at all times hyperbolic and her professed opinions shift so dramatically from one statement to the next, we can never be sure what is ironic and what is sincere. And it is through this ambiguity in meaning that the issue is able to exist as both a commercially-oriented attempt at solidifying Anderson's celebrity status, and at the same time, a parody of that same celebrity culture.

The way that Anderson and her contributors approached the questionnaire format also smacks of the playful and parodic. Anderson included all of the responses she received, whether they answered the questionnaire or not, even those which were outright rude or insulting. She also occasionally inserted her own parenthetical insertions into some of the responses, as well as providing her own answers to the questions at the end. Many of the artists and writers solicited by Anderson refused to answer the questions posed. Djuna Barnes, for instance, responded with: 'Dear Little Review: I am sorry but the list of questions does not interest me to answer. Nor have I that respect for the public.'[101] Nathalie Clifford Barney took a slightly different approach, claiming to have lost the questions, but suggesting that 'Perhaps it is just as well so, for our opinions are ever shifting toward erroneous conclusions […] However if you would like to try your lists on some scholars and less unopinionated [*sic*] writers here bring them on a Friday at tea time.'[102] This response is particularly interesting because it implies that Barney had a problem not with the questions themselves, but with the practice of fixing down opinions and stating them definitively and publicly in print. She suggests instead that they discuss the questions among friends in private at her salon. Some contributors took the questions seriously, including Dorothy

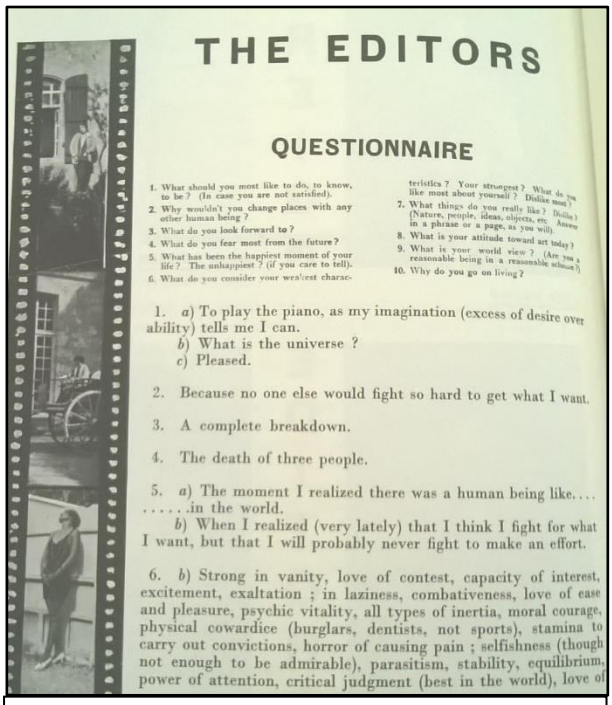
[100] Anderson, 'Editorial', p.4.
[101] Djuna Barnes, *The Little Review,* 12.2 (Spring 1929), p.17.
[102] Nathalie Clifford Barney, *The Little Review,* 12.2 (Spring 1929), p.17.

Richardson, who gave lengthy answers to all ten of them, but many—particularly those of the highest cultural prestige—seemed to suggest that the interview format was beneath them. Tristan Tzara's response is particularly memorable in this regard. It reads 'C'est avec Plaisir que je réponds à votre enquête: Qu'est-ce cela peut bien vous foutre?' [It is with pleasure that I answer your inquiry: why do you give a fuck?].[103]

These non-answers are fascinating though, in that they are a public statement of disregard for the conventions of mass media and the commodification of the artists' public persona, which also function as an act of conscious self-fashioning. Artists like Djuna Barnes and Tristan Tzara, in refusing to answer the questions, contribute to the image of themselves as figures of literary elitism and mystery. Tzara's response in particular make him appear irreverent and shocking, a portrayal which is in keeping with his status as avant-garde provocateur. One definite consequence of publishing the non-replies is that it implies to readers that Anderson herself is in on the joke. Publishing all answers, good and bad, shows readers that she is aware of the low cultural status of the questionnaire format, and is complicit in the way her contributors ridicule it. It implies that she welcomes responses that eschew or make fun of the interview format—that a *parody* of celebrity interview was in fact what she was looking for all along.

