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Feminist Media History

Suffrage, Periodicals and the
Public Sphere

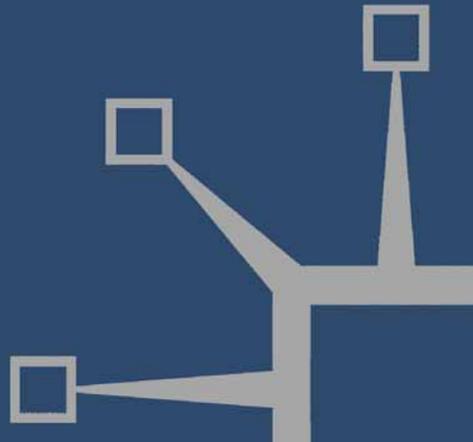
Maria DiCenzo

With

Lucy Delap

and

Leila Ryan



Feminist Media History

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Feminist Media History

Suffrage, Periodicals and the Public Sphere

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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	viii

Introduction: The Challenges and Contributions of Feminist Media History	1
Contentious voices	2
Media history as a field	4
Locating feminist media history	7
The early feminist and suffrage press	13
Structure and argument of the book	15

Part I Publics, Social Movements, and Media History

Introduction	21
Revisiting debates about the public sphere	22
Publics and counterpublics	25
Publics and social movements	29
The private and the public	31
Suffrage history and social movements	35
Key aspects of contentious collective action	38
Social movement organizations	42
Temporal continuity and cycles of protest	43
Framing	45
Culture and social movements	47
Media and social movements	54
Situating women's political periodicals in press/media history	57
Research to date	58
The impact of feminist media research	63
New directions	64
The feminist press and alternative media	66
The significance of early feminist media	68

Part II The Case Studies

Introduction	73
1 Unity and Dissent: Official Organs of the Suffrage Campaign	76
<i>Maria DiCenzo</i>	
“Causy papers”: The uses and abuses of official organs	78
The emergence and proliferation of suffrage organs	84
Suffrage and its discontents: Internal conflict	89
Agendas for change: Suffrage organs and the 1910 general election	99
Post election conciliation	116
Conclusion	118
2 <i>The Englishwoman</i>: “Twelve Years of Brilliant Life”	120
<i>Leila Ryan and Maria DiCenzo</i>	
Languishing in the archive	122
Finding a niche in a crowded print market	125
The <i>Englishwoman</i> : Anatomy of a feminist review	132
Arts and culture in the <i>Englishwoman</i>	139
Women’s movements, suffrage, and war	141
Women, work, and the <i>Englishwoman</i>	150
Conclusion	156
3 Individualism and Introspection: The Framing of Feminism in the <i>Freewoman</i>	159
<i>Lucy Delap</i>	
Contributors and readers	163
Experimental collective identities	165
Periodical communities	172
Framing: Sexual morality and practices	180
The <i>Freewoman</i> Discussion Circle	184
Conclusion	191
Conclusion	194
 <i>Notes</i>	201
 <i>Bibliography</i>	213
 <i>Index</i>	229

List of Figures

1	“Putting Away the Cane” <i>Votes for Women</i> (front cover, 25 February 1910)	106
2	“Candidates for Parliament who Advocate for Women’s Suffrage” <i>The Common Cause</i> (front cover, 6 January 1910)	114
3	Advertisement for <i>The Englishwoman</i> (<i>Englishwoman’s Review</i> , 15 July 1910)	131
4	<i>The Englishwoman</i> (front cover, November 1914)	143
5	<i>The Freewoman</i> (front cover, 30 November 1911)	175

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Introduction: The Challenges and Contributions of Feminist Media History

The demand which *Votes for Women* has to meet is twofold. In the first place, there is a growing desire for knowledge on the part of the outside public to learn what it is women are really striving for and how far the agitation is progressing.... In the second place, it has to supply to all those women who are at work within the ranks a bulletin of the doings of the Union which shall keep them in touch with all the ramifications of the movement and enable them to devote their work in the most profitable manner to the furtherance of the agitation.

Votes for Women, October 1907

The Englishwoman is not addressed only to those who are already fully convinced of the justice of the Women's Movement... It is intended for the general public.... The question of the Enfranchisement of Women is not one... that interests only a struggling minority, and we trust that we may add to the already increasing number of women who desire a more equitable distribution of power and responsibility.

The Englishwoman, February 1909

The chief event of this week is our own first appearance. The publication of THE FREEWOMAN marks an epoch. It marks the point at which Feminism in England ceases to be impulsive and unaware of its own features, and becomes definitely self-conscious and introspective. For the first time feminists themselves make the attempt to reflect the feminist movement in the mirror of thought.

The Freewoman, 23 November 1911

Contentious voices

Votes for Women, the *Englishwoman*, and the *Freewoman* were only three divergent examples of the wide range of feminist periodicals published between the end of the nineteenth century and the interwar years in Britain.¹ While a growing body of scholarship dealing with feminist print media in the period has emerged in recent years, it is remarkable that this rich and extensive body of documents has existed for so long in relative obscurity. These publications have been of interest primarily to those directly engaged in the fields of suffrage, early twentieth-century women's history, and the study of women's magazines. As the statements reproduced above indicate, the papers were used to organize and mobilize women for particular campaigns, not only to provide a forum for debate about women's roles in politics and society, but also to influence public opinion at a time when print media were the most effective means of circulating ideas. These are some of the key functions informing the shape of this book. These periodicals represented contentious voices in more ways than one. Women demanding rights and demanding that their grievances be heard were a source of contention for obvious reasons in the period. But they were also often in disagreement amongst themselves about long- and short-term goals and strategies. There were, at times, as many issues dividing individuals and organizations as there were those uniting them. The debates were varied, heated, and found their public expression in the pages of newspapers and periodicals.

Our framework of 'suffrage,' 'periodicals,' and the 'public sphere' allows us to focus on a particular campaign – one which was highly diverse and wide ranging in its implications, but in the context of the larger field of the role of print media in social and political change. As a result, this study necessarily draws from and builds on various disciplines, including media/press and book history, theories of the public sphere, social movement research, and women's/suffrage history – in each case relying on existing contributions, while also addressing gaps and omissions. We cannot attempt to cover the whole of the suffrage and feminist press, but through the analysis of a selection of periodicals from the Edwardian period we offer a point of entry into the lively, if fraught, debates about women's changing roles in social and political life in these years. In the process, we also assess and revise some of the prevailing narratives and disciplinary blind spots which account for why these sources have gone (and in many cases continue

to go) missing, particularly in histories of the press. In this respect, our own voices may also prove 'contentious' in terms of existing research in these fields. By taking different approaches to a range of publications in separate, but related, case studies, our aim is to demonstrate how these periodicals are evidence of the complex and often conflicting terms in which women reformers and activists engaged with one another and with the wider public. In addition to dispelling generalizations about the suffrage movement and feminism in these years, these publications challenge many of the assumptions about the decline of a political/educational press and the wholesale commercialization of the press by the end of the nineteenth century. They provide evidence of the crucial role print media played in the formation of so-called new social movements and in a redefinition of 'politics' originating outside the formal institutional sphere.

For these reasons, this is not a book for gender or feminist historians only. While women may have been the primary readers of feminist periodicals in the period, these publications were directed at a wider public and the issues they dealt with were major sources of concern for men and women, involving a wide spectrum of social and political institutions. The term 'feminist' achieved widespread use by the early decades of the twentieth century, but its earlier formulations – debates about the 'Woman Question,' anxiety about the figures of the 'New Woman,' the 'Wild Women,' and the 'shrieking sisterhood' – all point to the threat that 'women's rightism' represented. The emancipation of women was a major issue for men and women then, if for the simple reason that women's demands for citizenship, equality, and independence would have a potentially transformative impact on life as people knew it – on marriage and the family, educational institutions, the labor force and professions, legal reform, and parliamentary politics. It should, for the same reason, matter to historians of media, culture, and political institutions now. Asa Briggs and Peter Burke remind us of the necessity "for people working in communication and cultural studies – a still growing number – to take history seriously, as well as for historians – whatever their period and preoccupations – to take serious account of communication, including both communication theory and communications technology" (2–3). This study attempts to historicize contemporary media and feminist studies, while at the same time, it uses the insights and conceptual frameworks of contemporary media, feminist, and social movement studies to elucidate and resituate women's movements and their media in the past.

Media history as a field

Increasingly eclectic and interdisciplinary approaches and methodologies have developed out of the need to address questions which cross or intersect with multiple fields, resulting in the emergence of new and hybrid fields or sub-disciplines. Media history, cultural history, periodical studies, print culture, and book history are only a few of the areas, relevant to this study, whose genealogies, terms, and methodologies have been debated and theorized in recent years. Each has a complex history, but the attempts to define the parameters and practices of media history are especially important to the sources we examine and the questions we are asking.² These attempts are illustrative of the challenges facing established and emerging sub-disciplines generally, and help to explain why sub-fields give way to even more sub-fields. Feminist media history is a case in point. It has developed because attempts to understand the history of women's media have been complicated by glaring omissions in mainstream media history on the one hand, and the development and growth of women's studies and specialized feminist scholarly venues on the other. Feminist media history raises empirical, theoretical, methodological, and professional issues crucial to media and cultural historians generally.

Media history (surprisingly to some, if not to others) has had difficulties establishing a coherent focus, thematic identity, or standard methods, because its objects of inquiry range from economics to culture and its methods from quantitative to qualitative. The editorial for the first issue of the journal *Media History* in June 1998 highlights the paradox of a field (and a journal claiming to represent it) with no clear identity, stating that "So much effort is currently being expended on histories of the book, news of serialization and of a vast range of individual components of what is becoming media history, that the need for a focus for this activity is becoming urgent" (Aronson et al. 1998: 5). The editors also note: "The specific skills of analysis and imagination it requires; the particular forms of investigation and research which are most suited to its construction; and sense of how it fits into the process of cultural formation and can contribute to a general historical understanding, have yet to be clearly identified." Even more surprising is the fact that after welcoming contributions from "scholars working across all disciplines in any period or country," they conclude "Whether an attempt at definition is either necessary or useful at this point is unclear." Others suggest that the very diversity of approaches to media history remains a problem. For example, John Nerone concurs

with the wide sweep of what qualifies as media history, but maintains that “media history cannot expect to achieve concrete status as a primary scholarly locus until it develops a common vocabulary and set of problems” (110).

The debate about media history – its emergence as a field, its objects of study, and its methods – has been taken up in a variety of contexts. These discussions are often oriented around or derived from the two main terms ‘media’ and ‘history’ themselves. For instance, while acknowledging a debt and relationship to ‘media studies,’ a frequent point of departure in media history is a criticism of the disproportionate emphasis in media studies on contemporary forms and developments. Niels Brügger and Søren Kolstrup lament the waning of the role historical studies played in the 1970s and their collection of essays on media history grows out of the need to address and redress the need for further and more detailed research within the historical field. In the context of alternative media (and with particular relevance to this study), John Downing also stresses the need for historical approaches because they illuminate the development of cultural forms over time, arguing:

A recurring and insidious temptation in media studies is to assess media from the singular vantage point of the contemporary moment. Both the impact and origins of media become extremely foggy as a result. This is not least true of radical alternative media and oppositional cultures, which are already vulnerable to premature dismissal as ephemeral and therefore irrelevant.

(2001: 6)

James Curran attributes the foundations of modern media research to pioneer historians of the press in the nineteenth century, but similarly suggests that media history has undergone a process of marginalization, and has “now [become] the neglected grandparent of media studies; isolated, ignored, rarely visited by her offspring” (2002b: 3).³

Some commentators stress the debt and relationship to the ‘history’ part of ‘media history.’ Tom O’Malley traces the emergence of and development of media history as theorized and practiced in the United Kingdom and argues that both historians and social theorists were “slow to recognize the importance of communications and media in history” (163). He notes how earlier tendencies in historical research “discourag[ed] a detailed historical focus on the nature and significance of communications systems” until the advent of social history “helped to create a climate in which questions of communications and media

history could develop" (164), but he maintains that there is "a continuing distance between historians and the status they accord to the study of media" (165). Hans Frederik Dahl claims that "historians do not see this thing that everybody else sees – 'the media.' Instead, they write particular histories of particular media, and nearly always prefer to do so within the frameworks of a particular national state" (552). It is not just the content and methods of media history that are debated, so is its very status and legitimacy in relation to its cognate disciplines.

Attempts to argue the need for media history and to define its parameters rarely draw any clear conclusions and often posit recommendations, particularly for strategies that will make sense of the fragments and competing tendencies. After a detailed account of the emergence of media history, O'Malley offers the following as a unifying theme: "By the turn of the twenty-first century, after a great deal of thinking on what was, and how to study, media history, the underlying interdisciplinary nature of the field stood out as the dominant paradigm, not least of all because the objects of study were multi-faceted, evolving social phenomena with wide-ranging implications" (2002: 170). Like Brügger and Kolstrup who seek a "general theory of media," Curran is critical of most media-history for being "media-centric"; as such, it fails to "illuminate the links between media development and wider trends in society because it is often narrowly focused on the content or organization of the media" (2002a: 135). He argues that "Probably, the best way to develop a new history of British media is to offer a general account of the development of modern British society, in which the history of the British media is inserted" (2002a: 149).

These calls for increasingly comprehensive and contextualized methodologies make a great deal of sense on the surface. They obviously speak to a frustration with the sense of fragmentation that characterizes the field, but the challenges and practical difficulties of trying to achieve these goals are rarely addressed. Media history necessarily borrows analytical tools and concepts from a range of disciplines. Attention has been paid to the competing demands and claims of theoretically focused vs. empirically focused methods of enquiry which derive from the disciplines influencing media history, usually characterized as the tensions between the 'theory' pull of media studies which have been more social science-oriented, and the 'empirical' pull of history. But these conflicts are far more complicated if we begin to account for the debates *within* those disciplines. What emerges, as we demonstrate in the following section, is that the tendency toward overgeneralization occurs more readily in relation to 'history.'

Locating feminist media history

By turning to the case of feminist media history (a sub- or hybrid field of an already sub/hybrid field), we identify key problems facing media historians generally – issues that do not always receive the attention they deserve – and use them to suggest the value of the work we pursue. Two central problems include: first, that of historical methods and historiography (the ‘history’ part of ‘media history’) and secondly, the relation of media history (as a field or discipline) to its cognate disciplines/fields. Our aim here is not to make the usual pitch for the ‘what about the women’ question – although we would maintain that gender remains a central and pervasive factor to consider in our analyses of media in any period – but rather to suggest an analogous relationship. It is possible to argue that what ‘feminist media history’ is to ‘media history’ is not unlike the relationship between ‘media history’ and ‘history’ or ‘media studies’ as larger fields. But in this case, the broader field has much to learn from the seemingly narrower field. In other words, feminist media history (its struggles, pitfalls, and achievements) has much to offer media history more generally. The problems related to/within feminist approaches (particularly in relation to modes of historical inquiry) offer useful models and suggest some important goals.

Feminist media histories invariably begin by noting the absences, silences, gaps they set out to address. The growing list of published work indicates the variety of ways in which we might understand ‘feminist media history’ (i.e., feminist interpretations of early forms of media and institutions, be they feminist or not). While feminist histories generally share an interest in the relationships between gender and power, research has been characterized by major differences at the levels of objects of study, critical approaches, even purpose/motivation (such as academic vs. activist concerns). As Mary Beth Haralovich and Lauren Rabinovicz observe in their history of television,

Feminism has never been unified. Feminism has always been feminisms...An important deeper meaning of feminism is its effort to reconceptualize what counts as knowledge and power in general... Feminism aims to change culture through constructing and championing new ways of thinking about subjects from law to philosophy to literature to politics to economics to popular media.

(1)

These kinds of insights of course are not exclusive to feminist inquiry and can be argued about other marginalized or oppressed groups, race being an obvious and crucial example. But because women's history represents an area that has suffered in obvious ways from preconceived notions, generalities, and entrenched narratives, it is especially useful here. Alexandra Juhasz believes that "understanding the causes and consequences of forgetting feminist media history may be as equally important as remembering it" (3). In this way feminist research highlights, contrary to Curran's suggestion, why the idea of plugging the analysis of media into broader historical accounts can be a problematic strategy. In validating and valuing the turn to history in media studies, it is crucial to pay attention to the history or versions of history that will influence the structure and concerns of the history of the media in a given period. As media historians, we often rely on existing accounts or studies of a given period to frame our analyses of particular developments in media, or accept particular forms of evidence over others in gaining an understanding of those historical contexts. The work of historians and media scholars who take up issues of gender, alternative media, and race reminds us that where media historians look, what they rely on, and the questions they ask have important implications for what they find and how they interpret the findings. Feminist media historians cannot take the 'history' part of media history for granted.

The impact of poststructuralist theory has complicated these questions even further. The debates within the field of history have been quite acrimonious at times. The implications of the linguistic turn for women's history (social history more generally) continue to be a source of conflict in the field and they have called into question fundamental assumptions about how we approach the past and what it is possible to say about it. A central debate in women's history revolves around the very use of the term "women" as a fixed category for analysis (Riley 1988; Scott 1992, 1999). As Lana Rakow forcefully asserts in the premiere issue of the journal *Feminist Media Studies*, "If we could sum up very simply the challenges that feminist media studies have made to an extraordinarily resistant set of assumptions about gender and media it would be... first, that media not only *are not* a mimetic or image-quality reflection of reality, but that also they *cannot be*... Media texts do not present messages about our culture; they *ARE* culture. Similarly, there are not women and then representations of them, which are more or less accurate" (42). The linguistic turn – the shift to the historical analysis of representation as opposed to the pursuit of discernible, retrievable historical 'reality' – has been a positive development

for gender historians interested in destabilizing traditional categories, but disempowering and even dangerous according to others. Attempts to examine early feminist media must negotiate these complex debates, foregrounding methodological and ideological assumptions.

Even in the case of empirical approaches, feminist media historians have confronted the question of 'evidence' and tackled the challenges of locating primary documents (often early women's political media – like forms of alternative media – are ephemeral or not preserved in the standard forms of collections and archives). They have even had to argue the legitimacy of unconventional forms of evidence. This can be further complicated by particular national contexts. For example, while it is possible to locate a variety of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British feminist periodicals, in the case of a country like Canada, there were never the same number produced, and, with the odd exception of publications like *Woman's Century* (official organ of the National Council of Women of Canada), one must go to the woman's page of the *Grain Growers' Guide* – not an obvious title – as a significant progressive source in Canadian women's history, especially in the western provinces. In some cases the problem involves overcoming the enormous quantity of material available, in others, the dearth of evidence. But it has always been necessary to question the reliability of standard historical sources, particularly standard histories of the press and periodical literature, as guides to forms of evidence. These difficulties and tensions extend to the problems of periodization and the conventional categories for analyzing print media. Developments in the feminist press have not always coincided with those in other sectors, nor have they adhered to familiar distinctions among 'mass,' 'popular,' 'highbrow,' and 'avant-garde.'

Linked to the methodological insights and innovations of feminist media history, is the role played by a sub-field in relation to its cognate disciplines, namely the relational issues and their implications. We need to examine the assumptions underlying notions of a 'sub-field,' marginality, and supplementarity (given that like feminist studies, media history has evolved out of other disciplines and is conducted in a variety of contexts including history, sociology, communication and media studies, literary, cultural and rhetoric studies). Again, feminist media studies reveal much about the limits, as well as the advantages, of occupying a position that involves filling gaps – recovery, revision, redefinition, re-mediation – what Juhasz refers to as the "perpetual 're' for things feminist" (3). While feminist perspectives have tended to remain marginal or regarded as 'add ons,' they have nevertheless, as

Peter Burke illustrates, had an important impact on historical practice at all levels, and the emergence of the category of gender history (52). More specifically, Joan Scott argues that within the discipline, women's history became much more than the addition of something that was missing; rather, it became a "radical replacement for established history" (1992: 50). In analyzing the relationship between women's history and 'history,' Scott draws on Derrida's notion of the "supplement" as "both an addition and a substitute" to argue that "by thinking in terms of the contradictory logic of the supplement we can analyse the ambiguity of women's history and its potentially critical political force, a force that challenges and destabilizes established disciplinary premises but without offering synthesis or easy resolution" (1992: 51). In the same way that feminist media history points to the gaps in media history, but also redefines and forces new levels of complexity, so too does media history not only reveal the gaps in history and media studies, but also rewrites and reconfigures their assumptions and narratives – whether it be to problematize assumptions about the past, or to expand the historical dimensions of issues assumed to be relevant only to contemporary media. For example, almost invariably the greatest challenges to standard narratives about women's confinement to the domestic sphere (be it in the early nineteenth century, interwar years, or the 1950s) have come from examinations of women's media in those periods.⁴

There are other, more practical, implications to the disciplinary relationships and complexities. Here, the diversity and dispersed nature of feminist media history (periodical history, publishing history, journalism history, etc.) offers a particularly complex case of the problems inherent in doing media history. Peter Burke explores the proliferation of sub-disciplines and the problems of synthesis, looking at the costs and benefits: "Convergence on the same intellectual territory occasionally leads to border disputes (where does historical geography end, for instance, and social history begin?) and even to the coining of different terms to describe the same phenomena, but it also allows different skills and points of view to be exploited in a common enterprise" (17). Implied in methodological and disciplinary border disputes are also professional issues. Like feminist studies, we can trace the dispersal of media history across disciplines: social history, communication studies, media studies, cultural studies, literary studies, and book history – most of which have their own institutional departments/identities, criteria for assessment, funding categories, academic associations, and scholarly journals. Many of those we might call media historians now migrated from other more established disciplines. These factors have important

implications for where and how researchers situate or target their work and complicate the process of others finding it.

With the proliferation of sub-disciplines has come the proliferation of publishing venues; feminist scholarly journals in all fields are a case in point. While they seem highly specialized, they are also, at the same time, remarkably eclectic. In the first issue of *Feminist Media Studies*, editors Lisa McLaughlin and Cynthia Carter explain that the journal grew out of the need to accommodate the “burgeoning area” of feminist media studies, where “there has been an unfortunate void in that an increase in scholarly interest and inquiry has not been matched by the number of available forums for this work” (2001: 5). They recognize that the “expansion in breadth and depth has meant that the definitional contours of feminist media studies have become much more difficult to identify” and they chose not to place “definitional closure” on the meaning of feminist media studies; rather, their goal has been “to promote recognition that feminist media studies represent an open, dynamic and contested field of inquiry” and to allow “the definitions and differences among theories, levels of analysis, modes of inquiry, and practices to emerge through ongoing dialogue,” welcoming contributors from a wide range of fields/disciplines, “featuring wide-ranging theoretical and methodological approaches to a variety of forms of media representation” (5–6). For a seemingly specialized journal, this approach echoes the rather broad and inclusive mandate of the journal *Media History* quoted above. Rather than failing to define a field, perhaps these wide-reaching mandates signal a need for both diversity and specificity.

The reasons that compel so many of us to undertake media history – the ‘why’ – are not difficult to fathom. In some cases, the interest in earlier forms of media has been prompted by current developments in new media, as some historians of the book have argued. For example, David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery observe

that book history as a field of study has come to prominence in the past few decades partly derives from both a recognition of the key role print has played in our culture for the past five hundred years and a realization that the role has now been usurped by other media . . . its dominance has disappeared and this in some way has licensed the study of its past. Perhaps the very ubiquity of printed texts in our history prevented previous scholars from appreciating and evaluating the fuller complexities of textual functions, procedures and nature.

(2–3)

With specific reference to women and political communication, Margaret Beetham highlights the ways in which recent developments in communication and mass media encourage us to rethink the growth of the periodical press in the mid- to late nineteenth century (Beetham 2006).

The 'how' of media history is not as straight forward. The fact that definitions and consensus around appropriate methods continue to elude us could be more productive than it seems. There is no immediate resolution to the lack of 'definitional closure' or the dispersed dissemination of research and no obvious benefits to limiting the scope of inquiry – in fact could other fields offer such coherence of purpose and method? A continued interrogation and reflexivity about the work we engage with is necessary, but we should be wary of being prescriptive. The benefits of dispersal are also important to recognize. Feminist media history has contributed to a growing body of theoretical and empirical studies of media which have remained obscure until now and, in doing so, has expanded the scope and enriched the contribution of media history in a range of fields. Curran makes similar claims about media history as a whole, suggesting that:

It sheds light on the central role of mass communications in the making of modern society. It provides insights into the influences that shape the media, both past and present. It also offers alternative ways of thinking about the media's relationship to society. An historical perspective provides a critical distance which can make apparent and clarify things that seem blurred when only viewed in a contemporary context.

(2002b: 3)

But this has actually been achieved through the very means he criticizes – namely, media centric and specialized studies. While specialization and specificity seem to run counter to the calls for general theories and accounts of media, they are the key to the value of media histories. William Uricchio offers a "nod in the direction of historical specificity," reminding us of the space between theory and practice in contemporary media history and the fact that historical practice is not unified by the abstractions of theory (30). He writes:

Much ink has been spilt critiquing historiographic efforts of the past, or establishing new parameters for historians of the future, but rarely do such discourses embrace the mundane specificity of historical

practice. Yet the latter realm, complicated by the stubbornness of data and the particularity of argumentation, yields some of the strongest insights.

(30)

Media history yields these insights through its ability to disrupt and reconfigure the 'generalizations' of history. If feminist media history has taught us anything, it is that when we revisit and look beyond the general accounts, we see complexity.

The early feminist and suffrage press

This study is intended as 'a nod in the direction of historical specificity.' The focus on feminist periodicals that were engaged directly with one of the most visible activist campaigns, as part of the larger women's movement, allows us to offer a detailed discussion of particular genres and the functions they served as communication tools for organizations and individuals. Women's media constituted an essential part of movement strategy at the time and continue to serve as crucial sources for historical research now. There never seems to be a "last word" on the suffrage movement (Holton 1996: 249) and these print media, in particular, continue to yield crucial insights into what may seem an already saturated historical field. At the same time, we acknowledge the dangers of the disproportionate emphasis on women's suffrage campaigns in women's history and how this has served to obscure both earlier movements and forms of activism since the early nineteenth century, as well as the variety of campaigns and activist discourses throughout the period. But it is equally important to stress that the suffrage movement served as a vehicle for much more than the struggle for enfranchisement. This is summarized most poignantly by Cicely Hamilton who, explaining why she worked so hard for women's suffrage movement, recalls:

it wasn't because I hoped great things from counting female noses at general elections, but because the agitation for women's enfranchisement must inevitably shake and weaken the tradition of the 'normal woman'... with her 'destiny' of marriage and motherhood and housekeeping, and no interest outside her home – and especially no interest in the man's preserve of politics! My personal revolt was feminist rather than suffragist; what I rebelled at chiefly was the dependence implied in the idea of 'destined' marriage, 'destined' motherhood – the identification of success with marriage, of

failure with spinsterhood, the artificial concentration of the hopes of girlhood on sexual attraction and maternity.

(65)

The selection of periodicals examined here is intended to reveal how suffrage networks and their diverse publications served as a hub, even an irritant or counterpoint, for a wider range of groups involved in social, economic, and political reforms.

The resurgence of work related to the women's suffrage movement in Britain as well as what has been variously termed 'first wave'/Victorian/Edwardian feminism or early women's movements has led to the publication of an extensive and impressive body of research in recent years. This work has contributed to a complex understanding of the campaigns for women's rights and their relationship to social, political, and economic developments in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, making it impossible to generalize about, let alone dismiss their significance. The attention paid to new and different bodies of documents has resulted in recovery and revisionist projects, providing access to the work and writing of individuals, organizations, and institutions for contemporary readers. The participation of scholars from a variety of disciplines, in addition to the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of research methods, has meant that early women's social movements have been considered from new perspectives, while other modes of inquiry have foregrounded dimensions of protest otherwise ignored or considered peripheral to the scholarship. Particularly notable in this respect has been the work of cultural and literary critics on the literature, theatre, art, and culture of the movement. In light of the diversity of both the objects of study and the disciplines from which the authors derive, detailed analysis of the suffrage/feminist press has been a relatively late development in the scholarship. These periodicals – the wide array of newspapers produced by organizations and independent editors – provide a crucial source of information and are cited frequently, but their role in the movement and the elaborate efforts made to produce and circulate them are often taken for granted or overlooked. It is important to account for why this has been the case and what a study of the periodicals, situated in the context of the history of both media and social movements, can contribute to the fields of feminist, suffrage, and media history at this time. We will examine the range of work, in relation to these issues, in the final section of Part I.

While it may be difficult to make claims for what these papers actually achieved, we are able to examine how they framed their goals (what the

papers themselves claim to set out to do and why) and to situate them in the context of wider debates (evidenced by contemporary sources) about the nature and influence of the press, public opinion, and the role of print media more generally. Major interpretative problems we face in approaching this body of material include: negotiating the sheer quantity and the miscellaneous nature of the material, its capacity to inspire readings ‘against the grain,’ and the need to read titles alongside each other. We aim to strike a balance between making some general claims while also attempting to provide some detail and a sense of the complexities of the content of and relationships among these papers, some of which appeared weekly over many years. But ‘specificity’ once again – in this case paying attention to the letterpress of these publications – is crucial to an understanding of these early feminist interventions and to dispelling generalizations about them.

Structure and argument of the book

All good scholarship relies on foundations and builds on the theoretical and empirical efforts and breakthroughs of other scholars in a variety of fields. In attempting to answer a range of questions about early feminist movements and print media, this study grows out of the intersection between diverse fields. The aim of this book is to offer an analysis of the early feminist periodical press that – by virtue of drawing on multi-disciplinary perspectives – will prove valuable and relevant to researchers and students in fields which have tended to treat aspects of these historical phenomena in isolated or limited ways.

While the analysis of yet another aspect of the British suffrage movement, primarily in the Edwardian years, seems a well-traveled path in light of calls to expand the boundaries of this field by examining the imperialist legacy and non-Western feminist movements, it is in fact far from exhausted and continues to yield important insights into the culture and politics of the period.⁵ For instance, the transnational circulation of feminist and suffrage periodicals has proved to be a fruitful area of research which sheds light on how the women’s movement worked both with and against imperial and global power structures. The periodicals at the core of this study offer a crucial layer of evidence related to how feminist ideas took shape and became a site of struggle in these years. Part I involves a discussion of the theoretical and historical framework which informs the analysis of the primary source material. The aims in this section are threefold. First, we will situate the feminist press in the context of the critiques which have emerged from

the re-evaluation of Jurgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere. The particular emphasis here is on the fate of a political press by the end of the nineteenth century, and the problem of competing publics from which critics have posited the concept of a feminist public sphere or 'counterpublics' more generally. These debates demonstrate how theories of the public sphere raise complex questions about the nature of democracy and issues of participation and exclusion in relation to forms of communication and the public discussion of ideas. Specifically, they provide a theoretical framework for understanding the role of print media in the women's movement at the turn of the twentieth century. But the emphasis on publics and/or a feminist public sphere (concepts which are now taken for granted in critical discourse) has proven to be limiting in important ways and has served to restrict, even ghettoize, the impact of feminist research in terms of broader fields. The 'publicist orientation' of early women's media has been obscured in the process. Women were not only trying to gain access to the public sphere through political representation, but were also challenging the very definition of what constituted the public sphere of concern.

Secondly, in order to identify the functions of these periodicals in relation to the public sphere at a particular historical juncture, we draw on developments and key concepts in social movement theory as a way to offer a more nuanced explanation of the ways in which movements use media to mobilize support and compete in struggles over meaning and interpretation both internally, within the movement, and externally, at the level of public discourse. Approaching the suffrage campaign and the wider women's movement as a multi-organizational field, instead of as a 'public,' accommodates the range of (often conflicting) positions within the movement, and the variety of levels on which participants and movement media engaged with a variety of constituencies, including opponents. By stressing *processes*, the social movement framework highlights the need to account for changes in organizations and their relationships over time. Most importantly, cultural perspectives in this field of research alert us to the ways in which social movements contribute to changes in public discourses, values, and norms, beyond their practical or policy-oriented goals.

Thirdly, we locate feminist periodicals in the context of press and media history more generally, in light of the boom in magazine and periodical publishing and the changing role of the press by the turn of the century. This section assesses the status of the growing body of work on early women's and feminist media in the context of mainstream media history. The focus on 'gender' as an interpretative framework has

perhaps proven to limit the extent to which these media addressed wider readerships and were implicated in public debates. The goal is to outline the ways in which early feminist publications can be understood to inform and change the assumptions and narratives at work in the wider field of press history and indicate some of the ways in which they are beginning to be incorporated into more generalist studies. These three areas of concern – the public sphere, social movements, and press history – are closely related and each provides a standpoint from which to understand the other two.

Part II is devoted to an analysis of selected suffrage and feminist periodicals. This distinction is important insofar as it signals the differences among the official organs of suffrage leagues (*Votes for Women*, the *Common Cause*, the *Vote*, the *Anti-Suffrage Review*), and feminist periodicals which were (or seemed to be) independent of particular organizations or campaigns (the *Englishwoman* and the *Freewoman*), modeled on the intellectual magazines and reviews of the period, but actively engaged with issues related to women's suffrage and feminism more generally. This section of the book deals more specifically with the ways in which the periodicals provided a forum for debate and played a crucial role in framing and communicating competing versions of social and political change for women. This process was troubled with conflicts, and access to print media became a way of reinforcing certain positions vis a vis the aims and methods of protest, as well as for expressing dissenting views. Lucy Delap foregrounds Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale's army metaphor which she used in 1914 "to delineate the main body of parliamentary suffragists, the rear of municipal suffragists, a vanguard of 'advanced feminists' and an ultra-radical group of 'skirmishers'" (2007: 1). While Delap's study of avant-garde feminism in the Edwardian period focuses on the arguments of the last two groups, our combined case studies offer a glimpse into the broader range of feminist discourses and approaches to women's emancipation circulating and available through a selection of periodicals at the time.

The ways in which the periodicals attempt to situate themselves and address their readers reveal a great deal about the internal dynamics of the movement. But their interest in reporting on a wide range of events and developments (interpreting everything from news to culture for their readerships), and the degree of engagement with the wider press reinforce their 'publicist orientation' and the importance of these papers for a social, political, and cultural history of period. The case studies underscore the range of periodicals in the period and their diverging ideological positions, particularly between 1907 and 1918, the most

intensive years of periodical publication within and in reaction to the suffrage movement. By bringing different voices and perspectives to bear on existing scholarship and providing detailed case studies of a selection of periodicals, it is our hope that this project will highlight the substantial role that the feminist press played in the development of media and politics in late Victorian and Edwardian society.

Part I

Publics, Social Movements, and Media History

Introduction

Women's homes, their houses and children, their food and drink and work and sickness, the attendance upon them in labour, every minute matter of their daily life, from the registering of their birth, to their final old-age pension and death certificate, is bound round, hedged in, prescribed by law, and the laws are not always what the women approve—they are by no means what they would be if the women's voices were heard.

(*Common Cause*, 15 Apr 1909)

This month's copy of *The Labor Woman* arrived this morning, containing some very good little articles. I was so glad to see the question of the limitation of families dealt with. The wording of the article very strongly resembled my own thoughts expressed a little while ago on the same subject in this journal—it proves how electric thought is: it is a current ready to touch like minds in different parts of the world.

(Eva Slawson, 6 Sept 1913 in Thompson 1987: 182)

This section will outline the theoretical and historical framework informing the analysis of the primary source materials in the case studies of Part II. The central issues we take up emerge from three separate areas of scholarship – the public sphere literature, social movement theory, and press/periodical history – and we relate them to the particular historical juncture and print media at the core of this study. Each of the three areas under consideration offers key concepts or narratives which warrant examination in relational terms. On one level, we will underscore why and how engaging with current critical debates can be useful to studies of historical media. But the key objective here is to reveal

critical blind spots and to disrupt some of the assumptions surrounding widely accepted concepts and narratives. These challenges are presented in the interests of seeing anew phenomena and processes which have been either under recognized or oversimplified.

The process has even involved a rethinking of terms we have employed in our own research in the past. For instance, the all too familiar ‘publics’ and ‘counterpublics’ are rendered problematic in the attempt to account for a more complex dynamic between participants in early women’s movements. For this reason, the discussion of the debates in the public sphere literature leads into an overview of social movement theory. As analytical tools, the concepts developed in various social movement paradigms provide a more nuanced way to identify the range of social actors and how they framed the issues that came to permeate public debates at the time. This framework also allows a way to integrate the activities of early women’s movements, including their media, into a broader historical canvas. The early feminist press served important functions within particular campaigns, but it was always and deliberately addressing a wider readership – actively engaged in a wider public discussion.

Revisiting debates about the public sphere

The concept of the ‘public sphere’ in Jurgen Habermas’s sense of public discussion about matters concerning the public interest is central to positioning the function and impact of women’s political media at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We use the term ‘public sphere’ and invoke the debates surrounding Habermas’s formulation of it because it is fundamental to any discussion of public and political communication, and we distinguish this from more widespread and generalized uses of the concept. The ‘public sphere’ has become a catch-all term, often used to indicate distinctions between public/private and public/domestic realms. But our interest is not to invoke the language of separate spheres,⁶ and our analysis of women’s movements and their media should not be understood in the oversimplified and literal sense of women leaving the ‘domestic sphere’ to enter ‘public life.’ Women of different classes had been and were already active in ‘public life’ through their participation in the work force, professions, education, philanthropy, political parties, and a range of civic and religious institutions. The focus here is on how and why they engaged in (and influenced) public debate in order to effect fundamental changes in all areas of social and political life.

It is worth revisiting the first wave of critical debates about Habermas's work that emerged in the 1990s in order to re-examine the terms which have come to be taken for granted and used in more recent contexts. The English-language translation of Jurgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* in 1989 gave rise to a significant critical debate about this work, and it continues to move in new directions even now, in relation to Habermas's later work, as well as in relation to changing communication technologies, social movements, and transnational and global structures.⁷ Habermas's work offers a conceptual resource and historical narrative for understanding the role of media under capitalism in democratic societies, and remains a crucial point of reference both because of its insights and its oversights.

Habermas establishes the category of the 'public sphere' as arising for the first time in the eighteenth century and representing "a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed" – namely as a "sphere which mediates between society and state ... that principle of public information ... which has made possible the democratic control of state activities" (Habermas 1974: 50). His analysis involves a detailed historical and sociological account of the rise and eventual degradation of the liberal model of the bourgeois public sphere whose potential for rational-critical discussion was gradually eroded through mass participation, the influx of organized large-scale economic interests for whom the public sphere became an instrument of advertising and public relations, and the emergence of the social welfare state that contributed to the collapse of distinctions between public and private. He uses the history of the press to trace this larger transformation, from the point at which it "was for the first time established as a genuinely critical organ of a public engaged in critical political debate," to the emergence of a depoliticized mass press, which lost this critical function through the process of commercialization, by the middle of the nineteenth century (Habermas 1989: 60).

Critics have attempted to challenge Habermas's influential account for being both too idealistic about the bourgeois public sphere at its peak, and too pessimistic about the degradation of this sphere by the mid- to late nineteenth century. The interrogation and revisionist critiques of Habermas have ultimately led to a broader and more nuanced account of these developments. His work (in spite of his own rethinking and revisions) continues to function as a constructive point of departure because of how he foregrounded the public sphere as a critical concept, and tried to situate it historically.

Most important to our purposes in this study are the limitations of his account of the bourgeois public sphere and its supposed decline. Central to women's movements and media at the end of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is the process of expansion that took place on a number of levels: pluralization (the proliferation and differentiation of what we might refer to for the moment as publics and counterpublics) and democratization (the opening up of accessibility to various institutions for wider segments of the population). The expansion of the press in the same decades is tied in many ways to these social and political developments, and for some groups – namely women reformers – the increased access to and availability of print media (even their commercialized elements) represented a significant political opportunity.

The stress in Habermas's account on decline and degradation has to be situated in the context of these wider developments and assessed in terms of the interests of very different groups. Similarly, it is important to problematize the distinctions among spheres of activity. Habermas traces the shift in function of the bourgeois public sphere from political activity to economic activity, in other words, through the process of commercialization, or the entry and growing dominance of commercial over other interests. The analysis seems to take for granted that these spheres are mutually exclusive. Assumptions about the fundamental incompatibility between rational critical debate and commercial interests continue to plague accounts of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century press, leading to oversimplified conclusions about the destructive influence of advertising.

Habermas's analysis has been challenged on a number of fronts, but we will focus on two that arise repeatedly and are of particular relevance to first-wave feminism and its media. First, his privileging of a bourgeois public sphere to the exclusion of other publics has raised both the problem of singular vs. plural notions of the public sphere, and the issue of 'access' and recognition. Secondly, critics have questioned the distinctions between 'public' and 'private' as they pertain to the decline of the public sphere through the rise of competing 'private interests,' which run contrary to the concept of the 'general interest.' By selectively examining the debates surrounding these particular terms and distinctions, we attempt not only to clarify the ways in which we are employing these concepts, but also to demonstrate how women's reform movements and their media necessarily enrich and complicate an historical understanding of them. While the most recent wave of re-engagements with Habermas has focused on contemporary and future implications of

changing communication technologies and transnational/global political structures, we are reexamining a moment in the past. In this way, contemporary critical discourses help to illuminate historical developments and revisionist history continues to expand the longitudinal understanding of social and political phenomena.

Publics and counterpublics

Habermas's focus on and treatment of the liberal bourgeois public sphere in singular or at least exclusive terms have provoked not only some of the most direct and compelling challenges, but the debates have in turn gone on to generate more widely used concepts such as 'publics' and 'counterpublics.'⁸ The emergence and evolution of these terms is too extensive to treat comprehensively, but some key examples related to class and gender (including Habermas's own clarifications and revisions) are enough to demonstrate both the advantages and disadvantages of their use.

Koivisto and Valiveronen argue that the competing and contested forms of public discourses that Habermas fails to develop in the interests of a singular focus represent the "attempts to democratize and expand discursive space" (1991: 23). This calls into question his historical narrative as it pertains to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century reform movements: "The Habermasian 'decline' of the public sphere actually coincides with the widening of the access into the public sphere as well as with the struggles to reach a universal franchise" (23). These criticisms have been echoed in more specific contexts and the critiques pursuing these lines of inquiry often rely on revisionist historiography to argue their positions. For instance, James Curran claims that Habermas's analysis "does not survive empirical historical scrutiny" and offers a strong case for how radical democratic approaches to mass media highlight the class exclusivity of Habermas's formulation and the problematic nature of his conception of reasoned discourse (Curran 1991).

While the class bias of the bourgeois public sphere has been an obvious target for attacks, many commentators, particularly feminist critics, have exposed the gender exclusivity of Habermas's original formulation. They point to the fundamental flaws and assumptions in an account of the depoliticization of the press and public sphere at the point at which women were gaining a stronger presence in public debates in an attempt to gain citizenship rights.⁹ In her influential critique, Nancy Fraser offers a compelling case for how "The public sphere was always constituted

by conflict” and that “Virtually from the beginning, counterpublics contested the exclusionary norms of the bourgeois public, elaborating alternative styles of political behaviour and alternative norms of public speech” (1992: 116). She accounts for the formation (historically and in more contemporary contexts) of subordinated social groups into *subaltern counterpublics* which she describes as “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (1992: 123). Fraser’s analysis has become a standard point of reference for discussions concerning feminist communities and activities.

In her historically rooted study of women and public access in nineteenth-century America, Mary Ryan presents a “counternarrative” to Habermas’s account of the decline of the bourgeois public sphere, and illustrates how “Even the barest outlines of women’s political history are sufficient to call into question a characterization of the last century as a blanket, undifferentiated decline of public life” (Ryan 1992: 263). She claims that “the tenacious efforts of women to subvert... restrictions and to be heard in public testify to the power of public ideals, that persistent impulse to have a voice in some space open and accessible to all where they could be counted in the general interest” (Ryan 1992: 284). Ryan’s work is a good example of how feminist, revisionist history is instrumental in challenging these influential narratives of decline and revealing the implications for groups who were only beginning to gain a political foothold.

These insights are especially relevant to the contribution of the early feminist press in Britain. It is this historical juncture which interests us and for which these periodicals constitute a compelling challenge not just to Habermas’s account, but also to more widespread assumptions about the decline of a political press that take for granted that commercial and advertising interests preclude radical political agendas. If we accept the idea of plural, competing ‘public(s)’ at the core of these critiques, then the rise of what has been termed a ‘feminist public sphere’ has, necessarily, a different historical moment, appearing later by virtue of women’s formal exclusion from the political realm. In these ways, this debate has provided a theoretical framework for understanding the role of print media in the formation of a ‘feminist public sphere’ at the turn of the twentieth century. The case can be further reinforced if we consider the historical evidence supporting women’s own articulation of themselves as an “already-created public” in the nineteenth century and their exclusion from a “Public Press.”¹⁰

It is in the context of these class and gender critiques that the widespread, contemporary uses of the terms 'publics' and 'counterpublics' have emerged and gained their currency as a way to account for the proliferation of public discourses and for groups excluded from the traditional public sphere. But it is not unusual for these and more recent critiques, at the same time, to make use of 'the public sphere' in its singular sense as a point of reference, conflating the very terms they set out to interrogate. As Negt and Kluge note, "the category's frame of reference fluctuates confusingly" (1988: 66). While the model of multiple 'publics' has provided an illuminating and necessary intervention in the elaboration of public sphere theory, the critiques are often troubled by a tension between the idea of competing publics and the idea of the public sphere (in the sense that Negt and Kluge describe it) as "also a general horizon of social experience, the summation of everything that is, in reality or allegedly, relevant for all members of society" (1988: 66). At the empirical level, the increasing tendency to describe everything from communities, readerships, and audiences to political groups and social movements as "publics," "counterpublics," or "alternative public spheres" raises logistical problems in defining the relations among competing publics – relations inevitably characterized in terms of dominance ("the dominant public sphere") and subordination ("counterpublics").

Like 'public sphere' itself, 'counterpublics' has become too loose a term, too blunt an instrument – a synonym for oppositional tendencies or oppressed voices, almost invariably assumed to be progressive rather than reactionary ones. Even if we accept the language of multiple publics to describe the relationships among these 'groupings,' the concept often blurs (or lacks the mechanisms for accounting for) diverse positions and conflict *within* those publics. It may not be necessary to abandon the language of publics and counterpublics entirely, but it is important to be specific about the points of reference and how they relate to other formations.

Everything from small grass roots efforts to large-scale social movement organizations can potentially have an impact on public debates/opinion and the terms of those discourses, without constituting 'publics' per se. These groupings also generate opponents and countermovements that cannot be explained away by concepts like the 'dominant public.' Did constitutional suffragists, militant suffragettes, avant-garde feminists, and women anti-suffragists/anti-feminists constitute separate publics, or were they all part of a feminist or women's public sphere? How do we account for those who supported the positions

or methods of any of these groups, but would never have considered themselves as belonging to those constituencies or taking part in their activities? Distinctions are not only useful in terms of accuracy, they are crucial to preventing the homogenizing and ghettoizing effects that umbrella terms tend to have. When we “engage the subject of women and the public sphere on the ground of history” as Ryan recommends (1992: 262), then we return to the problem noted earlier, Uricchio’s warning about the relationship between historical practice and the abstractions of theory.

Some of these risks have been addressed directly. Fraser anticipates the problem of ghettoization when she “emphasiz[es] the contestatory function of subaltern counterpublics in stratified societies in part to complicate the issue of separatism” (124). She argues that counterpublics are not “enclaves” and they militate against separatism because of their “publicist orientation”; by maintaining a “dual character,” they function as “spaces of withdrawal and regroupment” at the same time as they direct themselves toward wider publics (124). Rita Felski also describes a dual function in her model of the feminist public sphere in relation to the specific context of the postwar women’s movement. She defines its logic in the “tension between universality and particularity” (1989: 167), arguing that it is a “partial or counter-public sphere” on the one hand (because its critique stems from the perspective of women as a marginalized group), and as a “public sphere” on the other (because it “seeks to convince society as a whole of the validity of feminist claims, challenging existing structures of authority through political activity and theoretical critique”) (1989: 124–25). While these analyses are helpful in elaborating the internal and external needs of social movements, history and scholarship have demonstrated that this ‘publicist orientation’ cannot always prevent the compartmentalization and marginalization of these ‘publics.’ In the case of feminist public spheres past and present, the disproportionate attention paid to the role of media and cultural forms *within* those publics has obscured their external orientation and public contributions. We will address this problem in greater detail in the discussion on press history below.

Some recent critics have expressed more vehemently than others their objections to the idea of a single public sphere, objections which are often based on the mistaken assumption that this was what Habermas meant by the liberal model of the bourgeois public sphere. Angela Crack argues that “An alternative multiple spheres model is better designed to capture the diversity and plurality of discourses in a complex society” and describes “the promotion of a singular public sphere [as] at best

misguided and utopian, at worst sinister and oppressive" (2008: 54, 34). Crack maintains that the "multiple spheres model does not preclude dialogue between publics" (53) but, like most, she continues to subscribe to the notions of (or sets counterpublics in opposition to) "mainstream discourse," "the dominant public," "hegemonic discourse," and public discourse directed at "an indefinite audience." Geoff Eley proposes that "the public sphere makes more sense as the structured setting where cultural and ideological contest or negotiation among a variety of publics takes place" (1992: 306). Even in this kind of multiple sphere model, we still never resolve who Crack's 'indefinite audience' is or how we locate the ubiquitous notion of 'public opinion' in this scenario. The slippage in terminology is evident throughout this literature. Critics positing multiple sphere models repeatedly refer to 'wider public agendas,' 'society as a whole,' 'wider communicative flows of the public sphere,' 'wider publics,' and a 'general public,' without noting any identifying features. One is tempted to ask if wider publics are bigger, more affluent, or what?

Publics and social movements

The empirical and theoretical scope of these issues is too great to summarize here. But the purpose of highlighting the origins and ongoing nature of these debates is to clarify and justify why we have turned to other critical discourses to capture the highly diverse ways in which early women's movements formed, proliferated, changed, and conflicted internally. Social movement theory provides an effective framework for understanding how participants in women's movements used print media to organize, mobilize, disseminate ideas, and engage with the social and political groups and structures around them. Women reformers subscribed to the idea that 'public opinion' and a "British Public" existed and needed to be changed if they were to have a say in matters of the state, law, and other public institutions, and the "Public Press" (which they challenged by launching their own newspapers) was the chief means through which public opinion was measured, influenced, and communicated. Barbara Onslow's observation that, being denied access to Parliament, women carried out the fight in the political byways of the press, is important to understanding the public and political marginalization of women and the role of print media in their struggle for attention and legitimation (Onslow 170).

Not only did they direct their protests at the state (particularly in terms of gaining enfranchisement), but through their media they

consciously addressed and directed their arguments to the ‘general public.’ For these reasons, the concept of a singular, overarching, or universal public sphere (as the arena in which conflicts among a wide range of groups, organizations, and institutions are staged) remains central to an investigation of the print media and the historical context that are our focus here. It is best captured in one of Habermas’s later formulations where he argues: “The public sphere can best be described as a network for communicating information and points of view (i.e., opinions expressing affirmative or negative attitudes); the streams of communication are, in the process, filtered and synthesized in such a way that they coalesce into bundles of topically specified *public* opinions” (1996: 360). The exercise of empirical history makes it possible to recover those bundles.

Because of the lack of clarity and consensus in defining what actually constitutes *a* given public in a multiple spheres model, it makes more sense to examine these complex forms of women’s activism as social movements operating in a larger public context, and linked to larger cycles of protest. Critics often refer to social movements in their discussions of publics and counterpublics (sometimes even interchangeably) without distinguishing between them in any clear or decisive way. Social movement theory, which relies in fundamental ways on theories of the public sphere, may be plagued by its own conflicts about typology, but is better able to account for everything from small-scale campaigns to larger organizations and movements, particularly forms of political activism originating outside of political institutions.

While the concept of ‘counterpublics’ stresses a relationship (an oppositional, antagonistic one between existing entities of some kind), the extensive literature on social movements stresses processes, methods, and change – most importantly, in relation to specific persons/actors, places, and topics. By highlighting the fact that social movements are “complex social entities with vague and shifting boundaries” and that they can be understood only in “relational” terms, Dieter Rucht argues:

It is time to abandon the simplified image of a two-party struggle between a (unified) movement and its (unified) opponent acting in some kind of social vacuum. Unlike two individuals who may engage in personal struggles without spectators, social movements are internally differentiated actors operating within complex social settings that, in part, consist of public arenas.

(197)

The closer we look at the composition and interactions of social movements, the more difficult it becomes to impose the (spatial) boundaries often implicit in the terms ‘publics’ and ‘counterpublics.’

The private and the public

Understanding early women’s reform movements as social movements is central to reassessing the other key issue that interests us in the critiques of Habermas’s account of the public sphere – namely the changing relationship between private and public spheres. Foregrounded here is how ‘public’ is understood in relation to ‘private’ and, by implication, to ‘interest’ in the sense of the public or general interest. We have seen how the plurality of publics raises questions about the relations among those supposed entities. Similarly, the complexities of public and private should, according to Asen and Brouwer, “drive public sphere scholars to pay attention to struggles over demarcation as valuable sites of study. Boundaries mark relations of power that often inform discourse obliquely” (11). It is by now a given that the historical distinctions between public and private spheres are, as Koivisto and Valiveronen describe, “not natural but socially and culturally constructed” (24). Social movements have always been instrumental in exposing and challenging those very distinctions.

It is significant that a renewed interest and emphasis on social movements arises both in Habermas’s later writing and in the critical responses to it. This has been due, in part, to the assumptions underlying the phenomenon of so-called ‘new social movements.’ Habermas locates the potential for protest in the new conflicts arising:

in domains of cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization; they are carried out in sub-institutional – or at least extra-parliamentary – forms of protest . . . In short, the new conflicts are not ignited by distribution problems but by questions having to do with the grammar of forms of life.

(1987: 392)

In distinguishing “old politics” from new, he identifies the new problems as having to do with “quality of life, equal rights, individual self-realization, participation, and human rights” (1987: 392). Feminism and environmentalism, read as products of the post industrial world, are the frequently cited examples of new social movements on the basis of their non-partisan, non-materialist goals and their ability to

'politicize everyday life.'¹¹ But critics have challenged the validity of the distinction between old and new social movements, stressing the oversimplification of the goals of social movements, most notably the labor movement, in the past.

While critical of the assumptions and "historical misrepresentation" of new social movement theory, Craig Calhoun does not simply dismiss the new paradigm; instead, he suggests applying the issues it raises to social movements more generally (1995: 176). To illustrate his point, he demonstrates how the key features attributed to new social movements were also key concerns of early nineteenth-century social movements such as feminism, Owenite socialism, temperance, communitarianism, abolition, and forms of nationalism. These features include identity politics, defensive versus offensive orientations, the politicization of everyday life, mobilization along non-class or middle-class lines, self-exemplification, unconventional means, and partial and overlapping commitments. In each case, Calhoun offers a range of examples to highlight the striking similarities between early nineteenth and late twentieth-century social movements.

Ironically, some of these features have actually served as the source for criticisms of and dismissive attitudes toward early women's movements, both at the time and in later scholarship. An obvious example is the criticism often directed at the disproportionate middle-class status of members of the suffrage movement. As he speculates about the methodological and ideological reasons for these oversights and the privileging of socialism and the labor movement in social theory generally, Calhoun observes that social movements that were not oriented around socialism's instrumental, material goals were "relegated to the margins of theoretical relevance" (1995: 200). By recovering what he terms "new social movements of the early nineteenth century," Calhoun alerts us to the dangers of developmentalist narratives that tend to obscure details, particularly in historical terms.

Gemma Edwards takes up the question of what is new in new social movements specifically in relation to Habermas and the implications for the present context. She focuses on Habermas's identification of the potential of new social movements to construct "a relatively autonomous space for public debate... for generating a genuine public sphere" (2004: 113). Like Calhoun, she rejects the label of 'new' and regards the features of 'new social movements' as relevant to social movements *per se*. While Edwards is concerned with the relevance of Habermas's claims to the struggles of twenty-first-century social movements, we are interested in reading the implications retrospectively. The

promise embodied in social movements for regenerating and recovering the public sphere in today's contexts could be usefully historicized to explain why earlier periods deserve greater attention as part of these debates – and why the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries cannot be characterized as a period of decline.

For the very reasons that the late twentieth-century women's movement is considered a quintessential example of new social movements, so too should early women's movements be re-evaluated in these terms and for similar reasons. It may also help to explain why they were and have been marginalized, given how the substance and scope of their concerns differed from and were overshadowed by those of the labor movement primarily. In this sense women were doubly disadvantaged; they were denied citizenship rights and hence direct access to political decision-making processes, but gaining recognition was complicated by the fact that they were trying to foreground issues that were considered either irrelevant or inappropriate to public debate – namely, the politicization of everyday life.

Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato highlight feminist movements to illustrate their point about dualistic politics – namely how social movements target the institutions of civil society as crucially as those of political society. With reference to American second-wave feminism, they argue that “before any standard offensive politics of reform and inclusion could be fruitful, a feminist consciousness and ideology had to be developed on the part of movement women and then communicated to others through a different politics of identity, one aimed at the public and private spheres of civil society” (Cohen and Arato 551). The dualistic strategy they outline is not only relevant to the earlier movement, but was in many ways more urgent given the opposition against which early feminists tried to carve out and express these new identities and roles.

The feminist slogan ‘the personal is political’ is often taken for granted as representing the goals of the postwar women's liberation movement. But, in principle, it was also the cornerstone of first-wave feminist interventions, as single and married women worked not only to gain access to education and work, but also to gain control over their very functions in the private sphere – marriage/divorce/property rights, custody of children, married women's right to work, recognition of domestic labor, and personal safety in sexual and physical terms. The scope of these goals is captured by Teresa Billington-Greig in her 1911 essay ‘Feminism and Politics,’ where she describes feminism as “a movement seeking the reorganisation of the world upon a basis of sex-equality in

all human relations . . . a movement so defined demands a revolution in every department of human life" (226). For these reasons, Billington-Greig deemed the "channel of politics" no more than a tool for, or record of, the "work done, fixing in the form of law the changes in opinion and morality which active feminism will produce" because "the real work of feminism lies outside politics, the real harvest of feminism will be garnered outside of politics" (227). Similarly, journalist and activist Helena Swanwick, reflecting on this period in her autobiography, wrote: "let there be no mistake about it – this movement was not primarily political; it was social, moral, psychological and profoundly religious" (1935: 187).

Early women's movements, like 'new social movements' later, were engaged in a struggle to redefine 'the grammar of forms of life' and did so through non-partisan, extra parliamentary modes of organization. These efforts had an impact. Near the end of the war, the *Englishwoman* recalled its own early days:

At the time [in 1909 when the journal started] we might read of, but we could not discuss in print, problems in which we and our children were intimately concerned In eight years the circumstances have changed so completely that hardly any one notices they have altered at all. No one now complains or implies that what women are doing or thinking is unimportant. On the contrary, the daily papers are filled with accounts of our works and days; we can air our opinions in their columns without adopting masculine pseudonyms.

(July 1917: 17–18)

Their challenges would have long-standing consequences for a wide range of institutions and social practices. Print media of the period (ranging from movement media themselves to intellectual reviews, dailies, popular media, in addition to the literary sphere) offer compelling evidence of how pervasive and wide ranging the debates about feminist issues were.

Lisa McLaughlin advocates "both a feminist theory of the public sphere accounting for the media and a feminist media studies accounting for the public sphere" and recommends that feminist theories of both the public sphere and the media "must turn to an exploration of female acts of production as forms of resistance" (1993: 614–15). We would urge that these theories include a historical dimension to account for early women's movements and their media as well. McLaughlin does not state this directly, but implies the importance of an

historical perspective by citing Mary Ryan's work as an example. Ryan's analysis of the nineteenth-century American women's rights movement is one of the few feminist interventions to engage Habermas's theory in specific historical terms. Most deal with late capitalist, late twentieth-century developments and contexts. Ryan's approach could be usefully extended to movements and national contexts that have not been interrogated fully on this basis.

Suffrage history and social movements

The feminist media we are focusing on emerge specifically out of or in relation to the women's suffrage campaign in Britain in the first decades of the twentieth century. The continued growth of scholarly work on the British women's suffrage movement has served to underscore what Mary Jean Corbett noted many years ago, that "the meaning of the suffrage movement is still – as it was in its own time – under contestation" (1992: 178). Revisionist tendencies in suffrage history have ranged from reexamining the efficacy of militancy and the importance of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), to the problematic and divisive issues of class, race, and the politics of empire. Related to these substantive challenges are the growing tensions between the concerns and disciplinary perspectives of historians and literary critics working in the field, particularly in light of critical approaches to history writing (Mayhall 2000a, 2000b). Antoinette Burton has stressed the extent to which feminist critics should treat history as "historical production . . . so that what we 'know' about the feminist movements of the past is understood as knowledge that has been produced during discrete historical moments – and so that we understand that the history we are writing and theory we are reading are themselves the products not just of our cultural milieux, but of the historical moments we are living in as well" (1992: 26).

In these ways, the meaning of the suffrage movement continues to be debated. The reception of Martin Pugh's "revisionist" analysis of the women's suffrage campaign is a case in point. Pugh, writing in 2000, claimed to offer a "truer perspective" (171) and set out to prove that Victorian suffragists had effectively won the argument about votes for women by 1900. What was most striking about his intervention at the time was that, given the widespread attempts to problematize the field of suffrage studies by opening it to new challenges and approaches, Pugh tried to close the debate by having a final say – by putting the 'past' in its place and, by implication, future discussion as well. In methodological

terms, Pugh failed to recognize that the very ways in which ideas are framed, negotiated, and transformed over time are themselves a crucial area of research and important to understanding the long-term effects of movement activities. While securing the parliamentary vote was the ostensible goal of the suffrage movement, Pugh's approach also obscures the extent to which the long and arduous campaign was about much more than that. At least two reviews of this book indicate the degree to which an ongoing struggle continues between contemporary historians over competing versions of how the suffrage movement is to be characterized.¹² There was a conscious and deliberate struggle over representation and 'history making' not only on the part of activists at the time, but also among scholars today.

These tendencies to draw conclusions or to arrive at definitive explanations of the political outcomes of the struggle for enfranchisement are important to defining both what we aim to do and not to do in this study. While the questions of evaluating the success and failure, or attributing credit and blame are inevitable in the analysis of social movements, they often obscure the contributions such movements are able to make on a variety of levels – either as part of or in spite of the realization of stated goals. We are not interested in debating the political efficacy of particular organizations, individuals, and strategies. Instead, our focus is on the print media of the women's/suffrage movement, particularly the ways in which different groups and individuals came to define and communicate the issues. These interventions were directed at influencing attitudes toward women's roles in public life and shaping public discourse more generally. We are not treating these periodicals as repositories of facts; they were vehicles through which constituencies within the movement framed their grievances, mobilized support, challenged one another *within* the movement, and engaged externally with the larger 'Public' they were trying to convince. To use Nancy Fraser's terms, these media provided the site for early feminists to democratize and expand discursive space.

The explanation for why there has been such a disproportionate emphasis on the suffrage campaign in tracing women's and feminist history may indeed lie in the very effectiveness with which these groups were able to assert their claims and to capture the public imagination, regardless of the actual practical importance of winning limited enfranchisement at the time. The variety of forms of participation the suffrage movement offered women is also a factor in understanding the impact it had on the lives of participants and in challenging public perceptions of what women could do. As Francesca Polletta argues,

in relation to the value of cultural argument in the sociology of social movements, “it is to assert that movements achieve significant effects as much by altering the cultural rules of the game, both within politics and outside it, as by winning formal policy reform” (2008: 78). Verta Taylor and Nella Van Dyke assert that “ultimately this [the way different tactical repertoires result in the changes in belief systems, identities, and cultural practices] may be the most powerful consequence of public performances of protest” (2007: 284).

In spite of the proliferation of historical accounts of the British suffrage movement, the very particularism of historical documentation has proven to be a disadvantage in capturing the ways in which early women’s reform campaigns fit the larger patterns of social movement organization and forms of collective action. Historical accounts often give us the major developments – outlines of the founding and splintering of organizations and profiles of leaders, details of petitions or demonstrations, the particulars of legislative reform, and so on. But as crucial as they are, these details offer remarkably little sense of the dynamics and cultural impact of these forms of activism. Social and women’s history have expanded the field of inquiry considerably, bringing a much larger range of issues and forms of historical evidence to bear on the recovery and critical investigation of these phenomena, but even comparative studies tend to remain largely descriptive. Drawing on the critical apparatus of social movement theory helps to circumvent the emphasis on specific events and outcomes by focusing on the processes and cultures of social movements, thereby also integrating the history of women’s activism into a larger context of social protest in both substantive and historical ways.

The field of social movement research has undergone significant paradigm shifts, and these shifts are important to understanding the layered and synthetic approaches which have emerged in this last decade. These shifts are often described in one of two ways. The first formulation charts a movement from: the advent of resource mobilization theory and political opportunity perspectives (both stressing the rationality of collective actors in response to earlier theories of collective behavior); followed by social constructionist approaches and framing perspectives (with a greater emphasis on interpretive elements and the psychological dimensions of mobilization); and challenged eventually by the cultural analysis of social movements emerging from the interest in new social movements, particularly the formation and role of collective identity. Other accounts cover essentially the same ground by suggesting the displacement of primarily American approaches in

the tradition of resource mobilization theory, by the more European approaches to what were identified as the new social movements of the late twentieth century, namely the peace, women's and environmental movements (Carroll 1997; Cohen and Arato 1992; Lahusen 1996; McAdam 1994). What both narratives share are the basic characteristics and limits of earlier approaches (with their focus on the rational and strategic use of resources and political opportunities by social movements) and later ones (with their focus on the more ideational, discursive, subjective, and symbolic elements and processes which help account for why people/groups mobilize and act collectively to effect change).

While these paradigms initially seemed to displace one another, they have, instead, had a cumulative effect. The concepts emerging from the various paradigms are by no means mutually exclusive. Either way we choose to arrive at the current state of the field of social movement research, what we find are more integrated approaches to both the instrumental and symbolic dimensions of social movements.¹³ New social movement theory has served to foreground the limits of earlier perspectives, but in turn, the recent challenges to the very claims of theorists of new social movements have also contributed to a broader understanding of the features and strategies of social movements generally.¹⁴ By questioning the 'new,' critics have demonstrated how various approaches might converge to offer fuller explanations of social movements now and – importantly for our purposes – in the past.

Key aspects of contentious collective action

While a comprehensive account of the evolving perspectives in the field of social movement research is well beyond the scope of this study, we will identify some key concepts central to an understanding of how and why early feminisms came to position themselves in different (often conflicting) ways. The selective focus of this study is on the media of social movements – the functions of the feminist press in this period – but our goal in the process is to highlight features and contributions of feminist protest which have been obscured or unproductively framed in the past. Social movement theory is invoked here not simply as a novel set of terms to describe familiar phenomena, but as a way to shift our conceptual understanding of the substance and implications of this particular public protest and to link/re-integrate it to broader historical contexts. Some of the elements we foreground, such as collective

identities or organizational cultures, have been dealt with by suffrage historians using more generalized terms and vocabularies.

Social movement researchers have tended to pay more attention to contemporary women's movements than to historical ones.¹⁵ However, there have been some important studies of the American woman suffrage movement, some of which have been the product of more synthetic approaches.¹⁶ In terms of full-length studies, Andrew Buechler's work has dealt with the process of transformation in the broader context of social change in the United States (1986) and with the comparative analysis of historical and contemporary women's movements in the United States (1990). Lee Ann Banaszak provides a comparative analysis of suffrage campaigns in the United States and Switzerland (1996). The British suffrage movement (and early women's movements in Britain generally) have not received this kind of sustained attention by social movement scholars. Key studies by Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism* (1981) and *Becoming a Feminist* (1986), analyze early British feminism as a social movement, but more in terms of historical sociology than within the specific framework or critical vocabulary of social movement theory. Media have not been central to the concerns of these studies, except insofar as they provide sources of information. A notable exception is Louise Ryan's work on the Irish suffrage movement which draws on social movement theory (2001) and grows out of her work on the Irish suffrage press (1996).

This section aims to offer a more general overview of concepts relevant to the analysis of early women's movements. Recent developments and synthetic approaches in the field of social movement theory provide a useful point of entry and encourage multi-faceted analyses, even if the multiple and overlapping dimensions complicate the process of exposition. We begin with two general working concepts and assumptions within which to situate our concerns with feminist media and the factors that relate to their examination. First, our study is premised on the idea of 'contentious politics' or 'contentious collective action.' The *raison d'être* of social movements is to bring a set of issues or grievances to be heard, recognized, and addressed in the public sphere. Sidney Tarrow argues it is a necessary starting point for understanding social movements:

The irreducible act that lies at the base of all social movements and revolutions is *contentious collective action* It [collective action] becomes contentious when it is used by people who lack regular access to institutions, act in the name of new or unaccepted claims

and behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others. It produces social movements when social actors concert their actions around common claims in sustained sequences of interaction with opponents or authorities.

(1998: 3)

More specifically, in attempting to identify the dynamics of different forms of contention, McAdam et al. argue that “collective political struggle” is “episodic rather than continuous, occurs in public, involves interaction between makers of claims and others, is recognized by those others as bearing on their interests, and brings in government as mediator, target, or claimant” (2001: 5). These components of contentious politics relate directly to the struggle of women’s groups in the period we are examining. What interests us in such a definition is not only the stress on the ‘public’ nature of the struggle, but also the recognition that the objects or targets of claims vary and that a wide range of interests are at stake at any one time.

Secondly, the idea of a ‘social movement field’ or a ‘multiorganizational field’ is a useful way to define the parameters within which contentious politics are enacted and to locate the relevant players and constituencies. Bert Klandermans defines the multiorganizational field as “the total possible number of organizations with which a movement organization might establish specific links,” but, importantly, these include “both supportive and antagonistic sectors” (95). Further, he notes that the “boundaries between the two systems [alliance and conflict systems] remain fluid and may change in the course of events” (95). We need to remember that supporters and opponents do not exist in blocks; instead, they can be found in institutional and other contexts, including those being challenged. Dieter Rucht broadens the perspective to include mediators and audiences, distinguishing between bystanders (those who are indifferent or neutral) and potential sympathizers (211). The benefits of using a model like the multiorganizational field include: the ability to account for a wider range of positions (in relation to grievances); the assumption of or ability to accommodate conflict (among movement actors as well as between movement organizations and their opponents); and its stress on change (these relations to do not remain static, since allies can become opponents and vice versa).

The idea of a social movement field is in many ways a better and more accurate way to capture what we have been calling the ‘women’s movement’ and its various campaigns and components, some of which were more overtly ‘feminist’ than others.¹⁷ The suffrage campaign was large,

highly diverse, and could be seen to constitute a multiorganizational field in its own right. But because of the substantial evidence to demonstrate that gaining the vote was for many only a means to a larger and more complex end, it makes sense to situate it in the larger context of women's activism (i.e., protest based on changing the consequences of gender inequalities on a variety of institutional levels). Historians have been critical of the disproportionate emphasis in women's history on the suffrage campaign, but it is crucial to remember that it served as a hub for a wide range of issues and types of participants who overlapped with other reform organizations and brought those concerns to bear on their involvement in the suffrage campaign. As Klandermans explains:

By situating social movement organizations within multiorganizational fields, we see the movements as something much more dynamic... Such factors as the relationship between an organization and its opponents, the presence of countermovements, the formation of coalitions, the movement's relationship with sympathetic and oppositional political parties, and its relationship with the mass media all shape the field of tension in which social movement organizations develop, change, and decline.

(99)

The divisions and clashes both within the suffrage movement and with opponents outside were not aberrations or failures; rather, they were part and parcel of the formation and evolution of such movements – in other words, part and parcel of what happens when collectives or groups become involved in contentious claims-making in the attempt to effect social and political change. The various positions and relations among groups were also more complex and made for stranger bedfellows than the model of publics/counterpublics allows. As support for suffrage began to gain ground, organized anti-suffragism has to be understood as a countermovement, eventually as a counterpublic in its own right, even if the term is generally not used in relation to reactionary forces.¹⁸ Similarly, there were prominent self-declared feminists who were also highly critical of the women's suffrage campaign, but for different reasons. The critical framework of social movement theory provides a lens through which to understand these changing relationships in terms of larger forms and patterns of contentious politics.

If contentious politics are the basis of social movements and multiorganizational fields are the playing field, then we need to turn to the mechanics and strategies of collective action in order to situate a

discussion of the role of media. The dimensions of strategy are multiple and overlapping; it is almost impossible to discuss one concept without reference to another. For instance, collective identity (central to mobilizing any group or organization) is, as Hunt and Benford explain, “both a necessary precursor and product of movement collective action” (433). In other words, it plays a role in the formation of social movement organizations, as much as organizations work to generate collective identity. In the same way, framing (as a discursive strategy) is implicated in virtually all of the other dimensions of protest, such as the formation of collective identity, organizational cultures, and resource mobilization. If we accept that the concepts are all relational at some level, then we can proceed by outlining key topics pertaining directly to the media of social movements – namely, organizations and tactics, cycles of protest, framing, and culture.

Social movement organizations

Beginning at the level of organizations offers a broader, structural point of entry into a diverse movement. The actual debates in the literature have drawn attention to the existence, role, and importance of social movement organizations (SMOs), revealing the diversity of approaches within particular movements. According to Clemens and Minkoff (2007) and Caniglia and Carmin (2005) there has been a resurgence of interest in organizations in social movement research in light of recent developments in the field. Clemens and Minkoff argue that organizations have come to be seen not just as instrumental (as they were in the context of resource mobilization theory), but also “organizations sustain distinctive cultures of interaction and shape trajectories of mobilization” and “are recognized as arenas for the development of the practices and identities of activism” (157–8). As a result, they underscore how “Choices of organizational form were simultaneously vehicles of mobilization, signals of identity to opponents and possible coalition partners, and... ‘etiquettes’ for collective action” and, consequently, how “Choices of organizational form shape alliances as well as fueling schisms” (Clemens and Minkoff 157–8). This emphasis on diversity and choices is important to understanding the proliferation of organizations in the British suffrage campaign and is linked to the role of media in relation to those organizations, particularly the genre of official organs. The newspapers emerging from specific organizations (discussed in the first case study (Chapter 1)) served a variety of symbolic and practical functions directly related to building and maintaining any

given organization, as well as reflecting its culture and serving as its public face. They necessarily conflicted as they appealed to and competed for potential members and supporters. But non-organizationally-based media (e.g., the *Freewoman*) are equally significant by virtue of the fact that they were used by other feminist constituencies within the movement to promote different forms of collective identity and reacted as much to existing organizations as to the general range of issues and grievances. In these ways, communication plays a central role in the formation, proliferation, and even the rejection of organizational forms.

Suffrage organizations differed significantly in terms of their leadership and internal structures (hierarchical vs. democratic). In fact, many of the conflicts and splits, dating from the late nineteenth century into the Edwardian period, were related to how organizations and decision-making processes would be governed, in addition to the substance of their positions and choice of tactics. They were divided in terms of how they framed their grievances, proposed solutions, and their approaches to protest. Consequently, accounting for organizations necessarily entails accounting for tactics (the use of familiar and new repertoires of collective action), and for how these organizations came to be perceived based on their tactics. These perceptions affected recruitment since, as Clemens and Minkoff point out, "Distinctive styles of organizing also make activism attractive to different potential activists" (157). Notable differences emerged in the conflict between militant and constitutional approaches to suffrage campaigning. These were differences not just of tactics and goals, but also in terms of the networks from which participants derived prior activist involvement, ranging from labor and trade union organizations, political parties, religious communities, and social groups.

Temporal continuity and cycles of protest

Given the size, diversity, and duration of the British suffrage movement, organizations, networks, and tactics have to be understood over time and in the context of other developments. Temporal continuity and cycles of protest – basic social movement concepts – serve to highlight the implications of a campaign that took place and evolved over a relatively long period of time. Earlier scholarship often served to reinforce compartmentalized approaches, since Victorian and twentieth-century historians tended to concentrate on developments in their respective centuries. Much of the revisionist work on the suffrage movement since the early 1990s has been instrumental in reassessing the

disproportionate emphasis on the militant campaign of the Edwardian period in order to reveal the importance of a wider range of participants and to highlight the connections and continuities in historical (temporal) as well as in geographic/international terms between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁹ The 'wave' metaphor used to describe heightened and changing periods of feminist protest itself implies a degree of continuity. But Tarrow's notion of 'cycles of contention' moves beyond the obvious point about the phases of long-standing movements. Tarrow stresses the need to identify "broader waves of contention" when the degree of "heightened conflict across the social system" has a direct impact on the scale of activity and participation, the innovation and intensification of forms of collective action, and the response of authorities to these actions (1998). He claims that during these "periods of turbulence," political opportunities open up for a wider range of actors. As a result of this expansion of activity, groups are able to rely on and tap into "master frames" and "models of activism" (1998: 8). In these periods of heightened protest, Tarrow argues that "information flows more rapidly, political attention heightens, and interactions among groups of challengers and between them and authorities increase in frequency and intensity" (1998: 146). The turn of the twentieth century in Britain was one of these periods of turbulence. Cycles of protest may create opportunities for reform groups, allowing them to exploit master frames such as justice and equality, but the number of competing voices also makes it difficult to be heard.

This emphasis on periods of widespread contention foregrounds the larger context of collective action within which any particular movement or organization exists and functions, and the other groups or movements it might potentially cooperate or compete with to achieve its goals. Not only were print media instrumental in disseminating ideas and forging the connections within and among movements, but they provide some key evidence of the continuities and changes over time. For instance, by tracing the evolution of particular publications or genres, we can better understand the relationship between what McAdam refers to as "initiator" and "spin off" movements (McAdam 1995). As the case studies will demonstrate, the proliferation of suffrage and feminist periodicals after 1907 reflects the growth, but more importantly, the diversification of the movement. Organizations within the suffrage campaign used official organs to define and justify their positions and their tactics, while individuals or other feminist groups used independent periodicals to either distance themselves from the campaign and/or to promote a different set of issues. Again, this kind of framework offers a constructive approach to understanding phases of protest and changing

repertoires of collective action – namely the whole set of means that a group has for making claims of different kinds (Tarrow 1993). If Tarrow is right about the intensification or radicalization in the repertoires of movements nearing the peak of cycles of protest, then this helps to explain why earlier constitutional approaches to women’s reform eventually came into conflict with more militant and violent tactics in the years before World War I. In other words, these developments fit a larger pattern, but are distinguished through the unconventional use of them by women.

In these ways, just as temporal continuity highlights a more longitudinal approach to a particular movement, examining ‘cycles of protest’ (as defined by Tarrow and redefined by subsequent researchers) serves to situate particular movements in the context of broader environments of political contention. Not only was the suffrage campaign a hub of activity for other women’s reform groups, but it existed, in its various phases, in relation to other key movements of the time (e.g., abolition, the labor movement, adult suffrage, and Irish nationalism) in what was a heightened period of political protest generally, particularly in terms of claims to rights or autonomy on the part of disenfranchised groups.²⁰ The interconnections become apparent not just in the feminist press (which often reported on these other movements), but also through the extent to which the press of other movements reported on or took up issues related to the women’s movement. Cycles of protest also provide a conceptual frame for elaborating the different forms of participation by women from different social groups and across the political spectrum. Ferree and Mueller make an important distinction between women who organize in some capacities and become feminists and those who organize as feminists and take on other issues (2007). This was certainly true of women who were involved in a wide range of reform campaigns in the period. We can even see it in the morphing of publications after the first Franchise Bill in 1918. There are numerous examples of periodicals which began as suffrage organs, but went on to embrace issues beyond enfranchisement: *Woman’s Dreadnought* became *Workers’ Dreadnought*, *Common Cause* became *Woman’s Leader*, and *Church League for Women’s Suffrage* became *Church Militant*, and *The Vote* continued until 1933 taking up issues related to child welfare and violence.

Framing

While cycles of protest have been explained primarily in terms of expanded political opportunities, Snow and Benford focus on the ideational factors accounting for the clustering of social movement

activities by analyzing what they term “master frames” (1992). They use master frames to deal with the macro-level of broader cycles of protests, but the concept derives from the more specific element of the “collective action frame” or process of “framing” related to how social movements interpret problems and articulate their grievances. Of all the concepts derived from social movement research, framing is perhaps the most familiar because of the more widespread use of the term in other fields of study. But it is also one of the most directly relevant to our purposes in this study of movement media because it focuses on the cultural dimensions of protest.²¹ David Snow and Robert Benford argue that we cannot treat mobilizing ideas and meanings as givens; instead we should “see movement organizations and actors as actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers” (1992: 136). It is this “signifying work” that they refer to as “framing,” while “collective action frames” are the products of this process (136).

The extensive literature on the framing perspective covers a wide range of issues related to the functions of collective action frames. Snow and Benford classify these functions broadly to include: “diagnostic framing” (the process of identifying a problem and attributing blame or responsibility); “prognostic framing” (the proposed solutions or strategies for dealing with the problem); and “motivational framing” (the reasons why it is important to engage in collective action). They also stress that collective action frames must “resonate” in the contexts in which they are articulated. In other words, the frames and those who proffer them must be credible, consistent, and salient to be effective (Benford and Snow 2000). Of course “frame disputes” may occur at all these levels, among constituents in a multi-organizational field, so the frames articulated by any one organization or constituency can change and transform in response to “counterframing” activities by opponents or rivals (Benford and Snow 2000). In these ways, framing is also inextricably related to collective identity (by identifying collective actors and their opponents), to mobilization (by providing a rationale or purpose for action), and changes in movements over time (because frame disputes within movements and with opponents lead to the formation of spin off and countermovements).

It is by creating and circulating new interpretative frames that social movements can play a significant role in influencing and shifting public discourses around a given set of issues. We need only consider terms such as ‘birth control,’ ‘domestic violence,’ and ‘affirmative action’ to see the impact of interpretive frames on public vocabularies.²² Because

of the reliance on print media, early women's groups used periodicals to communicate and debate their platforms. While 'votes for women' served as a generic label or goal for the women's suffrage campaign, organizations and their newspapers proliferated because of the different ways in which they framed problems, proposed solutions, and appealed to their supporters to act. More importantly, it was not just the franchise itself, but the broader program of social reform (related to work, education, marriage, rights over children, etc.) that suffragists claimed the franchise would facilitate that resonated so powerfully and widely for supporters of the cause. It is by looking closely at what they wrote and circulated that the sometimes subtle and sometimes striking differences become most apparent. Given the campaign spanned from the mid-nineteenth century to the interwar years, framing (and reframing) was crucial to responding to developments and to keeping the cause relevant for long-standing and new generations of supporters.

The challenges of framing over a long stretch of time points to the role that narratives can play in the discourses generated by social movements. Francesca Polletta (1998, 2006) argues that this "temporal dimension" of the construction and maintenance of collective identity is one of several reasons for distinguishing the functions of narratives and storytelling from theories of framing, even though the processes are connected in many ways (1998: 140). Gary Alan Fine also links narrative to collective identity formation and to organizational cultures because it aids in constructing shared meanings and influences how a group presents itself to outsiders (128). History writing is one of the most powerful examples of this process. Jane Jenson argues, in relation to nationalist movements, that "In competing for discursive space, communities are imagining more than their present and future; they also imagine their pasts. Therefore, social movements...write and rewrite history in order to justify contemporary definitions of interests and strategies" (108). The writing of suffrage histories during the campaign made use of narratives to explain developments over time and these were often employed strategically on the part of particular figures or organizations (DiCenzo 2005).

Culture and social movements

The production of meanings – the interpretive frameworks generated by social movements – in the immediate and the long term are inextricably related to the cultural dimensions of protest and to the impact movements can have on cultural change more generally. Doug McAdam

describes framing as an act of “cultural appropriation” because the ability of organizers to mobilize activism depends in part on the “cultural resonance” of the frames they use (1994: 37). In these ways, framing is implicated in what have come to be recognized as cultural perspectives in social movement theory. The work in this area is wide-ranging and continually expanding, but there are particular threads directly relevant to the analysis of early women’s movements and media. Beyond ‘framing’ (which we have isolated because of its centrality to the analysis of media), we would highlight three contributions that the cultural perspective offers: the treatment of collective identity as both instrument and goal; a framework for understanding the actual ‘cultures’ of social movement organizations; and a reconsideration of the impact of social movements beyond practical and policy-oriented goals. It is no coincidence that much of the work on contemporary women’s movements in social movement research is related to these areas of inquiry (Mueller 1994; Rupp and Taylor 1991; Taylor and Whittier 1992, 1995). But there is much to gain by considering the cultural dimensions of protest in historical terms.

‘Collective identity’ is an obvious example of an analytical concept emerging from the challenges and characteristics of ‘new social movements.’ Hunt and Benford trace its use back to classical roots in Marx and its social psychological foundations in the work of figures like Mead, describing it as “a central concept or residual category for nearly every theoretical perspective and empirical question associated with contemporary studies of social movements” (2007: 433). Its prominence in recent decades grows out of the attempts to explain the composition of new social movements – such as feminist, environmental, peace, anti-globalization movements – and to address a more complex range of factors influencing collective action than resource mobilization and political opportunity perspectives were able to account for. Collective identities are not only both precursors and products, but they can function as means or as a goal in themselves. Nancy Whittier explains that “Some movements, like the women’s or lesbian and gay movement, want to construct new collective identities that challenge subservient definitions of the group, whereas others, like the peace or environmental movement, construct new identities as a means of promoting mobilization rather than as a goal in themselves” (2002: 290). The identity politics of contemporary movements may have given the critical analysis of collective identity a greater relevance and urgency, but these issues are no less important when we think about them in historical terms.

The concept is not historically specific. Francesca Polletta and James Jasper define collective identity as:

an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution.... a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly... [which] may have been first constructed by outsiders... but depends on some acceptance by those to whom it is applied... Collective identities are expressed in cultural materials – names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals, clothing, and so on.