We get a clear sense from this final issue that Anderson was acutely aware of the irony inherent in memorialising the modernist movement in a medium so closely tied to popular culture. Her own answers to the questionnaire draw even more heavily on the registers of popular media and entertainment. She published her answers to the questions across a two-page spread. Whereas most contributors, including her co-editor Jane Heap, had their responses printed alongside a professional headshot, Anderson instead chose to illustrate her own responses to the questions with a series of photographs of herself in various theatrical poses (see: fig. 3 and 4). These photographs directly evoke popular culture, their vertical layout being suggestive of a film reel. We see Anderson in a bathing suit, extending her neck dramatically away from the camera, and on the opposite page, a

[103] Tristan Tzara, *The Little Review,* 12.2 (Spring 1929), p.29.



THE EDITORS

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What should you most like to do, to know, to be? (In case you are not satisfied).
2. Why wouldn't you change places with any other human being?
3. What do you look forward to?
4. What do you fear most from the future?
5. What has been the happiest moment of your life? The unhappiest? (if you care to tell).
6. What do you consider your weakest characteristics? Your strongest? What do you like most about yourself? Dislike most?
7. What things do you really like? Dislike? (Nature, people, ideas, objects, etc. Answer in a phrase or a page, as you will).
8. What is your attitude toward art today?
9. What is your world view? (Are you a reasonable being in a reasonable scheme?)
10. Why do you go on living?

1. *a*) To play the piano, as my imagination (excess of desire over ability) tells me I can.
b) What is the universe?
c) Pleased.

2. Because no one else would fight so hard to get what I want.

3. A complete breakdown.

4. The death of three people.

5. *a*) The moment I realized there was a human being like.... .....in the world.
b) When I realized (very lately) that I think I fight for what I want, but that I will probably never fight to make an effort.

6. *b*) Strong in vanity, love of contest, capacity of interest, excitement, exaltation; in laziness, combativeness, love of ease and pleasure, psychic vitality, all types of inertia, moral courage, physical cowardice (burglars, dentists, not sports), stamina to carry out convictions, horror of causing pain; selfishness (though not enough to be admirable), parasitism, stability, equilibrium, power of attention, critical judgment (best in the world), love of

Figure 3: Anderson's answers to the questionnaire, *Little Review* (Spring, 1929), pp. 58-59 (p.58).

Figure 4 (opposite): A close-up of the images on the opposite page, L*ittle Review* (Spring, 1929), pp. 58-59 (p.59).

close-up of her face and an image of her sitting in a motor car. These feel like the types of image which would accompany a magazine feature on a society girl or film star, and play almost brazenly into the visual register of celebrity culture.

The collage effect used to make the photographs appear as though they are a part of a film reel foregrounds this even further. Not only does the film reel effect bring to mind images of Hollywood celebrity, it also highlights the artificiality of the images, creating a distance between the reader and the image by reminding us that we are looking not at Anderson herself, but at a photograph of Anderson. These photographs are camp in every sense of the word, bringing the artifice of the production to light, with an irreverent theatricality. With these photographs, Anderson makes the issue's commercial and popular dimension not just visible but glaringly so, to a camp and parodic degree. In them we see Anderson revelling in the tacky ostentatiousness of modern celebrity culture. As with almost all forms of camp production, they are a shameless admission of the simultaneous wonderfulness *and* the awfulness of the popular. They speak strongly to Sontag's claim that 'Camp taste is, above all, a mode of enjoyment, of appreciation- not judgment.'[104]

Anderson's editorship of *The Little Review* continually treads a very fine line between parodying the mass-market techniques of mainstream magazines and newspapers, and sincerely benefitting from them.

[104] Stontag, 'Notes on Camp', p.291.

Adopting the principles of the popular ironically, through a campy lens, Anderson was able to secure the highbrow status of her magazine, while simultaneously utilising the techniques of the popular, mass-market press to keep it afloat. The key facet of Camp which Anderson played on is its doubleness: its implicit irony, and its capacity for allowing the user plausible deniability for things said, on the grounds that they were not 'serious'. Anderson's camp editorial aesthetics enabled her to benefit from the tactics of the commercial press, while at the same time maintaining a critical distance from it, and continuing to define her magazine as the mouthpiece of individualism and high art. What is more, her camp persona enabled Anderson to portray herself as different things to different audiences simultaneously: being plausibly interpreted as both an avant-garde provocateur, and as a modernist celebrity. In this respect, Anderson is perhaps the most successful of any of the women discussed throughout this thesis in terms of her ability to manipulate the doubleness of parody and humour to suit her own ends. While some of the other case studies found themselves caught between the spheres of high art and popular culture, and were unable to properly thrive within either one, Anderson is successful in occupying both of them simultaneously. She seizes upon the inherently paradoxical mode of camp in order to inhabit two fundamentally contradictory positions at once: being at the same time a commercially-driven celebrity editor, as well as an avant-garde literary snob who remains aloof and disdainful towards mass culture.

Conclusion: "Honest, Addie, I wouldn't laugh. I don't think it's meant to be funny."

"Honest, Addie, I wouldn't laugh. I don't think it's meant to be funny."

When we think of the literature of the early twentieth century we seldom think of humour. More likely our initial thoughts lead to modernism, a movement commonly associated with complexity, angst, and perhaps the academic seriousness of T. S. Eliot's 'New Criticism'.[1] As Mao and Walkowitz point out, however, recent changes have seen a New Modernist Studies emerge which seeks to conceptualise modernism outside of rigid boundaries and a fixed canon consisting of a few select figures.[2] This project forms a part of that movement, showing not only how modernist literature can be funny, but also how women played a central role in producing and disseminating a particular brand of modernist humour. This thesis shines a spotlight upon a distinct sub-category of humourist: the so-called 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour': a concept that is encapsulated perfectly in the above image by Cornelia Barns, which appeared in the February 1920 issue of *The Liberator*.[3]

This image, like almost all of Barns' cartoons, is replete with meaning. It shows two women in an art gallery looking at a painting which is hidden from the reader. One woman, Addie, is standing with her hands on her hips, looking at the picture to her right and laughing

[1] See: A. Walton Litz, Louis Menand, Lawrence Rainey, ed. *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism Vol.VII: Modernism and the New Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
[2] Douglas Mao, Rebecca Walkowitz, 'The New Modernist Studies', *PMLA*, 123.3 (2008), pp.737-748.
[3] Cornelia Barns, 'Honest, Addie', *Liberator*, 3.2 (February 1920), p.21.

irreverently. Her friend, buttoned up to the neck in a thick coat, looks on with consternation, speaking the words in the caption below: 'Honest, Addie, I wouldn't laugh. I don't think it's meant to be funny."[4] Behind them, two men can also be observed, leaning in with comic intensity to get a closer look at another painting in the background. Clearly whatever Addie sees as so funny in the painting is lost on them, as well as on her worried friend. Fashion, always a visible presence in Barns' work, comes into play heavily in demarcating the two women's status. Addie's sartorial choices are bold and modern. She is wearing what appear to be either wide-legged trousers or a drop-waist skirt, her arms are bare and she wears a flamboyant feather in her hat. We can read her as such as a quintessential 'Modern Woman', or what Esther Newton describes as the 'second generation New Woman.': a character trope which emerged around this time of an androgynous, empowered figure who signified 'a break with the prewar world of chaperones, Victorian values and restrictive clothing. […] She was associated with short hair, short skirts, dropped waistlines, a flat chest'.[5] Barns unmistakably draws upon these visual signifiers in her depiction of Addie. This is further emphasised by the juxtaposition between Addie and her friend who appears beside her, buttoned up and shapeless in a dark coat and muffler. While Addie, the carefree Modern Woman, appears joyful and unconcerned, her friend is anxious and reprimanding, clearly preoccupied with whether or not Addie's response to the painting is appropriate.