(2001: 285)

They argue that identity plays a crucial role in different phases of protest and they outline four key questions collective identity has been used to address: the formation of collective identities (why groups form around issues); the different motivations or bases for involvement; the strategic choices made by movements; and the cultural impact of social movements (in terms of representations and social norms) (2001: 284). These questions are complicated by Alberto Melucci's stress on collective identity as a dynamic process because the "definition [the 'we'] that the actors construct is not linear but produced by interaction, negotiation, and the opposition of different orientations" (1995: 43). Early feminists constantly referred to and saw themselves as part of a 'women's movement,' but more specific identities and groupings proliferated, changed, and forced distinctions both within and outside of specific campaigns. Periodicals functioned as one medium – the 'cultural materials' – through which these identities could be articulated, communicated, and responded to. They also serve, along with letters, diaries, and other sources, as key historical evidence for reconstructing these competing identities.²³

The second area to highlight involves the cultures which develop in movements or movement organizations. McAdam argues that "Social movements tend to become worlds unto themselves that are characterized by distinctive ideologies, collective identities, behavioral routines, and material cultures" (1994: 46). In other contexts, the use of the terms 'publics' or 'counterpublics' are often used to describe similar phenomena, but as noted above, these terms often have a homogenizing effect. Again, it is important to adopt a framework which accounts for process and change. McAdam suggests it is not uncommon for the "locus of protest activity to shift over time" and, hence, for the culture of a

movement to reflect changes in the social, generational, or regional characteristics (1994: 46). This is complicated further if we consider the diversity within movements and how specific organizations develop their own cultures. In the case of the suffrage movement, these organizational cultures and the more provocative styles of younger generations of feminists are invariably reflected in their media. In some cases, we see organizations (the militant WSPU) or individual editors (Dora Marsden) attempting to promote distinct, competing styles of protest – visually and discursively. A glance at the classified sections of suffrage organs or the advertisements and correspondence sections of other feminist publications reveals the extent to which the issues they debated permeated all aspects of daily life. These publications both constitute and represent the system of shared values, practices, language, and symbols which distinguish social movement organizations from one another and from the larger contexts in which they operate.

The final and most comprehensive question addressed by cultural analysis is that of the cultural consequences of social movements. This takes us back to the starting point of this section and the focus on how movements contribute to changes in values, belief systems, identities, and cultural practices – not just political change. Individual movements often effect these changes in combination with other movements and are hindered or propelled by other circumstances. For instance, there is no doubt that the extensive and unconventional forms of women's involvement in the war effort after 1914 had a reinforcing and amplifying effect on the case feminist and labor activists had tried to make about the need for women to participate fully as citizens and workers. But 60 years of active campaigning for women's enfranchisement, along with many legislative changes, had already substantially altered public discourse and attitudes toward women, as well as having wrought major changes in the ways women were choosing to live their lives. Adrian Bingham, in his study of gender and the popular press in the interwar period, argues that the press offers "a useful arena in which to examine the possible disjuncture between the political efficacy of the 'feminist' movement, and the more general acceptance of 'feminist' ideas in popular culture" (8).

Social movements both draw on existing cultural vocabularies and transform them. Culture is, in Ann Swidler's formulation, a "tool kit of symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems... for constructing 'strategies of action'" (1986: 273, 277). In turn, these strategies of action have the power to reshape the larger movements,

institutions, and contexts they confront (Whittier 2007). Acknowledging that cultural outcomes are difficult to define and measure, Jennifer Earl nevertheless describes some of the areas of social life that social movement research has identified for examination, “ranging from value and opinion change, to changes in art, to the development of new and distinct collective identities and communities” (2007: 525). When we consider our own contemporary context, it is easy to take the changes brought about by social movements for granted. But civil rights, feminist, gay and lesbian, peace, human rights, anti-racism, and environmental activism (to name a few) have altered the way we think and the language we use to discuss issues that affect our lives.

Another influential argument for the impact of social movements is posited by political theorists Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato in their analysis of contemporary collective action and civil society (1992). They invoke the competing paradigms of social movement theory to distinguish between “reactive” forms of collective action (which involve “defensive” action on the part of communal groups resisting appropriation of resources currently under their control) and “proactive” ones (which involve “special purpose organizations” taking “offensive” action to “assert group claims to power, privileges, or resources that have not previously existed”) (Cohen and Arato 501). But rather than seeing these as exclusive, they suggest that movements can be both defensive and proactive at the same time. They expose the narrowly defined political terrain and instrumental goals of resource mobilization theory in order to argue that social movements engage in a “dualistic politics of identity and influence” aimed at political society *and* civil society. Instead of using the language of ‘cultural perspectives’ to question the problematic emphasis on political goals, they posit a “civil-society-oriented approach” and draw on the new social movements paradigm in order to account for a more complex set of influences. Civil society becomes both “the target as well as the terrain of collective action” (509).

Cohen and Arato make repeated use of the contemporary women’s movement to illustrate this dualistic strategy, arguing that “The dual logic of feminist politics thus involves a communicative, discursive politics of identity and influence that targets civil and political society and an organized, strategically rational politics of inclusion and reform that is aimed at political and economic institutions” (550). In fact they suggest that “attempts to alter the norms, roles, and identities of women within the public and private spheres of civil society have generated

far more resistance (and even countermovements) than claims for formal equality in the work place or for inclusion in the political public sphere" (558). This work is significant because it accounts for cultural normative change as well as political change, but does so by offering a different conceptual framework for understanding the scope and influence of social movements. In so doing, they attempt to redefine "the criterion of success" to include the impact of movements on values and norms and to recognize the new collective identities as achievements in themselves. These conclusions, however, should not be restricted to 'new' social movements. Only by approaching earlier women's movements in the same way can we begin to grasp their complexity and the different areas of social and political life they attempted to influence.

In all of this attention to strategies of action, solutions to problems, and targets of protest, the crucial question that gets obscured is where or how do these issues arise in the first place? Culture and civil society are the arenas in which everyday issues become problematized – where people experience the contradictions and injustices that turn into public grievances. This highlights the problem with using the 'public sphere' as a spatial concept instead of as one of process. While Habermas himself uses spatial terms to conceptualize the public sphere, what is significant in his analysis is the activity by which issues, grievances, and opinions are made public and circulated, or exchanged as part of the broader process of articulating civil and political society. He argues that it is in the "discussion among citizens" that "issues were made topical and took shape" (1989: 4). The focus here is on the publicly deliberative and discursive activity of democratic politics, not on a condition or state with distinctive boundaries.

Nina Eliasoph asks "can we theorize the press without theorizing the public?" and reminds us of the role of "public conversation" in understanding how "issues come to bear political meaning" (2004: 297). She underscores the fact that "the press does not just inspire conversation; it also crystallizes conversation" (298). Arguing the need for a journal that could place before the public the "connection of women's lives with social advancement," Amelia Lewis remarks, "Social quiet has been so deceptive on the outside that we have really believed 'all is well underneath'" (*Woman*, 10 Feb 1872: 50). Similarly, reflecting back on her involvement in the suffrage movement, Evelyn Sharp offers a sense of how the women's movement came to facilitate the public expression of grievances arising from everyday experience. She writes:

For the sake of a quiet life the majority of women had left their menfolk in ignorance of the extent to which they chafed under their disabilities; and I think some women welcomed the militant movement because it enabled them to express their discontent publicly without appearing to reproach any individual man in the home their rebellion came as a shock to many, both men and women, who had not previously realised the existence either of the discontent or of the disabilities that produced it.

(132–3)

The public sphere is where these issues are debated and the press (periodicals and newspapers), in the period we are examining, were the chief means by which these public conversations were conducted and shared on a wider basis. To use Eliasoph's term, they constituted the "method of conversing" (300).

The "marriage question" serves as a comprehensive illustration. One can easily trace the legislative changes related to marriage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through the series of property, divorce, and child custody acts passed in these years. But these measures were the product of a widespread dissatisfaction with and the injustice of constraints imposed on women. Direct evidence of the interrogation of the institution of marriage can be found across the spectrum of print media – from polemical books, to essays in the established periodical press, debates in the popular press, in addition to literary genres, memoirs and letters. The overlap or intersections between different sectors of the press serve to reinforce the extent to which these issues had permeated contemporary life. For example, Mona Caird's essay "Marriage," first published in the *Westminster Review* in 1888, was taken up by the popular press. Susan Hamilton notes, "in a classic device of the new journalism, the *Daily Telegraph* asked its readers, 'Is Marriage a Failure?' Two months and twenty-seven thousand responses later, the *Daily Telegraph* was obliged to refuse any further correspondence on a topic that clearly caught the late-Victorian interest" (272). Hamilton adds that the article later elicited a response from anti-feminist Eliza Lynn Linton which initiated the "Wild Women" exchange between these two prominent writers in the *Nineteenth Century*. Sheila Rosenberg's insights into the context for Caird's oft-cited article prevent us from reading it as an isolated incident. She demonstrates how it was only a piece of a larger debate within the pages of the *Westminster Review* and among a wide range of contributors who made the issues of marriage and divorce and sexual relations part of a nationwide debate (2005). She cites *Westminster*

editor John Chapman's remarks to Karl Pearson in a letter: "To me the Woman Question – What ought to be the relation of the sexes? is the most important question of our time" (123).²⁴ The so-called 'marriage question' had many dimensions, some of which surprise readers now, including: education, the marriage bar, sexual relations, birth control, wages for housework, violence, venereal disease, and marital rape. The 'public conversation' about these issues was chiefly conducted through the press. These very debates, in turn, had the power to influence and reshape the institutions of civil and political society, troubling the boundaries between them.

Media and social movements

Media figure in the study of social movements past and present, but there is remarkably little attention paid to the role of media *produced by* social movements per se. This may be due, in part, to the fact that media (as vehicles) and communication (as process) are implicated – even taken for granted – in the various dimensions of social movements (organizations, mobilization, collective identity, and framing processes). This has been especially true of historical forms of movement media; these have received comparatively little attention in the context of social movement research, even though they are relevant to the repertoires of earlier movements. Analysis of the presses of early radical and revolutionary movements is more likely to be found in the work of press, rhetoric, and social historians, than in social movement research.

Movement and alternative media have been a greater preoccupation in a contemporary context, particularly as the role of mass and electronic forms of media have had a significant impact on the levels and forms of participation possible in new social movements. There has always been greater interest in the relationship between movements and *mainstream* sectors of media (or "general-audience media"), with a focus on how organizations gain access to coverage, influence how they are represented, and how they contribute to the construction of movements' collective action frames (Gamson 1995). Even in this context the attention to movement media has been limited, leading John Downing to claim "it seems distinctly odd that the framing activities of social movements' *own* media, whether internally or externally directed or both, are so comprehensively off the map" (2008: 42).

The media of social movements are often acknowledged only in general ways. Charles Tilly claims: "From the eighteenth-century days of incipient social movements onward, newspapers, magazines,

pamphlets, and other print media conveyed campaign messages, announced forthcoming movement activities, evaluated those activities, and provided news reports on their successes or failures" (84). But he ends up focusing his attention almost exclusively on twentieth-century forms of mass media. Sidney Tarrow also traces the role of print media back to the eighteenth century and identifies "print" and "association" as key factors in the development of movement networks. He argues that print made it possible for people, otherwise scattered in geographic terms, to communicate and join together, hence diffusing specific conflicts into national social movements (1998: 44). Interested in how grievances lead to collective action, Tarrow suggests that print and informal networks helped to create new solidarities beyond the usual class ties (what he calls weak ties for strong movements) and concludes that:

Primary associations and face-to-face contacts provide solidarity for collective action among people who know and trust one another. But print, association and coalitional campaigns of collective action build solidarity among larger numbers of people and help to diffuse movements to new publics. They thus permit the formation of loose, often contingent social coalitions, sympathetic or parallel issues and broad movement cycles.

(52)

This emphasis on the potential of print as an organizational and mobilizing tool (building solidarities among otherwise disparate groups, communities, and geographic regions) has been central to the analysis of historical forms of movement media in other fields.

Historian Brian Harrison looks at the distribution and content of what he terms "pressure-group periodicals" or "specialist reforming periodicals" in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This remains one of the only studies to grant the women's suffrage campaign prominent consideration in the context of other reform movements of the time, such as Chartism, the Anti-Corn Law League, temperance, anti-vivisection, socialism, and the labor movement. Harrison's analysis is valuable for its generic treatment of the various functions of pressure-group periodicals. He summarizes the content of these periodicals as "inspirational, informative and integrating" (282). These general categories include using the press to convert new members, reinforce and encourage the already converted, educate members and the general public (particularly in reaction to exclusion from the public Press and even other specialist papers), offer a forum for participation (through

articles or correspondence), and bring news of activities of the leadership and branches to members nationally, thus connecting them across geographic, and even social lines. It is this unifying or integrating role that is often highlighted in studies which focus on the potential of print media to influence collective identity formation and to create what Kate Flint calls “reading communities” (42). But Harrison also points to the schisms and rivalries within movements that led to the launching of new journals. The proliferation of and conflicts among women’s suffrage organizations, dissidents, and opponents are central to our concerns.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries offer a rich opportunity for the analysis of movement media. Not only did the expansion of the press and increased access to publishing represent a political opportunity for early feminists, but they were also able to borrow from and model the strategic use of such resources from other movements at the time. Because women’s reform campaigns were embedded in a larger cycle of protest, activists were often involved in other campaigns directly or through family and friendship networks, sharing skills and material resources. The obvious example is the link between the labor and suffrage movements at the end of the nineteenth century. Part of Frederick and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence’s contribution to the WSPU was *Votes for Women*, which became the group’s official organ. Frederick Pethick-Lawrence brought with him considerable experience, having edited the *Echo*, a London evening newspaper, and founded the *Labour Record and Review*, which eventually became incorporated into the *New Age* (Hopkin 1985: 115). In these ways, pressure-group periodicals or movement media were not innovations per se, but their use by women in these years was a departure and can be seen as constituting a form of contentious collective action. As a tactic, producing their own papers operated strategically both within the movement and outside. These papers were continually addressing and appealing to the wider public. This publicist orientation is frequently overlooked; the ‘specialist’ nature of movement media should not be allowed to obscure the extent to which they tried to communicate their ideas and demands beyond their constituencies.

The feminist press must also be considered in relation to the established or mainstream media available at the time. Publishing their own papers was essential, but activists and organizations monitored, engaged directly with, and tried to communicate through mainstream media. Some critics would argue that feminist writing in the established press was ultimately more influential. Joanne Shattock and Susan Hamilton have both suggested that articles by figures like Harriet

Martineau, Frances Power Cobbe and others in journals such as the *Westminster Review*, *Nineteenth Century*, *Contemporary Review*, *Fortnightly Review*, *Edinburgh Magazine*, and *Fraser's Magazine* had a greater impact than the "specialist press" or "separate journals" we examine here (Hamilton 2006: 5; Shattock 2007: 339). These venues certainly provided different kinds of opportunities and challenges for feminists and their supporters. In fact, the claims regarding the impact of these interventions in public debates only serve to reinforce the prevalence of public discussion about women's rights in all sectors of the press. Hamilton argues that feminist writing in the established press reminds us that "there are different audiences for feminism, different podiums to mount . . . that Victorian feminisms circulated as constant commentary, as a perspective available on quarterly, monthly, daily terms . . . part of a nation's speech to and about itself" (15).

An examination of the daily press and early agenda-setting journals is beyond the scope of this study. One of the only attempts to trace the general coverage of the suffrage campaign in mainstream dailies remains Ragnhild Nessheim's *Press, Politics and Votes for Women, 1910–1918*.²⁵ We will, however, consider how the early feminist press provides a record of the shifting perceptions of the so-called 'Press' and print media as a field of contention in these years. Openly critical of the mainstream press, women's periodicals reveal the necessity for a more complex approach to the reliability of the mainstream press as a source for understanding early reform movements. The structure and needs of organizations and movements raise a different set of considerations for analyzing 'movement media'; conventional approaches to press history have to be rethought or supplemented in the interests of understanding this related, but differing, phenomenon.

Situating women's political periodicals in press/media history

Press and periodical history is perhaps the most obvious area within which to contextualize the suffrage and feminist press. It is certainly the field in which much of the work to date has been done. We address this area last because part of our goal has been to expand – through a discussion of the public sphere and social movements – the theoretical and historical framework necessary to assessing the role of these media at the time and their significance to scholarship now. Attention to the impact of these discourses on public discussion and the relationship between social movements and civil society is an attempt to dispel

assumptions that these movements and media concerned only women. Collective action on the part of women's movements was motivated by fundamental inequities at all levels of social and political life, so the solutions were necessarily implicated in and intended to influence society as a whole. In fact, these levels or spheres were inextricably linked in that their ability to influence social change required participation in the political process.

While our focus is a separate or alternative press, we want to stress the 'publicist orientation' of these periodicals.²⁶ This includes, but is not restricted to Ardis's attention to the 'external dialogics' of magazines which she defines as "their discursive exchanges with other print media" (2008: 38). There is clear evidence of the conversations and exchanges among a range of publications. But in terms of communicating, feminists were not just talking to one another; they were addressing a wider public readership. In the following section, we will point to some of the key contributions in the field of press and periodical history in order to situate our analysis of feminist periodicals and the general concerns of feminist media history. We will consider the following areas: first, where the feminist press has figured in the scholarship to date; secondly, where it goes missing and how recent developments point to more integrated approaches; and finally, the significance of these media, as alternative media, to a history of the press.

Research to date

The range and types of periodicals under consideration here have received growing critical attention in recent years. They have been treated in specific and general ways in studies of women in journalism, feminist and suffrage history, women's periodicals, and the history of reading. These contributions span a number of scholarly fields, including Victorian studies, women's history, literary studies, journalism history, book history or print culture, communication studies, and rhetoric studies. The interdisciplinary and methodological range accounts for the often dispersed nature of this work, much of it focused on women's periodicals in Britain and United States. The point here is not to offer a comprehensive bibliography, but to outline some of the main developments and types of sources.²⁷

Much of the initial attention to early women's print media in Britain concerned women's magazines, with key studies spanning the eighteenth to twentieth centuries (Adburgham 1972; Ballaster et al. 1991; Beetham 1996; Braithwaite 1995; Dancyger 1978; Ferguson 1983;

Shevelow 1989; White 1970). While some of these studies gesture toward politically oriented publications, the recovery and critical work on reforming or movement-based periodicals has emerged as a separate tendency. Bibliographies and critical studies of American and British women's radical, reform, and feminist periodicals, printed collections, microfilm reproduction, and now electronic publication of these journals have grown steadily since the 1980s.²⁸ The field of Victorian periodical research has by far been the most influential single area in a British context, with its array of dedicated scholarly journals, academic associations, and major bibliographic projects.²⁹ The field of Victorian studies has shaped the kinds of critical issues and research questions we take for granted in the field of print culture and offers a rich resource for early twentieth-century researchers who have turned their attention to periodicals in more recent years (Latham and Scholes 2006). Attention to women and print spans the nineteenth century, with notable contributions to the more politicized discourses of the early part of the century emerging in recent years (Gleadle 1995, 2002; Rogers 2000).

Also important to situating women's pressure-group and feminist publications are studies exploring the relationship between gender and the newspaper or periodical press at the levels of production and reception. This considerable body of work, in the British context alone, includes the history of women in journalism (Chambers et al. 2004; Onslow 2000); women's domestic magazines (Beetham 1996); women's presses (Murray 2000, 2004; Stanley with Morley 1988); the influence of the periodical press (Fraser et al. 2003); genres (Beetham and Boardman 2001); women's journalism in relation to literature and modernity (Ardis and Lewis 2003; Clay 2009; Green 2009; Shattock 2001); women readers (Flint 1993; Phegley 2004); the popular press (Bingham 2004); and women reviewers (Demoor 2000). Many of these works devote some attention to the literature of the women's movement in the period and offer valuable insights into the range of considerations relevant to a critical assessment of women's roles and contributions to the history of the press. In the specific case of the suffrage press and feminist periodicals, apart from Michelle Tusan's full-length study of the "women's advocacy press," much of the work to date can be found in chapters and articles in a wide array of venues and contexts.³⁰

The purpose of this snapshot is to highlight both how much has been, and what remains to be, done in the field. James Curran refers to feminist media history as "the fastest growing version of media history" (2009). It is striking, given the scope and availability of both primary sources and critical studies, how little this work has been

integrated into mainstream media history. In part, the focus on 'gender' which characterizes this research has limited its reception and impact. Rather than "challeng[ing] and destabiliz[ing] established disciplinary premises . . . without offering synthesis or easy resolution" as the contradictory logic of the supplement proposes, feminist media history has been politely acknowledged and mainly relegated to the concerns of women's history.³¹ The reasons for this derive both from the ways in which some feminist analyses frame their objects of inquiry and from more general assumptions about the relationship between 'gender' and 'feminism.'

In their discussion of alternative media in the context of media history, James Hamilton and Chris Atton help to shed light on the first problem. They consider some of the ways in which the study and practice of alternative media become inadvertently circumscribed, including what they term a "separatist agenda" which involves "celebrating the simple presence of newspapers, magazines, and other media produced by marginalized or dissenting groups" (123). In addition to this "separatist" or "subcultural" interpretative framework, they identify the "vanguard assumptions" informing the study of some of these media: "Studies of the black press, the feminist press, and others focus on publishers, publications, and content while leaving broader questions about the relationships with society, readers, and their lives largely unaddressed" (124). These pitfalls are often the understandable product of 'recovery' work in any field, even if subsequent critical research is indebted to this process.

Michelle Tusan's study of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century women's advocacy press is a case in point. Tusan covers the widest range of periodicals to be found in a single study, but the repeated stress on "modern women's political culture," "woman-identified spaces," and the "making of a female political subject" highlight the shortcomings of focusing too closely on a feminist public sphere. The impulse to gather these developments into a cohesive (often celebratory) narrative or "story" has consequences. Not only does it collapse crucial distinctions and contradictions between the publications and the individuals and organizations who produced them, but it also serves to circumscribe the implications and relevance of these media to their broader contexts and readerships. As Joan Scott suggests, "the response of most nonfeminist historians has been acknowledgment and then separation or dismissal" (1999: 30). She also foregrounds the role of methodological questions when she notes that "the discrepancy between the high quality of recent work in women's history and its continuing marginal status

in the field as a whole ... points up the limits of descriptive approaches that do not address dominant disciplinary concepts, or at least that do not address these concepts in terms that can shake their power and perhaps transform them" (1999: 30).

Another major problem lies in the assumptions about the limited, reductive nature of 'gender' as an interpretive framework. The problem works in different ways. First, while feminist media history may privilege 'gender' as a category of analysis, this is not the same thing as looking exclusively at 'women' or being relevant only to 'half of the population.' Margaret Beetham's study of nineteenth-century women's magazines makes a major contribution to media history because the analysis of femininity is developed in relation to shifting definitions of masculinity and class structures in the period (Beetham 1996). It positions these publications in the relationship between the politics of gender formation and developments in the institutions of print, offering valuable insights into the history of advertising and journalism (DiCenzo 2004: 46). A similar case could be made for Fraser, Green, and Johnston who, in their study of gender and the Victorian periodical, deal with the Victorians' awareness of the role of the periodical press and they focus on the periodical as "a textual field through which to engage with the production of discourse" (16). Critical approaches to gender have, of course, also been central to studies of masculinities, but this work has made little headway in press history. The broader implications of these studies have not been absorbed to the extent they deserve and are often understood simply as analyses of the representations of gender.

The other dimension to this problem involves the distinction between 'gender' as a basis for analysis and 'feminism' as a project (linked here to early women's social movements). Feminism may rely on a gendered analysis of institutions and practices, but its goals were directed at changing society, committed to a comprehensive program of change. As Teresa Billington-Greig proclaimed: "Feminism would re-make society, would set up new standards, would destroy old customs, would establish a new morality. It frankly sets out to do great deeds of destruction and reconstruction. It asks a new world" (1911: 227). In his discussion of the value of a cultural perspective on media and communication, James Hamilton notes that we must not limit the role of alternative media to "a negative exercise of unmasking a dominant ideology" and reminds us of the "need not just for critique but for the creative, positive action of proposing, debating, and putting into practice new kinds of social relationships and, ultimately, a new social order" (2000: 363). Early feminisms were not simply reactive; individuals and

organizations necessarily exposed the inequities and double-standards of prevailing social and political institutions, but they articulated a range of proactive agendas, with wide-reaching implications.

This recalls Cohen's and Arato's use of the contemporary feminist movement to illustrate their concept of dual politics. They argue two complementary orientations working at the same time: "In the case of feminism, the focus on overturning concrete forms of life based on male dominance and reinterpreting gender identities *complements* attempts to secure the influence of new, more egalitarian gender identities within the public spaces of civil and political society and to attain political inclusion on these terms" (our emphasis 548). They urge a productive reading of these complementary orientations, arguing against tendencies to read feminist politics as solely defensive or as 'particularist':

These ought not be taken as a sign of a withdrawal into communities organized around naturalistic categories of biology and sex. Quite the contrary. Nor are they simply reactive. Rather, these concerns focus on the normative presuppositions and institutional articulation of civil society. The feminist intervention constitutes a challenge to the particularist sexist norms and practices that dominate in both public and private spheres. It attempts to initiate and influence discourses on norms and identities throughout society. Such projects are universalist insofar as they challenge restrictions and inequalities in the communicative processes (in public and in private) that generate norms, interpret traditions, and construct identities.

(549)

These distinctions are as relevant historically as they are to contemporary social movements. In attempting to initiate and influence discourses, feminists were not just talking to one another.

The ubiquity of the 'woman question' in *public* debate invokes once again the work of press historians who focus on feminist writing in the established press (Brake, Caine, Hamilton, Onslow, Rosenberg). Their work offers compelling evidence for the widespread circulation and discussion of feminist issues, as well as the influence of the figures involved in these debates. Laurel Brake uses 'the sex' debates of 1889 to indicate the power of women's issues to attract readers; she examines how major reviews, such as the *Nineteenth Century*, *Fortnightly Review*, *Contemporary Review*, *National Review*, and the *Westminster Review*, participated in "a national and commercial debate about female suffrage" from different

political angles (2004: 66). She has also argued that even the most “cursory look” at the late nineteenth century “reveals the saturation of politics by gender issues of the day” and describes gender as “one of the defining variables in the claim of the press to the authority of governing” (2005: 218).

Similarly, Barbara Caine describes the ‘woman question’ as “a staple of nineteenth-century serious journals” (2001: 102), emphasizing the sheer volume of its discussion and maintains that feminist journals in the period “were neither the only nor the most significant avenue for nineteenth-century debate” (2001: 101).³² But even these kinds of sources have not had the impact one might expect. Barbara Caine asserts that “The extensive involvement of women writers in public debate throughout the nineteenth century has rarely been recognized, despite the fact that they addressed almost every imaginable social and political subject” (2001: 99). She identifies a range of prominent feminist theorists and activists (including Harriet Martineau, Millicent Garrett Fawcett, and Josephine Butler) to underscore the fact that they “contributed to the broad arguments surrounding the ‘woman question,’ but they connected that question with other intellectual currents and they also brought women’s voices to bear on many different social, political and cultural questions” (2001: 100). In spite of the case these critics make, their findings are more likely to be taken up in the context of women’s history than absorbed by mainstream media history. But taken together, with studies of the specialist press, they rewrite the history of the position and impact of feminism in these years and reinforce the fact that interventions were made on a range of fronts.

The impact of feminist media research

In these ways, much feminist media history remains circumscribed in the wider field, not always or necessarily seen as pertaining directly to other currents of press history. The early feminist press and the research about it have been conspicuously absent, until very recently, in British press history, particularly in the narratives of the rise and fall of the radical/popular/political presses.³³ This is due primarily to the fact that these accounts focus on class, rather than gender, politics. For instance, all of the functions Curran and Seaton attribute to early radical presses (namely, how they helped build wider support, their effectiveness “in strengthening a growing consciousness of class and unifying disparate elements” through national coverage, how they were able to “dispel the collective lack of confidence that inhibited working-class resistance,”

to “foster an alternative value system” and radicalize by “developing a more sophisticated political analysis”) are all applicable to the feminist press much later, if we are willing to substitute references to class with references to gender (Curran and Seaton 1991: 18–32). As noted earlier, Brian Harrison is one of the only historians to include a substantial consideration of the women’s suffrage press as part of a discussion of the relationship between the press and reform movements. He is critical of approaches which underestimate “the extent of the press freedom which is feasible under competitive proprietorship at any time” (261). Suffrage periodicals and feminist reviews force a reconsideration of the assumptions about what is generally accepted as the decline of a radical press by the end of the nineteenth century, due to the increased costs of newspaper ownership and the subsequent reliance on advertising as a source of revenue.

The ability and willingness to account for a wider range of publications and print practices is often complicated by frames of reference and terminology.³⁴ For instance, it may seem at times that general assumptions about developments in the press presuppose large circulation dailies for evidence, but much press history points to and relies on small-circulation or obscure publications and periodicals to make its case. There has been a greater tendency on the part of researchers of women’s and feminist media to try to link their sources to more familiar mainstream and specialist press titles (in terms of genres and debates). This is an inevitable strategy in the process of legitimizing and contextualizing lesser known or marginalized publications. But these strategies are either not engaged in enough or not recognized when they are. Curran claims that “Feminist history focuses on women, and largely excludes one half of the population (as does most media history, the other way around)” (2002a: 149). These perceptions, even if they are in the process of revision, suggest that the rich and varied work produced to date has been seen as too particularistic to inform and change the assumptions and narratives at work in the wider field – at least for some.

New directions

There are signs that feminist media analysis and early feminist media are being incorporated into more generalist studies; these measures are limited, sometimes tentative, and recent. Martin Conboy notes that “journalism tends to present itself as either being about men, for men and by men or only of relevance to women when dealing with parochial and gender-restricted issues in women’s magazines” (2004: 128). The chapter

in his critical history of journalism offers an overview of women's contributions from the seventeenth century to the present day. Curran's identification of a "feminist narrative" as one of the major approaches informing British media history has been especially influential (2002a, 2002b) and Michael Bailey's recent collection demonstrates some of the ways in which that particular formulation has been interpreted and incorporated into press history (2009). We see similar strategies of inclusion in anthologies or readers such as Andrew King and John Plunkett's collection of Victorian print media, even if the selections do not represent the range of perspectives available at the time (2005).³⁵

These attempts to account for early examples of women's interventions into journalism or debates about the press should be distinguished from studies that incorporate the concerns and methodologies of feminist research. Adrian Bingham's analysis of gender discourse in the popular press in the interwar years is a useful case in point. Bingham reassesses the dismissive attitudes toward popular dailies as a genre through an examination of the fluid and varied treatment of femininity and masculinity in the pages of the popular press, thereby challenging assumptions about its reactionary stance. He underscores the extent to which feminism had already had a major impact and feminist attitudes had become more commonly accepted, as evidenced through popular discourse (8).

Less conspicuous are the kinds of studies that include the feminist and suffrage press as a given in the landscape of early politicized media. Ian Christopher Fletcher's analysis of press coverage of the Criminal Amendment Act of 1912 is a noteworthy example because it treats the women's movement as part of what he terms the plural Edwardian left. He includes the suffrage press in a discussion of the radical press of the period (89) and treats suffragists, socialists, and laborists as part of a "protest cycle" (91). Fletcher's analysis takes for granted that feminist perspectives constituted an integral part of the radical press's critique of parliament at the time, arguing that "the radical press is a useful optic for tracking the effort to forge a chain of equivalence between the labour and women's movements" (113). He also reveals the limits and oversights of these discourses as they pertain to nation and race.

These integrated approaches are important because they recognize the points of intersection between social movements and political/radical presses at the time and the degree to which feminist analysis was fundamentally implicated in these public debates. Feminist publications were after all sources of 'news' for their readers; by mediating current events and information, they necessarily contributed to debates about a wide

range of political struggles, from a variety of ideological perspectives. They were not politically homogeneous.

Feminist publications were also, on a reflexive level, directly involved in the self-conscious debates about the power and influence of the 'press' itself. These debates have generated much interest in press history and serve as a good example of an area that would benefit from taking account of early feminist perspectives on the influence and practices of what was often termed the 'Public Press.' For instance, Aled Jones (1996) and Mark Hampton (2004) have made important contributions to the recovery and analysis of debates about the press. However, they ignore the ways in which women's publications intervened in overt ways by offering their own assessments and producing their own alternative media in order to publicize perspectives that were systematically excluded or undervalued in the mainstream press.³⁶ These are not mere oversights. The inclusion of these kinds of sources calls into question the arguments themselves, such as Hampton's claims about "the long decline of the educational ideal of the press" (14). While he briefly acknowledges that the political Left continued to see the press as an arena of potentially rational political discussion (132), he does not take up the implications of social movements and their media which present obvious challenges and complicate the relationship between the "educational" and "representative" ideals he attempts to trace.³⁷

The feminist press and alternative media

The problem of omissions and the need to challenge assumptions recalls one of the claims of our Introduction – where media historians look, what they rely on, and the questions they ask have important implications for what they find. The study of alternative media (which includes the media of social movements) is predicated on media forms produced outside of the usual mass, commercial practices. This may be one reason why alternative media (in their radical and cultural forms) are rarely accounted for in histories of mainstream or dominant media and communications (Atton 2002: 7).

Using the framework of alternative media research serves to both situate and reassess the early feminist media. Tusan suggests in the conclusion to her book that it "has been the story of a series of failed experiments" because the "inability of advocacy journalism to succeed in the marketplace has historically ensured the limited success of papers that represent radical ideas" (243). It has always been a mistake to measure the impact of publications on the basis of commercial success,

profitability, circulation, or longevity – the short sharp shock of the *Freewoman* is a good example. James Hamilton identifies the “inability to escape the seeming tradeoff between political effectiveness and organizational or cultural massification” as one of the problems with how alternative media have been theorized (2000: 358). He suggests the need to conceptualize alternative media in a way that “instead of leading to efforts to build mirror images of mainstream media organizations with all their limitations, makes possible greater and more meaningful participation in debates about the nature and direction of... society” (2000: 359). Early social movement media did not necessarily seek to be profitable. In fact, some early publications were overtly critical of commercial imperatives. Amelia Lewis, in an editorial in *Woman*, argued:

The usual way of judging new periodicals is to see whether they will stand the commercial test or not, or whether they have mighty names and wealthy owners to back them. Is this not somewhat short-sighted? Should literature not have a rallying point of its own, and take a higher stand than the mere possibility whether someone is inclined to drown an immense sum of advertisement before ‘*a thing can take?*’

(10 Feb 1872: 50)

Suffrage organizations could rely on their own infrastructure (such as printing presses and volunteer labor) and writers, while some independent organs had benefactors willing to finance or subsidize them (see Doughan and Sanchez xiv).

Social movement media are driven by different motives and exercise greater flexibility at the levels of production. Suffrage periodicals and feminist reviews were part of a conscious campaign of counterinformation designed to influence public opinion. They constitute early examples of radical alternative media as Chris Atton (2002) and John Downing (2001) define them, serving the same functions then as the media of social movements now. In his focus on content, Atton argues that alternative media not only critique mass media news, but more importantly they provide their “own construction of news, based on alternative values and frameworks... alternative media provide information and interpretations of the world which we might not otherwise see and information about the world that we simply will not find anywhere else” (2002: 10, 12). Downing reminds us that “context and consequences” must ultimately determine how one defines the ‘radical’

dimension of alternative media: “What might abstractly seem a bland and low-key instance could, in a given context, be wielding a hammer blow at some orthodoxy” (2001: x).

The suffrage press has been discussed as alternative media by feminist media scholars interested in the history of women in journalism (Chambers et al. 2004; Steiner 1992). Tracing the entry of women into the profession of journalism and the institutions of print necessarily involves looking beyond the mainstream, commercial press. The options available for early women journalists were limited. Chambers et al. acknowledge that women journalists were often “confined to the marginal areas of news – fashion, domestic issues and . . . ‘society news’” (2004: 15–16). Alternative media provided opportunities to circumvent the professional restrictions imposed on women on the one hand, and to mediate issues in feminist terms by writing for or producing their own journals, on the other. This likely accounts for why Barbara Onslow’s analysis of the women’s reform press in the nineteenth century focuses in part on how it drew individuals into journalism and provided a platform for the expression of feminist views (159).

Downing claims that radical alternative media serve two main purposes: “(a) to express opposition vertically from subordinate quarters directly at the power structure and against its behaviour; (b) to build support, solidarity, and networking laterally against policies or even against the very survival of the power structure” (2001: xi). While most critics acknowledge both functions, the emphasis in accounts of feminist media has revolved around the second function, the one most directly related to the ways in which social movements constitute alternative public spheres. This emphasis has obscured the active forms of external engagement so central to how movements communicate their analyses and participate in public discourses. Leonor Camauër identifies this problem in the context of contemporary women’s movements, noting that the external, publicist orientation is the area most neglected (165). She suggests that an analysis of the publicist practices of internally diverse movements should include an association’s own media, its “media inputs” (interaction with dominant media such as letters to the editor) and its dissemination practices (165).

The significance of early feminist media

As feminist media and communications historians have been asserting for a long time, there is much to learn from an examination of the production, dissemination, and reception of early feminist media.

We would like to posit three broad areas relevant to the selection of periodicals in Part II. The first is what the suffrage press and feminist reviews tell us about the history and impact of women's movements in the period. At the simplest level, print media serve as public records or evidence of a movement. Sarah Dredge says of the *English Woman's Journal* (1858–64) that while it “by no means stands as the apogee of feminist activity in the period,” nevertheless “its establishment, editorial practices, scope, deficiencies and struggles, and its writings, are themselves indicative of the women's movement at large, and its place in Victorian society” (133). In a more general sense, Johnston and Klandermans argue that the “verbal and textual production [generated by movements] constitute an important set of data for investigating a movement's cultural work” (1995: 12). These documents are one of the most important means by which we can access and reconstruct how feminists framed their critique of existing conditions and communicated their programs for change.

Secondly, these publications serve as important sources of news in historical terms. They covered current events and political affairs, nationally and internationally, ranging from the sinking of the *Titanic* to Irish Home Rule. They also mediated culture from a feminist perspective. Often ignored in the fields of arts, theatre, and literary history is the wealth of material contained in the pages of the women's periodical press. The interpretive frameworks offered by different feminist media need to be read alongside other radical perspectives to build a more complex picture of public debates, as Fletcher demonstrates in his analysis of “opposition by journalism” in the Edwardian socialist and feminist press (2006).

Thirdly, feminist media are important to a comprehensive history of the press. Because of their self-conscious positioning outside the sphere of media privilege, these publications engaged in a critique of the ‘Press’ as a powerful, influential, and exclusionary institution. In this sense they provide a record of the shifting perceptions of the Press and print media as a field of contention in these years. They certainly expose the unreliability of the mainstream press as a source for understanding early reform movements and encourage a more fluid approach to the relationships among different sectors and genres of print media.

The tendency to separate and categorize – while useful in isolating objects of study – has served to obscure the points of overlap shared by different kinds of media. At the level of content, the implications of studies by Margaret Beetham (1996), Adrian Bingham (2004), and Fiona Hackney (2008) serve as an example here. Dealing with

different periods and popular genres, they demonstrate how even the more overtly 'domestic' or 'feminine' magazines, journals, or features of dailies operated in more nuanced and sometimes contradictory ways than is often assumed. They reveal the ways in which the woman question or feminist ideas had been absorbed more widely and had popular appeal. At the level of genre, Laurel Brake (2001) complicates any simple assumptions we might have about the relationship between book publishing and the newspaper and periodical press. R. A. Scott-James, in *The Influence of the Press* (1913), suggests "Every journal is like a wire carrying a psychological current which winds its way intricately across and through the country, and it is continually crossed and recrossed by thousands of other wires" (215). Terms such as 'alternative,' 'advocacy,' 'popular,' 'mainstream,' 'established,' and so on reinforce distinctions and patterns, but in practice these areas influenced one another through formats, news sources, and personnel who straddled different sectors at the same time.³⁸

Part I has provided an opportunity to explore some key theoretical, historical, and methodological issues related to feminist media history and the media of social movements more generally. Part II consists of three case studies based on original, empirical research, designed to offer detailed analyses of periodicals which represent diverging ideological positions and genres. We attempt to demonstrate how they participated in public debate and expanded the discursive arena, both in terms of the new set of issues they brought to bear on public discourse, in addition to commenting, from different feminist perspectives, on political developments of the day.

Part II

The Case Studies

Introduction

Having situated feminist and suffrage periodicals in a broader context, we will examine them on two levels. First, they functioned in important ways internally within the suffrage movement, within specific groups and organizations, as vehicles for identity formation and for mobilizing collective action, and their role in this internal dynamic was complicated by the factionalism of the movement. Secondly, they engaged with other publications and participated in public debates, so it is important to examine their public, external, interactive, and interventionist function. It is often this attempt to address a wider public that is most obscured in accounts of the feminist press as a separate or specialist press. This publicist orientation actually contributed to the 'expansion of the discursive arena' and forced a new set of issues into public debate. In addition, they provided an opportunity to comment, from different perspectives, on events and political developments of the day. By stressing these aspects of the publicist orientation of the early feminist press, we hope to demonstrate that these publications constituted an integral part of (and need to be integrated into) the broader history of the 'public' and the 'press.'

The reality is that the closer you look, the more difficult it is to generalize about the publications themselves, the feminisms they articulate, and the readerships they tried to reach. While it is difficult to measure or make claims about what these papers actually achieved, it is possible to examine how they framed their goals (what the papers themselves claim to set out to do and why) and to situate them in the context of wider debates about the nature and influence of the press at the time. Closer examination also reveals that they did not remain static. The issue of change over time is important here – many of the periodicals changed and the very reductive and summary approaches in

the scholarship we often have to rely on do not capture these transformations and the reasons for them. Attention to the actual 'letter press' of these publications is necessary to understanding them in substantive terms and to dispelling generalizations about them. Martin Conboy criticizes the tendency in histories of newspapers to show "very little regard for the social specifics of their language" and to assume that "the language that they employ is a rather static commodity in the service of the dynamics of life outside their pages" (2010: 3). We hope to demonstrate, by letting these periodicals speak for themselves, the compelling and direct terms in which they addressed and challenged their different readerships. But methodologically, this presents the practical problem of negotiating the sheer quantity of material, at the same time as striking a balance between the general and the specific.

The case studies rely on the suffrage campaign as a point of reference, even though we are not looking at suffrage journals exclusively. While this may seem to contribute to the privileging of the suffrage campaign in feminist history, our purpose is specific, strategic, and not intended to suggest that this was the only or most important sphere of activity. We are under no illusions about the fact that the vote represented, for many reformers at the time, a very limited measure in advancing women's rights. In fact part of the point of looking at the periodicals is to indicate how they reveal and promote a wide variety of perspectives and rely on complex networks of women's political activities at the time. Stanley and Morley encourage anyone who thinks that suffragist activists were only interested in the vote to read the minutiae of suffrage newspapers to find women whose political histories overlapped several feminist organizations (85). Even in the already seemingly saturated field of suffrage studies, it is still possible to offer a new perspective by focusing on the movement's media, serving to underscore Sandra Holton's claim that there seems never to be a "last word" on the history of the women's suffrage movement (1996: 249).