What is particularly resonant about this image in relation to the types of humour that have been discussed over the course of this thesis is its ambivalent nature. We cannot see what Addie is laughing at. The painting is positioned frustratingly so that it is hidden from our view, and, as the surrounding paintings are left blank, we have no clues as to what might be the cause of Addie's laughter. It is only Addie who is in on the joke, not her friend, nor the men in the background, and nor indeed the reader themselves. And because we cannot see the painting we can never attribute Addie's response with one singular definitive reading. Addie's friend only 'thinks' that it is not meant to be funny, but does not say why. We as

[4] Barns, 'Honest, Addie', p.21.
[5] Esther Newton, 'The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman', *Signs,* 9.4 (1984), pp.557-575 (p.562); Lucy Bland, *Modern Women on Trial: Sexual Transgression in the Age of the Flapper* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p.3. See also: Laura Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism: The Origins of a Modern English Lesbian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

readers can only speculate. Is this a piece of modern art, perhaps, ridiculous in its novelty? Or could it be a portrait? The unnatural way Addie is standing—hands on hips, toe pointed, body faced forwards with her head turned to the left—could suggest that she herself is imitating the figure in the painting.[6] It is even possible that the exhibition in question is that of Barns' former colleague, *Masses* illustrator and former co-editor John Sloan, whose work was featured in an exhibition in New York that same month.[7] The punchline is shifted slightly, depending on what type of painting the reader imagines this to be. We can never know definitively what is so funny to Addie, and it is this status of unknowing that makes this cartoon conform to the off-beat, ambivalent humour of the feminist avant-garde. This image also speaks to the modern woman's determination to find humour even where they are not 'meant' to find it. Her laughter is a rebellious, defiant laughter which cares not for the rules of decorum or for the established hierarchies of artistic taste. Not only that, the Modern Woman's laughter belongs to her and her alone.

The idea of laughing alone re-occurs throughout this thesis. From Ada Leverson, who moved in both the journalistic and aesthetic spheres of 1890s print media and yet stood slightly apart from them both, to the various in-jokes and dialogic humour which characterises both Beatrice Hastings and Katherine Mansfield's contributions to *The New Age*, almost all of the case studies addressed throughout this thesis contain examples of women writing for a select audience or utilising humour which is inaccessible to the casual reader, despite being published in an open public forum. What is more, they often find themselves alone in the sense that they are positioned on the margins or straddling multiple spheres, not fully conforming to one set of conventions nor the next. In another sense, however, the concept of 'laughing alone' is yet another paradox. Laughter is born of social interaction, and in many cases functions to galvanise connections within and between networks, as much as it serves to keep those networks exclusive to outsiders. Although sometimes there may be obstacles to understanding the jokes discussed throughout this thesis, they are nevertheless

[6] Addie's pose is somewhat evocative of Hans Holbein's *Portrait of Henry VIII* (circa 1536) for example, or Sir Thomas Lawrence's side-profile portrait the prince regent, *George IV* (1818).
[7] 'Exhibition of Recent Paintings by John Sloan', New York C.W. Kraushaar Galleries, February 9th-28th 1920, *John Sloan's Oil Paintings: A Catalogue Raisonné, Part II,* ed. by Rowland Eleza, (Newark: University of Delaware, 1991), p.454.

accessible to the invested reader who is able to share in the joke and become 'Modern Women with a Sense of Humour' themselves. Even in the example above, we may not know exactly why Addie is laughing, but we can still choose to join in with her laughter, implicitly aligning ourselves with Addie and enjoying a level of superiority over her anxious, old-fashioned friend.

Born often of elitism and superiority, it is possible to read the 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour' archetype simply as a precursor to the kinds of 'advanced' humour which would be theorised by Freud and Breton in the late 1920s onward. This does not give a full picture of the uniqueness and complexity of the archetype, however. As my case-studies have cumulatively established, the sense of humour is a central and undeniable presence within avant-garde feminist periodical culture. Each chapter of this thesis has highlighted an author for whom humour formed an integral part of their magazine contributions. And while humour manifested differently in each of the authors discussed, there are nevertheless several defining features which link all five of them together. The most prominent feature of avant-garde feminist humour is inarguably the profound ambivalence which characterises all five of these authors' works. For all five of the women discussed over the course of this thesis, humour and parody provide a means to grapple with fundamentally incompatible ideas, drawing upon the inherent doubleness of these modes in order to avoid reconciling themselves to a singular viewpoint or ideal. All five chapters engage in some way with 'high' and 'low' art-forms, refusing to see them as being mutually exclusive, and exposing the instances in which they overlap. Nearly all of them contain some sort of political ambivalence, often having, for example, an over-arching feminist message which is expressed via the use of anti-feminist female tropes (as in the case of the gossipy woman trope which Katherine Mansfield draws upon in many of her *New Age* contributions, for example).[8] And perhaps most significantly, unlike Freud and Breton's vision of "advanced" humour as an implicitly masculine phenomenon, the advanced humour discussed throughout this thesis has been exclusively performed by and shared between women.

[8] Many of Mansfield's *New Age* contributions contain stereotypes of gossipy women, such as Tilly and Gwennie in 'Festival of the Coronation' (1911); the two speakers in 'Stay Laces' (1915) and 'Two Tuppeny Ones Please' (1917).

Humour is a vastly under-appreciated factor, both within studies of women's literature, and in studies of modernist literature more generally, and the specific type of humour addressed by this thesis is one that has never previously been discussed. It is distinct from the humour of the suffrage movement which tends to avoid formal experimentation, preferring a clear didactic message and an underpinning of collectivism.[9] There is some inevitable overlap between the two: many of Cornelia Barns' cartoons, for example, such as 'Anti-Suffrage Argument No.87', do have a clearly defined political agenda. Where feminist avant-garde humour differs, however, is in its imprecision and ambivalence. Although the humour of the feminist avant-garde is often deeply politically motivated, it rarely allows us to glean a straightforward singular reading which can be easily digested and understood. Like the politics of the feminist avant-garde movement, it is conflicted. The avant-garde feminist movement is based not around fighting for state reform and concrete goals, but instead, a process of individual, internal transformation. It is therefore unsurprising that the humour produced by its exponents rarely focuses on specific political issues, and is more experimental in nature than the humour of the mainstream women's movement. The humour of the avant-garde feminist movement is challenging. It is often deliberately confusing, does not follow established setup/punchline structures, and it often asks more questions than it answers. It is less a means to push an agenda to an outside audience, and more a means of exploration and experimentation, aimed towards a select readership of likeminded individuals.

This thesis has also shown how the use of humour in feminist avant-garde periodical culture developed and changed over the thirty year period covered, with the types of humour becoming darker, more formally unstable, and arguably more ambitious over time. Chapter One showed how Ada Leverson, writing in the 1890s, was able to overcome the conflicting demands of the literary marketplace through parody, and yet these conflicting demands still played a role in determining what she wrote about and how she portrayed her subjects. Although Leverson herself seemed to view her role as parodist as an empowering one that

[9] See: Barbara Green, *Spectacular Confessions: Autobiography, Performative Activism, and the Sites of Suffrage 1905-1938* (London: Macmillan 1997), p.14; Maroula Joannou, 'Suffragette Fiction', *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives,* pp.101-116 (p.106).

allowed her to shape the legacies of those around her, her liminal position in relation to the aesthetic movement, as well as the fact that she contributed her parodies anonymously, have nevertheless contributed to her own legacy being erased, and she is now seen primarily as a companion of Wilde's, rather than an author in her own right. The demanding and often hostile publishing environment of *The New Age* also came to bear on Hastings' and Mansfield's contributions. Although they were able to write back to their detractors by means of parody, it was still necessary for them to toe the line to some extent in order to find publication at all. It is arguably not until we get to Margaret Anderson, the '*prima donna*' editor of *The Little Review* that we see the 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour' come into her fullest embodiment. Anderson used her editorial role to cultivate her camp aesthetic, publishing what she liked regardless of how it would be received and was not hampered by editorial demands in the same way. But it is not only the fact that Anderson was herself the editor of *The Little Review* which allowed her the degree of freedom that she had to experiment with humour. The development of periodical culture as we move into the twentieth century sees magazines grow increasingly open to publishing the kinds of work which 'The Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour' sought to produce.