The case studies cover a range of publications. The first examines official organs (most overtly emanating from the suffrage campaign) which offer a point of entry into the divisions and debates both within the movement and between it and the wider public, revealing how these were expressed, communicated, circulated, and managed. The second focuses on the much neglected *Englishwoman*, a monthly review associated with one of the main suffrage organizations, but which positioned itself beyond the day-to-day activities of the campaign. The final case study examines the well-known *Freewoman*, an important feminist

journal which serves as perhaps the best example of “feminism as an identity formulated in defiance of suffragism” (Delap 2007).

The following chapters are not based on a unified approach, but they share an interest in revealing how the periodicals offered a ‘feminist’ lens on the world. The concerns include how they framed issues, reported on developments, made appeals, allowed and encouraged participation (through contributions and correspondence sections), selected and highlighted aspects of culture (books, theatre, art reviews), and how they monitored, and related to, the mainstream media of the time. Given the sheer volume of material involved, it is impossible to be comprehensive.³⁹ But we can offer readers a more concrete sense of the content and strategies of these journals than is usually attempted. Ragnild Nessheim complains that “Almost without exception, authors of books about press and politics quote very sparingly from the letterpress of newspapers... The reader learns what individuals papers said and stood for, not from the horse’s mouth (i.e., the letterpress of the papers themselves) but from the press historian’s indirect rendering of editorial content” (16–17). Herein lies the value of case studies as a dimension of our work.

These case studies will necessarily raise different kinds of issues and rely on different forms and availability of evidence. In the case of suffrage organs such as *Votes for Women* and the *Common Cause*, and an independent journal such as the *Freewoman*, we have been able to take more for granted, given the status of these titles in various bodies of scholarship. The *Englishwoman*, however, has presented a very different set of problems, given the dearth of even basic information about this substantial publication. As a result, the case study of the *Englishwoman* is designed to provide a more comprehensive account than has been available to date. In addition to this exercise in recovery, the case study works to locate its role in suffrage and feminist debates. These case studies constitute a response to the tendency to homogenize and dismiss the women’s press in these years, or to see its concerns as circumscribed and limited. But they also demonstrate different modes of writing about periodicals, reflecting our interests and approaches as media historians. It is our hope that, as case studies, they will offer frameworks which will prove useful to other researchers and students in the examination of periodicals beyond the scope of this book – particularly those beyond the English and London-centric basis of our selection.

1

Unity and Dissent: Official Organs of the Suffrage Campaign

Maria DiCenzo

Society is grouped by the Press in many ways. It divides it by strange untraceable lines into communities of individuals... But journalism not only groups society... it also promotes social action by presenting information or opinion which is the necessary basis of action. It serves to link together the members of each group, and enables them to co-operate.

(R. A. Scott-James, *The Influence of the Press*, 1913: 208)

The Press of the country, with very few exceptions, contributed largely to our difficulties, by advertising every outrage and by failing almost altogether to report us.... It will be impossible for any future historian to write an adequate account of the Suffrage movement by reference only to the public Press. The censorship was extreme and grotesque.

(Helena Swanwick, *I Have Been Young*, 1935: 221)

News is a window on the world... the news aims to tell us what we want to know, need to know, and should know.... But, like any frame that delineates a world, the news frame may be considered problematic. The view through a window depends upon whether the window is large or small, has many panes or few, whether the glass is opaque or clear, whether the window faces a street or backyard. The unfolding scene also depends upon where one stands...

(Gaye Tuchman 1978: 1)

The Women's Coronation Procession of 17 June 1911 saw an estimated 40,000 women suffragists, marching together through the streets of London. Evelyn Sharp described it as "greater... than any national

assembly of people that a common cause has ever called together," stressing that "the greatness of it depended not so much upon its numbers, but rather upon its representative character and its unanimity":

Never before have Militant Suffragists and Constitutional Suffragists, Liberal, Conservative and Socialistic women, Anglicans, Catholics and Nonconformists, rich and poor, leisured women and workers, consented to forget the smaller differences that usually divide them, for the sake of showing that they were at one in demanding that much bigger thing – liberty for half the human race.

(*Votes for Women*, 23 June 1911: 627)

The intended impact was predicated on the event as a grand display of unity – a unified front was, after all, crucial to legitimating the cause at the national level. But the reality by 1911 was more complicated, as Sharp's catalog of participants only serves to underscore. The suffrage campaign faced a dilemma all too common to social movements before and after it: while a broadly based movement – clear and strong in purpose – was the key to gaining public and government support, social movements are almost invariably complex and divided entities. This was exacerbated in the case of the British campaign by its sheer duration. The splits and conflicts among organizations were played out in print in ways that often go unacknowledged. But the fact that unity and the attempt to suppress internal criticism became such an issue and posed a threat to securing public support must inform how we read the official organs of suffrage organizations which proliferated before and during World War I.

Suffrage periodicals played an increasingly strategic role in how rival organizations communicated and managed their differences in terms of both their memberships and the wider public – a public which included sympathizers and opponents alike. The proliferation of official organs after 1907 indicated not just a growing movement, but also a changing and diversified movement. This case study explores how official organs negotiated the tension between the need for a coherent movement and the reality of its factionalism. It offers an overview of the genre of the 'official organ,' its emergence and development in the suffrage movement, with a particular focus on the links between movement media and the growing divisions and conflicts in the movement after 1907. The final section is devoted to an analysis of a selection of key publications (*Votes for Women*, the *Anti-Suffrage Review*, the *Common Cause*, and the *Vote*) and their coverage of the January 1910 general election

to illustrate different approaches to the framing and interpretation of events for a range of readerships. Then, as now, media played an important role in constructing and communicating competing versions of social and political change.

“Causy papers”: The uses and abuses of official organs

Expounding the need for independent weekly papers as the means “to correct the suppressions, distortions, exaggerations and inventions of the daily Press,” Christabel Pankhurst claimed: “There is, as there has always been, a certain prejudice against propaganda or ‘causy’ papers” (*Suffragette*, 17 Apr 1914: 5). Their status in later scholarship would change very little. What I am referring to as official organs have been variously termed: pressure-group periodicals, publications of special interest groups, special periodicals, campaign journals, and suffrage newspapers. These labels distinguish these publications from general feminist journals or reviews, as well as from commercial magazines and the mainstream or public Press of the day.

Official organs, the most obvious example of organizationally based movement media, remain perhaps the most underestimated (in terms of scope and significance) and undervalued of early journalistic genres. The dismissive treatment is largely the result of assuming they fulfilled a solely propagandist function or that they represented little more than newsletters for league activities. Even if editors at the time expressed frustration with the limited space allowed by suffrage periodicals for an in-depth discussion of issues, they remained determined to address a wide range of social, political, economic, and cultural issues.

While historians of the movement draw on the official organs as evidence, there is often no attempt to foreground the suffrage press and to consider the implications of these sources – as sources – and what they represented at the time in terms of vehicles for competing groups and ideas. So they are often taken at face value without accounting for the strategic functions of movement media, or the fact that publications might operate as sites of struggle within and between movement organizations. Even when they are approached as objects in their own right by media historians, they tend to be considered in generic terms, or as examples of differing ideological tendencies or positions within the larger movement. They are rarely analyzed in relational terms – namely, read in relation to one another and other publications that engaged with them directly. This is all the more surprising when we consider how much attention has been paid to the various organizations or

leagues. The conflicting ways in which suffrage organizations framed their positions, appealed to or mobilized supporters, and engaged in forms of collective action not only created the need for specialized media, but they should inform how we understand and use those media now.

By their very definition, official organs provide information about the organizations that produce them. But what we recover by examining these documents is only, in part, what the leaders and representatives believed; the ideas and positions expressed in official organs were also (even if only occasionally) what they thought would be expedient or appropriate, given the limits of expression and prevailing attitudes at a given time. Discrepancies between leadership and rank-and-file, or between public statements and privately held views, are often only apparent by means of sources such as diaries, memoirs, correspondence, league minutes, or dissident writings. The fact that feminists framed their claims and demands in strategic ways is evident as early as the nineteenth century, as Jane Rendall demonstrates in her analysis of the 'languages' of early suffragists (1994) or later in Christine Bolt's analysis of the "ideas" of British suffragism (2000). Teresa Billington-Greig is an example of a dissident who would eventually publish her criticisms of the movement and of the Women's Freedom League's refusal to criticize the WSPU publically (1911b: 173). Strategic framing and forms of self-censorship reinforce the extent to which movement media were intended for (and assumed to be read by) a wider readership outside the movement. What we recover, then, are the official, public debates and modes of self-representation – the language and terms they used to describe themselves and their goals in order to gain support and counter the claims of their opponents.

As a genre or type of publication, official organs of the suffrage movement are part of a long tradition which includes the Chartist, socialist, labor, and radical presses of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. All of these movements were devoted to electoral as well as more general social and political reforms. In terms of objectives and formal features, it could be argued that the suffrage press was derivative; rather than inventing new forms, organizations drew on an established tradition of using print media to articulate and circulate ideas, in the form of weekly or monthly periodicals, as well as pamphlets and books. Brian Harrison suggests that the women's suffrage movement learned much from labor and socialist societies about promotional strategies, ranging from the use of street sellers to street spectacles (280). It is not surprising that they drew from the labor press which, according to Deian Hopkin, underwent significant growth in the same period, between 1890–1910

(1978: 295), since leading figures as well as supporters of suffrage had been or continued to be involved with the labor movement. These factors, in addition to over 50 years of journalism by women in the feminist press and a wide range of women's commercial magazines, meant that suffrage organizations had many useful models to turn to and experience to draw from, so that starting their own papers was a logical, predictable step.

Women reformers shared the same belief as socialists and radicals "in the power of the press to influence politics" (Hopkin 1978: 294), and they found themselves in a similar position in relation to what they referred to as the 'Public Press' of the day. Hopkin outlines the conscious terms in which socialist papers countered the hostility of mainstream dailies or "capitalist organs" toward the labor movement and notes that "The possession of a paper was regarded as indispensable... Virtually every socialist group established in Britain after 1880 eventually launched its own official organ" (298). They also operated in the context of an evolving and increasingly diversified movement, in which the proliferation of papers was a result of political fragmentation and a lack of co-operation within the larger movement (Hopkin 1978, 1985). Hopkin portrays this fragmentation as detrimental (never as positive), noting that socialists at the time believed it diluted the cause. Michael Harris and Alan Lee identify the processes of "specialization" (in terms of targeting audiences) and "diversification" (in terms of the content of a publication in order to broaden its appeal) as a development in the late nineteenth-century press (1986: 109–10). In the case of pressure-group periodicals, these processes may have worked to spread resources thinner, but they were also indicators of the stratification of issues and their relationships to a growing number of politicized constituencies.

There has been more emphasis in the accounts of early left-wing and feminist presses on their struggle for financial survival, or on their general features, than on what they tried to deal with on a weekly or monthly basis. The fact is that individuals and groups of all stripes continued to produce their own papers in spite of the financial risks. Women reformers were making deliberate choices to enter the media arena. They also participated directly in larger debates about the specialization of the press and relative merits of the 'dedicated' vs. the 'general' press (Onslow 174).

As early as 1864 Bessie Rayner Parkes made the case for "The Use of a Special Periodical" in a lead article for the newly amalgamated *Alexandra Magazine and Englishwoman's Journal*.⁴⁰ She acknowledged that

the “very considerable change...wrought in public opinion” was due to more than just the work of the *Englishwoman's Journal*, but nevertheless asserted: “that periodical [the *EJ*] threaded the separate parts of the movements, brought the thinkers and the workers together, and, though never distinguished for intellectual excellence, it preserved a uniform tone of serious and sensible discussion” (257). Assessing the venues available to the movement, she argued strongly in favour of the periodical over diffusing ideas through the general press, in spite of its higher circulation. She explained:

I am convinced there is something in a re-iterated effort which far outweighs the effect of the separate thoughts. It is not this or that number of a magazine, this or that article from a given pen, which does the work; it is partly the effect of repetition – line upon line – and partly the knowledge that there is in the world a distinct embodiment of certain principles.... it serves to sustain a great amount of scattered energy, and may be a rallying point of much value to the whole of the field...

(258)

Individual titles may have been short-lived, but the list of Langham Place journals suggests a persistent commitment to the ‘work’ of periodical production to advance the women’s movement. In her first editorial ‘Work We Have to Do,’ for the *Englishwoman's Review* in 1866, Jessie Boucherett expressed her hope that “this Review shall prove equally effective in calling the attention of the public to the wants and conditions of women... for we believe the favourable change of opinion, and more respectful tone with regard to women, which may be observed in the literature of the present day, to be in no small degree due to the influence of the *Englishwoman's Journal*” (4–5). They clearly believed these publications were making a difference.

This faith in the power of a separate press changed very little by the time Christabel was asserting the advantages of the ‘weekly paper’ and an ‘independent press’ in 1914 and new titles continued to appear during the war. Individual periodicals saw themselves as fulfilling important functions, one of the most important of which was providing coverage of events or information that the ‘Public Press’ wilfully ignored or refused to report. For instance, on 18 May 1906, the *Women's Tribune* self-consciously declared its arrival in the saturated print marketplace: “Another new paper! Hardly needed, some will say, when the dailies and weeklies and the monthlies jostle each other, overlay and smother

each other on the bookstalls" (3). But it did so with the conviction that it served an important purpose, assuming "No thoughtful woman can be satisfied with the position of women with regard to general journalism" and that a journal "which should express the not-flippant attitude of the very large number of women who are seeking in various ways to help in the general life of the community, and should offer an additional means of linking them together, is certainly called for" (3). It saw itself as working in solidarity with the "various periodicals emanating from societies, or devoted to some special line of advance" and encouraged women to "speak more and more emphatically... much speech is action" (3). In November of the same year, it was reissued as *Women & Progress*, this time criticizing the daily Press of suppressing facts, of being in "gross breach of faith with their readers," willing to "conceal or misrepresent what is going on" (1). This is only one example of a range of women's progressive periodicals (from the latter years of the nineteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth) founded for the purposes of counterinformation – to correct the distortions and omissions of the daily press.

Much was made in the *Common Cause*, *Votes for Women*, and the *Vote* of the press boycott of woman suffrage. A report in the *Common Cause* on "Suffrage Week in the Papers" in 1910 claimed,

Londoners who take their news from their papers would hardly be aware of what was going on under their noses. Again the papers have decided that the things they do not like shall not happen, and the two great meetings in the Albert Hall, to say nothing of the countless demonstrations all over the country in support of the Conciliation Bill, were passed over with the briefest notice or in total silence... we know of letters, pithy and signed by women of worth, which have been declined this week because they were in support of the Conciliation Bill.

(17 Nov 1910: 514)

Along with trying to boost sales of their own papers and attempting to insert letters and articles into other publications, one subscriber to the *Common Cause* suggested a more consumer-oriented response in her letter to the editor:

With regard to the Press boycott, why not organize a counter-boycott? All women (anyway, all working gentlewomen) take a daily paper. If all women refrained from taking any paper except the

'Manchester Guardian' say, surely the sale of daily papers would be affected to a certain extent. It would have to be a universal movement, organized by the Suffrage societies. I am sending a copy of this to the WFL and to the WSPU as in this case, at any rate, union is strength.

(20 Apr 1911)

The daily press mattered greatly to the movement and it served as the barometer of change.

It becomes clearer why suffrage organs shared an interest, as part of their informative and educational functions, in gaining the attention of the 'public.' Not enough attention has been paid to the variety of audiences pressure-group periodicals addressed; the tendency to focus on a 'separate press' that spoke to and for women has obscured how actively these publications sought to address a wider readership which included men. Harrison argues that pressure-group periodicals were aimed at "opinion-formers," stressing that their "influence radiated out far beyond their readership" (1982: 276). In a contemporary context, John Downing uses the example of international solidarity movements to indicate the multiple audiences implicated in movement media – the movement itself, opposition movements, and governments or elites with interests at stake. The contemporary mass media context he describes may differ from the early years of the twentieth century, but the analysis underscores the multiple addressees and potential listeners implicated at any one time (2003: 639). One need only see how often the *Anti-Suffrage Review* or monthly reviews like the *New Age* regularly cited suffrage organs and other feminist publications to appreciate how closely opponents and other observers monitored movement media.

The production and circulation of periodicals was a key element in a more comprehensive press campaign for many women's organizations. As early as the 1860s, the Langham Place group embarked on a larger press strategy which included placing letters, articles, and reports in as many newspapers and journals of opinion as possible, in order to increase public consciousness and to "convey the impression of a widespread movement" (Bostick 1980). This dual strategy of producing their own organs as well as infiltrating the mainstream Press remained a standard feature of suffrage organizations in the Edwardian years of the campaign who consciously engaged with the dailies through their "press work" and "press departments."⁴¹ While the relationship between these presses (and the constituencies they claimed to represent) was an

often hostile and adversarial one, at the same time, favourable coverage was seized up and regarded by women activists as a measure of their success and an indication of the effectiveness the movement was having in shifting public attitudes toward their campaign and the woman question more generally. This tension (even paradox) points to the degree of influence the mainstream press was credited with having, even though its status and reliability as a gauge of public opinion had been under attack since the nineteenth century. But this remains true even today, as Rucht notes in relation to contemporary social movement actors who seek positive coverage by the mass media because it has credibility and reaches broader audiences than they can do on their own (211).

The attempt to reach (and educate) readerships both inside and outside organizations proved a constant challenge for suffrage periodicals. They tried to supply everything from basic 'political literacy' and encouragement to compelling analyses of current affairs and major events.⁴² In 1910 *Common Cause* editor Helena Swanwick appealed to readers to understand these competing demands:

We would like the paper to meet the needs and wishes of many sorts of people. There is the old, convinced Suffragist, who is sick and tired of 'arguments' and who wants to have news to be kept abreast of the movement. There is the new convert, who is hungering for fresh reasons wherewith she may defeat the enemy in dialectics. There is the educated man or woman who wants special articles, and there is the illiterate, for whom we would like to cater. There is the secretary of the small society who wants the names of the local people and their speeches recorded, and there is the large body of the frivolous or the tired, who want 'something readable.'

(14 Apr 1910: 3)

It was difficult to work on so many levels at the same time. The multiple forms of address and the range of goals official organs set out to achieve require that we take into account a substantial sample before drawing conclusions about their content.

The emergence and proliferation of suffrage organs

In addition to the Langham Place journals, a growing number of women's progressive periodicals appeared in the nineteenth century, including titles such as: the *Victoria Magazine* 1863; the *Women's Penny*

Paper 1888 (later the *Woman's Herald*); Amelia Lewis's *Woman* 1872 and her *Woman's Opinion* 1874; *Shafts* 1892; and *Woman's Signal* 1894.⁴³ Included in this group are organizationally based periodicals such as the *Women's Gazette & Weekly News* 1888, organ of the Women's Liberal Federation. Many of these publications included reports about the suffrage campaign. Also significant, even if not suffrage related, are trade-based journals emerging mainly after the turn of the century. While their mandates and coverage varied, they assumed or actively promoted women's rights, especially as employees. Titles include *Women's Industrial News* 1895, *Woman Teacher* 1911, *Business Girl* 1912, *Humanity* 1913 ("Devoted to the Emancipation of sweated Female Workers"), *Woman Clerk* 1919, and *Woman Engineer* 1919. These kinds of publications often referred to themselves as 'organs' for these groups and have received little critical attention to date.⁴⁴

Suffrage organs per se were few and far between until after the turn of the century, the noteworthy exception being Lydia Becker's *Women's Suffrage Journal* (initially the *Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage Journal*) founded in 1870. Becker's aim with the first number was to "furnish a medium of communication" and to "extend to every isolated well-wisher the firm grasp of an outstretched hand, offering and seeking help" (1 Mar 1870: 1). Along with providing a record of the work of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, the journal provided detailed coverage of Parliamentary debates, legislative reform, and suffrage campaigns outside of Great Britain. As Audrey Kelly explains, the journal also covered a wide range of topics related to women, including domestic violence, poverty, and working conditions (40–1). It remains a key source for insights into the late nineteenth-century suffrage campaign. One example is Becker's coverage of the famous appeal against woman suffrage published in the *Nineteenth Century Review* in 1889. She interprets it at the time as "an indication of the strength of the movement in favour of the franchise, and of the apprehension of the opponents that the measure may soon become law" and explains the selection of signatures that would be part of the counterdeclaration published in the *Fortnightly Review* (1 July 1889). The journal ceased publication after Becker's death and the "Final and Memorial Number" in August 1890 announced the opening of a Women's Suffrage section in the *Englishwoman's Review*.

Except for some brief attempts to launch suffrage organs, the first viable campaign paper dealing with national organizations was *Women's Franchise*. Regarding itself as "the mother of Suffrage periodicals"

(9 Sept 1909: 769), it started life with the intention of offering a vehicle that all existing societies could contribute to, and to fill a void left by the cessation of earlier papers which publicized the movement, as it outlined in its preliminary issue:

Our readers will now for the first time, have an opportunity of hearing all sides of the question, the more so in that we have been fortunate enough to secure the enthusiastic co-operation of Societies, whose tactics differ, though all are working for the furtherance of what is, after all, their common object.

(27 June 1907: 1)

Initially it included the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), and the Men's League for Women's Suffrage. The evolving table of contents, in which leagues had their own sections with mastheads, indicated the changes occurring at the time. After the pages of the WSPU were replaced by the Women's Freedom League (WFL), the NUWSS withdrew its commitment of long-term support, deeming it impossible to share the space with a militant society and stating that the paper had ceased to represent all the suffrage societies. The proprietor John E. Francis regretted their decision claiming:

I believe it was never more necessary than now that the differing methods of societies working for the same end should be shown under one cover, so that the public may judge of the whole movement, and not be debarred from joining in it either by the militantism of the militants, or by the constitutionalism of the constitutionalists.

(21 Jan 1909: 355)

By September 1909, when the decision to discontinue the paper was finalized, the only consistent contributor, the Men's League for Women's Suffrage, expressed regrets at the paper's demise noting:

the splendid success of the Suffrage organs which have since appeared – *Votes for Women*, *The Common Cause*, *The Englishwoman* – and the probable success of the new organ of the WFL, make it unreasonable perhaps for us to deplore the fact that *Women's Franchise* has finished its work. And yet, we cannot but regret its disappearance.

Not only has it a special claim to our gratitude as the first of the Suffrage papers, but we shall miss it for another reason also In the beginning it symbolized the essential unity of the Suffrage Societies: it was the organ of the movement.

(9 Sept 1909: 769)

After *Women's Franchise*, the only long-running umbrella journal to include the leading British leagues was *Jus Suffragii* (1906–1929), organ of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Reports from the NUWSS, WSPU, and WFL appeared regularly under the heading “Great Britain.”

A number of suffrage organizations emerged in the years before and during the war. They ranged from conservative to socialist, patriotic to pacifist, constitutionalist to militant, and they included regional/national movements (Irish, Scottish, Welsh suffragists), denominational groups, men's leagues, and professional groups (artists, actresses, writers) – all working to distinguish themselves along particular lines and believing they had their contributions to make. Not all of them produced periodicals, but the years between 1907 and 1916 saw the highest growth in suffrage organs: *Votes for Women* 1907, *Anti-Suffrage Review* 1908, *Common Cause* 1909, *Vote* 1909, *Conservative & Unionist Women's Franchise Review* 1909, *Men's League for Women's Suffrage* 1909, *Church League for Women's Suffrage* 1912, *Suffragette* 1912 (which became *Britannia* 1915), *Irish Citizen* 1912, *Woman's Dreadnought* 1914, *Catholic Suffragist* 1915, and *Suffragette News Sheet* 1916.

The mandates of these official organs offer a sense of how each organization framed its particular project. William Gamson claims that movements always generate one or more collective action frames because:

They offer ways of understanding that imply the need for and desirability of some form of action. Movements may have internal battles over which particular frame will prevail or may offer several frames for different constituencies, but they all have in common the implication that those who share the frame can and should take action.

(1992: 7)

Positions ranged in terms of the political (and social) spectrum from *Woman's Dreadnought*, Organ of the East London Federation of Suffragettes (Sylvia Pankhurst's socialist paper, a no frills publication geared to poor and working women), to the *Conservative & Unionist*

Women's Franchise Review 1909, which restricted membership along party lines, opposed universal suffrage in any form and clearly drew on the ladies magazines of the period in its use of fashion plates and portraits. There were also several leagues with religious affiliations. The *Church League for Women's Suffrage* appealed to members of the Church of England to work for the cause not only through the familiar means of conferences, meetings, and the distribution of literature, but also through corporate devotions. In the first issue of the *Catholic Suffragist*, Alice Meynell claimed that "A Catholic suffragist woman is a suffragist on graver grounds and with weightier reasons than any other suffragist in England" (15 Jan 1915: 1). The Jewish League for Woman Suffrage formed in 1912 to "unite Jewish Suffragists of all shades of opinion" and described itself as "carry[ing] on propaganda on constitutional lines, parallel with those of the existing Church, Catholic, Free Church and Friends' Leagues" (R., A. J. 1913: 43).⁴⁵ It issued publications pertaining to its interests, but never produced an official organ of its own.

We can see how collective identity functioned as both instrument and goal as these papers not only invoked shared meanings and values, but also gave rise to new groupings. In the case of denominational feminisms, the merging of seemingly traditional contexts with new forms of activism had the potential to challenge existing definitions of those groups. Official organs were crucial to communicating organizational policies and approaches to political agitation. Benford uses the idea of "frame disputes" to describe the tendency toward disagreements over objectives, strategies, and tactics among organizations that otherwise share an overarching goal as a social movement. He distinguishes between diagnostic frames (how a group identifies a problem and attributes blame) and prognostic frames (a group's approach to how a problem is to be resolved, namely its strategies and tactics) (1993: 679). In the case of the suffrage campaign, the former involved *who* would get the vote, and the treatment of enfranchisement as a goal in itself or as a means to an end. But the major conflicts operated at the level of prognostic frames; so while the objectives of many of the organizations were similar, their methods of working toward them differed significantly. The formats and content of the official organs reflected the different values, styles, and means of the organizations that produced them, so their messages and approaches resonated with their readerships in different ways. The sheer diversity of leagues indicates the intricate network of social and political organizations and institutions the campaign had come to permeate and from which it could draw allies and provoke

adversaries. These papers became a way to assert their own positions and strategies, while also serving to intervene in the ways in which suffragists were being 'un' and 'mis' represented – even conflated – by the mainstream newspapers.

It would be misleading to suggest that members or readerships adhered exclusively to particular organizations. However difficult to enforce, some leagues tried to impose exclusionary membership practices, the main objections being membership in a political party or a militant suffrage society.⁴⁶ But the reality was very different and individuals belonged to more than one suffrage organization at a time, as well as more than one social movement at a time. Tierl Thompson's edited collection of the diaries and letters of two working women 1897–1917 offers a rare and fascinating glimpse into what multiple and overlapping forms of participation in the social, political and religious activities at the time could look like, even for two ordinary young women. They chronicle their reflections on and involvement in labor movement activities, church groups, political parties, and suffrage organizations, complicating our understanding of collective identities. They also document their reading in these years, which included contemporary novels, biographies, polemical works, and a host of periodicals from suffrage and labor movement organs to literary reviews, demonstrating how fluid the readerships for movement media could be.

Suffrage and its discontents: Internal conflict

The proliferation of suffrage papers reflected the growing diversity of opinion about goals and tactics and, in turn, the need to define organizational mandates and make them visible. Even if these groups shared similar goals, they distinguished themselves from one another within the movement and inevitably competed for financial and human resources. As Rucht explains, social movements are always "internally differentiated actors," "a collectivity with more or less distinct parts" (197). He uses the concept of "alliance" to describe the relationships among actors who might be seeking the same goal, because the term suggests an interest in co-operation at the same time that it implies difference and autonomy (202–3). Central to a consideration of the shifting relations among suffrage leagues, Rucht argues that alliances can involve cooperation/mutual support, competition, and conflict – with one type of relationship changing into another depending on circumstances. He stresses that all social movements are characterized by internal cleavages and reasons for conflicts arise from differences in ideology, priorities,

strategies, political styles, leadership rivalries, and struggles for hegemony (206). The analysis encourages a more complex approach to the interplay between *internal* movement dynamics and the more obvious adversarial relationships between movements and their opponents.

This larger or more detailed picture is captured through the framework of the multi-organizational field because it can account for a subtler range of relationships and for changes in those relations over time. The concept also presupposes modes of communication and persuasion:

Since beliefs can and will be disputed, the social construction of protest is a struggle among various actors to determine whose definition of the situation will prevail.... Because of the complex makeup of the multiorganizational field, individuals are objects of persuasive communications emanating not only from movement organization A but also from competing organization B, opponent C, countermovement D, and so on.

(Klandermans 1992: 100)

In the case of early social movements, these exchanges and contests were largely conducted through print media. Individuals and organizations worked to frame their grievances and challenge their rivals and opponents in ways that would resonate with, but more importantly *reach* potential supporters. Opponents or countermovements play a determining role in these processes because protesters are never simply asserting their own proposals for change – they are also forced to defend their claims and credibility. Hewitt and McCammon argue that countermovements constrain social movement framing and force protesters to challenge and reframe the claims of their opponents (154).

All comprehensive accounts of the suffrage movement from the late nineteenth century to 1918 face the uneasy task of documenting a complicated series of splits.⁴⁷ Sources of conflict ranged from radical vs. moderate positions to democratic vs. hierarchical modes of organization. There is often a discomfort on the part of feminist scholars to admit and explain divisiveness in the movement, perhaps because these undermine the notions of co-operation and collectivity we have come to regard as the ideal attributes of feminist organization. There is always the risk that such internal disputes only encourage or reinforce negative stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes toward women. As Paula Bartley notes, “the splits, particularly within the WSPU, are unsympathetically portrayed as female squabbles rather than as serious political differences between intelligent participants” (42). Sandra Holton uses the specific

case of militant suffragists to reveal the ways in which “masculinist histories” of the movement tend to portray women activists as “merely the vehicle of a historical process or victims of their own pathology, not activists seeking a clear degree of deliberation to revolutionise sexual relations” (2000: 24). What is significant is that the same fears existed at the time.

Divisions in early stages of the movement tended to be more about the specific goals of proposed legislation, most notably the exclusion of married women. Lydia Becker criticized what she called the “extreme left section” of the women’s suffrage party for breaking away and trying to eliminate both the disqualification of sex and that of marriage (*Women’s Suffrage Journal*, 1 Apr 1889: 48). The fact that this internal conflict over compromise measures had already been seized upon by opponents is suggested in her reference to a *Punch* cartoon in the same article. Anti-suffrage advocates exploited divisions between suffragists in order to discredit the movement as early as the anti-suffrage appeal in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1889, prompting Millicent Fawcett to respond: “It was natural that the subscribers to the Protest should make the most of a subject on which the supporters of women’s suffrage are not at one: viz. the admission or the exclusion of married women. The party in favour of an extension of the suffrage is seldom in absolute harmony upon the extent of the change they demand” (quoted in Nelson 32–3). Years later, the divisions between constitutionalists and militants would prove more difficult for Fawcett to negotiate. Ironically, the anti-suffragists later faced their own internal ideological and tactical divisions (Bush 2007: 191).

If internal divisions first arose over specific goals and demands, after 1905 the public controversies were related to tactics. As Millicent Fawcett claimed, “It is notorious that differences of method separate people from one another even more acutely than differences of aim” (1912: 61). For better or for worse (at the time and from the perspective of historians now) the WSPU, their campaign of militancy, and their paper *Votes for Women* represented a new direction and contributed to a redefinition of suffrage struggle. By forcing a redefinition of suffrage activism, they also forced divisions which were much more *public* than those in earlier phases of the movement. Teresa Billington-Greig would later criticize the WSPU for its blatant self-advertisement and willingness to exploit publicity, but their actions nevertheless managed to capture more media attention than ever before, ensuring that a much wider range of people were discussing the cause, if only to express outrage. Even NUWSS supporters admitted that,

in its initial stages, militancy had done much to raise the profile of the cause in the public eye and bolstered their membership (Holton 1986: 37–8). In her analysis of how women were recruited to feminism, Olive Banks also credits the militant campaign with creating widespread awareness of the issues, arguing that the response “turned the suffrage campaign from a small pressure group involved mainly in parliamentary lobbying into what was effectively a mass movement” (1986: 140).

Militancy served as the most visible form of protest the campaign had seen to date. As the WSPU’s repertoire of collective action expanded from acts of civil disobedience to more overt forms of violence, the dividing lines between the major organizations were sharpened and it became increasingly important for the NUWSS to distinguish and separate itself from mounting criticism directed at the militants. The NUWSS’s message of peaceful, constitutional change was getting lost in the din of militaristic language – fighting, battle cries, and crusades – emanating from the growing list of publications issued by the Woman’s Press and reaction to them.⁴⁸ By launching *Votes for Women* in 1907, the WSPU led the movement in having its own official organ through which it could reach, recruit, and organize members, in addition to providing “the means by which the leaders and pioneers in thought shall convey their ideas to the public” (13 Nov 1907: 13). Harold Smith suggests that the NUWSS created their own paper in 1909, the *Common Cause*, in response to their clash with the WSPU (1998: 20). This is consistent with Holton’s claim of growing discord between the two major organizations from 1909 onwards (1986: 31). But it remains curious that they waited until 1909 to finally launch an official organ, given their prominence and history as a national organization.⁴⁹ I believe that the need for their own paper was made all the more urgent by the formation of the Women’s National Anti-Suffrage League, who launched the *Anti-Suffrage Review* in 1908.

The formal organization of what was described by the *Times* as a “counter-movement” was itself a response to the growing momentum of the suffrage campaign (Bush 2007: 164).⁵⁰ Julia Bush examines the impact of escalating militancy in 1908–9 on the both sides of the cause. She indicates that militants and moderates both benefitted from increased media coverage (even as their leaderships were driven apart), but the controversy also generated “unprecedented levels of indignation among anti-suffrage women,” pushing the Women’s National Anti-Suffrage League (WNASL) “to move beyond private lobbying and published protest out into the propaganda mainstream” (2007: 166).

The first issue of the *Anti-Suffrage Review* makes this reaction to WSPU militancy quite clear:

No moment could be more favourable for the appearance of our little journal. The recent performances of the Women's Social and Political Union [the article provides a list] . . . have sent a shock of repulsion – a wave of angry laughter – through England, and are bringing recruits from all sides to the Anti-Suffrage League.

(Dec 1908: 1)

From the outset, the WNASL encouraged a focus on the WSPU, militancy, and “Suffragettes” because this served their purposes of discrediting the movement more effectively than criticism of constitutional suffragists. In fact, in the same first article, M. A. W. (Mary Ward) indicates that these outrages threatened even the NUWSS:

although the omens for our League are good, and the Suffragettes have been rapidly destroying all that generous respect for the cause and the advocates of woman suffrage, which the efforts of Mrs. Fawcett and many others have awakened even among those who could not agree with them, the peril is still great, and the League has its work before it! For in these days of wide publicity, any movement which takes to the streets, and gets something of a hold there . . . [gets] far more attention from a democracy than it gives to reformers who are law-abiding and self-controlled.

(Dec 1908: 1)

An organized and well-connected opposition made damage control all the more necessary, giving the NUWSS no choice but to enter the media fray. They had to assert their own platform and keep from being conflated with the WSPU in the public eye. As Bush notes, part of the antis' strategy was to “tar all suffragists with the militant brush” (166). The antis may have become a mutual joke for suffragists of all stripes, but they were able to mobilize their own networks and exploit the anti-suffrage sentiments of mainstream dailies to exert their influence, forcing suffragists to address their criticisms. By mounting their own publicity campaign to prove women did *not* want the vote, women anti-suffragists increased the pressure on suffragists to prove to the governing Liberals and the country that a ‘majority’ of women actually *did* want the vote.

The WNASL and the *Anti-Suffrage Review* represented both a problem and an opportunity – a vocal opponent on one hand, but a focus for ridicule and a source of solidarity for rival organizations on the other. Fawcett recounts the formation of the anti-suffrage society as providing an “immediate objective,” making it “obvious to all suffragists that they should turn their artillery on their opponents rather than on each other” (1912: 61). The general editor of *Women’s Franchise* reported the WNASL’s inaugural meeting with some excitement (“We firmly believe that this fresh opposition of a totally different character will prove... advantageous to us”) and looked forward to publishing their manifesto as soon as an authoritative version could be furnished (30 July 1908: 49). Also in the pages of *Women’s Franchise*, the NUWSS reviewed the first issue of the *Anti-Suffrage Review*. Helena Swanwick’s account is sharp and facetious, concluding: “Assertion without argument, ‘dim feeling’... an almost fantastic ignorance of life as it is for the majority, are the characteristics of this review, as of the movement of which it is the worthy mouthpiece” (7 Jan 1909: 334). She makes no reference to the journal’s attack on militancy or the WSPU, focusing instead on the reports of branch activities and speeches. A few months later, the first issue of the *Common Cause* addressed their opponents on the first page, thanking “Our Friends the Anti-Suffragists” (“no one piece of agitation has done us quite so much good as the anti-suffrage agitation”) (15 Apr 1909: 1). But conspicuous by its absence was any direct criticism of, or reference to, the WSPU. This may signal a deliberate strategy of evasion – a way of dealing with conflict by ignoring it, thereby manufacturing unity in the face of division. This is reinforced by the presence of activity reports from other organizations in the latter pages of the same first issue of the *Common Cause*, including the WSPU and the WFL (surprising given the NUWSS’s refusal to appear in the same pages as militant organizations in *Women’s Franchise*). These entries were likely submitted as copy by league secretaries and they were a standard feature of many of the official organs. The conclusion one could draw from this seeming contradiction is that the activity reports were tolerated because they did not deal with policy per se; they mainly reported on or listed upcoming meetings and events. The appearance of reports from a range of other suffrage organizations had the potential to reinforce the scope of the movement and to create a sense of cohesiveness and mutual support.

The WSPU’s attempts to capture and dominate the suffrage agenda through their protests, visibility, and publications served as a catalyst for rival organizations and opponents to make new efforts to enter the press arena.⁵¹ But militancy was not the only source of division. The

WFL was the first splinter group to form in reaction to the WSPU's leadership and organizational structure. Under the leadership of Charlotte Despard, Teresa Billington-Greig and Edith How Martyn in 1907, the WFL chose to define itself as a separate militant league, but operating along democratic lines. They initially published news of their activities in *Women's Franchise*, but it was clear by June 1909 that they would no longer have that space at their disposal. In September 1909, the WFL bid farewell to *Women's Franchise* and announced plans for their own new paper. They launched *The Vote* in October 1909. The split with the WSPU had been acrimonious, but the only reference to them in the first issue was to their "sister militant society" (30 Oct 1909). Like the *Common Cause*, the *Vote* seemed convinced it could break new ground and concentrated on promoting its own policies and strategies – in this case its own brand of militancy – without engaging in direct debate with other organizations.

In these ways, the proliferation of suffrage periodicals was driven by the evolving, complex dynamic of the movement itself and the attempts of particular organizations to appeal to their membership, potential recruits, and to the public more generally. This autonomy came at the expense of a comprehensive, cohesive movement, as the Men's League warned in relation to the demise of *Women's Franchise*:

With the foundation of a separate journal for each society, we are liable more and more to forget that we are all parts of the one whole, that each contributes something to the general progress, and that over and beyond the failures and successes of societies there is the great common goal of the freedom of women.

(9 Sept 1909: 769)

There is ample evidence to suggest that there was a tacit agreement to avoid attacking one another in the interests of the cause. Fawcett recalled "a most anxious time... when there seemed a danger that the suffrage cause might degenerate into futile quarreling among suffragists about the respective merits of their different methods, rather than develop into a larger, broader, and more widespread movement" but claims that "each group went on it own way" after "recognising fully all the acute differences which must exist between the advocates of revolutionary and constitutional methods" (1912: 61). In entering the media arena, these organizations united against their opponents, but tried to avoid open criticism of one another. For some, like Fawcett, it

was the sensible thing to do. For others, this strategy of evasion, even censorship, rankled.

Despite the reluctance to admit or openly address conflicts within the movement, they surfaced in a variety of ways. Suffrage organs and the groups they represented proved too restrictive for some, forcing them to leave and/or find other venues to express their views. We know about the attempts to suppress open criticism of rival organizations from sources such as letters, minutes, histories of the movement, and memoirs, as well as the more public criticisms of the tendency by dissident figures such as Teresa Billington-Greig. In 1911, after her resignation from the WFL, in a series of articles in *The New Age* (also published as a book, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Emancipation in a Hurry*), Billington-Greig produced one of the most scathing critiques of the suffrage movement, from someone 'inside' the movement. While the WSPU is the target of the most vitriolic attacks, no wing of the movement emerges unscathed. She attributes the failure of the WFL to its inability to capture public attention by setting itself apart from the WSPU. She claims that the WFL's "incapacity to set itself free from the obsession exercised by the dictators of the other society showed itself, within a few months of the split, in the passing of a self-denying ordinance which forbade its members to make any defence under attack or to utter any criticism of the sister militant society" (173). But she believed all suffrage societies paid a price for maintaining a show of solidarity:

they have submitted because of the fear of harming the suffrage cause in the public eye by exposing the disunion that existed. A show of peace has thus been preserved in the suffrage world, but it has been the sort of peace preserved in many households where one member of the family is a bully and the rest for the sake of name and blood are constrained to hide their injuries, and to put a fair face upon an unhappy condition.

(1911b: 182)

the *Anti-Suffrage Review* was quick to publicize Billington-Greig's indictment, noting the "silence" with which it had been received by militant organizations.⁵²

Another prominent figure who criticized this strategy of avoidance was Helena Swanwick. She resigned as editor of the *Common Cause* when the NUWSS would not tolerate her criticism of the WSPU; quoting her letter to Mrs. Fawcett in her autobiography, she writes:

I was in a difficult position, because the things I wanted to say about the W.S.P.U. were such that apparently the N.U. would not tolerate in its organ.... I cannot accept a position in which I am responsible editor and yet prohibited from saying what I think on what may be the most tremendous danger to our cause. I am quite willing to stand abuse for what I pass or write, but I cannot endure the position of seeming to have scope for expression and yet being actually prohibited from such expression.

(1935: 223–4)

In her final editorial, she was very clear about what she had hoped to achieve with the paper and how it could have fulfilled a function that existing papers did not, but her most forceful comments were directed at the reluctance to denounce what she believed to be destructive tendencies within the movement:

Holding these opinions about the wholesomeness of criticism, I have never been able to see that it does the cause of women's suffrage any good at all to refrain from criticising militant suffragists who, in my opinion, are doing considerable immediate harm... though I am immensely proud of the self-control shown by the National Union in not being tempted into any retaliation, I see no beauty in sentimentalising away our differences. They are great and vital and I will be no party to making light of them.

(3 Oct 1912: 441)

Swanwick's case points to the discrepancies between the views of editors/contributors and the official policies of organizations, revealing the difficulties of negotiating both internal and external conflicts as the editor of an official organ.⁵³ She returned to freelancing for the *Manchester Guardian*, with what she describes as her "new-found freedom" and in 1913 published *The Future of the Women's Movement* in which she attacked the Pankhursts directly.