While magazines like *Punch* and *The Yellow Book* had a clear formula for the types of work they accepted, this is something which begins to fall away as we enter the twentieth century and modernist 'little magazine' culture. Segments such as the *New Age's* 'Pastiche' section made a space for works which did not fit into clear generic categories and allowed for the kind of ambivalent, uncertain humour produced by Hastings and Mansfield. *The Masses,* with its attempt to democratise art, gave cartoons the same sort of attention and page space usually reserved for more traditional contributions and made space for artists who, like Barns, blurred the lines between art and cartoon, creating works which, though funny, were also complex and thought-provoking. Finally, *The Little Review,* under the editorship of Jane Heap and Margaret Anderson, succeeded in delivering feminist avant-garde humour on a scale never seen before, with editorial stunts like the 'blank issue' enabling humour to become a composite part of the magazine's very construction. As magazines become more modernist and more avant-garde in form and content, it follows that the types of humour

they embrace and cultivate become more avant-garde in turn. Magazine culture, then, is undoubtedly integral to the developments in humour described over the course of this thesis.

The concept of discomforting or experimental humour by women extends far more broadly than the remit of this particular study, and in fact, the thoughts and concerns discussed over the course of this thesis are still pertinent to the present day. A fitting modern-day parallel for the 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour' discussed in this thesis is Tasmanian comedian Hannah Gadsby. Gadsby achieved international acclaim and recognition after the success of her 2017 stand-up show *Nannette,* which was subsequently adapted into an Emmy-Award-Winning Netflix special. Much like the subjects of this thesis, Gadsby is disinterested in playing by the rules of traditional stand-up: her brand of stand-up has been described by *Entertainment Weekly* as 'shrewd discomfort comedy'.[10] The concept underpinning *Nanette* is inherently paradoxical. It can loosely be described as a stand-up show about quitting stand-up comedy. Throughout the show, Gadsby deliberately disrupts the expected formula of stand-up comedy, juxtaposing traditional set-up/punchline style jokes with moments of visceral, raw emotion that she refuses to cushion or dilute by providing them with a punchline. [11] Her work is proof of the ongoing relevance of experimental, discomforting comedy by women, while the not insignificant backlash it has received evidences the extent to which audiences are still resistant to and even hostile towards comedy that centres female experiences while also flouting the rules of comedic convention.

The fact that we tend to see experimental comedy by women as not-comedy means that there is a significant dearth of scholarship on women's use of humour generally, and particularly within the context of modern periodical culture. By asserting the presence and significance of humour in avant-garde feminist periodical culture, this thesis therefore hopes to have gone some way towards addressing this gap in research, while also opening up

[10] Leah Greenblatt, 'Hannah Gadsby brings her shrewd discomfort comedy to new show Douglas', *Entertainment Weekly* (July 26th, 2019) <https://ew.com/theater-reviews/2019/07/26/hannah-gadsby-douglas-review/> [accessed 26/08/20].

[11] Gadsby also plays with the expected binaries between high and low art, repeatedly drawing on Art History as a recurrent motif of her comedy. In addition to more traditional comedy venues, Gadsby has also performed her shows in venues such as The Sydney Opera House and London's Southbank Centre.

further avenues of study. This study has addressed five case studies of figures who can be categorised as 'Modern Women with a Sense of Humour'. Each of the women this thesis has addressed are each prolific and fascinating case studies, however they by no means make up the entirety of feminist avant-garde humour in periodical culture. Over the course of this project I have encountered an astonishingly broad corpus of under-studied archival material, including many figures whose contributions were perhaps too few or too sporadic to constitute a full case study, but who nonetheless fit the same pattern as the women discussed in this thesis.[12] There is also huge scope to study women's humour in magazines which fall outside of the timeframe and transatlantic remit of this study. This project has focussed solely on examples from Britain and the U.S., but a flourishing little magazine culture also existed in Europe and beyond, meaning that there is no shortage of potential sources of primary material where further examples of 'The Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour' may be found.[13] The timeframe of this study also means that it excludes certain developments to modernist thought including the surrealist and Dada movements. *The Little Review,* which formed the focus of the fifth chapter of this thesis, adopted the Dada movement in its later years, and there is considerable scope for a more in-depth analysis of how humour functions within this one magazine, including how Anderson's own humour was influenced by the avant-garde humour of the Dada movement.[14] Alternatively, a considerable body of research already exists surrounding the prevalence of women's 'middlebrow' humour

[12] These include 'Sue Golden', a pseudonym of an unknown author who contributed two comic pieces to *The Little Review:* 'Julia to Jim' *Little Review,* 3.5 (August 1916), pp.20-23 and 'So This Is Art!', *Little Review,* 3.8 (January 1917), p.27; *Masses* contributors Gertrude Buck, ['Anti-Suffrage Sentiments', *Masses,* 4.9 (June 1913), p.9] and Inez Hayes Gilmore ['As Mars Sees Us', Masses, 4.2 (August 1912), p.12]. Another compelling figure is Marjorie Allen Seiffert who, in addition to being one of the three poets responsible for the 'Spectra' Hoax of 1917, also continued to write feminist poetry under the pseudonym Angela Cypher in magazines such as *The New Yorker* and *Scribner's* well into the 1930s [for more on Sieffert, see: Audrey Russek, '"So Many Useful Women": The Pseudonymous Poetry of Marjorie Allen Seiffert, 1916-1938', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 28.1 (2009), pp.75-96].

[13] See: Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, ed. *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines vol. III: Europe 1880-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[14] A potential case study for a project of this type would be Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, whose often hilarious avant-garde performance art and poetry was featured *The Little Review* from 1918 onwards. The Baroness was remarkable not only for her use of dadaist humour, but also for her sexual politics and irreverent approach to feminism. For more on the Baroness, see: Irene Gammel, *Baroness Elsa: Gender, Dada, and Everyday Modernity--A Cultural Biography* (Cambridge Mass: MIT Press, 2002); Amelia Jones, '"Women" in Dada: Elsa, Rrose, and Charlie', *Women in Dada: Essays on Sex, Gender, and Identity,* ed. Naomi Sawelson-Gorse (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1998), pp.142-172.

in the 1920s and 1930s, and it would be fascinating to explore how this might compare to or intersect with the types of avant-garde humour discussed throughout this thesis.[15]

It is still commonly supposed, whether through unconscious or conscious bias, that modernism, feminism, and humour, are three fundamentally disparate things with little room for overlap, and yet, the 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour' succeeds in uniting all three. It may be that their apparent mutual exclusivity was fallacious to begin with, but I would argue that it also has to do with humour's unique capacity for containing both multiplicity and contradiction. A cartoon like 'Honest, Addie' epitomises this: it is a place where ambivalence and uncertainty can thrive. For the women discussed throughout this thesis, humour provides a means to experiment with uncertainty, to undermine the established discourses of taste, and to navigate a literary and artistic marketplace which was, more often than not, hostile towards them. Born of the contradiction and paradox that is so fundamental to avant-garde feminism, it is no surprise that the types of humour that have been examined throughout this thesis are so profoundly ambivalent. But this ambivalence is a strength rather than a failing. It means that they remain fascinating, if often frustrating, objects for study even a century on. The women who populate this thesis at times appear to delight in teasing, unsettling and sometimes even mystifying their readers, but by dismissing these instances of discomforting or off-beat humour we risk perpetuating the notion that women are simply not funny, or that 'funny' takes only a single form. Instead, this thesis hopes to shed light on the profound significance of the 'Modern Woman with a Sense of Humour', showing how feminist avant-garde periodical culture bred a specific and overlooked category of art and literature that, in addition to being thought-provoking, experimental and politically resonant, was also unashamedly and defiantly funny.