If Billington-Greig and Swanwick represent both militants and constitutionalists who felt constrained by the need to suppress criticism within the movement, there were others who believed there was *too much* public infighting. Little attention has been paid to the New Constitutional Society which formed, according to their entry in the *Suffrage Annual*, in January 1910 "in order to unite all suffragists who believe in the anti-Government election policy, who desire to work by constitutional means, and to abstain from public criticism of other

suffragists whose conscience leads them to adopt different methods" (1913: 98).⁵⁴ Laura Mayhall is one of the few critics to comment on the NCS, using it as an example of organizations formed on the "premise that public criticism of other suffrage organizations and tactics was unacceptable" (2003: 103). While this may seem a contradiction, it is true that there were mixed messages communicated in the context of official organs as well as beyond. As early as 12 November 1908 the *Times* published a circular letter addressed to members of the House of Commons, signed by Millicent Garrett Fawcett, Bertha Mason, and Frances Hardcastle (the executive committee of the NUWSS), which stated the Union's protest against militant methods. On 20 November 1908, Fawcett wrote a letter to the editor of the *Times* explaining her own change of position, having two years earlier come forward in defence of some women who had been imprisoned for "suffragette tactics." She added that recent events made it clear to her that "the moment had come when societies standing for lawful and constitutional methods only should definitely and plainly say so." The strategy of downplaying conflict was more difficult and less consistent in practice than in theory.

Official organs provided a persuasive medium for establishing a platform and framing the issues in a particular way, without openly criticizing other organizations. They may have resisted open condemnation, but by promoting one set of strategies over another, by implication they were positioning themselves in relation to one another. For example, *Votes For Women* regularly ran feature articles defending the use of militant over constitutional tactics, usually explaining why peaceful methods had failed to work in the past. Similarly, *Common Cause* (which eventually featured the labels "Non-Party" and "Non-Militant" on its cover pages) regularly outlined the principles and value of their constitutional policy. There was an implied dialogue, and hence debate, between these organs. Evidence from correspondence pages, the presence of league reports, notices for events and publications, and the practice of publishing extracts from the press all indicate the degree to which these papers engaged one another and the wider press. Also significant was the fact that, just as individuals belonged to more than one organization at a time, they also read more than one suffrage paper at a time. As an article in the *Englishwoman* observes: "the stern black and delicate pink (so suggestive of a thwarted desire to blush unseen) of the *Anti-Suffrage Review* are eagerly welcomed in many a suffrage household, and the contents of the *Common Cause* and of *Votes for Women* are evidently as well known to the Editor of that Review as

to the most ardent supporters of the cause" (Oct 1911: 1). Movement organizations must be understood in relational terms, and so must movement media. Yet these strategies of evasion and their lapses are rarely accounted for in drawing on or contextualizing these periodicals. It is crucial to ask how did the suffrage organs participate in the negotiation of these divisions and how does that affect how we read them now?

Agendas for change: Suffrage organs and the 1910 general election

Fawcett claims that the election of January 1910 was the "first time in the history of the women's suffrage movement the political campaign preceding a general election was opened with important declarations from the Prime Minister and other members of his Government on the subject of the enfranchisement of women" (1912: 71). Similarly, Christabel Pankhurst recalls the Government's election pledge: "For the first time in history a political party went to the country with the admission that the votes for women issue was a living political issue" (1959: 149). Suffragists were faced with the challenge of proving that the issue of votes for women had enough currency to enter the realm of 'practical politics,' so this kind of acknowledgment in anticipation of a general election was significant. The other challenge, as articulated by opponents, was to prove that a critical mass of women actually wanted the vote (since the antis claimed they did not want it and would refuse it if granted). The election was called when the House of Lords refused to pass the Liberals' budget. The Liberals' response to what they saw as an outrageous act of arrogance on the part of the House of Lords became fodder for suffrage campaigners who claimed the government was behaving in the same way toward them. According to David Powell, franchise reform was a major area of contention in what was described as the longest election campaign in modern British history (2004: 34). The Liberals remained in office, but lost their majority. Powell cites the women's suffrage campaign as an example of the widespread extra-parliamentary forces protesting the existing political system at the time (56). The Liberals were divided over the question of women's enfranchisement and the relationship between the government and the WSPU had turned adversarial and violent over the harsh treatment of imprisoned militants.

A series of by-elections just prior to the general election had been targets for militants, the most controversial incident being the attempt

to destroy ballot boxes by members of the WFL (Alice Chapin and Alice Neilans) during the Bermondsey by-election. The WSPU had also mobilized their anti-government election policy in these by-elections, working to prevent the election of Liberal candidates – a policy the NUWSS disagreed with, favouring instead a policy of helping candidates, irrespective of party, who would declare their support for women’s enfranchisement. Given this background of contentious election strategies, I would like to turn to the coverage of the election in a selection of suffrage organs in order to compare the ways in which these organizations framed their conflicting approaches for their readers, keeping in mind the WFL’s self-denying ordinance and the NUWSS’s interest in suppressing criticism of other major organizations. Exacerbating the tensions was the fact that members of these organizations were implicated in party politics in complex ways, for example the traditional Liberal base of support in the NUWSS.⁵⁵ The timing and circumstances of the election created an important political opportunity for the movement.

Comparing approaches to election coverage highlights the challenges facing official organs, given their multiple functions related to the internal needs of organizations as well as their publicist orientation. The papers were a vehicle for mobilizing and organizing existing members, while also trying to attract new recruits. They were crucial to communicating and justifying policy and tactical differences as organizations competed for the attention and support of the public. They provided an interpretation of major events on a weekly basis, but they remained committed to dealing with business as usual. The standard features and regular coverage are where we locate what Mary Maynard terms the more proactive and developmental aspects of feminist thought, underscoring the fact that feminists were not simply reactive. She focuses on the extent to which early feminists “were actively creating and constructing... analyses and explanations of their subordinate position which then enabled them to make sense of the various ‘triggering events’ when they occurred” (225). Maynard’s context is the nineteenth century, but her observations are relevant to suffrage activism and to the role of official organs as the primary vehicles for developing and circulating these ideas.

Votes for Women

Founded in 1907, *Votes for Women* was the longest running of the organizationally based suffrage papers by the time the election was

called in December 1909. As the official organ of the WSPU, the paper had established itself as a fixture of the campaign and was promoted widely through elaborate marketing and promotional strategies (DiCenzo 2000). It adopted a popular journalistic style and was priced at one penny, making it a lively and accessible publication. The paper's bold and forceful style reflected the organization – situating itself as the “mouthpiece of the advance guard” determined to “press forward” and claim “victory,” appealing to women of all ages, social classes, and political inclinations to join the “battle” (Oct 1907: 1). While it promoted the WSPU's leaders and policies with an evangelical fervor, the paper had more breadth than is generally assumed. Stanley and Morley, addressing Dora Marsden's claims of “empty rhetorical mush,” argue that “faced by chapter and verse from *Votes for Women* . . . Marsden's remarks do not hold up as a general critique, however much they may apply to the Pankhursts themselves” (1988: 83–4). The observation is useful in that it reminds us of the cumulative effect of reading weekly organs and of the distinction between editors/contributors and leaders/members of the organization.

Predictably, *Votes for Women* highlighted WSPU activities, the importance of the vote, and a defence of militant tactics, but it also covered developments in the movement nationally, offered regular parliamentary coverage (including major speeches, contributions, and voting records of MPs), monitored by-elections, and offered more general pieces related to labor practices and legal issues affecting working and married women. In addition to and related to the social and political concerns expressed, the paper reviewed a wide range of books and cultural events and published short stories, plays, and poetry. It provided a forum for some respected and influential writers, activists, and personalities to offer their views and lend support, such as Mona Caird, Olive Schreiner, Beatrice Harraden, May Sinclair, Elizabeth Robins, Edith and Israel Zangwill, John Galsworthy, G. B. Shaw, Margaret and Henry Nevinson, Laurence Housman, Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy, Hertha Ayrton, and Maud Arncliffe Sennett.

There is no question the paper's tone tended toward declaration and pronouncement, particularly in matters where the leaders were concerned. The Pankhursts expressed their views with impunity and they were less concerned with issues of conflict within the movement than were the other leagues who worked to downplay their differences. They were, after all, the self-declared ‘advance guard.’ In her

memoir, Emmeline Pankhurst outlined how the WSPU differed from other organizations:

our members are absolutely single minded; they concentrate all their forces on one object, political equality with men. No member of the WSPU divides her attention between suffrage and other social reforms we demand, before any other legislation whatever, the elementary justice of votes for women the women of Great Britain would have been enfranchised years ago had all the suffragists adopted this simple principle.

(1914: 57)

Linked to the culture and public image of the league was the WSPU's approach to internal dissent. In the same memoir, Pankhurst makes clear that members were required to sign a declaration of "loyal adherence" and any suggestion otherwise would result in the cessation of membership. She adds:

Autocratic? Quite so. But, you may object, a suffrage organisation ought to be democratic. Well the members of the WSPU do not agree with you. We do not believe in the effectiveness of the ordinary suffrage organisation The WSPU is simply a suffrage army, and no one is obliged to remain in it.

(1914: 59)

Krista Cowan's study of paid organizers suggests that the WSPU took strict measures to manage dissent within the organization. These policies are relevant to how one reads *Votes for Women* and may help to explain why there is less evidence of debate or disagreement in the paper. This is most notable in the occasional correspondence sections which featured, almost exclusively, supportive letters, in contrast to the other suffrage organs.⁵⁶

The months before the election call were taken up with the justification for and consequences of escalating acts of militancy. Features focused on the arrests, imprisonment, hunger strikes, and the forcible feeding of WSPU members, highlighting the cases of Mary Leigh and Emily Davison. The already strong anti-Liberal rhetoric was intensified as the government ordered and sanctioned what many agreed was a shocking treatment of women prisoners. The use of first-hand accounts of "brutality and torture" and posters reinforced in graphic terms the violence of forcible feeding. Features such as

"The Press on the Movement" compiled extracts from daily/regional newspapers and monthly reviews indicating support for the cause or criticism of government measures. Pressure on readers and members to sell copies of *Votes for Women* was ramped up, stressing the need to get reliable information and explanations for their actions to the public. In response to criticism in the mainstream press, Emmeline Pethick Lawrence outlined the need to extend the circulation of their paper in order to instruct the public (8 Oct 1909: 25). Similarly, as a farewell message before departing for a tour of America, Mrs. Pankhurst urged members to devote time to making the paper "the most powerful instrument for political education in the country" (15 Oct 1909: 40). There was also coverage of their involvement in the Bermondsey by-election, with Christabel Pankhurst attributing the defeat of the Liberal candidate to the WSPU's anti-government campaign, but also distancing the WSPU from the ballot box incident without naming the WFL per se (5 Nov 1909: 82). So with an election looming in January 1910, the paper announced "arrangements for a vigorous campaign throughout the country" (3 Dec 1909: 145).

It was in this highly combative mood that the WSPU embarked on their election work, outlining an official policy which called for voters to deny the government the vote of confidence it was asking for and to "express their censure . . . by rejecting Liberal candidates at the poll" (10 Dec 1909: 168). Christabel Pankhurst had already seized on the conflict between the House of Lords and the government to reframe and give new currency to their long-standing grievances:

The [WSPU] are determined to expose the inconsistency and hypocrisy on the part of the Liberal Leaders. We shall tell Mr. Asquith that if, as he claims, the Peers, because they are unrepresentative, have no right to interfere with questions of taxation, he himself has no right to tax the women of the country, whom he and his followers in the House of Commons in no way represent.

(12 Nov 1909: 104)

Declaring a "policy of revolt," she used Winston Churchill's words about the House of Lords ("They are using their own power in a furious and sordid spirit to wreck and smash the British Constitution") to describe "the Government's own action in refusing to women the rights of citizenship" (10 Nov 1909: 120). *Votes for Women* was instrumental in justifying the WSPU election strategy, raising funds, and mobilizing the

volunteers necessary to conduct the work at the constituency level – canvassing, street meetings, and the sale of the paper itself.

On a weekly basis, the paper provided programmes of events and monitored the campaign throughout the country, while continuing to report on developments in court cases involving WSPU members, and Mrs. Pankhurst's tour of America. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence contributed her motivational pieces, sometimes punctuated by poems celebrating the warrior spirit. Without losing sight of the lighter side of activist life, the feature "The World We Live In" ran articles on frocks and shopping at the sales, cartoons ridiculed political leaders, advertisement pages included ads for "Panko" (the woman's suffrage card game) and "Pank-a-Squith" (the propaganda table game), and classifieds brought services, employment opportunities, housing, and products to the attention of readers.

There is little evidence of direct engagement or response to other suffrage organizations, except insofar as the justifications for the anti-government policy anticipated or addressed objections. But these avoided specific reference. For instance, "Some Questions the Electors Are Asking" addresses the question of why the WSPU was not agitating along lawful and constitutional lines; the response never refers to the NUWSS, but catalogs the decades of "quiet and constitutional" forms of agitation that never resulted in change (7 Jan 1910: 227). Fewer notices of the activities of other leagues appeared in these months, although *Votes for Women* did include an announcement of the formation of the New Constitutional Society for Women's Suffrage, with its constitutional version of the anti-government policy. There were also occasional notices from Irish leagues and artists' organizations.

As polling results began to be available in January, *Votes for Women* was quick to interpret the falling Liberal figures as directly due to the influence and strategies of the WSPU. Also at this time, the forcible feeding of Lady Constance Lytton, disguised as the working-class Jane Warton, hit the headlines. It was an act of courage that evoked the sympathy and interest of the general public and exposed the government's claims that social position had had nothing to do with Lytton's previous treatment (she had been released from prison without being forcibly fed because of a heart condition). The case sparked angry criticism in the press of the government's treatment of women prisoners and served to bolster support for the WSPU. By early February 1910, with the Liberals facing a minority, the WSPU was willing to place "militancy in reserve" until the government forced it back to the use of drastic methods. Assuming full credit for "the immense advance of

the woman's movement" in the general election of 1910, the WSPU resumed active campaigning by "peaceful and constitutional methods" (4 Feb 1910: 289). Its sense of power and superiority was captured in the *Votes for Women* cover cartoon for 25 February 1910, with the image of a school teacher putting away her cane (labeled "militant methods") before a classroom of politicians depicted as schoolboys (Figure 1).

The Vote

The WFL made arrangements for its own official organ only once *Women's Franchise* was forced to cease publication. The WFL expressed concern about the financial responsibilities their own paper would entail, but admitted "we cannot be left without any official organ to bring the public and the branches generally in touch with headquarters and the various plans and activities that are perpetually taking place" (*Women's Franchise*, 10 June 1909: 625). The first full issue appeared in October 1909, making it the most recent addition to the growing series of suffrage publications before the 1910 election. Without referring directly to the WSPU, the first issue describes the WFL as "A militant body, its methods differ in some points from those of its sister militant society, and the police know it best as being the one that springs the most disconcerting surprises upon them" (30 Oct 1909: 1). It would not confine itself to suffrage activities, since "The feminist movement has a wider scope than that." These sentiments are not surprising given the presence of regular contributors such as Cicely Hamilton, Teresa Billington-Greig, and Charlotte Despard.

Anticipation of a general election is evident from Billington-Greig's first leader on "The Price of Freedom" in which she declares it is "the Government, not the women of the country, that has chosen war" (30 Oct 1909: 6). In her "Welcome" to readers, Charlotte Despard stressed the need for communication and education:

We call our organ THE VOTE because we hope and believe that through its pages the public (those millions whom Mr. Winston Churchill, desiring to evade his responsibility in the matter, says we have yet to convert) will come to understand what the Parliamentary Franchise means to us women For men, as well as women, require education in citizenship.

(30 Oct 1909: 10)

In the lead up to and during the election campaign, the paper concerned itself chiefly with the Bermondsey by-election and the consequences of the ballot box incident. After 15 weeks of “a peaceful and constitutional opportunity of stating their grievances” the WFL claimed that they were forced to resort to methods of “protest and rebellion” involving the destruction of ballots at a polling station using an alkaline solution (4 Nov 1909: 13). The paper made a concerted effort to justify the WFL’s choices and to report on the trial and imprisonment of Neilans and Chapin.

Other features were also beginning to establish themselves, such as “Parliamentary Notes,” “Press Comments” (which later becomes “Suffrage Shearings”), and “Mainly About Women.”⁵⁷ Ethel Hill contributed profiles of important members and friends of the league. There was a degree of overlap by writers who also contributed to *Votes for Women* such as Laurence Housman, Margaret Nevinson, and Israel Zangwill. Humorous elements included a regular feature entitled “Gossip” (anecdotes from a range of sources), “Types of Anti-Suffragists” cartoons, and Cicely Hamilton’s tongue-in-cheek “History of the Votes for Women Movement,” and articles such as “‘Suffragitis’ the New Disease.” Absent, by comparison with *Votes for Women*, was the emotional engagement of readers. The *Vote* offered rational and political justifications for militancy, without the more spiritual dimension that writers like Emmeline Pethick Lawrence brought to *Votes for Women*. While her motivational articles about the ‘unconquerable spirit’ of the WSPU’s fighting women were rather overwrought – described at the time as “dithyrambic hymns to Maidens of the Dawn” – they may also have been inspiring and validating for members who were indeed putting themselves on the line for the cause.⁵⁸

The WFL seemed to align itself with the WSPU by identifying itself as a militant society, but it also showed signs of trying to create an image of its own. Both tendencies are evident in Edith How Martyn’s account of the rise of the WFL. She claims that the chief distinction between “militant Suffrage societies” and “other Suffrage organizations” is “the spirit of self-sacrifice” and, after recounting “the cleavage” with the WSPU, she stresses the need for “democratic machinery” (9 Dec 1909: 75). Billington-Greig would later criticize the WFL’s inability to make its mark. In spite of their potential at the outset, she claims:

No essential difference between [the WFL] and [the WSPU] has been established; the tone and direction of militant tactics has

continued unchanged to the outsider.... he did not know that this society refrained from using militancy for advertisement... for the League made those changes in its attitude but failed to make them public.... As a natural result it has come to be rightly regarded as a smaller militant group, sometimes milder than larger, sometimes more aggressive, but always imitative.

(1911b: 176)

Her observations are as relevant to the journal she helped to produce as they are to the WFL itself.

The WFL outlined an election policy that differed from those of the WSPU and the NUWSS in the *Vote* in December 1909. Rather than opposing Liberal candidates per se, the WFL thought it wiser to oppose members of the retiring cabinet (since they had proven themselves enemies to the women's cause). The second line of opposition was directed at Conservative and Unionist opponents who might be likely members of the next Conservative cabinet. Finally, less clear, was the third line of opposition aimed against "the election of any Government WITHOUT the consent of the women of the country." With these three lines of policy Billington-Greig claimed "a complete whole is made, and the whole country is covered" and through its application "we shall preserve and proclaim our political independence" (16 Dec 1909: 90). The following week she clarified that what recommended the WFL policy was the fact that it was "anti-Government" rather than "anti-party" (by implication suggesting the WSPU's approach was flawed). The paper appealed internally to members to do their work in the constituencies, raise funds, and sell the paper, and externally to voters to send a clear message of support for women's enfranchisement.

The response to election results was far more muted in the *Vote*. The new configuration in Parliament was interpreted as a hopeful sign for women's suffrage, but Billington-Greig attributed the outcome to a range of factors:

Our own propaganda and that of other Suffrage organizations has produced effect. Political accidents have played into our hands. The results of the election have established one fact – that the Government returned to power will not be a great Government, nor a strong one, but one which will have to remember the elector and his expectations, and to walk warily if it is to retain power and place.

(29 Jan 1910: 162)

The paper paid considerable attention to the potential role of the Irish Nationalists and the Labour Party in the coming months. It also announced that the WFL, like its sister society, agreed to hold out “a flag of truce” by refraining from militant tactics until the Government had an opportunity to declare its intention toward the women of the country. But it did so less with bravado and more with concern and uncertainty about what the immediate future might hold. In an open letter to Asquith reprinted in the paper, the WFL declared: “We wait peaceably to see if you (the Government) are great enough to do a great deed, to rise above prejudice and personal considerations, to put on one side lesser things, and to do this act of national justice” (19 Feb 1910: 198).

Common Cause

By the time the NUWSS withdrew its contributions to *Women's Franchise*, the plans to start up an independent weekly were already underway. A magazine sub-committee had formed in January 1909 to plan the finances and general mandate for this official organ, to which Helena Swanwick was appointed Editor-Manager. Proposed as “The Coming Citizen” the committee identified an “urgent demand” for a paper edited from the point of view of the constitutional suffragists since no such paper existed.⁵⁹ The “Common Cause,” like the original working title, seemed to signal a principle or goal more than a demand, setting the tone for this publication which devoted far more space to social reform than the militant papers discussed so far. In her first editorial, Swanwick explained:

We hold that the liberation of women is the cause which good and intelligent men and good and intelligent women have in common . . . This paper is called the organ of the women's movement for reform. It is this urgent need for social reform that has given the tremendous impetus of late years to the women's movement.

(15 Apr 1909: 3)

From the outset, the paper articulated its goals and concerns in ways that highlighted the differences between constitutional and militant organizations, without having to name them or draw direct comparisons – at least initially.

The WSPU and NUWSS framed the enfranchisement of women in fundamentally different ways. For the WSPU, getting the vote was what mattered, immediately, and by whatever means necessary. For the

NUWSS, the ‘how’ mattered as much as the goal of enfranchisement. This is stated explicitly in an article on the constitutional policy of the National Union by A. M. Allen: “it is in great measure how we have fought which will determine what we shall win; for the winning of the vote is only a part of women’s enfranchisement, the vote is merely a tool to use in the attainment of freedom” (12 Aug 1909: 228).⁶⁰ Most organizations agreed that the vote was a means to much larger ends, but the emphasis on and discussion of social reform is more developed in the *Common Cause*. Swanwick’s recollections of what she hoped to achieve with the paper offer some insight into how she tried to distinguish it from other organs:

I had thought that what was greatly lacking in the women’s movement was a paper of wider interests and more advanced political thinking... *Votes for Women* might be the popular paper. We should try for something else. I was constantly having it suggested that we should adopt certain features which they had. But why? If it was being well done by them, why duplicate it? Hadn’t we something characteristic of our own? I thought we had. Moreover, with the huge lever of publicity which militancy gave them, they could do many things we could not attempt. I had no fancy to be a pale copy.
(1935: 229)

While it might be tempting to relate the ‘sober’ style of the *Common Cause* to the less flamboyant culture of the NUWSS, Swanwick’s explanation suggests it was more accurately a reflection of what she believed was needed.⁶¹ Beryl Haslam argues that “Suffrage for Swanwick had always been about the emancipation of women from their wider disabilities, not just about winning the vote” (18). Not unlike Cicely Hamilton, Swanwick later admitted she was “under no illusions as to the immediate political results of the enfranchisement of women” and “looked far more to the slow effect on the minds of women and on their social status for generations to come” (1935: 183). These priorities shaped her approach to the tone and content of the paper.

Deian Hopkin suggests, in relation to the left-wing press and new journalism, that “There is some indication, though necessarily impressionistic, that those papers or groups of journalists that subscribed to the ideas of New Journalism, both in content and in organization, showed greater resilience than those that did not” (1988: 227). He uses the example of the *Clarion* as the first mass-circulation socialist paper and compares it with what he describes as the “Less attractive and certainly less humorous” *Labour Leader*. It is tempting to apply this comparison

to *Votes for Women* and the *Common Cause*, but the latter turned out to be the more enduring of the two papers (lasting until 1920 when it became the *Woman's Leader*). Swanwick knew what she was up against and admitted "A newspaper cannot have it all ways, and if it eschews sensationalism it will have to wait for success. Such success has seemed to me worth waiting for" (1935: 230).

Ultimately the *raison d'être* of the *Common Cause* was to advance the cause by promoting and encouraging constitutional methods of political action. It made an appeal to "those who think with us" and "those of us who have most confidence in steady educational work" (men and women alike) because "for the moment, it seems as if all the wrong wires had been pulled, as if all the machinery were out of gear and horrid discordant noises, only, revealing the steam is on" (15 Apr 1909: 1). This assessment of the state of things does not name or condemn the militants, while the anti-suffragists are treated with mild amusement in the following paragraph. It is with this kind of quiet confidence and thoughtfulness that the paper introduced itself. An openness to debate was signaled in the first issue. Swanwick writes:

we start with the assumption that every one has a point of view: the creature we call a criminal does not regard himself with horror; even the anti-suffragist has a point of view, and the better we understand it, the more effective will be our efforts to change it. We don't want to score; we don't want to conquer; we want to understand.

(15 Apr 1909: 3)

This openness to internal and external debate became evident in the letters to the editor. The *Common Cause* includes the most extensive and mixed correspondence of the three suffrage papers examined here (at least during the period under examination). Swanwick later admitted that the correspondence column was a constant struggle and source of tension. She took the advice of her friend C. P. Scott not to intervene in or censor letters, since the feature was an "index of the paper's value" (1935: 225). It is on the basis of this willingness to see all sides of the question that Les Garner refers to the *Common Cause* as "a crucial element in the expression of suffragist thought" (12).

The broad mandate was in fact part of its organizational strategy. Swanwick claims: "Everything there is in modern society is an 'argument' for women's suffrage, and the more widely we can throw our net of interest, the more we shall find men and women who are led to our cause through the particular interest they have in some department of life" (1935: 230). In the first months alone, the paper provided coverage

of everything from teachers' and nurses' conferences to the co-education of children, factors affecting infant mortality, anti-sweating and shop assistants' bills before parliament, in addition to suffrage news ranging from the Congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, to the branch activities of the NUWSS and reports of other suffrage societies (including the Anti-Suffrage League). It is impossible to summarize the breadth of coverage in a meaningful way in this kind of snapshot, but it is important to underscore the spectrum of class interests represented in the coverage.

Also challenging is offering a consistent account of the paper's attitude toward the WSPU. I have suggested that the *Common Cause* tried to avoid open condemnation, but in practice it steered an uneven course between upholding the principle of unity on one hand (acknowledging that "different natures work and must work in different ways for the one great end and that there is room for all") and openly criticizing damaging policies and tactics on the other (6 May 1909: 51). In the months leading up to the election call, the paper placed repeated emphasis on the value of the constitutional policy and outlined the league's by-election policy. These policies generated considerable feedback in the correspondence section from a range of readers during this period, including letters from WSPU members taking issue with statements made in the paper. Even Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy wrote to clarify an historical point about "so-called militant methods" (19 Aug 1909: 243). These exchanges reinforce the extent to which the paper was being read well beyond the NUWSS membership.

Two early controversial articles were "Violence and Reaction: The Two Forces of Disorder" (16 Sept 1909: 287) and "Outrages: Legal and Illegal" (4 Nov 1909: 383). Both pieces are openly critical of the ways in which violent and disorderly tactics only breed further violence and distortion, referring to acts committed by the WSPU and the WFL and the responses to them. However, both pieces criticize the Government of the day as much as they do the actions of the militant societies. Less forgiving is "Condemnation of Violence" (14 Oct 1909: 339) which offers a report of the NUWSS Council meeting discussion of the points of division between the NU and the "other great organisation" – namely the WSPU's by-election policy and the use of violence. These articles followed Maude Royden's open condemnation of the WSPU's anti-government by-election policy as "disastrous, politically and morally" (19 Aug 1909: 240). The front page of the 26 November 1909 issue reports the protests by the militant societies against NUWSS policy and the *Common Cause*:

It is a grief to us that we should feel ourselves obliged to condemn the methods of women working for the same object as that for which we work. We have not done it lightly or easily, and we refrained for very long, simply from loyalty to fellow women and from a conviction that they did what they thought right. Now, however, that we find our silence and reserve misunderstood, and the cause of women's enfranchisement in danger... we recognise that the brave and necessary thing is to speak out...

(26 Nov 1909: 429)

In the same issue, a letter to the editor accuses the paper of condoning, by its very silence on the issue, Government brutality in the forcible feeding of prisoners. The editor responds by clarifying the misunderstanding and adds, "If we are not incessantly talking about the hunger strikers it is because we have other important matters in hand" (438). Indeed the comparative absence of stories about the prison experience is striking; even if many constitutionalists expressed sympathy for the prisoners in other contexts, the paper chose to give this major controversy a wide berth.

In this sense the general election may have come as a welcome distraction. Even though the NUWSS framed grievances in similar ways – depicting the struggles between the Lords and Commons and those between unenfranchised women and enfranchised men as the same (9 Dec 1909: 461) – election strategies differed. The NUWSS was cautious in announcing its policy, but eventually agreed on a two-pronged approach. They pursued a policy of "peaceful persuasion" by supporting all candidates, regardless of party, who were friends of women's suffrage (requiring candidates to answer questions and declare in writing their support of the cause). Secondly, they embarked on the collection of signatures for a massive electors' petition (polling male voters across the country who supported women's suffrage). In a small number of constituencies, they also attempted to run a suffrage candidate, in the interests of diverting votes from other candidates and, in the case of victories, returning advocates for the cause to parliament (25 Nov 1909: 432). From December to February, the *Common Cause* was mainly taken up with the coverage of the NUWSS campaign in the constituencies, the progress of their petition, lists and photographs of candidates who had given support and their written statements (Figure 2). NUWSS members were encouraged to use and help the *Common Cause* by making it their "best weapon during the general election" (16 Dec 1909: 477). There was more coverage of the anti-suffragists than there was of the militant societies in this period.

As the election came to a close, the NUWSS seemed not to draw strong conclusions about the results, admitting its own non-party measures were difficult to conduct and produced scattered results. But the paper maintained this was a better approach than targeting particular parties. Tremendous value was attributed to the work of members on the ground in constituencies, claiming: "The General Election policy has done for us what all true work does – educated those who did and those who saw and helped" concluding that "The movement stands today greater, in an infinitely stronger political position, and perceptibly nearer attainment through the National Union's General Election work" (17 Feb 1910: 625).

Anti-Suffrage Review

Since its first issue in December 1908, the *Anti-Suffrage Review* made a concerted effort to monitor suffrage activities and publications, reserving its most pointed attacks for the WSPU and their militant tactics. Leader titles in the months before the election call included "Anarchy in Politics," "Political Offenders?" and "Cheapening Revolution." The attacks were designed both to discredit the campaign and to generate fear or anxiety about the political implications of the possible enfranchisement of women. The antis continued to press their claims about the suffrage campaign as insignificant – namely, that all the suffrage societies combined (even though new ones were "sprouting like mushrooms") amounted to a small fraction of the women of the country (Nov 1909: 1). The same article stressed that even this fraction was divided, underscoring once again the lack of consensus on the part of suffrage campaigners. The other main line of attack was directed at the "hooligans"; by maintaining a focus on the WSPU and the WFL, the antis made militancy representative of the movement as a whole and exploited the outrage expressed elsewhere, such as the *Times*. In these ways, they framed the situation in terms of an active minority thrusting themselves into public notoriety vs. the immense majority who repudiated the political franchise (Mar 1909: 1). At the same time, the antis used the bogey of adult suffrage to discourage even partial measures in terms of women's enfranchisement; the assumption was that once the sex disqualification was eliminated, the property qualification would be next.

During the general election, the *Anti-Suffrage Review* offered coverage of the attempts suffrage organizations were making to affect the outcome. It outlined the election policies of the two leading organizations, summarizing: "The more pacific followers of Mrs. Fawcett are to put

suffrage before party, the militants of the W.S.P.U. are to put obstruction before suffrage" (Dec 1909: 1). The antis also adopted their own line in the process, choosing: to "push with energy" the collection of signatures for their own large-scale petition and to "strengthen 'the feeble-kneed'" particularly among the Conservatives "who may be tempted to bid for future votes by more or less vague expressions of sympathy or promises of support" (Dec 1909: 1). They were concerned to keep Adult Suffrage to the fore in light of the recent formation of the People's Suffrage Society. The fear of the Conservatives' susceptibility to pandering for votes without regard for the long-term consequences was especially acute. A leader entitled "The Conservative Party and Woman Suffrage" warned:

The sex distinction stands out clear and unmistakable. If, however, votes are given to women with property, the sex distinction is abandoned, the property distinction cannot be maintained, and the Radicals will be obliged to swell the registers with a new class of voters, more ignorant of politics and more incapable of looking beyond the impulse of the moment than the least fit of those who now exercise the franchise.

(Feb 1910: 2)

In the same issue, the antis were already assessing the results of the election and expressing their views as to how far the agitation for the vote had "advanced or receded in the domain of practical politics." With some satisfaction, they declared: "In spite of the most indefatigable personal efforts, in spite of an expenditure of money which might almost be termed profligate, in spite of campaigning methods which for variety and ingenuity are the despair of the most accomplished advertising agents, the Parliamentary franchise is further off than ever" (Feb 1910: 2). The anxiety about adult suffrage seemed to belie the antis' confidence about the inefficacy of the suffrage election efforts. Admitting "the defence has been more difficult to organise than the attack" the league expressed their determination to continue its work (Mar 1910: 1).

Post election conciliation

It is difficult to draw conclusions about the impact of these strategies on the actual election results, since no consensus existed at the time. As might be expected, all sides/parties interpreted the results to their own advantage. The *Times* reported both suffrage and anti-suffrage assessments of their respective campaigns. Contradictory

views appeared even in the same column, with a report of Lord Cromer reassuring the Men's League for Opposing Woman Suffrage that the issue of woman suffrage had "made no headway in the country" followed directly by a report of a London Society for Women's Suffrage's "at home" during which Lady Frances Balfour and Mrs Fawcett declared the "immense advance" that the voters' petition represented and praised the "splendid" and "eminently satisfactory" work of the organization during the election (*Times*, 19 Mar 1910: 9).⁶² An earlier article had already reported on Christabel Pankhurst's speech outlining the impact of the WSPU on the Liberals' shrinking majority (*Times*, 18 Jan 1910: 4).

It is, however, clear that to read only one of the papers examined here would offer a skewed sense of the relationship between the suffrage campaign and political developments at the time. All of the organizations and their official organs claimed to speak on behalf of the women's movement, but they did so in very different ways. The adoption of different and conflicting election strategies served to reinforce the lines of division that had already formed for other reasons. But one of the developments arising from the new configuration in Parliament was the formation of the all-party Conciliation committee committed to drafting a workable franchise bill. This was a sign of a new level of co-operation at the parliamentary level, as well as amongst suffrage organizations (made possible by the willingness to suspend militancy). The bill eventually failed, as did the next Conciliation bill of 1912. But the process is an example of how conflicts could be put aside in the interests of co-operation, taking advantage of political opportunities as they arose, in order to maximize their influence on a political process to which they were denied direct access through voting rights.

These developments invariably affected the relationships between suffrage organizations – alliances could break down, resulting in open conflict, leading in turn to new forms of co-operation. The strategy of avoiding open condemnation of rival organizations was a difficult one to maintain and was not always consistent; moments of criticism flared up at critical points. While tensions were always simmering, 1910 and 1911 saw moments of a renewed emphasis on unity.

The Procession of June 1911 represented perhaps the grandest show of solidarity between suffrage organizations. Reassuring the readers of the *Common Cause* about the co-operation between the NUWSS and the WSPU in anticipation of the event, Fawcett writes: "I hope no one will think that this indicates any weakening of my belief that force is no argument... But our belief in our own policy is surely no reason for refusing co-operation with the Social and Political Union when they find themselves able to act on our lines" (4 May 1911: 60). All of the suffrage

organs celebrated the event (even the *Anti-Suffrage Review* described it as charming). The review in the *Common Cause* suggests that ‘difference’ could be reframed as ‘strength.’ Asking what the demonstration showed, the article chronicles the sheer numbers, the variety of women represented in terms of social classes, political parties, militant and constitutionalist, religious communities, national groups, concluding:

One of the chief reasons why women need the vote is because women differ so much from each other (being as individual as men) and this is also one of the difficulties of work in common. It is therefore... the most remarkable sign of the intensity of our demand for enfranchisement that we are willing all differences should be less than the great common agreement of our belief in liberty.... This unity in the midst of diversity is the healthiest sign of life.

(22 June 1911: 187)

“Comrades all!” declared the *Vote* in the same week (24 June 1911: 110).

While the frame disputes which plagued the women’s movement made it vulnerable to opposing factions, contributed to a public credibility crisis, and affected the morale of members and potential recruits, they also ultimately forced groups to reflect on and reinforce their positions and arguments, leading to greater cohesiveness in some cases, and pluralistic tendencies appealing to more diverse constituencies in other cases. These conflicts may have contributed to a complex and dynamic movement, but the fact that the lack of cohesiveness was still regarded as a problem (rather than a strength) at the time was demonstrated by the formation of the United Suffragists in 1914. This organization was both a collection of dissidents and an attempt to merge smaller suffrage societies by eliminating exclusionary policies, and the Pethick-Lawrences gave them *Votes For Women* as an official organ.⁶³ It is perhaps ironic that the paper which in many ways spearheaded the move to separate, organizationally based periodicals would become the tool with which the United Suffragists would try to unite the movement, only a few months before the great war would provide new grounds for division.

Conclusion

The reductive attitudes toward the genre of the official organ obscure the variety of approaches to form and content, and the enduring qualities of some of the journals – the *Common Cause* became *Woman’s Leader*, *Woman’s Dreadnought* became *Workers’ Dreadnought*; the *Church League*

for *Women's Suffrage* became *Church Militant*, the *Catholic Suffragist* became the *Catholic Citizen*, and the *Vote* continued to be published into the 1930s, taking up new issues related to the welfare of women and children. The continued commitment to these publications indicates that they were dealing with issues that remained important and newsworthy beyond the Franchise bills of 1918 and 1928. On a league by league basis, official organs may have helped to solidify support for national organizations, but as researchers we need to negotiate the different and sometimes conflicting messages they conveyed – and how these changed over time. Cohesion in terms of one kind of community could also imply conflict with others. Dorothy Thompson notes in the context of the Chartist press, “How far the printed word was a unifying force and how far it was a divisive one is a difficult question” (55). This is complicated further by the problem of multiple and diverse readerships.

What these publications shared – those produced by activists and opponents alike – was the belief in reasoned argument to influence potential readers in a period in which print media were the chief means by which these ideas could be effectively circulated. The WSPU rallying cry may have been ‘Deeds, not words,’ but this underestimates the power of ‘Words as Deeds’ – the publication of periodicals as political acts. They provided a way of asserting a platform for change and served as instruments of mobilization. But each of the papers was also based on a more general need for, and commitment to, the critical discussion of ideas in a public forum. While the conflicts and competing interests were no doubt detrimental to the movement insofar as they provided opponents with a basis for criticism and to some extent they represented power struggles between high-profile leaders and strong personalities, it is important to consider the positive implications of these splits as well. After all, what they also shared were attempts to define feminist goals in this period. The divisions represent conflict at one level, but diversity at another, underscoring the number and variety of women who were actually drawn to the movement for different reasons and whose backgrounds differed in terms of social class, political affiliations, and religious denominations (not unlike postwar feminism). That the concerns of these different groups were viable and enduring is only reinforced by the fact that some periodicals had a life after enfranchisement.

2

The Englishwoman: “Twelve Years of Brilliant Life”

Leila Ryan and Maria DiCenzo

The advocates of Women’s Suffrage, and particularly those ‘who believe in constitutional methods,’ are to be congratulated on the appearance of *The Englishwoman*. It is a shilling monthly magazine edited by Mrs. Grant Richards, and its appeal is not only to the convinced and faithful; an alien husband might be seduced into toleration of the didactic parts through approval of something in letters and arts.

(*Manchester Guardian*)⁶⁴

THE “Englishwoman” is now one of the least unreadable of the reviews, and is certainly the best edited.

(*New Age*, 23 Dec 1909: 187)

[*The Englishwoman*] goes out of existence... because enough money cannot be found to continue it, but not in any sense because the need for such a paper is at an end. It is indeed greatly needed, even as it was in the hottest days of the Suffrage campaign, when its work was so wonderfully useful, and its reputation so deservedly high.

(*Woman’s Leader*, 7 Jan 1921: 1037)

When the *Englishwoman* ceased publication in January 1921, the *Woman’s Leader* announced the demise of the review with “most profound regret,” noting that “After twelve years of brilliant life it has been... ‘beaten by the too high and ever-increasing cost of printing, of paper, and of everything else concerned with book production’” (7 Jan 1921: 1037). Given the praise and widespread attention it received at the time, it is especially surprising that this highly regarded publication, devoted to “further[ing] the Enfranchisement of Women,”

has been neglected and overlooked in both women's periodical and suffrage scholarship. Even key studies of suffrage leaders and organizations ignore the *Englishwoman's* contribution to the public discourse on women's rights. A brief perusal of the magazine, however, establishes its distinguished contributors and the breadth of its coverage, offering important insights into early twentieth-century feminist approaches to social and political reform. Whatever the reasons for its neglect, the *Englishwoman* remains one of the most substantial journals to deal with women's issues in the years up to and including World War One. In spite of this achievement, the *Englishwoman* languishes in relative obscurity while the *Freewoman*, one of the most short-lived of all the periodicals in this study, maintains its notoriety throughout the subsequent century.

The *Englishwoman* differs from the official organs examined in the previous chapter in important ways, occupying a peculiar position as both a 'suffrage magazine' and a more generalist monthly review devoted to politics and culture. In a campaign which often struggled to defend its social inclusiveness, this journal addressed itself unapologetically to the "cultured public" and included "The Lady Frances Balfour" and Lady Strachey on its editorial committee. The journal seems implicitly to define the 'Englishwoman' as intelligent, politically informed and engaged, committed to issues of social justice for all classes of women, and interested in the arts and culture. If other markers of identity such as 'Suffragette' or 'Freewoman' represented new departures and deliberate breaks with the past, the 'Englishwoman' invoked a more long-standing tradition of women reformers, reminiscent of the roots of liberal feminism in the Langham Place Group.⁶⁵ The journal's public image may have been a very strategic one, ensuring, as the Men's League reviewer in *Women's Franchise* noted, that it was "likely to receive a hearing where exclusively Suffrage journals have no opening" (10 June 1909: 630). The *Englishwoman* offers a complex record of debates about political and social reforms affecting women, at the same time as it provides an impressive repository of original literary contributions and cultural commentary which has been almost completely ignored in arts scholarship on the period. This case study can only hope to sketch the contours of this rich resource which deserves far more detailed attention. The following sections are intended to offer readers a point of entry into this archive by outlining the journal's general features and approaches in the early years, and then to use its contributions in the war years to highlight the complexities of its politics and to challenge any reductive conclusions about what and whom it represented at the time.

Languishing in the archive

Very little of note has been said about the *Englishwoman* to date. The passing mentions it has received tend to be iterations of the entry for the periodical in the Doughan and Sanchez bibliography which reads:

Effectively a NUWSS attempt to provide a woman-oriented equivalent of such 'mainstream' literary-intellectual magazines as the *Nineteenth Century*, *Contemporary Review* etc. It acted as a forum for serious feminist discussion at greater length and higher intellectual level than was possible in the suffrage campaign papers. Many distinguished contributors (Millicent Fawcett, Mary Lowndes, John Galsworthy, Bernard Shaw etc.); it consisted entirely of long articles and reviews (the latter are particularly interesting).