[15] Nicola Humble touches on the role of humour in *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s to 1950s: Class, Domesticity, and Bohemianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), although this is in the context of the novel. See also: Sophie Blanch, 'Women and Comedy', *The History of British Women's Writing 1920-1945,* ed. Maroula Joannou (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.112-128. Faye Hammill, *Women, Celebrity and Literary Culture Between the Wars* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007) discusses humour and parody in the works of authors such as Stella Gibbons, E.M. Delafield and Dorothy Parker although not necessarily through the lens of magazines/periodicals. Delafield's enormously popular (and hilarious) *Diary of a Provincial* Lady is however discussed in the context of its original periodical publication in Catherine Clay, *Time and Tide: The Feminist and Cultural Politics of a Modern Magazine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018). Anita Loos has also been discussed in the context of humour and periodical culture by Daniel Tracy, 'From Vernacular Humor to Middlebrow Modernism: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and the Creation of Literary Value', *Arizona Quarterly*, 66.1 (2010), pp.115-143.

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Appendix:

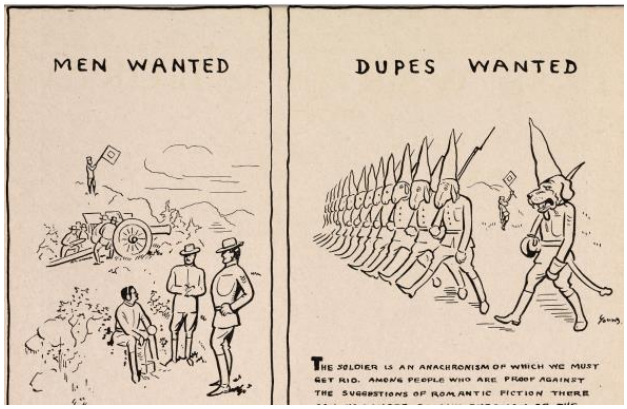

Figure 1. Art Young, 'Take Your Choice', *Masses,* 5.9 (June 1914), p.4.

Figure 2. Cornelia Barns, 'Requiem', *Masses,* 8.4 (February 1916), p.20.

Figure 3. Howard Chandler Christie, *I Want You for the Navy*, 1917, Colour Lithograph, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

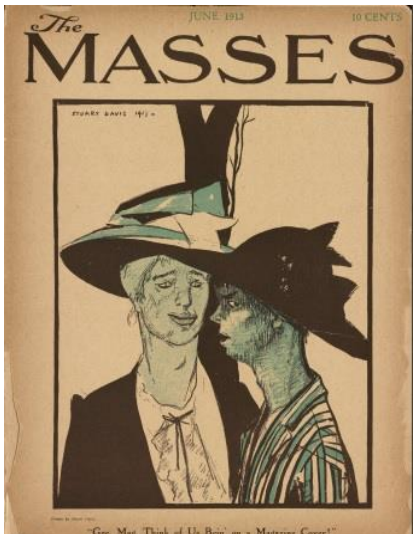

Figure 4. Stuart Davis, 'Gee Mag', cover, *Masses* 4.9 (June 1913).

Figure 5. Frank Walts, [Unsigned Cover Image], *Masses,* 9.2 (December 1916).

Figure 6. Cornelia Barns, [Untitled Cover], *Liberator,* 7.4 (April 1924).

Figure 7. Cornelia Barns, 'Home!', *Liberator,* 2.1 (January 1919), p.4.

Figure 8. Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, *The Fourth Estate*, c. 1900, oil on canvas, Museo del Novecento, Milan.

Fig. 9: Cover of *The Little Review's* final issue (Spring, 1929).


boy to editor of English reviews. According to himself, he has "discovered G. B. Shaw" and "found the key to Shakespeare's heart."

Photograph by Paul Thompson.

"PEOPLE who write for the *Little Review* are the only ones who ought to be allowed to talk about art," says Margaret C. Anderson, late of Chicago and San Francisco, now of New York. Needless to add, Miss Anderson is the editor and chief contrib to the above-mentioned sheet, which she founded and maintains. Obviously, Miss Anderson has not yet seen E. W. We are sending her this issue.

dren loved him and called him "the good gray poet." For ourself, we shall continue in our retiring expensive way, maintaining our press-agent in luxury.

Figure 10. [Author Unknown], 'How they Hate Themselves', *Every Week* (May 4th 1918), p.11.