(1987: 28)

Those who refer to the *Englishwoman* as an NUWSS journal, published in addition to the official organ, the *Common Cause*, do not actually provide any evidence of this (Delap 2007; Tusan 2005). This may have been the case, and records pertaining to the journal are included in the NUWSS papers, but it is interesting to note that the journal itself did not state this connection, nor did any of the announcements and reviews refer to this organizational affiliation when the journal was launched. The half-page review in *Women's Franchise* appears in the pages devoted to the Men's League for Women's Suffrage, with no reference to the NUWSS; this is especially noteworthy given the reports of discussions about the NUWSS's relationship to the paper at this time (18 Feb 1909: 415). Even the direct reference to the *Englishwoman* and the *Common Cause* in Clementina Black's review of the progress of the suffrage movement in 1909 casts both publications as developments in the "movement," making no specific mention of the NUWSS (*Englishwoman*, Jan 1910: 255). She highlights the success of the *Englishwoman* in reaching a wider public of readers who read "not for the sake of any interest in Women's Suffrage, but for the sake of being interested" and notes the later arrival of the *Common Cause* as yet another source of necessary information for the "constitutionalist," claiming that "In intellectual calibre both organs stand well above the average level of their contemporaries" (Jan 1910: 256). Certainly the members of the editorial team belonged to the NUWSS and, more specifically, to the London Society for Women's Suffrage (the LSWS was the largest of the constituent societies forming the NUWSS) for which a

full-page advertisement began to appear regularly in November 1909 on the inside of the journal's red cover. Neither of the entries for the LSWS and the NUWSS in the *Suffrage Annual and Women's Who's Who* makes any reference to their papers or organs (R., A. J. 1913). The journal's connections to the LSWS are discussed below in greater detail in the context of the war.

In these ways one might argue that the journal's status as an unofficial organ of the NUWSS was taken for granted, but that only makes it more surprising that major studies of the constitutionalist campaign and its leaders have paid hardly any attention to it. Holton (1986) and Pugh (2000) do not even list it, while Calvini-Lefebvre (2008), Hume (1982) and Vellacott (1993, 2007) cite articles in it, but offer no information about the journal itself. Millicent Fawcett's presence as a contributor in the first issue would also have signalled the journal's sympathies and alliances, but she sheds no light on it in her accounts of the movement. In fact, in her memoir, she makes a passing reference to an item in the journal which she describes "as quoted by Miss Lowdnes in her valuable magazine, *The Englishwoman*" (1925: 227). In his biography of Fawcett, Rubinstein refers to the *Englishwoman* in relation to her contribution to the suffrage press, noting she wrote 25 articles for the 144 issues of the journal, some of which were turned into pamphlets by the NUWSS. Apart from references to other articles she wrote for the journal and the fact that it was run by her "pro-war allies" he offers no other significant information about the publication or her relationship to it. Given she remained the president of the NUWSS, one might expect a stronger acknowledgment of the journal's role or status, unless the connection itself was being deliberately effaced.

The only sustained discussion of the *Englishwoman* in the scholarly literature to date is Gemma Bristow's article on Richard Aldington's poems published in the journal in 1912. In attempting to trace Aldington's poetry, Bristow situates the *Englishwoman* in relation to other publishing venues, distinguishing it from its "ideological rival" the *Freewoman*, and describing it as "oriented towards a middle/upper-class readership . . . and away from the more violent and anarchistic manifestations of its cause" (2006: 6). It is significant that Bristow approaches the journal from the context of literary history, rather than suffrage or women's political history, underscoring the potential value of the *Englishwoman* for recovery work in literary and cultural history.

Obtaining a real sense of the 'feel' of the periodical is an issue for today's researcher when the fragility of the paper copies means that many journals are available only in bound form or on microfiche,

minus covers and advertisements. This deficiency is a common one for periodicals as these items were routinely removed for binding either by publishers or by libraries. The bound versions of the *Englishwoman* hold few visual clues that it was a suffrage publication. In the original versions of the review there were advertisements for suffrage books, items, and the activities of organizations such as the LSWS, the NUWSS, and others.

As a suffrage magazine, the *Englishwoman* distanced itself from more obvious forms of movement media. The unsigned tribute to the paper in the *Woman's Leader* in 1921 claims:

It came to the Suffrage movement at the time when its only other papers were purely propagandist and made no appeal at all to general interests. *The Common Cause* of 1909, and *Votes for Women*, which were its chief sister publications, were very different in kind and intention. They were useful to the movement from within; *The Englishwoman* went without, and carried the doctrine (well wrapped in attractive papers) to the outside world.

(7 Jan 1921: 1037)

Indeed, the fact that it was regularly advertised in the "Contents of the Magazines" pages and reviewed in the "Reviews and Magazines" feature of the *Times* on a monthly basis indicates that it kept very different company than the official organs. It appeared and was reviewed alongside *Nineteenth Century*, *Contemporary Review*, *National Review*, *Fortnightly Review*, and the *English Review* in the *Times*, as well as in other reviews, including the *New Age*. These endorsements clearly mattered and early ads for the *Englishwoman* regularly featured the line:

Of articles dealing with women and their interests, pride of place must be given to the contents of *The Englishwoman*.

– TIMES

Its status and quality as a review ensured that it could gain a wider audience for a comprehensive treatment of issues pertaining to women. The back cover of the first issue proudly reproduced laudatory reviews from leading titles in the liberal leaning press. The *Westminster Gazette* claimed that the *Englishwoman's* "aim is excellently carried out in this first number" and that it "contrives to be readable and interesting without sacrificing the propagandist purpose with which it has come into existence." Similarly, the extract from the *Manchester Guardian* praised

its scope and linked its cultural contributions to a rebranding of the suffrage cause: "Clearly, it appears, the movement appeals to those who care for what is beautiful and vital, and, with a fine body of artists in its service, that ancient association of something dowdy and ludicrous with the woman who seeks enfranchisement will be finally discredited."

For these reasons, the journal's obscurity poses methodological and ideological questions about why it has not proven to be a greater source of interest to periodical history or a source for historians of the women's movement, especially once one tackles these dense and lengthy volumes. Perhaps its own attempt to distance itself from the active side of campaigning has proven a greater problem for readers now than it was for readers at the time.

Finding a niche in a crowded print market

The journal announced itself in the preface to its first number in February 1909: "THE ENGLISHWOMAN is intended to reach the cultured public, and bring before it, in a convincing and moderate form, the case for the Enfranchisement of Women" (1) The stress on moderation was part of the tone it seemed determined to set, noting it would undertake its work "by securing the sympathy and holding the attention of that public which is interested in letters, art, and culture generally; and by a wise, fair, and decorous marshalling of the facts" (2). This may have been an effective way to invite readers in and to serve up analysis that was certainly as hard hitting as that found in other reviews and organs at the time. The *Anti-Suffrage Review* described it as "gentle and readable" (Aug 1909: 2) even though it offered repeated and pointed criticism of the antis. The *New Age* described the first number as "quiet and dignified in tone" followed by an account of Fawcett's article which "deals trenchantly with the very sloppy, sentimental prejudice and the few arguments that anti-Suffragists have ever advanced" (4 Feb 1909: 295). The *Westminster Gazette*, quoted on the back cover of the first issue of the *Englishwoman*, claims that this same piece by Mrs. Fawcett is argued with "sweetness and light." The journal successfully managed a tension between its polite facade and the frankness of its content.

The editorial committee assumed that the active supporters of the *Englishwoman* were "for the most part those who believe in constitutional methods and no other methods [would] be officially advocated in the paper" (Feb 1909: 2). It was committed to the suffrage cause, but to

no political party, and welcomed submissions from both sexes. Its chief features would be:

- References made in Parliament to the Women's Movement, ordered and complete, with explanatory but not critical comments.
- Articles by experts on those trades in which women are engaged, treated as far as possible from the women's point of view.
- Short stories, poems, scientific articles, and short plays.
- Contributions in French printed in French, and from German and Italian sources translated.
- Criticisms of music, painting, sculpture and current literature, including dramatic literature, French, German, and Italian books, and the most important magazines.
- Special articles from time to time on the progress of the Women's Movement in other countries besides our own (Feb 1909).

This was an ambitious agenda and the journal stressed its objectivity and openness "to discussion on any of the views expressed in the signed articles, with which the Editorial Committee in no way identifies itself" (Feb 1909).

The magazine advertised itself on its back cover as "The only monthly review devoted to the interests of women" (Nov 1915) and throughout its run was managed mainly by women. Management by women did not mean that the *Englishwoman* devoted itself to female interests only. From the outset the review emphasized that its audience would be the general public, noting "as the world is made up of men and women, and they work together in real life, nothing much is to be gained by dissociating them violently in literature, and, indeed, much has been lost by dissociating them violently in the conduct of life" (Feb 1909: 2). The appeal to a wide audience was part and parcel of the approach to the issue of women's suffrage, which the journal made very clear was "not one apart from the ordinary interests of life, or one that only interests a struggling minority," and so it was promised that the magazine would deal with "broad general principles, and [would] be inspired from the first page to the last by one continuous policy, which is to further the Enfranchisement of Women" (Feb 1909: 2).

The editorial committee offered instant recognition in terms of public reputations and affiliations to leagues or political parties. The committee consisted of: "The Lady Frances Balfour, Lady Strachey, Miss Cicely Hamilton, Miss Lowndes, Mrs. Grant Richards (*Editor*)." They represented a well-connected panel with credentials spanning political

activism and artistic accomplishments. Whitelaw refers to Lady Balfour and Lady Strachey as "two of the most redoubtable members of the NUWSS" and argues that the presence of such women on the editorial committee was "a powerful argument in constitutionalist terms" (93). Cicely Hamilton, an actress-turned playwright and novelist, was co-founder of the Women Writers' Suffrage League and of the Actresses' Franchise League. As an activist, she was considerably more radical in her views on the relations between the sexes than her fellow committee members. Whitelaw suggests she may have been "attracted by the serious approach to art, literature and politics which the *Englishwoman* adopted and recognised that any contribution which she made to it would reach a wider audience, one different from that which enjoyed her articles in the suffrage press" (92). By 1915 Hamilton was replaced by Edith Palliser, an experienced suffrage campaigner, who was involved with the LSWS, and had funded and edited the *Women's Suffrage Record* for the NUWSS between 1903 and 1906. Mary Lowndes, a successful glass artist, was a founder of the Artists' Suffrage League and became an executive member of the LSWS. She was the designer of many of the banners carried in the June 1908 NUWSS procession and through this and her subsequent design activities she is credited with creating a corporate image for the suffrage cause. Lowndes was the most frequent contributor of the group to the pages of the *Englishwoman*, and in the later years of the magazine may have been its financial backer. Her efforts appear to have been responsible for keeping the magazine afloat through the World War I years. Mrs. (Elisina) Grant Richards was the first wife of the publisher, Grant Richards, and she was the initial editor of the *Englishwoman*.⁶⁶ Her status as the founding editor likely gave her some latitude and, not surprisingly, she was the most overtly opinionated of the editors of the magazine.

The journal styled itself, in its physical aspects, on successful mainstream reviews such as the *Nineteenth Century* and the *Fortnightly Review* and, like them, it would cover a broad range of topics including the arts and culture. In this print milieu, with its profusion of publications, both suffrage and otherwise, the *Englishwoman* vied for subscribers. The title and the open declaration of support for the suffrage cause were an announcement of difference from the masculinist cast of these other mainstream reviews. As for other suffrage publications, because the *Englishwoman* was a monthly magazine, it was able to distinguish itself as different by claiming that the distance of time allowed it to deliver a more considered overview of events and ideas than suffrage weeklies

were able to do. It also differed from them in being outward looking and committed to reasoned persuasion:

We would reply to a friendly criticism that in *The Englishwoman*, a Suffrage magazine, the word Suffrage does not appear on every page. There is no doubt an irresistible coercion [*sic*] about a word or sentence repeated constantly in never-varying form. But the efficacy of such methods depends on whether the victim has a choice in laying himself open to the attack... We believe that prejudice only divides the thoughtful non-Suffragist and Suffrage; and we wish to convince him, not to bully him, into assent.

(Nov 1909: 1–2)

This statement was not simply good business, but also the defence of a moderate constitutional approach to achieving women's rights and perhaps an implicit criticism of the more aggressive tactics advocated by the Pankhursts and the WSPU. The decision not to cover the news and events of the suffrage organizations in the magazine also meant that it could avoid taking a stand on issues it wished to ignore.

At the price of one shilling the *Englishwoman* joined company with magazines such as the popular monthly *Cornhill*, which sold for 12 pence (Brake 2000: 254–55). As is noted below in the chapter on the *Freewoman*, the editor, Dora Marsden, strategically priced her publication at well above the going rate for other suffragist publications in order to distinguish it from them. The *Englishwoman* was regarded as a quality journal and sported a red cover throughout its run which was remembered fondly by its supporters and praised even by the *Anti-Suffrage Review* as “well printed and brightly bound” (Feb 1909: 2). The business activities of the *Englishwoman* were operated under the auspices of an incorporated company, The Englishwoman Ltd., in which both men and women held shares. Although the periodical ceased publication in early 1921 its business entity, The Englishwoman Ltd., was still in existence in 1929 as evidenced by Mary Lowndes' will which bequeathed her shares in the corporation to her companion, Barbara Forbes (Crawford 359).⁶⁷

The ‘dignified tone’ of the *Englishwoman* did not prevent it from being aggressive in the selling of advertisements and solicitations to potential subscribers. Advertisements ran in size from an eighth of a page to a full page and the May 1910 issue contained a note about reserving space for small ads dealing with Educational, Literary, and Professional matters and Houses to Let. The advertisements numbering up to seven

pages or more plus cover space appeared in both the back and front of the magazine and were, in the first few years, printed on shiny stock and included insertions for a wide variety of products and services ranging from Nestlé (hair services under "Royal Patronage") to once a week milk delivery, educational institutes, Twilight Sleep, exclusive women's fashions and "Practical Blouses for Women Workers," stationery, free accounting services, suffrage plays, magazines and books. In the first number Grant Richards, the publisher, took a page entitled "Books for Englishwomen" which included such titles as *Fifty Years of Modern Painting*, *Montaigne's Essays*, *The Heritage of Dress*, *The Perfect Garden*, *Health Strength and Happiness* and *The Wagner Stories*. There were also notices of theatrical performances, shops purveying tea, coffee and canned fruit, and an insertion by a widow lady with an invalid son selling bon-bons. Printers and publishers and other journals advertised in the *Englishwoman* as well. The latter include *The British Journal of Nursing*, *Women's Franchise*, *The Common Cause*, *The Eugenics Review*, *The Ladies' Court Book*, *The Englishwoman's Review*, *The Gentlewoman*, *The Review of Reviews* and *The Tramp*, a new open air magazine. The quantity and the quality of the advertisements suggest that The Englishwoman Ltd. was able to reach a broad range of advertisers and was effective both in its solicitation of their business and in encouraging readers to give advertisers their patronage. It is also likely that this success was partially due to the proprietors of those businesses who were sympathetic to the campaign for women's rights and viewed their advertisements as a way of supporting the cause.

In common with the suffrage periodicals, the *Englishwoman* was diligent in its hunt for subscribers and made sophisticated use of its publication to spread the word. The periodical offered free specimen copies of back numbers to potential readers, promoted sales of bound editions, and included tear-out forms on the front page of the magazine to request a copy and/or subscription. The publisher would send back copies postage free "to any address, English or foreign" but postage for the current number was requested at 1s.3d. At the bottom of the page were tear-out reminder slips about the *Englishwoman*, complete with instructions to "Tear this off and Put it In your Purse" (May 1910). The magazine consistently encouraged its subscribers to help in expanding circulation:

We desire that every educated woman should have a copy for careful examination, and we would enlist the sympathetic co-operation of our readers to the extent of asking them to give us, on the postcard

to be found in this issue, the names and addresses of any friends to whom a presentation copy might be sent. This will entail no obligation on those whose names are given, and it will certainly afford them some pleasure and interest.

(Feb 1914: 228)

Male readers do not appear to have been included in the subscription appeals; the assumption presumably being that increasing subscriptions to women would by definition increase the number of men who read the magazine.

No doubt central to its success and appeal was its ability to attract a wide range of contributors, many with high profiles in politics and the arts, including John Galsworthy, John Masefield, G. B. Shaw, Laurence Housman, Millicent Garrett Fawcett, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Philip Snowden, Eva Gore-Booth, and Clementina Black. The tribute in *Woman's Leader* suggests the *Englishwoman* was a "novelty" when it first came out, remained for years "the only serious shilling monthly magazine" and gave "steadily and constantly... what no other paper has so much as attempted" (7 Jan 1921: 1037). Over its 12 years, it did indeed straddle different sectors of the periodical press in important ways. While its political mandate and editorial content overlaps with the suffrage organs, it provided wider scope for the discussion of those particular issues. There is a good case to be made that the *Englishwoman* was the early twentieth-century version of women's feminist periodicals that were funded and edited by women in response to the suffrage and equality concerns of the nineteenth-century women's movement. For example, there are clear signs of a continuity of interest between *The Englishwoman's Review* which began publication in 1866. It is also worth comparing the *Englishwoman* with the *Englishwoman's Review* to appreciate how much more readable and of greater general interest the former is, even though the two journals shared similar features and interests. It is perhaps no coincidence that the "Farewell" to readers of the *Englishwoman's Review* was followed by a full-page advertisement for the *Englishwoman* (15 July 1910) (Figure 3). At the other end, the demise of the *Englishwoman* occurred around the same time as the appearance of *Woman's Leader* and *Time and Tide*. These titles represented a persistent attempt to provide a larger review format for debates about women's issues from the late nineteenth century through to the interwar years.

ENGLISHWOMAN'S REVIEW.] *Advertisements.* [JULY 15th, 1910.

"Of articles dealing with women and their interests, pride of place must be given to the contents of *The Englishwoman*."—TIMES.

THE ENGLISHWOMAN

A Monthly Magazine to further the
—Enfranchisement of Women.—

Among the Contributors are—

LAURENCE ALMA-TADEMA	JOHN MASEFIELD
GRANVILLE BARKER	LADY MCLAREN
PROF. GUSTAVE LE BON	WILLIAM NICHOLSON
MAX BEERBOHM	LADY ONSLOW
HAROLD COX, M.P.	CHARLES RICKETTS
MRS. HENRY FAWCETT	THOMAS SECCOMBE
JOHN GALSWORTHY	BERNARD SHAW
LADY GROVE	PHILIP SNOWDEN, M.P.
CICELY HAMILTON	FLORA ANNIE STEEL
MAURICE HEWLETT	G. S. STREET
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DEWAR HOUSE, 11, HAYMARKET, S.W.

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SIDGWICK & JACKSON, Ltd., 3, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.

Figure 3 Advertisement for *The Englishwoman* (*Englishwoman's Review*, 15 July 1910)

The *Englishwoman*: Anatomy of a feminist review

The founders of the *Englishwoman* had lofty ambitions and continued to publish and write in support of women's rights even after the suffrage was won. Out of their energetic effort came the sheer volume of material that produces such an obstacle for researchers. For much of its life the monthly ran to more than 90 pages and on occasion up to nearly 140. The only serious decline occurred between July 1918 and March 1919 when the page numbers plummeted to 48, but recovered somewhat to 80 pages for the remainder of the run. When these pages are multiplied by publication over 12 years, the achievement is impressive – in terms of quality and variety – so the task of producing a meaningful and accurate case study is daunting. The challenge is complicated by the fact that working on this material is akin to coming into the middle of a highly nuanced conversation; this kind of referential discourse challenges the researcher to gauge the irony and veiled criticism that underlie the positions taken by the contributors. Given the dearth of existing commentary for this body of material, this case study will rely more directly on the journal itself to reveal its character, paying close attention to the ways in which it engaged its readers, as well as to the ways in which it monitored and interacted with other publications. The overall shape of the *Englishwoman* changed very little and its willingness to allow the expression of various and conflicting views is evident from the outset. The table of contents for the February 1909 number (totaling 94 pages) included the following:

PREFACE

IN PARLIAMENT . . . *An M.P.*

INVOCATION . . . *John Masefield*

'MEN ARE MEN AND WOMEN ARE WOMEN' . . . *Mrs. Henry Fawcett*

AN OLD SOLDIER . . . *Tudor Ralph Castle*

BOW AND SPEAR

ECHOES

POINTS FOR REFLECTION . . . *Harold Cox, M.P.*

THE OPEN LETTER: THE UNEMPLOYED AND THE UNFED

SECURITY . . . *John Galsworthy*

MRS. VANCE . . . *Cicely Hamilton*

ESSAYS ON MASTERPIECES. – 1 *Royall Tyler*

OPERA IN ENGLAND . . . *John Powell*

THE SILENT COMPANY OF BOOKS . . . *E.G.R.*

By taking a close look at the features appearing in the first issue in February 1909, we hope to offer a sense of the variety of material and the concerns and interests of the journal. The editorial committee established its distance from the signed articles in the preface, leaving the unsigned features to represent their own views. The political commentary will be examined first, followed by a discussion of the literary contributions and reviews of the arts.

IN PARLIAMENT

The first example of this feature, signed "An M.P.," offered a detailed account of the treatment of private members bills in Parliament, outlining the advantages and disadvantages of these kinds of measures, warning that too much store should not be placed in these initiatives, given the process. This lengthy analysis prefaces the discussion of a series of specific bills relating to the interests of women. He covers everything from bills to confer political rights, and the regulation of women's employment (barmaids, domestic servants, home work, sweated industries, nurses, shop assistants, teachers), to those related to women's property, children, and divorce. He considers the implications and possible advantages these bills would have in practical terms for the workers/women involved.

The article chronicles and comments on the machinery of the parliamentary process, from what was clearly an 'insider' view. This is not scintillating copy, but it is thorough and informative and was assumed to be of interest to the readers the journal was attempting to attract. It may also have been deliberately didactic, working to educate readers by providing this kind of information. The review in the pages of the Men's League in *Women's Franchise* devoted a paragraph to summarizing this article, appreciating how the bills were "admirably and simply explained," but suggested a subtext to the piece, claiming: "the M.P. also explains the insuperable difficulties which beset the present members, who endeavor to pass a Bill of a contentious character; and those Suffragists who have so rashly condemned Mr. Stanger would do well to read and ponder over his words" (18 Feb 1909: 415).⁶⁸ The value or effectiveness of private members bills had become a point of contention within the women's movement. As a feature, "In Parliament" lasted roughly a year and the journal announced in January 1910 that there would be a hiatus until more issues related to women appeared on the parliamentary agenda. When it reappeared it retained its position as the lead article. Occasionally it even included details concerning voting lists in relation to particular bills. Its frequency and

position in the table of contents indicates the value the journal placed on a detailed diary of the parliamentary process and implicitly underscores the *Englishwoman's* commitment to constitutional solutions, establishing its priorities firmly in the territory of political reform.

'MEN ARE MEN AND WOMEN ARE WOMEN'

Millicent Garrett Fawcett contributed this essay to the first issue. Drawing her title from the well-worn anti-slogan, she addresses the problem that "For the first time in the forty-two years of the Women's Suffrage movement its advocates have to face an organized and manifestly influential opposition" (17). She warns that no matter how easy the arguments of the anti-suffragists may be to refute, they represent "a power notwithstanding their arguments" and reminds her readers of their appeal to a variety of groups. Fawcett addresses the implications of specific anti-suffrage arguments in detail, drawing on history to demonstrate the ways in which earlier reform acts had led to improved conditions and educational opportunities for workers and agricultural laborers. She argues ultimately for the positive influence women would bring to politics after being enfranchised, claiming she has "endeavoured to point out how much of our political history is the outcome of social changes" (30) and relates this to current struggles undertaken by women. She systematically reveals the contradictions inherent in the main arguments posited by antis and argues that "Our friends, the anti-suffragists, ought to choose which horse they are going to ride; but, instead of making their choice and sticking to it, they show extraordinary agility, worthy of circus-riders, in skipping from one horse to another" (31).

The arguments are not new; they can be traced back to her response to the antis' appeal against suffrage in 1889. But the *Englishwoman* offered Fawcett a platform to write at greater length and with the full sympathy of her editors who were her allies in the constitutional campaign. Her presence, up front, in the premiere issue sent a clear message about who the journal regarded as leading voices in the debate on suffrage and no other figure could have better represented the 'decorous' tone the *Englishwoman* had promised. She concludes with an appeal to "common sense, supported by justice and experience" (31).

The article is part of the tradition of essays to be found in the established press dealing with the contradictions and hypocrisy of arguments against the extension of the franchise to women. In spite of the temptation to ridicule the antis (the circus image remains a polite example), Fawcett demonstrated the need to take counter-movement framing seriously, because the anti-arguments continued to resonate for

many at the time. In fact the need to address these counter-movement arguments may have been even more important in a journal like the *Englishwoman* than in the official organs because it was more likely to be read outside the movement and was reviewed more regularly in the agenda-setting press of the day. This may also help to explain why the journal addressed anti-suffrage arguments as frequently as it did, as well as why the *Anti-Suffrage Review* kept close tabs on it in turn.

BOW AND SPEAR

The title signals the skewering intentions of this editorial intervention and sometimes referred to itself as editorial notes. It traced the progress of the cause in terms of its profile and currency, using evidence in the media as an indication of the attention the cause was finally getting, noting with irony:

We seem to be coming to grips at last. The monthly magazines are occupied with the advisability of inducing Suffragists to desist from their efforts, and the daily press seems at last to have grown aware of the possible importance of the women's movement as a factor in practical politics.

(Feb 1909: 33)

The first instance of "Bow and Spear" reproduces statements from three separate articles in a recent issue of the *National Review*, all of which express opposition to women's suffrage. The extracts appear in italics and are followed by commentary. At other times, this section drew from statements, reports, or simply raised issues related to developments in or attitudes toward the suffrage question or the woman question more generally. By January 1911 Maud Meredith took over as assistant editor and the feature changed to "Problems of the Day" and focused more specifically on issues of social justice, particularly in relation to problems of women's work, children, and education.

ECHOES

This editorial feature resembled "Bow and Spear" in many ways, even the strategy of including a variety of items separated by a large asterisk – a kind of political titbits. For instance, the first appearance of the feature includes eight separate extracts, drawn from publications ranging from the *Times* to a report from the Departmental Committee inquiry into working conditions for shop assistants, and dealing with subjects as various as: the high rates of mortality among illegitimate children in institutions; the censure of a single woman for the death of her infant

while in a workhouse; a letter attributing ‘suffragettism’ to the disuse of whipping in schools, suggesting that “political women can always be cured by a vigorous application of the birch”; statistics from the *Classified Directory to the Metropolitan Charities* outlining the income of leading charities and figures for the number of paupers receiving relief; an extract from an interview with Dr. Tekla Hultin, woman member of the Finnish Parliament, published in the *Manchester Guardian*; and an extract from the *Daily Chronicle* which sums up the main points of a recent Home Office Committee regarding the implications for women of the evils of drunkenness and urges women of all classes to be involved in active propaganda. The amount of commentary devoted to each item varies, and the connections between these otherwise disparate pieces is implied rather than stated. For instance, the juxtaposition of the first two items and the highlighting of specific elements is clearly deliberate – the case of the young mother reinforcing the need for the experience and advice of women in dealing effectively with the problem of infant mortality in institutions. The underlying point is that until women are involved in making and implementing the law, they will not be treated fairly.

Not only does this section include a grab bag of items, but the commentary, when it appears, shifts between the first-person singular and plural (“I” and “we”). The extracts are drawn from a wide variety of publications and sources, national and international. The subjects range from developments related to women in local government to the achievements of women and suffrage campaigns abroad. We see similar tendencies in this kind of reporting in the suffrage organs, but again here there is greater scope for the length and number of items, as well as for commentary about them. Both “Bow and Spear” and “Echoes” indicate the *Englishwoman’s* involvement with the press of the day, as well as its ability to monitor developments in a variety of social and political institutions at the local and national levels. This method of identifying and publicizing key issues and developments remained a constant throughout the life of the magazine.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

The article, by Harold Cox, M.P., starts off with an apology for raising fundamental criticisms of the suffrage campaign:

It may seem a little ungracious that an article destined to appear in the first number of a new suffrage magazine should be devoted to the consideration of the difficulties in the way of woman’s suffrage, but

until these difficulties are faced, woman's suffrage can make no real progress.

(44)

Cox claims that the main weakness of the suffrage movement, as with all movements, is that it thinks about itself as isolated from all other considerations. The two main pro-suffrage arguments he challenges are that "the franchise is necessary to women for their protection against unjust laws, and that by means of the franchise women could improve their economic position" (45). He clarifies that he speaks as an advocate. After outlining his criticisms, he states why women should be enfranchised, positing suggestions that would make women's suffrage both feasible and inevitable.

What is interesting here is the attempt to stand back, to consider the campaign in a larger context. The criticisms are serious ones and certainly open to debate. Not surprisingly, the *Anti-Suffrage Review* seized on this very article as a vindication of anti-suffrage arguments, using it to discredit the claims Fawcett made in the same issue:

oddly enough, in what is perhaps the most striking contribution to the number – a short paper by Mr. Harold Cox, M.P. – the main arguments put forward by Mrs. Fawcett are shrewdly and rather scornfully answered by her chief coadjutor, and Mr. Cox strongly supports two of the chief contentions of Mrs. Fawcett's opponents...

(Feb 1909: 2)

One might wonder why the journal would have opened itself up to this kind of criticism. But a central part of its strategy from the outset was to encourage debate and to provide an arena for multiple and sometimes conflicting perspectives, a strategy reminiscent of the *Freewoman's* self-description as an 'open review.'

This could be seen over the years in relation to issues such as adult vs. women's suffrage, the social vs. economic bases of women's oppression, and the matter of equal pay. These varying and conflicting positions were not always debated in the same issue of the journal, but emerge over time. They represent an ongoing debate and dialogue between contributors themselves, and between the journal and its readership, but that makes it very difficult to draw conclusions or to pin down the journal's political stance on these kinds of issues. For instance, Elisina Grant Richards declared her personal stance in favor of the demand for equal suffrage, which was not necessarily endorsed by the journal or shared

by other contributors.⁶⁹ The range of opinion did not go unnoticed and a review in *Women's Franchise* suggested both the value and pitfalls of being genuinely open to debate:

We are glad to announce that there is every probability that *The Englishwoman* will continue . . . friends have offered to support it by taking shares . . . The policy of the review in respect of certain vexed questions has, no doubt, stood in its way; it is, however, admitted that differences of opinion on some points is inevitable, and that a definite and important purpose is served by a review such as *The Englishwoman* . . .

(10 June 1909: 630)

This strategy was one that other forms of movement media – official organs of the suffrage leagues – were less likely to engage in. The review, as genre, allowed for more latitude for debate than dedicated and partisan publications. The *Englishwoman*, without a declared organizational base, distanced itself from the day-to-day activities of the campaign, positioning itself above the fray. Its willingness to accommodate conflicting positions means that reading a journal like the *Englishwoman* in an isolated way can be very misleading. The contents were not always predictable because they developed in an iterative way.

THE OPEN LETTER: THE UNEMPLOYED AND UNFED

The Open Letter is intended to provide ground for the free discussion of the most varied points of view. We invite contributions in this form from the general public. One or more letters may be printed at the discretion of the Editorial Committee.

The letter, signed E.J.W., argues that the state should be made responsible for the unemployed and that charities have only served to “swell the ranks of the unemployed” (51). It proposes the supply of bread for all who require it and tries to bring home to the consciousness of readers how pitiless and cruel are the conditions in which the poor live today. The article makes no specific reference to women; instead, its focus is a critique of middle-class charity and ignorance of the conditions of the poor.

As a feature, “The Open Letter” came and went (this may have depended on the availability of contributions), but when it did appear it was always prefaced as above. There is little evidence of how decisions were taken regarding contributions, but the disclaimer, which

became stronger over time, ensured some distance between editors and the contributors. But what is interesting is the way in which the material included in other sections of the journal could be used to situate or offer a perspective on the open letter. For example, the statistics on charities in the "Echoes" section of the same issue are followed by an editorial comment: "All these figures have a bearing on the 'Open Letter' we print to-day, and we publish them with the idea of assisting people who wish to form some approximate idea as to the feasibility and pertinence of suggestions contained in the letter" (42). Again, this relationship is implied, but not stated, leaving the reader to process the statistics indicating the sheer volume of charitable giving and the scale of the problem of poverty. The inclusion in this first issue of both the statistical evidence and the call for state intervention signals the journal's persistent attention to the issues of poverty.

Arts and culture in the *Englishwoman*

In addition to the essays and editorial content, the journal published original literary contributions and reviews of art, music, theatre, and books in every issue. The premiere issue featured "Invocation," a short poem by John Masefield, "An Old Soldier," a humorous poem by Tudor R. Castle, "Security," a short story by John Galsworthy, and "Mrs. Vance," a short play by Cicely Hamilton, none of which makes any direct reference to suffrage. As the table of contents indicates, these pieces punctuate the political sections of the magazine. About Galsworthy's story and Hamilton's play, the review in the *Manchester Guardian* (quoted on the back cover of the journal) observed:

there is nothing in these [literary works] to suggest that lives which are awry will be smoothed out when Mr. Stanger's or some other Bill becomes law. It is a more subtle suggestion, wisely made, and it could hardly come in a magazine of lesser scope, that this Women's Suffrage movement is part of a greater one that concerns all of us who care for the interest and variety and responsibility of life.

The inclusion of Hamilton's play is noteworthy in relation to this question of scope. It is an odd little play about a man whose wife is possibly dying; his exchange with the attending doctor reveals she is an alcoholic. When the doctor leaves to attend to her, we learn the husband and governess have been having an affair. Their future together hinges on the wife's fate, and the play concludes with news of her recovery.

Women's Franchise claimed that it "treats a painful subject impressively" and the *Westminster Gazette* referred to it as a "somewhat morbid one-act play."⁷⁰ It is indeed an unusual play for anyone familiar with Hamilton's drama from the period. There is some ambiguity in terms of for whom Hamilton evokes sympathy in the situation. It also seems to refer back to the extract in "Echoes" on the problem of inebriates in the Home Office Committee report, about which the editorial commentary regrets, "Women are, alas! themselves offenders, and they are also those who suffer most from the evils of drunkenness" (43). Whitelaw claims the play was first performed by the Play Actors in 1907. She suggests it was surprising that the *Englishwoman* published the play and speculates that "perhaps the committee wished to show its new readers how diverse its offerings were to be," adding that the subject matter "could certainly be accused of outraging conventional standards of morality" (Whitelaw 94).

In addition to the original literary contributions, this issue included the first installment of "Essays on Masterpieces" by Royall Tyler, "Opera in England" by John Powell, and "Silent Company of Books" by Elisina Grant Richards. The first of these provides generalist content on contemporary art and music in England, with Tyler taking up issues of amateur painters, art collectors, and art and the public, while Powell laments the absence of English opera. Both articles address issues pertaining to current trends, tastes, and the snobbish undervaluation of home talent. These articles could have appeared in any other review with an interest in culture. Elisina Grant Richards' book reviews are decidedly more idiosyncratic, ranging from some French plays and books to histories, essays, English novels, and a collection of lectures on woman in industry. Perhaps the way to make sense of the selection are her words of introduction: "A wiser mind than ours can best know the particular degree of influence which books and the theatre exercise on contemporary opinions" (87). In the subsequent issues, the journal paid increasing attention to theatre, beginning with "Woman in the Modern Drama" April 1909 and it remained an important feature, with Marjorie Strachey as a frequent contributor.

As a whole, these cultural offerings constitute a remarkable body of original and critical work rarely drawn upon in the arts scholarship on this period.⁷¹ While official organs included poems, shorts stories, and plays, as well as reviews of books, art, and theatre, they tended (although not exclusively) to be more directly related to the campaign and the subjects of interest to supporters. The arts coverage in the *Englishwoman* was clearly intended to appeal to the 'cultured public' it claimed to

address, and these essays presupposed a fluency and engagement with cultural forms such as opera, painting, and academic literature. At the same time, Mary Lowndes was also instrumental in taking the journal's interest in art beyond the pages of the publication, and well beyond the world of high culture. A talented stained-glass artist, she organized the *Englishwoman* exhibition of Art and Handicrafts on an annual basis.⁷² The tribute in *Woman's Leader* devoted a whole paragraph to the discussion of this important annual event:

It is now a meeting place for those many women who are carrying on the traditions of craftsmanship, and a centre for the interchange of ideas . . . It displays annually the progress of the enterprise of that type of woman worker who has found or made the opportunity to use her hands and her brain and her artistic gifts all at once, under conditions of her own arrangement. These workers . . . carry on a most valuable warfare against the mechanical goods of mass production and keep alive the spirit of craftsmanship in a commercially sordid age.

(7 Jan 1921: 1037)

The continuation of the exhibition in spite of the demise of the journal was described as a source of great satisfaction and part of the important legacy of the *Englishwoman*.

Women's movements, suffrage, and war

The Editorial Committee of *The Englishwoman*, recognizing that at the present moment the first aim of all British subjects must be to prosecute a just war to its appointed end . . . have decided to suspend for the present advocacy of the Enfranchisement of Women and to co-operate as far as may be in the general movement of women to play the part of citizens. For the present *The Englishwoman* . . . will be used to give publicity, so far as lies in its power, to various schemes and methods of relief work, and will endeavour to represent the opinion of the large number of women who feel to the full the horrors of war, who ardently desire peace, but who would not buy it as the price of honour.

(Sept 1914: 241)

This announcement, signed by the editorial committee, marked the first major shift in the direction of the journal since its founding in 1909. Discussion of the implications of current war and future

peace – and women’s roles in both – became a mainstay of the publication (Figure 4). However, this focus did not preclude ongoing attention to cultural coverage and literary contributions. Features, headings, and format remained quite consistent, except for changes in emphasis.⁷³ In January 1915 the *Englishwoman* also established an ‘Anaesthetic Fund’ for which it solicited donations and on which it reported its monthly successes. There was still nuanced debate on issues, but there was also a generally patriotic cast to the discussions, and uniformity of opinion that Germany was the aggressor in the war and that Britain, with its treaty obligations to France and imperative for self-defence, had the advantage of right on its side. The decision to support the war effort had important implications for the journal’s relationship with the suffrage campaign, with the NUWSS, and more generally with feminist debates in the context of the national crisis and international politics. True to its aims, the *Englishwoman* tried to steer a cautious course, and even though it continued to demonstrate a commitment to the open discussion of ideas, there is no question that it represented the conservative tendencies of the constitutionalist wing of the movement during the war years.

The divisions which already characterized the suffrage movement were further exacerbated by the onset of the war, as individuals and organizations were forced to make both practical and ideological decisions. Not only did particular organizations choose different courses of action, but some were internally divided between pacifist and patriotic tendencies. The two chief myths to have been discredited by suffrage scholarship in recent decades are that suffrage campaign activities were suspended once the war began, and that suffrage activists redirected all their energies into supportive roles in the war effort. As Margaret Kamester and Jo Vellacott argue, “Early twentieth-century feminism has often been seen so much in terms of the suffrage campaign that we seem to be expected to believe that with the coming of the war in 1914 feminists not only laid aside the struggle for the vote, but stopped thinking altogether” (1). They point to the works of feminist pacifists to “give the lie to this facile view” and identify 1915 as a pivotal and turbulent year in the growing conflicts between democratic pacifist feminists and patriotic suffragists. We would argue that any close reading of the suffrage press during the war years reinforces the extent to which discussion of the campaign and its implications for the progress of feminism remained a major preoccupation even for activists who supported the war effort.⁷⁴

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
BRITISH LABOUR AND THE WAR. Geo. N. Barnes, M.P. ...	89
OUR SOLDIERS AS PEACEMAKERS. Mrs. Henry Fawcett ...	96
PROBLEMS OF THE DAY: THE UTILISATION OF VOLUNTARY AID DETACHMENTS	101
MARTIAL HEROINES: AGOSTINA ZARAGOZA. Edith Palliser ...	109
THE SUBSTITUTES. Mary Lowndes	116
SOLDIERS' WIVES. Poem. Ethel Talbot	125
THE WORK OF THE CHILDREN'S CARE COMMITTEES. E. Chivers Davies	126
THE LITERARY TREATMENT OF COLOUR. J. W. Meredith ...	140
THE DAMES INFIRMIERES OF THE FRENCH RED CROSS SOCIETY. G. E.	149
POYNING'S. Poem. F. L. Ghey	156
LETTER FROM BELGIUM	157
JEANNE. Clarice Blakeley	162
ECHOES OF WAR	166
BOOK REVIEWS	173

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Figure 4 *The Englishwoman* (front cover, November 1914)

Considerable work has emerged on the women's movement, suffrage, and feminist pacifism in the context of World War I.⁷⁵ The purpose in this case study is not to retrace this extensive and complicated history, but to use the war to foreground some key issues which aid in situating the role and status of the *Englishwoman* as both a suffrage and feminist journal. The war caused major rifts in organizations at the time, illustrated most often by the case of the Pankhursts, as Emmeline and Christabel embraced a jingoistic patriotic rhetoric in stark contrast to the pacifist socialist Sylvia who campaigned for peace. Vellacott posits that while there might seem to be a logical consistency between suffrage militancy and the willingness to support the use of force in settling international disputes, there were nevertheless militants who were anti-war and she cites Naomi Black's suggestion that "a commitment to peace correlates more closely with pre-war commitment to democratic decision-making than it does with the use of non-militant methods" (1987: 86–87). The observation is important and complicates the case of the constitutionalist and supposedly democratic NUWSS. The divisions within the NU had begun before the war with attempts by the radical democratic suffragists to make the executive structures more representative. Vellacott details the process by which the LSWS (described as "small and large 'c' conservatives") lost their dominance on the NU executive, noting however that "the two cooperated with wary mutual respect until the war" (2007: 8). Elizabeth Crawford's account of the LSWS confirms this view: "In 1909 the London Society was forced to repel, at its annual general meeting, an attempt by militants to capture it and thereafter was firmly 'Non-Party and Constitutional' ... The perception was that the LSWS was less democratic and less open to the interests of the non-middle class than the rest of the NUWSS" (357).

This history of the NU's internal conflicts is important for two reasons.⁷⁶ First, it reminds us of the need to consider the heterogeneity of social movement organizations and to resist the easy reification of values which groups or individuals are assumed to uphold. Secondly, related directly to movement media, is the fact that the two papers which have come to be associated with the NU – the *Common Cause* and the *Englishwoman* – both began publication in 1909, a year during which the internal turmoil was brewing. Helena Swanwick, linked to the more radical wing of the organization, was the first editor of the *Common Cause*, while the editorial team and initial contributors to the *Englishwoman* were disproportionately represented by the LSWS. The implicit relationship between the LSWS and the *Englishwoman* has become more apparent to us in the process of examining the war

coverage and may help to clarify why the journal tended to efface organizational affiliation in its editorial content, but ran a regular advertisement for the LSWS on the inside cover.⁷⁷ The differences between these two publications are most striking in the first year of the war. It becomes clear from reading them against one another, that it would be a mistake to regard the *Englishwoman* as the unofficial organ of the NUWSS. It may have supported and reported on the NU's mobilization of resources to help the war effort, but it was reluctant to represent the diversity of opinion expressed within the organization about women's roles and responsibilities as feminists and pacifists.

Responses on the part of NU members to Britain's declaration of war differed significantly, and signs began to appear in its official organ in the early weeks. In her address "To the Members of the National Union" in the *Common Cause* (7 Aug 1914), Fawcett describes the war as the "greatest crisis" in the country's national history, and appeals to members of the NU to "bind ourselves together for the purpose of rendering the greatest possible aid to our country at this momentous epoch" (376). She acknowledges that "As long as there was any hope of peace most members . . . probably sought for peace and endeavoured to support those who were trying to maintain it" but asserts "we have another duty now" and concludes with "Let us show ourselves worthy of citizenship whether our claim to it be recognised or not" (376). Her address is directly followed by "What War Means," an account of the "Great Women's Meeting at Kingsway Hall" organized by and representing a number of groups including: the Women's Co-operative Guild, the National Federation of Women Workers, the Women's Labour League, the International Suffrage Alliance, and the NUWSS. Fawcett is reported as having spoken in favor of "concentrat[ing] every effort on meeting the calamity," while Helena Swanwick, who "voiced the National Union standpoint" reminded the audience that the NU had always declared that "force was no remedy . . . the great mass of women were on the side of peace" and she hoped that "by the way they met this crisis women would so establish their claim to enfranchisement that their husbands, lovers, brothers, sons would no longer seek to deny it" (7 Aug 1914: 377). The discrepancy between their statements is more apparent when one takes into account Swanwick's strong commitment to pacifism and the fact that she would later resign from the NU for this reason. The articles, placed side by side, suggest different perspectives and priorities.

The difference is reinforced by the general tenor of the Kingsway Hall meeting described in the report. The event assumed, "in accordance with the fundamental principles of Suffragism," that "women have an

equal right with men to speak and be heard” and the article reports that “Those hundreds of women had clearly come, with few exceptions, with the object only to protest with all the strength that was in them against war, and, above all, against the participation of Britain in a European War” (377). The speakers who were resigned and accepted the burden of war were “coldly received,” while all the “enthusiasm” was for those who “denounced the war, and called on all the women of Europe, even at the eleventh hour, to fling themselves between the combatants,” noting especially the “force of anti-war feeling among women of the working class” (377). The report in the *Common Cause* must have generated some anxiety since it issued a statement the following week, “Accepting Facts,” which clarified:

We are not going to enter into any discussion as to the rights and wrongs of British intervention in this war. Great Britain has gone to war. This is a British paper. We accept the war as our condition for the time being, and our immediate concern is to bear ourselves as good citizens under this condition.

(14 Aug 1914: 386)

The notice further reminded readers that the Kingsway Hall event had *not* been a meeting of the National Union, and as chair, Mrs. Fawcett “announced that each member was responsible only for what she herself said” (386). The anxiety was obviously felt in the back rooms, at the highest levels of the organization. Vellacott cites a letter from Lord Robert Cecil (a leading Conservative Unionist suffragist) written to Fawcett the day after the meeting expressing his,

great regret that you should have thought it right not only to take part in the ‘peace’ meeting last night but also have allowed the organisation of the National Union to be used for its promotion... the action seems so unreasonable under the circumstances as to shake my belief in the fitness of women to deal with great Imperial questions and I can only console myself by the belief that in this matter the National Union do not represent the opinions of their fellow country women.

(quoted in Vellacott 1987: 88)

The reason this incident is worth citing is because the lead article to follow the Editorial Announcement about the war in the *Englishwoman* in September 1914 is “The German War” by Robert Cecil. There is no

debate here regarding the necessity of and support for Britain's declaration of war. There is no sense of resignation and acceptance; rather, it fully endorses the need to "fight with all our wealth and all our strength" (250).

These different registers would characterize the coverage in the two publications well into the war. This is not to suggest the *Common Cause* was pacifist and the *Englishwoman* patriotic. The former dealt far more overtly and sympathetically with pacifist arguments and their implications for feminism. Regular articles as well as the presence and content of a correspondence section in the *Common Cause* made it possible to air a range of views expressed by both members and non-members in reaction to the NU's stance. N. O'Shea (presumably Norah O'Shea, an NU member and pacifist) sparked a vigorous debate with a letter rejecting women's "old time-honoured traditions of picking up the pieces" and called for support for a women's international peace movement (18 Sept 1914: 439). Letters in the following weeks expressed everything from outrage at O'Shea's suggestion to bring about the "early cessation of hostilities," to endorsement, including those torn between sympathy and resignation who recommended measures such as educational work to influence public opinion. These signed and unsigned contributions reveal how the pacifist/patriotic frame oversimplified (perhaps deliberately) the range of positions people actually held at the time.⁷⁸

If the *Common Cause* served as a forum for the heated debate taking place among members of the NU, and a means of chronicling the impact of these developments on the organization, the *Englishwoman* distanced itself. It did not avoid these highly contentious issues altogether, but when it dealt with them, it did so in indirect, even hypothetical, ways. For instance, Oliver Strachey (patriot and member of the LSWS) contributed a lead article in April 1915 on "The Implications of the Women's Suffrage Movement," basically arguing that peace propaganda at this time would be ineffective and would only hurt the suffrage cause. The vagueness with which he introduced the discussion can be seen in the following:

At the present moment there is in many quarters a strong feeling that women should come forward to protest with all their might against the use of force and arms to decide differences. We may agree. But it is also argued, as though it were the same thing, that the great Suffrage Societies should devote themselves, at least in part, to this object, and this seems to need consideration.

At times he seems more absorbed by the concept of 'implication' in abstract terms than the examples at hand, but ultimately, his point is that while there might be overlapping adherents to different causes, "equal political power for men and women does not imply either democracy or pacifism" (3). In a related example, he also claims "though we can say that Feminism includes and implies Women's Suffrage, we cannot say that Women's Suffrage implies Feminism" (4). Finally he urges: "We must not confuse our issues and pretend that everything is involved in everything else simply because we find our interests changing... if Suffrage Societies must stand still and wait, so indeed must all progress, all art, and all science" (10).

Helena Swanwick, devoted pacifist, offered a direct reply in the "Open Letter" the following month. The disclaimer explains that "THE ENGLISHWOMAN accepts no responsibility for the opinions expressed in the Open Letter, which is intended to provide ground for the free discussion of the most varied points of view" (May 1915: 171). Along with rebutting Strachey's points and criticizing his argument as "too arid and formal to be effective," Swanwick exposes the fallacy of "Force as the supreme arbiter" and clarifies the larger significance of the franchise: "To many of us the vote for women has been and is the symbol of a new human society based on public right" (177). Rather than fearing misunderstanding, she advocates that "men and women can be making public opinion, and those suffragists who miss this supreme occasion for laying the foundations of the new commonwealth will have missed what was best worth having in their little day" (178).

The fact that the journal published her response is noteworthy and indicates that the *Englishwoman's* position vis a vis the war did not preclude its commitment to presenting different sides of the issue.⁷⁹ The theme of "implication" was taken up again by Fawcett in the June 1915 issue, specifically in relation to what different people assumed Women's Suffrage implied. Her claim that the National Union asked no pledge beyond "their devotion to the cause of women's enfranchisement" (199) was clearly a strategy of containment. The problem was that the supposedly narrow demand for the vote had always implied much more than mere electoral reform for many. The democratic suffragists of the NUWSS certainly believed that demand for suffrage implied a wider range of feminist demands and the war years only served to sharpen lines of division between different feminisms.

The *Common Cause* also provided extensive coverage leading up to the International Congress of Women at the Hague in 1915. Alison Fell and Ingrid Sharp point to the sensitive nature of pacifist arguments in

the polarizing atmosphere of war. Given the prevalence of censorship, they suggest that only the most committed pacifists were involved in the Congress at the Hague, and many failed to attend after government intervention (11–12). Nonetheless, disputes within the National Union concerning attendance and representation at the Congress led to a series of resignations from the executive in April 1915. While the debate played out weekly in the pages of the *Common Cause*, the *Englishwoman* devoted only a few pieces to this event and its consequences. The first, "War, Women, and the Hague" in May 1915, by P. W. Wilson describes itself as "respectful, even if on some points it be a decided rejoinder" (97). After giving cautious consideration to pacifist arguments, Wilson asserts that it is no time "to be following the pathway of peace" (108).

In an usual move in June 1915, Fawcett wrote the leading article for the *Englishwoman*, "The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and the Hague Congress" as the president of the union, not as a journalist per se. She took the opportunity after the Congress to clarify her position and that of the majority of the NU, as she had in an editorial in the *Common Cause* before the event (23 Apr 1915: 32–33). She appealed directly to "readers of THE ENGLISHWOMAN" to explain why she chose to dissociate the NU from the event and refused to send official representatives. She acknowledges that "many important members of the National Union do not agree with me on this point, and they have expressed strong disapproval of what I have written and spoken" (199). The directness with which she addressed the readership of the journal regarding the internal politics of the organization is striking. Much more typical was the rather veiled approach taken in the piece immediately following Fawcett's article. The "Problems of the Day" section is devoted to "The Infallibility of Minorities" which explores the relationship between minorities and majorities in the context of democratic principles and argues that a majority should not be bullied into doing what it does not believe is right. It concludes that a majority should not abuse its strength, but if it refuses to use its power at the "bidding of the minority," then it is a "traitor" (206). The subtext is revealed in the central part of the article; the author does not deny the right of these "pessimistic suffragists" to speak "as Suffragists," but objects to their speaking "for Suffragists" and denying the right of the majority to express its views (205).

These few examples are provided here to illustrate how the war forced divisions and realignments within the movement, leading to the formation of new organizations and arenas of protest. Not only was the suffrage campaign itself part of a larger cycle of protest before the

war, but the crisis led to the proliferation of and points of intersection between even more sites of protest. Women's periodicals played a crucial role in mediating these developments and facilitating the participation in debate of supporters, opponents, sympathizers, and onlookers. The *Common Cause* made a proactive choice to keep publishing in order to "keep alive the ideas and ideals during the war" arguing that "no paper conducted by men will put forth women's view as women themselves will" insisting that "We are one-half the nation: we must be heard" (14 Aug 1914: 36). The *Englishwoman* claimed to commit its publicity to schemes and methods of relief work (see Editorial Announcement above), but it did not abandon its feminist agenda and attention to women's service remained a way to advance the emancipation of women during the war. As the previous case study (Chapter 1) demonstrated, dissidents also continued to expand their opportunities to articulate their views by starting new periodicals or publishing in other venues. For example, Helena Swanwick published her strong feminist pacifist statement *Women and War* through the Union of Democratic Control in 1915. The other point which becomes clear from the suffrage press is the extent to which the discussion of and demand for enfranchisement remained ongoing throughout the war. Women's suffrage in wartime – in Britain and internationally – was a frequent theme.⁸⁰ It was as unavoidable in the context of exploring women's roles in international peace politics, as it was to the war service to which so many women devoted themselves.

Women, work, and the *Englishwoman*

A commitment to pacifist feminism was by no means the only issue to divide women activists in these years. While women's paid and voluntary participation in the war effort became a strong and unifying focus (even for many pacifists), this did not mean that the motives, expectations, and political analysis of women's work were treated uniformly. Occupations, working conditions, wages, and trade unions were dominant themes throughout this period and had long been the source of contention within the women's movement. Since the nineteenth century, local and national levels of government, political parties, trade unions, and reform groups had been debating the scope and terms of women's involvement in the workforce and their rights to compensation in their roles as mothers. Even among feminists there was disagreement about the extent to which the state should intervene to 'protect' working women and shape their conditions in the labor

market. In these ways, women's work had been a long-standing concern (along with education, family and child welfare), but the problems intensified as the circumstances of the war created a dramatically different set of opportunities and risks for women as workers and, at the same time, in terms of the double burden of their traditional reproductive roles as mothers.

By the time war broke out, the *Englishwoman* had offered extensive coverage of women's work and unemployment and the journal had an informed stable of authors who were well positioned to contribute knowledgeable and intelligent discussion of the ramifications of women's role in the workplace in war time. The "Bow and Spear" section lived up to its name in the early years of the journal:

There are actually fourteen million people engaged in trade, industry, and professions in England: and out of these about five million are women, engaged in earning their living. These women are the producers of labour, they are the employed. Those who employ them, at a rate which is lowered artificially by their unorganized and unrecognized position in the labour market are men. From this fact the superficial observer deduces the theory of sex antagonism. The real antagonism is not between men and women, but between the exploiter and the exploited.

(9 Apr 1909: 252)

Like the earlier *Englishwoman's Review*, the *Englishwoman* commented on issues of women's work, social and welfare concerns, and highlighted the wide range of opportunities available for women seeking employment. The *Englishwoman's* listings, for example, included occupations that ranged from the professions of medicine, the law and engineering to forestry, farming, factory work, hand weaving, bee-keeping, piano-tuning, and tram conducting. The related issues included wages, women in the trades, working and living conditions, education and technical training.

In these ways, the magazine had from the beginning worked to publicize the conditions of working women and, in the main, its contributors continued to promote the free labor market as the solution to women's economic marginalization. This had been a long-standing position amongst liberal feminists associated with the Langham Place Group and the Society for the Promotion of the Employment of Women, and was particularly strong in the LSWS through the enduring influence of John Stuart Mill. However, the argument that working women

needed no assistance from the state had proved controversial in the face of popular support for the Factory Acts and other forms of protective labor legislation (Malone 1998). Indeed, the women's movement could not cohere around any particular vision of paid employment, and the *Englishwoman* continued to advocate the free labor contract in the face of strong opposition from bodies such as the Women's Trade Union League. In this, it emerges as the heir to the *Englishwoman's Review* which had foregrounded the liberal approach, and it is clear that the war years saw no suspension of conflict between contending protectionist and free market options.

The *Englishwoman* continued to foreground the need to stave off state interference in the female labor market during the war years, and welcomed wartime suspension of the restrictions on women's employment at night and in the 'dangerous' trades. Its editors were well aware, however, that these changes were understood as for the duration only, and Eleanor Rathbone predicted ominously that the re-establishment of women's labor market exclusions would see "outbreaks of hostility between the sexes far exceeding anything produced by the militant suffrage movement" (Apr 1917: 6). A positive commitment to the status quo ante was made in the 1919 Restoration of Prewar Practices Act, and the whole controversy around women's freedom in the labor market showed no sign of abatement. Discussions in the *Englishwoman* suggested that the divide between 'protectionists' and 'free marketeers' was never completely clear. Contributors offered a sensitive portrayal of the labor market and were willing to concede, and even ask for, government intervention especially in factory inspection. The editors, however, were still sensitive to the accusation that a 'freedom of contract feminism' could not represent working women. An "Echoes" feature during the war actively refuted accusations that the "Feminist movement" was "a class movement...engineered by middle-class women for their own advantage" and cites the numbers and status of working women in suffrage societies such as the NUWSS (July 1916: 87). Indeed, if the *Englishwoman* seemed to downplay some controversies in the early war years, it was more willing to engage in vigorous debate about the implications of women's service and rights, particularly in the latter years of war, with increased speculation about what the postwar period held in store.

Government and industry were both slow to acknowledge and take advantage of the infrastructure available through women's suffrage organizations and the potential of women of all classes once the country was at war. Government ineptitude in its decision making and conduct of

the war was a generally polite, but constant, refrain in the *Englishwoman* as were criticisms of its reluctance and inability to make use of the skills that women had to offer. The coverage of work-related issues indicated a concern for women's working conditions, but many contributors also advocated for women's involvement in policy at both the industrial and professional levels. "Caller Herrin" by James Haslam detailed the impact of the war on the fish-curing industry which employed large numbers of Scottish women and girls. He was concerned with appalling work conditions and wages and found it "strange that in these days of awakened social consciousness, this inhumanity in industry should have persisted so long" (Jan 1915: 43). He used the case to argue the need for "woman's work and influence in the social, economic, and political affairs of the nation," suggesting they will be even more necessary in future because of the likely effect of the costly war "to throw back the industrial conditions of vast numbers of women workers" (43). Haslam had called for the "championing" of women workers in politics in the first year of the journal and predicted that "men and women will work together more effectually than they can do while the present artificial barriers exist to divide and scatter their single efforts for the common good" (June 1909: 457).⁸¹ For Haslam, as for others, it was the job of publications like the *Englishwoman* to "hasten that day" by showing clearly that it was "desirable" and "inevitable" (457).

Concerns for the rights of women workers informed the frequent attention to equal pay for equal work. In a pointed "Open Letter" in June 1915, L.F. Waring was critical of male trade union leaders protesting the threat to men's jobs and reduced wages resulting from the use of women replacement workers. Waring argued, "would it not be sounder patriotism, sounder economics, and sounder ethics, to demand that women shall be paid the same as men for the same work, and work under equally good general conditions?" (267), noting that the government was being asked "to enforce the so-called Trade Union rights of voting men against the natural and ethical rights of voteless women" (268). The problem of equal pay for equal work, as a "feminist" demand, continued to be debated beyond the war, sometimes with opposing viewpoints presented back to back.⁸² Importantly, the debates would become increasingly fractious over the issue of state intervention in women's welfare as contributors assessed Eleanor Rathbone's proposals in support of the endowment of motherhood.⁸³

The endorsements of women's right to hold positions at all levels could be quite forceful at times. A lead article on "Women and the Civil

Service" in October 1915 was openly critical of the Government for failing to employ women at the higher branches of the civil service, at a time when a steady supply of efficient labor was needed, underscoring "if ever there was a time when the barriers of tradition and prejudice as to the sex of the worker should be overthrown, that hour has assuredly struck" (3). L. Keyser Yates identified the hypocrisy implied in these barriers and concludes the article by noting:

We are repeatedly reminded by our political leaders that the whole effort of the nation is required for the successful prosecution of this terrible war; may we, in our turn, call attention to the fact that the whole nation is not in harness so long as women are artificially debarred from taking their share in the work of the State.

(10)

These arguments suggested a greater consistency with the coverage of work-related issues in the *Common Cause*, even though the latter was more likely to foreground these views as feminist. An editorial on "Women in the Professions" claimed:

We are naturally desirous, as Suffragists and feminists, to see opened to women all the industries and professions which they have the ability to enter, and we believe that if all were opened, a process of natural selection would prevent their permanent entrance into any for which they have not the capacity. But while most – perhaps all – feminists are agreed on this point, the public generally has not realised that the coming of women into new spheres of activity is 'for the public good.'

(26 Feb 1915: 734)

The *Common Cause* was overt about the fact that women were not simply an "auxiliary" workforce to be replaced and displaced once the war was over.⁸⁴ Calls for the proper training of women for 'dangerous' occupations, such as munitions work, or in roles such as factory inspectors, were not just about safety, but also geared to ensuring future employment for women.

There was no question that women's service in wartime was proof positive of their qualifications for full citizenship. In other words the war years confirmed what the Women's Movement had been saying all along about women's capacity for citizenship and entitlements as workers. The *Englishwoman* questioned the idea of 'franchise for service.' Feminists

committed to a just society did not want the vote as a 'reward,' but believed they deserved it as a right. In "The Decisive Argument" (June 1917: 176–79), John W. Hills traces the impact of the war on attitudes toward women's suffrage and considers the various arguments he has been influenced by. He dismisses the argument of the vote as reward in favor of profounder ones such as the need to uphold freedom, but finally admits to being "converted" by the "industrial argument" (179). He uses the occasion to condemn the "elemental injustice" and "national folly" of restricting the opportunities for women workers after the war. Essentially, he argued that Parliament's handling of work-related measures during the war proved why working women needed the vote more than ever and why there should be no age limit on the franchise reform because it would potentially exclude those who most needed protection.⁸⁵

In these ways, the debates during the war years looked forward to peacetime and considered the implications of women's war work for the state of the nation postwar. It was also in this context that the journal later pursued social justice issues related to child and infant mortality, the lost educational opportunities of children working during wartime, and child welfare. Even while Britain celebrated the peace, the *Englishwoman* registered the harsh reality of the postwar world for women. The December 1918 "Echoes" opens with a lyrical description of the celebration of the Armistice in London on 11 November, but is immediately followed by the cold facts of women's dismissal from their workplaces and lack of representation on the official bodies making demobilization decisions. The piece refers the issue to Lloyd George's immediate attention and contains the promise of retribution at the ballot box:

Gross injustice and deprivation of the means of livelihood are the begetters of disorder and the national misfortune. Nothing can affect the problem of reconstruction so adversely as real discontent or despair on the part of women workers; nothing will be so conducive to rapid resettlement as their good will . . . Should this matter of the out of work women workers be neglected, it will undoubtedly affect the position of the Coalition in the coming election, for it will anger all classes among women electors.

(Dec 1918: 138–39)

Along with the recognition of these serious problems, the certainty of the Representation of the People's Bill brought with it a renewed rigor

and vigor as the journal speculated about the future of feminism. Oliver Strachey's "The Future of Women's Societies" in August 1917 speculates about the implications of the franchise for women and recommends, rather than forming a Woman's Party, that they make use instead of the experience and structures of existing organizations to build new foundations, predicting "If the watchwords of the past have been courage and perseverance, the watchwords of the future are co-operation with autonomy" (102).

Conclusion

While it would only last a few more years, in July 1917 the *Englishwoman* believed it still had an important role to play; in spite of the increased presence of women in public life, it had no intention of "vanishing like a ghost in the dawn of a new world" (23). "Ourselves" (in "Problems of Day") recalls the journal's early challenges, compared with the present – "now that daily journals allow women to speak through their megaphones" (18). But the journal insisted on the continued need for a platform, arguing: "To have a press of our own safeguards us against indiscriminate praise or blame; we must have an opportunity to expound our point of view unpolarised by masculine spectacles, rose-coloured though they may be" (21). There was also some speculation about the future of the feminist press more generally:

several women's Reviews might conceivably be required for our information, our guidance, and that complicated process of giving advice while seeming to ask it and asking while seeming to give it which forms so large a part of politics and journalism. No woman whose opinion need be reckoned with desires to set up a feminist party which shall be 'anti-man,' but it is impossible not to foresee that women may wear their party colours with a difference, and that a Liberal woman may diverge from the average Liberal man as the readers of the *Daily Chronicle* differ in outlook from those of the *Manchester Guardian*.

(22)

Having distinguished itself from other women's publications, as providing "a field for the discussion of women's serious interests" (17), the *Englishwoman* advocated the further expansion of a press that might seek out controversy between women and did so with a clear feminist understanding of the dangers of supportive as well as negative comments

about women as a whole. It also remained aware of who was reading, claiming: "we shall want our own paper or papers, and men will desire sometimes if not always to read them, so as to know for certain what we are saying and thinking" (22). It pursued its work "on behalf of justice for women" (Jan 1921: 3) until its demise. In "Finis," the *Englishwoman*, having exhausted its funds, bid farewell to its readers with much regret because there was still so much to do: "there is yet a great inequality, as unreasonable as it is unjust" (Jan 1921: 3). But other efforts were underway. The campaign to support the extension of the vote to women under 30 had already been taken over by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC) in 1919, when it revised and expanded the NUWSS's constitution and Rathbone replaced Fawcett as president of the organization. The *Woman's Leader* became its official organ, and provided the tribute to the *Englishwoman* which opened this case study.

Cheryl Law's account of the co-ordinating force represented by the NUSEC in bringing together a broad spectrum of groups suggests that this was an attempt to foster the kind of co-operation between different sectors of the women's movement that Strachey hoped would develop. Far from the war shutting down the suffrage campaign, Law argues, "The partial enfranchisement of women in February 1918 did not mark the end of a fifty-year struggle, rather it signified the opening of a new chapter where 'the symbol must be made real' through the expansion of the social, political and economic equality of women" (1998: 201). But movement reorganization brought with it new ideas and new conflicts in the 1920s.

The postwar years saw an intensification of the debates around freedom of labor, with the reinstatement of prewar exclusions and new marriage bars in the 1920s. The *Englishwoman* had continued to promote the need for absolute freedom for women to work as they chose, and offered a more emphatic account of misogyny lying at the root of establishment opposition to this. In November 1920, an "Echoes" column insisted that "The old idea about women... was that women were incapable of most work, and quite unable to perform any but the most menial tasks: the new idea is – they *can* do things, after all, but they must be prevented: men are jealous about their privileges, and intend to hold on to every supremacy as far as possible" (150). There was a polarization of debate which became newly perceived as a form of 'new' versus 'old' feminism, a shift that had been intensified rather than postponed by the war. The NUSEC would be as torn over the terms of Rathbone's "new feminism" and her commitment to helping women in their domestic roles as mothers and wives, as the NUWSS had been over

suffrage strategy. She argued her ground in the *Woman's Leader* and was challenged in the pages of *Time and Tide*, perhaps the most important feminist weekly to emerge in the interwar period.⁸⁶

The *Englishwoman* did not survive to participate in the interwar debates. The journal said goodbye to its friends of 12 years, its newer friends, and its "many unknown readers" (Jan 21: 3). While this case study has merely brushed the surface of this rich resource, we hope it encourages new readers for this relatively unknown periodical. If the previous case study explored the function of media in a multiorganizational field, the *Englishwoman* complicates the picture further. It expands the scope and nature of the dialogue and highlights the function of both genre and affiliation because it entered the market as an independent monthly review, but was implicated in the divisive organizational politics of the NUWSS. It remains, in the next case study (Chapter 3), to examine a truly independent feminist periodical which rejected any connection to the suffrage campaign, except by way of acting as one of its harshest critic.

3

Individualism and Introspection: The Framing of Feminism in the *Freewoman*

Lucy Delap

The characteristics of a social movement defy easy categorization, and the *Freewoman* periodical offers a case study which adds to our understanding of how social movements operate, yet also pushes at the definitions of what a social movement is, and how its media might function. Movement media have typically been viewed as secondary to the formation of the 'core' movement; it is often assumed that social movements formulate grievances and collective identities at a face-to-face level or through everyday 'submerged networks,' and then during a more publicist or insurgent phase, attempt to convey or communicate them (Melucci 1985; Mueller 1994: 236). Early twentieth-century feminist movement media, however, challenge this model, and place communications at the heart of collective identity formation. The publication of the *Freewoman* was not a tactic adopted by a pre-existing movement, but itself tentatively brought some new collective identities into being. Though the *Freewoman* did not follow conventional social movement formulae of attempting to mobilize large numbers or influence the state, it offered a space to think about movement dynamics, and envisage new avenues of activism. It also offered a site of disenchantment and disaffiliation amongst suffragists; its letters pages and archived correspondences offer unique insights into the trajectories of commitment and motivation at the individual level.

The *Freewoman* addressed a shifting range of constituencies, observers, and bystanders, and represented an unstable but provocative coalition or, as Calhoun terms it, a "submerged network" of actors with "partial and overlapping commitments" (1993: 407). It positioned itself around cultural and symbolic issues, through a framing process that avoided a clear suffrage/anti-suffrage position, and preferred to cohere through

opposition to ‘conventional thinking.’ Characterizing the *Freewoman* within the social movement literature helpfully situates the historical unfolding of the journal and its experimental collective identities within a theoretical framework, and a larger historical context. It allows for an unpacking of the diversity, conflict, and plurality of the broad social movement field or ‘movement family’ represented by the women’s movement, of which suffrage was a part. It also points to other traditions prominent within early twentieth-century radical thought, primarily the socialist, humanist, and anarchist-individualist movements. And it explores the brief success of the *Freewoman* in knitting these fields together, under the newly coined label of feminism, into a political and cultural formation that defied categorization as left or right, progressive or reactionary, utopian or defensive.

The *Freewoman* was founded as a three-penny weekly by Dora Marsden, a former WSPU organizer, and her colleague Mary Gawthorpe, still working for the WSPU but permanently in ill health after her prison experiences, and whose editorial role was fairly short term.⁸⁷ Published under the subtitle *A Weekly Feminist Review* from 1911, the journal aimed to transform the publishing landscape of the suffrage movement, and to open up a new space in which the political, social, and cultural controversies of ‘feminism’ could be discussed. Marsden was inspired by a fellow disillusioned suffragist Teresa Billington-Greig, who had in 1911 called, in the pages of a contemporary weekly review, the *New Age*, for a “free feminist platform” to be established (30 Mar 1911: 525).⁸⁸ Like Billington-Greig, Marsden believed that “thought had come to a complete standstill” amongst suffrage circles, and derided the WSPU’s “hatred of liberty, its littleness of spirit, its cruelty” (22 Aug 1912: 264).⁸⁹ Marsden, Gawthorpe, and other activists had been part of a tiny group of Manchester suffragettes that, Marsden recalled, “as an unholy joke called itself the S.O.S. They were Sick of Suffrage” (*Egoist*, 15 June 1914: 223). Embittered by the autocracy of the WSPU, they sought a “critical controversial paper,” initially through the WFL journal the *Vote*, but after disputes around editorial control, decided on an independent.⁹⁰ Marsden and Gawthorpe eventually gained the backing of Charles Granville, a London publisher of other small circulation radical and ‘society’ periodicals, and dabbler in experimental movements.

The disappointments and constraints of suffrage were a key motivator in the *Freewoman*’s exploration of a broader conceptual basis for women’s emancipation, termed ‘feminism.’ Marsden described her feminist project as “more in the nature of retort than of argument”

(*New Freewoman*, 15 Dec 1913: 244) and it had some characteristics of what McAdam terms a “spin out” or derivative movement (1995). The journal attempted to shift the focus of the women’s movement away from suffrage, yet still engage in an ongoing and detailed critique of the tactics and aims of suffragists. Its role as a persistent interlocutor with the suffrage movement was welcomed by Mary Gawthorpe. She felt that the *Freewoman* was needed because suffragists’ “intellectual forces must not be permitted to degenerate during the years of ‘open warfare’ and I know no better means of keeping the hearts and minds fresh and keen ... than a fair, independent and uncompromising journal like this.”⁹¹ The *Freewoman* could be situated as a ‘thinking organ,’ offering a more critical angle than existing papers, but still firmly oriented toward the suffrage movement.

Marsden, however, had plans for the journal to move well away from suffragism in its focus, though she was ambivalent as to whether it could sustain a ‘movement.’ In 1911 she had written in vague terms to a potential Fabian backer of the need for a “Society for the promotion of the economic independence of women” to be set up alongside the journal. This, she hoped, would inspire a “national movement” which would “actively form unions for the protection of all women’s labour (especially married women’s) and demand political power as further protection and means of control. It would preach to Women: The Right to Work, The Duty to Work.”⁹² She corresponded on this topic with Gawthorpe, who was unconvinced of the need for a new movement, particularly one founded upon a critical, rejectionist impulse. She commented: “if you wish to associate destructive tactics with a *movement* then I say you’re doomed to barrenness... from the outset. No movement can destroy and build at the same time: that is the paradox of the WSPU.”⁹³ Gawthorpe was uninterested in building an organization, but preferred intellectual engagement:

I personally should care neither for size, nor success, nor any of those things as ordinarily understood in a ‘movement’ vocabulary, but there’s so much waiting to be done on the constructive side of ideas... I grant you a critical controversial paper like this would always be in order and would ultimately be a blessing all round; but a critical *movement* postulates a pretty problem in psychology. Work it out sweetheart and let me know.

She was clearly skeptical of the powers of mobilization that ‘feminism’ could sustain, and pointed out to Marsden: “See the moral of the

New Age. It can only do what it does by being independent of every movement."⁹⁴

Marsden did not clarify or pursue her ideas of founding a movement, and the *Freewoman* was launched as a non-aligned "open review," on the basis that "Feminism has as yet no definite creed." She actively positioned the *Freewoman* as a journal that addressed audiences beyond the suffrage movement, or even the broader women's movement, by using a non-aligned mass penny daily, the *Evening Standard and St James's Gazette*, for her launch publicity, and by offering a broadly defined range of topics: "intellectual, sexual, domestic, economic, legal and political" (1911). Some readers were unconvinced that this would amount to anything distinctive from the existing suffrage papers, and saw the print culture of the movement as already at saturation point. One wrote to Marsden: "I have received your letter re. a new feminist review. I am always ready to help forward the Woman's Movement but I should have thought that with three weekly papers and the *Englishwoman* there was about as much ephemeral literature on the subject as it required."⁹⁵ To such readers, the *Freewoman* needed to uncover a novel niche in the periodical market, to distinguish itself from the suffrage journals already on offer.

Marsden defined her idea of an open review in the first issue: "we do not mean 'open' in the sense that we have no point of view, but 'open' in the sense that we are prepared not only to accept, but to welcome opposing points of view" (23 Nov 1911: 31). This pluralism turned out to represent a highly controversial and unfamiliar strategy in the periodical culture of the women's movement, and amongst wider circles of the readership. Hosting discussions of female sexual pleasure, abortion, homosexuality, in tandem with a rejection of democracy and the modern state, the *Freewoman* became instantly notorious despite its tiny circulation of around 2000 to 2500 copies. It provoked outraged letters to the daily papers; the anti-suffragist writer Mary (Mrs Humphrey) Ward gave the *Freewoman* a national profile when her letters to the *Times* described it as propounding "a feminism which would uproot the moral landmarks of our race" (27 June 1912: 6). She complained of the *Freewoman's* "speculations and contentions with regard to the relations of the sexes" and believed that "These matters and the handling of them shed a flood of light on... this dark and dangerous side of the 'Woman Movement'" (19 June 1912). Another national daily, the *Morning Post*, editorialized that the *Freewoman* represented a doctrine of socialist feminism, which was battling "against society." Suffragists were horrified, and Catherine Furley Smith responded in the *Morning Post* that the

Freewoman “no more represent[s] the general opinion of suffragists than, say, the opinions of the Mormons represents the Christianity of the Church of England” (26 July 1912: 5). Respectable families like that of Rebecca West prohibited involvement with the paper, and this notoriety helped to establish the *Freewoman* as an iconoclastic interlocutor with the general reading public.

Contributors and readers

What sort of individuals wrote for the *Freewoman*? When Mary Gawthorpe consulted her old friend from the Leeds Arts Club, Alfred Orage (editor of the *New Age*), he was doubtful that either contributors or readers could be found: “My view is that there are not enough writers who understand feminism to run a paper; still more that there are not enough readers to keep it going.” Orage therefore suspected that “a feminist review” would be superfluous, with neither writers, nor a public to write for.⁹⁶ A few well-known names such as Upton Sinclair, H.G. Wells, and Teresa Billington-Greig balanced what were in the main, relatively unknown contributors. Some did not sign their contributions; others identified themselves by name, but have apparently left no historical record. Some used pseudonyms in order to set up playful dialogues or protect their reputations from the *Freewoman*'s notoriety.

The *Freewoman* introduced a few new writers to the public. Rebecca West, the literary editor of the *Freewoman* and a former WSPU supporter, was its most successful prodigy. West was only 18 when she began to write for the *Freewoman* and she recalled that its reputation for sexual openness necessitated her use of a pseudonym. Other suffragists, some alienated or retired from the movement, others still active, wrote for the *Freewoman*. Winifred Hindshaw, Amy Haughton, Rona Robinson, and E. M. White had all worked with the editors in their suffrage campaigns in the North of England, and came to contribute to the *Freewoman*. A backbone of contributors was also provided by a group of mostly male writers from Orage's *New Age*. The *Freewoman* was sometimes the recipient of articles which had been turned down by higher-status journals such as the *Nineteenth Century* or by ‘serious’ journals of the women's movement such as the *Englishwoman*.⁹⁷ It also published articles from the activists (sometimes termed “faddists” and “cranks” by critical readers) who used the *Freewoman* to push the causes dearest to their heart – Charles Drysdale produced a series on neo-Malthusian questions, Arthur Kitson wrote repeatedly on banking reform, and E. S. P. Haynes on divorce reform.

The paper achieved a fairly broad readership in terms of class. Evidence from the correspondence of the editors reveals middle- and working-class readers, both male and female. Ada Niell Chew was a prominent working-class contributor, and published letters reveal numbers claiming to be from “ordinary working people.” Despite its high price, the *Freewoman* was aimed at and achieved a readership that stretched beyond the middle-class elements of the women’s movement, to ‘advanced thinkers’ of all classes. Gawthorpe and Marsden themselves came from impoverished backgrounds; both had used the pupil-teacher system to achieve a precarious ‘middle class’ status as teachers prior to their suffrage work. Many who were likely to read the *Freewoman* were professional working women, often in teaching and social work.⁹⁸

The *Freewoman* offered an uncluttered front page, with broad margins and a spacious format. Each week’s issue opened with an editorial, normally by Dora Marsden, but occasionally by another figure. This was followed by a topical “Notes of the Week” which usually took up the first five or six pages. The editorials sometimes spanned many weeks. The content of the editorials was less topical than those of the suffrage papers, and the style of argument was more abstract. Long sentences and convoluted phrases marked Marsden’s style. Her writing was cruelly satirized in a key competitor journal, the independent and loosely ‘socialist’ *New Age*:

With reference to the account to and what making exception leads us poor women as we though not so bad as it might be are to deal with politics at all is that we will broke no argument, for none is fitting, denied when all the facts are known. Be that as it were our readers will instantly agree, within all such limits being the same.

(Bechhöfer, *New Age*, 16 May 1912: 68)

The journal also included longer, mostly signed articles, sometimes developed over several issues, placing it closer to the intellectually serious *Englishwoman* model. It offered book and theatre reviews, extracts from topical or seminal books (including Otto Weininger’s *Sex and Character* and Max Stirner’s *The Ego and His Own*), reviews of art shows and poetry. As its initial publicity stated, “An attempt will be made to sustain from a feminist standpoint critical reviews of the drama and of general literature. It is felt that women have been almost exclusively readers and portrayers and very rarely critics” (*Evening Standard*, 25 Oct 1911: 20). The realms of cultural criticism, of sexual morality, and women’s economic independence were all highlighted as appropriate

to treatment by an open review, and this was an explosive mix which fascinated readers.

A suffrage and Fabian supporter wrote to Dora Marsden describing the “loosening of the shackles of chained and fettered thought one feels in the FW.” A Glasgow reader wrote: “No paper has ever given me keener pleasure than yours. Its freshness and fairness made all lovers and seekers after truth respect it and love it ever while differing from many of the opinions expressed therein.”⁹⁹ One American reader wrote from the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) press office: “All of us in this office are in a state of delirious joy over the *Freewoman*. It has been really funny to see one after the other of us pick it up casually and immediately become rooted to the spot for hours.”¹⁰⁰ Margaret McClure wrote from Middlesborough, “Everybody seems to have the same ‘thrill’ for your paper, I live and count time by Thursday, soon as I have finished devouring it I wish it was Thursday again and when I get Sunday over I feel it will soon be Thurs and *The Freewoman*.”¹⁰¹ Some reading experiences were collective affairs; one correspondent described reading out the *Freewoman* criticisms of the Pankhursts to a breathless Manchester WSPU branch.

Experimental collective identities

Accounts of the intense reading experience and impact of the *Freewoman* resonate with other accounts of reading Edwardian feminist texts and periodicals. Kate Flint describes how “the activity of reading was often the vehicle through which an individual’s sense of identity was achieved or confirmed” (1993: 14). But could this amalgam of suffrage commentaries, faddish ideas, political individualism, and literary reflections on modernity really constitute anything other than a miscellany? The journal offered its readers two collective identity frames which proved to generate powerful loyalties and forms of self-identity. The first of these was indicated by the subtitle, *A Weekly Feminist Review*. Marsden’s adoption of ‘feminism’ was novel – the *Freewoman* was the first Anglo-American journal to name itself ‘feminist.’ The term had only begun to gain currency in Britain from the early years of the twentieth century, and was variously taken to mean suffrage, or the French women’s movement. Some equivocated over its meaning and their commitment; H. G. Wells wrote to Dora Marsden, “My works are saturated with feminism but I never take a hand in purely feminist movements.”¹⁰² Clearly, ‘feminism’ was familiar to Wells as an intellectual position, but unfamiliar or unacceptable as a point around which a *movement* could be

organized. 'Feminist' did not offer the usual elements that social movement theorists have looked for in a collective identity, of "a goal, tactics, and a strategy for collective action" (Mueller 1994: 237). Instead it stimulated imaginative and highly diverse appropriations on the part of many individuals.

Marsden intended 'feminist' to signify a rupture with the politics of the women's movement, a new openness to the participation of men, and a willingness to move away from the well-established controversies that had mobilized activists around political questions of suffrage, access to higher education and to the professions. She aimed to host "a full and frank discussion of feminism in all its aspects," linking it strikingly to psychological and sexual matters. It seems clear that the idea of a 'feminist movement' was one with which quite a wide range of writers could feel comfortable, and represented a space that did not foreclose any position. A critical suffragist reader, Mary Higgs, wrote, "Had I clearly understood what 'feminism' was supposed to stand for, I might have hesitated to contribute to the new magazine before satisfying myself as to its trend" (7 Dec 1911: 54). Her feminism stood for "a belief in the sacredness of wedlock." Mary Gawthorpe argued that feminism was a process of introspection, offering the means "whereby women shall be helped to know themselves."¹⁰³ Another reader talked of feminism as "a sort of moral taking out of the contents of one's pockets to see what is still inside. Some things one may put back in the pocket, and some throw away."¹⁰⁴ One male reader wrote to Mary Gawthorpe welcoming the *Freewoman*: "I am sick of 'Votes for Women' . . . their paper is a tremendous force. But the steel point is not everything. . . The WSPU have narrowed feminism down to suffragist. It's a far greater thing."¹⁰⁵

'Feminism' did not offer clear group boundaries, nor sustained a consensus around intellectual content, or associated activism (Taylor and Whittier 1992). Readers found it hard to interpret feminism through the medium of an 'open review,' accusing Marsden of "devil's advocacy."¹⁰⁶ Others clearly expected a political advocacy of suffrage combined with a wider range of topics than covered by the political-activist journals such as *Votes for Women*, the *Common Cause*, and the *Vote*. They were bitterly disappointed with the actual content of the *Freewoman*. Olive Schreiner described to Havelock Ellis reading the journal as a means of acquainting herself with "exactly that which we are going to fight against, that we may free ourselves and the world from that brutality and selfishness that degrades and tarnishes the divinity of sex" (Schreiner 1924: 312–13). Marsden herself lost faith in the 'feminist' identity, and changed the subtitle to *A Humanist Review* in 1912, and then *An Individualist Review*

when the journal was restarted as the *New Freewoman* in 1913. She had always claimed that feminism merely represented a leveling of the playing field, being not "a final doctrine, but [as] a temporary theory of expedients and readjustments. Masculinism and Feminism are relative terms, and when one is strong enough to equate the other both will become merged in a common doctrine of Humanism" (30 Nov 1911: 24). Nonetheless, readers continued to identify with 'feminism'; one wrote to Marsden, "I greatly resented the removal of your sub-title a 'feminist' paper."¹⁰⁷

H. G. Wells' comfort with identifying as a feminist, and the enthusiastic participation of men of all persuasions in these debates, points to a central aim in Marsden's initial adoption of the term 'feminism.' By shifting from 'the women's movement' and 'women's suffrage,' she deliberately opened this collective identity up to men. Indeed, the journal was accused by its critics of being male dominated, promulgating "the tone of the brutal self-indulgent selfish male," as Olive Schreiner declared (1924: 312). Marsden had announced in the initial publicity for the journal: "it is hoped that the paper will find male readers as readily as women. It is considered that any theory of feminism which regards itself as the private province of women's interests is an absurdity" (*New Age*, 23 Nov 1911: 95). Men had been extensively involved in the suffrage movement and its media; yet they commented on a certain reluctance to view them as full activists within the movement (Holton 1996: 184; John and Eustance 1997). The *Freewoman's* subscription list reveals that at least a quarter of the subscribers were male, and Dora Marsden guessed that its readership was evenly divided between the sexes. Male writers provided a controversial set of views on the nature of 'feminism.' E. S. P. Haynes, for example, wrote of his support for polygamy, in a piece that satirized the "trade union of monogamy" (23 Nov 1911: 9–10). Male readers were apparently fascinated; one suffragist described how she had provided her brother with back issues of the *Freewoman*, and "somehow he seems much more interested in the *Freewoman* than in any of the suffrage papers or other forms of advanced literature with which I have supplied him."¹⁰⁸ They were also disconcerted by assumptions that *Freewoman* readers must be female; one wrote to Marsden, "I read every number of *The Freewoman* from cover to cover, and wish it all success in the future. But please do not enter my name on your lists as 'Miss.' I belong to the same sex as Jehovah."¹⁰⁹

The *Freewoman* also offered another collective identity that might generate loyalty and mobilization, though one less open to the participation of men, through its evocation of 'freewoman.' This was not

an entirely new identity, having been coined by Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, mother of Marie Stopes, in her 1894 historical suffragist tract *British Freewomen* (Stopes 1894). Nonetheless, it was the *Freewoman* which first presented the term as a resource for personal identity, though it was initially very sketchily defined. Dora Marsden's version was highly elitist; her first editorial had commented: "There must be, say ten [freewomen] in the British Isles." More pessimistically, she claimed that "only one woman in four" had the potential to become a freewoman. The actress Ellen Terry was offered as an example of an existing 'freewoman,' apparently on the grounds of her artistic genius, abandonment of her husband and economic independence. Marsden idealized "sensuous, sensitive, restrained and fastidious men and women" (4 Jan 1912: 121). Yet she found few who could approach this, and she addressed her readership with a hectoring tone, accusing them of failing to develop their powers of creativity, and living under male or state protection.

In response, her readership was apologetic that they did not meet her standards, and some clearly felt cowed by the intellectual tone of the journal. One wrote to Marsden: "You will soon discover I am not a particularly 'intellectual' or 'clever' woman, yet *The Freewoman* has been a great delight to me, and I feel very grateful to you for taking up this work."¹¹⁰ Another termed herself "A Would-Be Freewoman" (21 Mar 1912: 353). One wrote tongue-in-cheek to Marsden, asking her to "grade the aspiring Freewomen into classes; then I might, perhaps, scrape into the last one by the skin of my teeth. It is so bitter to feel that one hasn't even a sporting chance of ever being free" (21 Dec 1911: 91). Teresa Billington-Greig was less drawn to the 'Freewoman' title, and felt that it was too evocative of an existing political movement. She complained to Marsden: "'Free woman' commits you to the libertarian side. It is a propagandist title – a symbol of all anti-marriage anti-governmentalist thought, you may be sure of one thing: if you keep that title you cannot conduct an *open* review."¹¹¹ Both Billington-Greig and Gawthorpe were highly reluctant to envisage any kind of movement or 'propagandist work' arising from the critique of suffrage. Their emotional commitment to movement activism had been severely eroded by their suffrage experiences. Others felt that movements of all kinds were damaging to free creativity; J. M. Kennedy argued that "an organization or a movement is a bed of Procrustes, a destroyer of individuality" for "all real creative artists" (23 Nov 1911: 16).

Though movement activism was controversial, there clearly was an appetite amongst some readers for new forms of collective identity, and

'the freewoman' identity appealed very strongly to most of the journal's readers. While intended by Dora Marsden to harness feminism to an individualist, elitist position, the idea of a 'freewoman' paradoxically engendered a strong collective identification. The constant references to the term in the journal's correspondence and articles is striking, and readers of both sexes quickly incorporated it into their vocabulary. Winifred Hindshaw, a Swansea-based lecturer in education and literature, who had studied in Manchester with Dora Marsden and been drawn into the suffrage movement, provocatively proposed Christabel Pankhurst as a paradigmatic freewoman.¹¹² David Eder, a socialist doctor involved in the early psychoanalytic movement, proposed that all working-class women might be regarded as freewomen, and feminism was simply the revolt of the middle-class women "to obtain for themselves the freedom enjoyed by poor women" (30 Nov 1911: 34). Charles Drysdale, of the Malthusian League, argued that "The Bradlaugh and Besant trial of 1876 was the real signal for the advent of the Freewoman, who will use and control her maternity for the glory of herself and the race" (30 Nov 1911: 37).

The 'freewoman' identity sparked satire, becoming recognizable enough to inspire jokes in wider circles; the *New Age* satirist Bechhöfer offered a spoof personal ad in 1912: "Fabian Freewoman, 30, determined, would like to meet seven young gentlemen, similarly situated" (18 July 1912: 283). In the United States, the literary commentator Floyd Dell suggested in 1913 that the IWW agitator Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was a typical 'freewoman.' He characterized the feminist 'freewomen' as "knowing what they want and taking it, asking no leave from anybody, doing things and enjoying life" (Dell 1913). Other American readers relished the link to the free thought tradition, to anarchism, and to their growing concerns with free speech.¹¹³ 'Freewoman' implied a personification of feminist ideals that was attractive and memorable. It became a form of group identity which Dora Marsden could not control, despite her editorial prerogatives. She became disenchanted with her readers, referring to them with disdain in the last issue of the *Freewoman*, as "startled and shocked at the approach of anything vital and sure. They feel roughly handled, and beg that they may be left alone" (10 Oct 1912: 402). The readership is, however, better described as voluble, articulate, and dissenting. It may have been Marsden's recognition of the unintended power of the 'freewoman' motif, and its ability to subvert the radical individualism she proposed, that motivated the final name change of the journal in 1914, from the *New Freewoman* to the *Egoist*.

The *Freewoman* included a long section of correspondence, sometimes stretching to six pages. The strength of the letters page indicates a key *Freewoman* feature – its responsiveness to its readers – and this facilitated ongoing debates over several issues. The correspondence section of the *Freewoman* was one of the most lively, interactive, and combative parts of the paper. Readers continually wrote letters posing alternative views, developing arguments, or satirizing each other. Their letters provoked exchanges that sometimes lasted over periods of months. Letters were not heavily edited, and the freedom of the correspondence columns was responsible for the sense of “‘tanks of oxygen” that readers associated with the *Freewoman*.¹¹⁴ Ideas could be presented in an iterative, unfinished, and provisional way. Editors and contributors did of course exploit the correspondence section in order to advance their arguments, or convey intellectual diversity.¹¹⁵ Nonetheless, this section of the journal represented a space in which the identities of ‘feminist’ and ‘freewoman’ could be appropriated and endowed with personal meaning. Despite sentiments of feeling intimidated by the elitism and intellectuality of being ‘a freewoman,’ the floods of letters to the editor indicate that the idea of a ‘freewoman’ or ‘feminist’ was one which promoted agency and authority, to speak and write.

Though it had offered two powerful if ambiguous identity frames which might compete with suffrage, the *Freewoman* did not quite manage to turn its attention away from suffrage, which for many remained associated or even synonymous with feminism. Rebecca West asked lightly in June 1913, prior to the foundation of the *New Freewoman*, “Can’t we stop attacking the WSPU? The poor dears are weak at metaphysics but they are doing their best to revolt.”¹¹⁶ Suffragists continued to be well represented within the readership, with subscriptions from individual members as well as branches of suffrage societies. There was no decisive disengagement from the suffrage field, which continued to be a frame of reference even within the more literary-oriented successor title to the *Freewoman*, the *Egoist*.

The controversies within the *Freewoman* however remind us of how capacious an identity ‘suffragist’ was, and suggest the inadequacy of categories offered by social movement theories to capture the different levels of intensity and emotional commitment found amongst suffragists, who ranged from the visionary to the apologetic. Mrs Eleanor Jacobs, for example, was an Essex-based WSPU supporter. She wrote to Dora Marsden in a private letter about her intense commitment: “Suffrage with some of us is a religion (– *not* a narrow ‘getting a vote you know’).”¹¹⁷ She celebrated the qualities of “Idealism, comradeship, self

sacrifice" in the suffrage movement, and her deep motivation resembles the ideal typical activism of social movement participation. Jacobs apparently continued to read the *Freewoman* for its insights into the philosophical basis of suffragism. Her fervent loyalty contrasts with that of a much more tentative American suffragist Frances Maule Björkman, who wrote to Marsden describing her colleagues in the NAWSA Literature Department: "[we] are not suffragists 'pure and simple.'" She identified her colleagues through their political commitments to the Socialist Party, the I.W.W., single tax campaigns and so on – but concluded: "Really, we are all much more feminists than suffragists, although we are all three anxious to see suffrage put through as speedily as possible."¹¹⁸

Another suffragist supporter and *Freewoman* reader, Winifred Hindshaw, made clear her unpartisan and equivocal commitment to suffrage; she described herself as inhabiting "the faintest penumbra of the movement." Overtly, Hindshaw was quite active within the Swansea WFL, as a court visitor. But her emotional commitment was complex: "I have always shuddered at the people who have gone a certain length in overt action, and on the strength of it develop settled views on policy and fierce hostilities in consequence." She admitted, "I go every week to the Police Court here – it is supposed to be the right sort of thing to do for members of suffrage societies, to see how the law is administered and things like that. And I go in mortal terror of the place and the officials, and, seeing you can learn how stupid the law is in one visit, I continue as a penance..."¹¹⁹ Suffrage, even during what is normally seen as its peak late Edwardian insurgency phase, was no moral or political crusade for her.

Hindshaw's enthusiastic reception of the *Freewoman* suggests that she, like other readers, was delighted with the prospect of gaining what she called "a real intelligent grasp of the main issues" of feminism. These kind of tentative affiliations to suffrage might be understood through the social movement lens as typical of bystanders or observers, but these categories seem inadequate. Hindshaw and Björkman had been committed activists; both were still working for suffrage and were members of suffrage societies. Yet their commitment and loyalty had faded over time, and they were casting about for new ways of endowing their emotional and intellectual commitments to the women's movement with meaning. Social movement analysis must acknowledge the interplay of commitment and motivation at both the individual and collective levels. There is a tendency to neglect the waning of social movement activism within the life-trajectories of individuals. Yet this

is essential to the micro-level dissent and conflict which underpins 'spin out' movements and protest cycles. Theorists have worked with ideas of movements in 'cycles of contention,' yet tend to offer fairly blunt characterizations of phases of insurgency and abeyance (Bagguley 2002; Tarrow 1993; Taylor 1989). Where the individual life-history of an activist is considered, there remains a preference for examining individual processes of affiliation, and a neglect of processes of disaffiliation and disenchantment (della Porta 1992). Yet this process is crucial to understanding the diffusion of ideas and the cycles of protest in which theorists have argued social movements must be situated. Recent work on social movements has stressed the centrality of emotions, though acknowledging the gap in the literature around issues of the decline of movements (Aminzade et al. 2001: 109). The *Freewoman* offered a working out of the emotions and intellectual rebellions that motivated the 'sick of suffrage' group in Manchester to withdraw, or find alternative realms of engagement.

Periodical communities

The *Freewoman* successfully offered new collective identities which appealed both to disillusioned suffragists and to iconoclastic thinkers from beyond the women's movement. This went with a willingness to engage with and draw together a number of diverse social movement fields, in other words, to reframe the women's movement by situating it within a more diverse context. This was primarily achieved through the links established with periodicals that lay outside of the primary 'initiating field' represented by the suffrage journals. I have argued in an earlier article that the construction of a periodical readership and circle of contributors takes place not only within the pages of a single title, but also through the interactions between periodicals; awareness of the shifting "periodical communities" which encompassed different titles is key to interpreting a particular title (Delap 2000). Such communities might be based around a shared ideology, a disagreement, a shared financial backer, or a brief moment of reaction to censorship. Editors exchange issues of their journals, set up dialogues, commentaries, and spats, and share material or writers. Readers follow the controversies through the pages of different papers, and are alerted to the shifting periodical landscape by the notices, reviews and satires titles offer relating to each other.

At the *Freewoman's* launch, notices were placed within the suffrage journals and most were initially supportive. The *Common Cause* noted

that the *Freewoman* showed “courageous individuality”: “there is no use in this crowded world for a review which just goes on saying what everybody is saying... We welcome it and wish it well” (28 Dec 1911: 658). The initial print run was also distributed to suffrage societies around Britain, and sent to suffrage contacts in the United States. Supporters deployed their own personal contacts; Hertha Ayrton, a scientist and WSPU supporter, wrote to Mary Gawthorpe: “I will order the paper of [sic] my newsagent as I think that will help to make it known. I shall also do my best to get all my friends to read it.”¹²⁰ Personal contacts were key to gaining readers. Rebecca West commented: “I find I have given away all the copies I bought” and another reader announced: “I pass on my paper every week to others who feel the necessity for it.”¹²¹ In an attempt to set the intellectual tone of the paper, readers were encouraged to leave it in locations of highbrow debate, in contrast to the railway carriages and waiting rooms which readers of *Votes for Women* were advised to leave copies in. A reader suggested to Marsden: “Perhaps you might think it worth while to place copies of *The Freewoman* for a few weeks on the table in the Common Room at the School of Economics... a number of ‘advanced’ women attend there. I have given away six copies to suitable people during the past week.”¹²²

File copies of the *Freewoman* were also kept for inspection at bookshops such as ‘Henderson, Specialists in Socialist Literature.’ Marsden always intended to reach a wider audience and to influence a wider field of ‘progressive’ public opinion. She actively canvassed Fabian support in the months before the launch. By March 1912, Ethel Bradshaw, secretary of the Fabian Women’s Group in Bristol, commented in the journal that “most of our members read your paper” (7 Mar 1912: 314). The *Freewoman’s* early links to socialist and labor movements were strong. One reader announced to Marsden: *I want the FW to join hands with the Trade Union Movement.*¹²³ Socialist periodicals saw the *Freewoman* as a means of reaching an intellectually open-minded and curious element of the women’s movement. The recently founded socialist *Daily Herald* advertised that “Readers of ‘The Freewoman’ cannot afford to be without the ‘Daily Herald’ if they are to keep in touch with the most advanced section of the progressive movement” (19 Sept 1912: 355).

However, as the individualist politics of the *Freewoman* became more clearly articulated, anarchist and ‘free-thought’ periodicals became increasingly prominent within the *Freewoman’s* periodical community. Material from the *Freewoman* was reproduced in other journals, such as the *Syndicalist* and the *Herald of Revolt*. The anarchist editor of the *Herald of Revolt*, Guy Aldred, offered detailed advice to Marsden on the publicity

strategies deployed by his own paper, including the reprinting of articles as leaflets for free distribution, standing notices within contemporary papers, the publicity gained through lectures and public meetings. He offered to give a *Freewoman* benefit lecture on "The Necessity for Sex Radicalism" at the South Place Institute, an important location for the free-thought and 'ethical' movements.¹²⁴

Clearly, the *Freewoman* inhabited overlapping periodical communities – Fabian, popular socialist, labor, anarchist and suffrage – though the relationship with the suffrage papers soured. By the *New Freewoman* relaunch, journals such as *Votes for Women* were refusing to alert readers to its existence. This was partly due to Marsden's willingness to see the papers of 'opponents' of the women's movement as a legitimate part of the *Freewoman's* periodical community; she was willing to engage with the *Anti-Suffrage Review* and was unrepentant about exploring the same intellectual ground as the 'Anti's.' She responded to a skeptical reader: "if the Anti-Suffragist journal is arguing the same points as *The Freewoman*, in no matter how different a manner, it is full proof that we have at last arrived at the root argument in the Suffrage Question" (7 Dec 1911: 55).

The *Freewoman* also had transnational influence. Dora Marsden had announced in 1911 to *Common Cause* readers that "feminism would be conceived in a truer perspective if the English movement could keep in view the forms of activity in which the impulse finds expression in countries other than our own" (23 Nov 1911: 577). Well-known continental European feminist activists such as Helene Stocker and Madeleine Pelletier contributed, and strong links with Parisian intellectuals emerged. A file copy was also kept for public consultation at the Literature Department of the NAWSA in New York, and a group of American supporters began to offer correspondence and some articles. The American suffrage paper, the *Woman's Journal* occasionally reprinted articles, and the NAWSA issued Marsden's first editorial, "Bondwomen," as a free-standing pamphlet (Figure 5). A second NAWSA pamphlet reproduced some articles from the suffrage and labor activist, Ada Nield Chew. The American contributors included NAWSA activists such as Mary Ware Dennett and Frances Björkman, who were interested in exploring questions wider than suffrage. But Marsden also managed to gain the support of some mostly New York-based avant-garde writers, such as Floyd Dell and Edna Kenton, and she came to feel that these Americans were the core supporters and ideal readership for her version of feminism. The *Freewoman* prompted commentary in a wide range of American periodicals, mostly without any affiliation to the women's movement – including the *Chicago Evening Post*, *Good Housekeeping*, the

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THE FREEWOMAN

A WEEKLY FEMINIST REVIEW

No. 2. VOL. I. THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1911 THREEPENCE

[Registered at G.P.O.]
[as a Newspaper.]

CONTENTS

	Page		Page
1. Commentary on Bondwomen	21	5. The Gospel According to Shaw.	27
2. Notes of the Week	23	By G. R. S. TAYLOR	27
3. The Tragedy of the Happy Marriage.	By CHARLES J. WHITEY, M.D.	6. Feminism Under the Republic and the Early Empire.—II.	28
4. Women's Municipal Lodging-Houses.—I.	By MARY HIGGS	By AMY HAUGHTON	28
	26	7. Correspondence	30
		8. Beauty (Poem).	By E. H. VEMAR
		9. Dock & Man Travell with Child.	By M. D. EDER
		10. The Tyranny of Words.	By C. GRANVILLE
		11. Freewomen and the Birth-rate.	By DR. DEVIDALE
		12. Hilda Lessways.	By A. B.
		13. The Position of Women in Indian Life.	By CECILIA FARRFIELD

Joint Editors:
DORA MARSDEN, B.A.
MARY GAWTHORPE

COMMENTARY ON BONDWOMEN.

IT turns out that the editorial attitude for this week will have to take the form of a commentary on that of last. According to correspondence, it would appear that in Bondwomen we gave the idea that we consider that only those women who are gifted to the extent of genius can be Freewomen, and all the rest, according to our version, must be Bondwomen, i.e., followers, servants. What, asks a very reasonable correspondent, who wishes to remain anonymous—what is to become of the "ordinary women"? Is not your championing of the strong, of the masters, as unnecessary as it is easy, and your postulating the existence of servants as an established fact, as unhelpful as it is cynical? Cannot the gifted take care of themselves? To use your own instance, has not Ellen Terry made herself free by the simple right of her genius? Are you not treating as negligible considerations the only ones where help such as you can give would count? Are you not engendering a revolt against a sphere wherein most "ordinary women" must of necessity spend their lives? Are you not, by depreciating the value of housework, supporting the view that housework is of little worth, and making it less likely that it should be recognised as a properly-paid profession? A sheaf of questions and objections! Let us see. Returning to the first, that we put forward the view that women's freedom is bound up with genius—well, that is a view we are prepared to uphold. To be a freewoman one must have the essential attribute of genius. Last week we implied it, and this week we state it, and, having more space, we take this opportunity of defining genius. Genius is an individual revelation of life-manifestation, made realisable to others in some outward form. So we hold that anyone who has an individual and personal vision of life in any sphere has the essential attribute of genius, and those who have not this individual realisation are without genius.

They are therefore followers—servants, if so preferred. We called them Bondwomen. We maintain that to accept the fact that great numbers of individuals are born without creative power in regard to any sphere of life whatever, argues no more cynicism than it would to accept the fact, and the statement of it, that coal is black and snow is white. It is a fact to be proved by simple observation. Our contention is that life should supply the conditions which would enable this native endowment of vision to make itself communicable to others, and we consider that so many women appear ordinary, not because they are born ordinary, but because they are bundled pell-mell into a sphere in which they can show no special gift; and because they are expected to be so bundled, they are deprived of that training which would enable them to make their individual revelation communicable, that is, of their chance to become artists. Nor for one moment do we wish to support the view that all women will be free, any more than all men are free. It will be difficult enough for freewomen to be free, and to force women, who neither are nor wish to be free, into the responsibilities of freedom is as futile as endeavouring to make two and two into five. It cannot be done. This explains why a feminist must make her appeal to freewomen, and not to "ordinary" women. The doctrine of feminism is one so hard on women that, at the outset, we can only appeal to those who have already shown signs of individuality and strength, and it is just here that the cult of the freewoman becomes plainly distinguishable from that of the Suffragist. If it is the work of the Suffragist women to guard the rear, it is that of the Freewomen to cheer the van. The cult of the Suffragist takes its stand upon the weakness and dejectedness of the conditions of women. The cult of the Suffragist would say, "Are women not

Figure 5 The Freewoman (front cover, 30 November 1911)

Forum, and *Current Opinion*. In 1913 Marsden wrote, "I am hoping to be able to make the paper into an Anglo-American Review in a literary sense as well as a commercial. We in England know practically nothing about the new spirit of America . . . I think the value of the paper would be increased enormously if it could contain the dual point of view – the different aspects of the same problems debated on the same ground."¹²⁵

Despite the transnational enthusiasm and controversy surrounding the *Freewoman*, some methods of gaining an audience beyond the women's movement failed; several editors of mainstream periodicals such as the *Contemporary Review* refused to set up a freelist arrangement with Marsden, due to their dislike of the treatment of sexual matters, or overall position.¹²⁶ Publicity was also hampered by the notoriety of the paper. One supporter gave the names of "leading women" in Birmingham who could be sent specimen copies, but asked that this be done anonymously, for fear of offending her family.¹²⁷ E. S. P. Haynes, who had fearlessly linked his name to divorce reform, wrote to Marsden that "My wife and friends have always been nervous about my connection with the paper . . ." ¹²⁸ The editors experimented with distributing handbills on the street, and selling at public meetings – strategies which worked well for the suffrage papers but proved problematic for the *Freewoman*. The advertising contractors reported a refusal to display *Freewoman* bills on the kiosk outside the London Law Courts, perhaps prompted by the political notoriety of the paper. In June 1912, a sales representative displayed bills for the *Freewoman* at an anarchist lecture, but reported selling only three copies. In the same month, three sandwich board men sold only six copies at a Trafalgar square meeting.¹²⁹

It may have been the relatively high price which made these strategies fruitless. At three pence, the *Freewoman* was three times the price of most weekly suffrage papers; anarchist and socialist periodicals were also mostly priced at a penny. The pricing was, however, a conscious strategy. After complaints at the 'ruination price,' Dora Marsden commented: "we are not proposing writing for women whose highest journalistic needs are realised at one penny" (23 Nov 1911: 3). Some readers shared this scathing regard for suffrage papers, and one commented on the *Freewoman*: "For such this paper is not written: they will continue to enjoy the temper which animates the pages of the *Common Cause*."¹³⁰ Through the price, style, and editorial choices, Marsden aimed to bracket the *Freewoman* with relatively non-partisan papers that were only tentatively linked to a social movement, such as the *New Age* and *New Witness* in Britain, or the *Masses* in the United States.

These journals represented a political milieu that is hard to identify using established political labels. They are perhaps best described as the radical-independent periodicals of advanced thought, often loosely oriented to socialism. During the *Freewoman's* publication between 1911 and 1912, the influence of the radical-independent periodicals became established as more significant for its editor and contributors than the suffrage papers.

The *New Age* was the journal which most influenced and directly competed with the *Freewoman*. It had started life as a Fabian journal in 1907, but became a successful political and literary independent, with a peak readership of around 22,000 in 1908 (Ardis 2007; Villis 2002). It provided a space for criticism of capitalism to be combined with interest in art, literature, and philosophy. The *Freewoman* editors saw their "open review" as occupying a similar iconoclastic space to the *New Age*. When the *New Age* was rumored to be defunct in 1914, Marsden celebrated that her journal would face 'an empty field.'¹³¹ The two journals offered direct criticism and satire of each other, while also sharing readers and contributors.

It would be tempting to read the divide between the two as a divide between feminism and anti-feminism. The *New Age* frequently published strong criticisms of both feminism and suffrage, and sometimes directed this specifically at the *Freewoman*. The journal hosted prominent anti-feminists such as Anthony Ludovici and the socialist Belfort Bax as regular contributors, and offered anti-suffrage and anti-feminist arguments ranging from well-established 'physical force' or 'superfluous women' points to more unusual arguments. J. M. Kennedy, for example, argued in 1913 that for socialists, "each step... in the emancipation of woman corresponded to a further step in the firm and ever firmer establishment of capitalism."¹³² In 1912, the editor, Alfred Orage, was stung by a reader who complained of the *New Age's* "patronising contempt" regarding women's emancipation. He responded that he believed that "women are naturally economically dependent upon men, and desire so to remain"; any talk of free love, voluntary childlessness, or free unions was idiotic and degrading, in his opinion. Orage supported traditional marriage and "decent prostitution" as "Natural" (*New Age* 29 Aug 1912: 411-12). Marsden responded with a scathing editorial that offered a defence of feminism, not as a "sex movement, or primarily an economic one." She preferred to see feminism as "a religious affair... concerned with the development of Personality; its objective is opportunity for exercise of free-will" (29 Aug 1912: 283). For Marsden, feminism was a form of humanism, working to "give the inner law its

real chance" and develop "the individual Ego." Yet the divide between feminism and anti-feminism was not always clear; *New Age* contributor Beatrice Hastings playfully moved across it, claiming both identities under different pseudonyms (Delap 2005). Apparent anti-feminists such as J. M. Kennedy also wrote for the *Freewoman*. Both the *New Age* and the *Freewoman* were sites of critical engagement with feminism and anti-feminism, rather than representing opposing sides.

Like other 'advanced women' who looked to feminism to construct an avant-garde space for debate, Marsden herself experimented with writings that can retrospectively be termed 'anti-feminist.' Using such labels tends to encourage an inadequate reading of the complex motivations and intellectual provenance of such pieces. A notorious article in the first issue, titled "A Spinster – By One," has been read by historians as "vicious and antagonistic to basic feminist principles" (23 Nov 1911: 10–11; Jackson 1994: 90). It offered a highly polemical excoriation of the "withering" and "blighted" role of the spinster in Edwardian society. The article spoke out against the "all-pervasive unrest and sickness" which marked the lives of those denied sexual fulfilment. The lives of chaste women were portrayed as empty of meaning, and the author called for more sexual experimentation to be available to women.

Historians have offered diverse readings of such material; Sheila Jeffreys, for example, reads "A Spinster" as representative of the *Freewoman* overall, and she situates the journal as a mouthpiece for what she terms the "anti-feminist" sexological movement (Jeffreys 1985: 95). Yet the article is best read through a media history optic as a 'first issue' attempt to stimulate controversy in a flowery and polemic style, rather than a serious statement of policy. It may or may not have been written by Marsden; its anonymity raises questions about how seriously it was meant to be taken. The obvious polemic of phrases such as "the withered tree, the acidulous vestal under whose pale shadow we chill and whiten, of the Spinster I write . . ." are self-consciously archaic, possibly intended as a tongue-in-cheek satire on the literary conventions of anti-feminist rhetoric.

We should also remember that articles such as "A Spinster – By One" were part of an ongoing conversation, and do not represent the journal as a whole. The article prompted numerous responses from readers, ranging from high praise to outrage. Many single women wrote to say that their experiences of life were not that of the 'barren' spinster portrayed. Single women were not left voiceless by such polemics, but gleefully in their turn satirized the spinster stereotype. One wrote to defend her "undersexed" lifestyle, and to thank *Freewoman* "readers

in advance for the glorious fun of calling ME, 'A Deficient and Disappointed Woman'" (9 May 1912: 496–97). Another, terming herself "Single, but Undismayed," wrote, "It is years since my interest has been so stirred as it has been by the article in your paper, entitled 'The Spinster'" (30 Nov 1911: 32). Other articles such as "Spinsters in the Making; Types One – the College Woman," in the fourth issue of the journal, continued to explore the psychological and physical effects of chastity and sexual experimentation and to prompt a range of letters and editorial comment (18 July 1912: 67–68).

Some readers clearly found the journal close to anti-feminism, yet still a worthwhile forum for debate. One, a member of the NUWSS in Exeter, described the *Freewoman* as "a valuable medium for free discussion and as a means of learning what the more insidious enemies of Feminism have to say" (18 July 1912: 175). It should hardly need to be pointed out that periodicals represent a miscellany of views, and should never be 'mined' by historians to represent a univocal position. Yet the attraction of the *Freewoman* as a stand-in for 'feminism' has been immense, and has led to an unhelpfully polarized historical commentary in which it either did or emphatically did not 'represent' Edwardian feminism. The *Freewoman* has received extensive critical attention, almost to the point that the journal's iconic status within feminist and modernist history has obscured the extent to which it should also be placed within the context of other intellectual traditions and activist movements. It has been read by feminist historians as part of a longer tradition of sexual radicalism within British feminism, though opinions have diverged sharply over whether this should be understood as a positive or negative contribution (Garner 1990; Hall 2001; Jeffreys 1985). The journal has also had a high-profile place within studies of early modernism, used both to demonstrate the critical significance of gender within modernist traditions and to suggest the ways in which women were marginalized and excluded from literary influence (Fernihough 2000). The ways in which the journal continued to interact with the suffrage press and to reflect on the nature of activism and movement dynamics has rarely been foregrounded, despite the productive ways in which social movement approaches can clarify the origins and evolution of the journal.

"A Spinster" and similar controversial pieces also raise important questions about how to read polemical material. Stefan Collini warns against "a disabling kind of naiveté involved in regarding all utterances simply as statements of belief" with regard to polemical literature (1979). Kate Jackson suggests that periodicals should be read "as a social discourse rather than as a direct social statement" (1997: 201). Contributors to

this type of controversial 'open review' rarely presented 'finished' or 'thought through' theories, and tended to submit rapid and intentionally provocative responses to contemporary affairs. The timeliness of a periodical requires us to remember this link to contemporary affairs, and not read an established position into an article that may have been provoked by the dramas of, say, the suffrage agitation. The emotional and violent nature of Marsden's rhetoric against the WSPU leaders was not her final word on the organization, and should not be read as conclusive. A political position can only be tentatively read into such contributions. Articles may have been penned (or commissioned) merely to start a debate and provoke responses, or to fill a gap where nothing else could be found. Marsden condoned or sought a certain amount of provocation between the contributors she shared with the *New Age* and the suffragist readers. Yet this was a strategy that confused and disturbed some of her readership, who expected a more partisan approach, and alongside more clearly defined grievances and avenues of activism.

Framing: Sexual morality and practices

It is rarely enough for a social movement simply to offer a collective identity; it must also mobilize its constituency around a set of grievances, and this process can be understood through Snow and Benford's idea of framing devices, which offer new means of interpreting and articulating experiences within social movements (Snow and Benford 2005). The *Freewoman* offered many possible grievances, indeed, too many to be integrated easily into a 'collective action frame' that could then sustain a social movement. However, the area around which most attention cohered was sexual reform. Sexuality was identified not only as a site of injustice and oppression, but also as productive of creativity and self-development. This of course was a long-standing tradition within the British women's movement and other social movements; sexual politics divided Owenite utopian communities, mobilized the activists of the Anti-Contagious Diseases Acts and were tentatively discussed by the 1880s Men and Women's Club, though often in euphemistic and veiled language (Bland 1995; Taylor 1983). In the *Freewoman*, however, issues of sexual morality and experimentation were not treated as settled and amenable to clear solutions or state action. 'Grievances' emerged, but without consensus as to their resolution. The *Freewoman* did not launch or support campaigns, preferring to elucidate problems through 'full and frank' discussions.

Rebecca West recalled that the *Freewoman* “mentioned sex loudly and clearly and repeatedly, and in the worst possible taste.” The journal attracted the support of some leading sex radicals such as Stella Browne, Havelock Ellis, and Edward Carpenter, and drew on European intellectual, scientific, and criminological traditions in discussing sexual issues.¹³³ Sexuality was an area in which women’s individuality could be asserted. “A Would-Be Freewoman” argued that “there are hardly two feminine natures alike, and nowhere is the difference between individual women so great, as in this, sexual temperament” (21 Mar 1912: 353). A series of five editorials, published by Marsden between December 1911 and January 1912, discussed “the new morality,” a euphemism for the public discussions of sexual relations, often undertaken in the name of ‘sexology.’ Recognizing the lack of precision and openness in debates about sex, Marsden opened her discussion of “passion and sex-passion” with the proviso:

here we will endeavour to be precise in our phraseology. And not only is it necessary for us to be precise; it is equally necessary for readers to be precise. A word or phrase is restricted to its own meaning, and cannot bear the weight of associated meanings. These associated meanings must be provided with specific and precise words or phrases solely to themselves.

(28 Dec 1911: 102)

Even with this care over language, she still struggled to express her meanings, painfully distinguishing passion, desire, lust, and orgasm (termed “the turbulent excitation of sense which rushes to work itself out to a swift finish”). Passion was possible in many realms – the passion of great causes, of power, of religion, of love. But Marsden believed that only selected geniuses could access most of these realms of passion, and for the “great common mass” it was the “gateway of sexual passion” which would lead humans to higher levels of consciousness. What kind of sexual passion, then, would “the new morality” sanction? Marsden rejected monogamy as tyrannous and productive of deceit and vice. She rejected promiscuity, because she believed passion to be “absorbing, jealous, exclusive, and individual” (4 Jan 1912: 122). Instead, she sought the psychic communication of love, which should be freed to come and go as individual passion dictated. Marriage and state intervention should be forbidden as damaging to passion.

Marsden also devoted an editorial in this series to an indictment of the protected and sentimentalized position of motherhood in society.

As a 'kept' position, motherhood was responsible for women's secondary position in the labor market, their unwillingness to explore realms of creativity, and their foregoing of individual dignity and self-reliance. She argued: "When women come to regard the 'kept' condition of the 'mother' and 'wife' with as much horror as they regard the other 'kept' women ... [then] shall we have arrived at the point where feminism may be sure of itself and its future" (11 Jan 1912: 141). She believed that motherhood should be freely chosen, supported by women's own independent work, and kept separate from the realm of sexual pleasure for women.

Other contributors took their lead from Marsden, and wrote with great honesty of their sexual desires and inhibitions. Some discussed birth control, others sex education, or their own sexual desires. There was no agreed position on sexual morality – some argued from a social purity perspective, others argued that sexual passion required the separation of spirit from body. The *Freewoman* also opened up the discussion of homosexuality promoted by European sexologists such as Havelock Ellis, Edward Carpenter, and Magnus Hirschfeld to wider audiences, and provided an unaligned textual space of unusual openness. It hosted a remarkable correspondence regarding the sexuality of 'uranians' or 'third sex' individuals, chiefly between an architect, Harry Birnstingl, and a medical doctor, Charles Whitby. Their exchange is a fascinating insight into contemporary theories of homosexuality, drawing on Edward Carpenter, Weininger, and the experiences of other contributors, via the correspondence pages. Birnstingl's initial article declined the idea that one could make an absolute distinction between masculinity and femininity, and pointed to the existence of those living "midway between the sexes." These "uranians" were "rich and many-sided" individuals, persecuted for their sexual desires (which Birnstingl believed "in the majority of cases, certainly amongst women, [do not] lead to any mechanical sexual act"). He called for a recognition of the naturalness of "genuine sex-inversion" which he believed was thriving within the women's movement (4 Jan 1912: 127–28). Birnstingl's arguments were countered by Charles Whitby, a cousin of the South African feminist Olive Schreiner and a frequent contributor to the *Freewoman*. He argued that "congenital homosexuality" was highly rare, and most "uranians" were simply the product of "artificial civilisation." He called for the re-emphasis of the polarities of gender, and for uranians to be regarded as physically deformed and abnormal. Homosexuality, in Whitby's view, was a condition which made for "decadence and disease," and pushed society to "the

abyss of vital dissipation and racial ruin" (18 Jan 1912: 167; 1 Feb 1912: 215).

The debate between sex reform and convention, mapped out in numerous articles and letters between Whitby and Birnstingl, provoked other contributions from readers, including one who wrote that "my principal reason for [reading *The Freewoman* from the start] was the sympathetic way in which the Uranian question was treated." This reader described himself as "superficially a man," but (using Otto Weininger's formulation of gender essences as "M" and "F"), "I am about 80 F + 20 M" (22 Feb 1912: 274). Albert Lowy, son of WSPU activist Henrietta Lowy, wrote to the *Freewoman* to claim that "the vast majority of persons are, *more or less*, Intermediate . . ." (1 Feb 1912: 213). Thomas Baty, a transgender lawyer and later, publisher of the private journal *Urania*, wrote to advertise his "Aethnic Union," a society dedicated to sweeping away the "gigantic superstructure of artificial convention" in sexual matters, and resisting the "insistent differentiation" into two genders (22 Feb 1912: 27). The muted discussion within the women's movement of sexual matters was set here within a much broader and richer intellectual context, and allowed for the open elaboration and contestation of some highly controversial topics. It was possible for the *Freewoman* to combine intellectual summaries of the abstract theories of Weininger, Ellis and Carpenter, with highly personal accounts of the experiences of readers with Uranian characteristics.

What was the response to this controversial material? Some readers, particularly those gained through suffrage networks, were outraged at the treatment of sexual issues and the "contamination" of the women's movement more generally which might be read into it. Some objected specifically to the uranian material. One reader commented on the *Freewoman*: "I regret that you should have thought it necessary to offend me with your disgusting publication. I consider it indecent, immoral and filthy, and I am sending it to the Director of Public Prosecutions."¹³⁴ Another reader from the Exeter NUWSS wrote that the suggestion that prostitution might be a necessary part of human sexuality was "utterly repugnant to all right-minded people, and it is with disgust that I have seen this in print in an advanced and feminist programme."¹³⁵

Even supportive journals such as the NUWSS *Common Cause* were disconcerted: "We hope that future numbers will show more variety in the subjects; to harp on the one string of sex will jar the nerves of readers in the long run" (30 Nov 1911: 600). Other readers, however, clearly welcomed the sensation of plain speaking and the abandonment of conventionality. One reader wrote: "I am particularly interested in

the free and unconventional letters discussing sexual freedom, endowment of mothers etc. I have often felt the need to discuss these much avoided topics..." (1 Apr 1912: 48). A single mention of birth control methods in the *Freewoman* generated over 40 "applications for information."¹³⁶ A couple practicing the "Karezza" technique of birth control from within a free union offered to lend books on Karezza to another letter writer, and to engage in correspondence with any who were "interested in free unions (monogamous)." Of the journal, they wrote: "How profoundly interested we are in your sex articles...we can hardly sufficiently state" (13 June 1912: 79). Rebecca West concluded that it was the "heritage of unembarrassed honesty" which was the paper's most significant achievement (*Time and Tide*, 16 July 1926).

The Freewoman Discussion Circle

The discussions of sexual morality and practices were an important part of what the *Freewoman* offered its readers. They contributed to debates around reform, and sometimes motivated readers to meet face-to-face to pursue these ideas more closely in the various discussion circles inspired by the *Freewoman*. In April 1912 the establishment in London of the first Freewoman Discussion Circle allowed for this to happen. Fortnightly meetings initially took place in the International Suffrage Shop, then in the vegetarian Eustace Miles restaurant, and later in the Chandos Hall, a site also well-used by suffrage societies. At the first meeting, the organizers had expected 12 or 15 attendees, but attracted over 100. Subjects discussed in 1912 included eugenics, "the abolition of domestic drudgery," neo-Malthusianism, prostitution, and celibacy; reports from the meeting talked of "strenuous," "heated," and "ardent" debates. Rebecca West wrote to Marsden of experiencing the "epidemic of kissing in the discussion circle," including being kissed by "A lady in deep mourning with an interest in Eugenics who gives away leaflets on Proportional Representation."¹³⁷

Marsden welcomed the Circle, and encouraged it to have independence from the journal. She commented to Charles Granville, "I did not want any who were officially connected with The FW to be much in evidence at the preliminary meeting as I want the clubs to run themselves."¹³⁸ Marsden had hoped that the idea might spread to other cities; Bristol members advertised a group, and members of a Dover group were solicited. Readers in Paris and New York enviously contemplated setting up their own Circles. But a correspondent from

Middlesborough, Margaret McClure, wrote in reply to Marsden's encouragement to set up a Circle: "You ask could I get a Freewoman club here. Well you see... I wasn't born amongst the better class... to be frank, Mbro is so very respectable and even our most intellectual seem to me rather old fashioned...."¹³⁹ Extending the *Freewoman's* virtual community could not be imagined, much less created, in such a 'respectable' provincial milieu. Nonetheless, the groups operating outside of London reveal the traditions of provincial radicalism which were important in sustaining Edwardian feminism. The Discussion Circles allowed for the establishment of face-to-face debating forums which significantly deepened and mobilized the reading community of the journal. They also served as a focal point for protest and mobilization around the 'censorship' of the *Freewoman* by W H Smith's 1912 decision not to hold the paper at its stationers and newsstands. After the suspension of publication in 1912, it was the London Discussion Circle which provided the impetus and organization for financial backing of a new title, *The New Freewoman*.

As the London Circle developed, discussions were prolonged after the formal end of the evening, and spread to the intervening weeks between meetings. Twenty eight participants took part in an informal continuation of the discussion of 'sex oppression and the way out' in July 1912. The speaker, Guy Aldred, also continued the debate in the letters pages of the next issue of the *Freewoman* (18 July 1912). Barbara Low, the secretary of the London Circle, talked of the usefulness of discussion in smaller groups, where "personal opinion and personal experience" could be revealed. She asked for leaders of local sub-groups, and offered her own house in the Hampstead Garden Suburb as a meeting place; an "Actionist Group" was also proposed; there clearly was an appetite for more practical activism being generated by the journal, though no records survive as to whether any such group met (11 July 1912: 153).

Activism remained an unresolved issue for *Freewoman* readers. One asked Marsden in 1912 whether her paper was to become "a propagandist paper."¹⁴⁰ It briefly seemed in 1912 that the charismatic power of Dora Marsden might inspire a more activist movement. She fascinated readers. One wrote: "One cannot fail to be impressed by Miss Dora Marsden's articles, for it is clear that she is a noble woman... Possibly a feminist policy will arise from the paper, still more probably from Miss Marsden's personality."¹⁴¹ Marsden's portrait was issued as a photographic supplement to the *Freewoman* in June 1912. This tendency to focus on Marsden as "a new prophetess of feminism," as one magazine put it, became more marked in the United States, where her portrait was

widely reproduced and commentary tended to concentrate on her personal life story. Floyd Dell declared in his 1913 characterization of Dora Marsden as a “world builder”: “She is the Max Stirner of Feminism.” But Marsden herself resisted this attempt to personalize her appeal, and she withdrew from London to live a relatively reclusive life in the North West of England.

Instead of being united around a leader-figure, the intellectual miscellany of this self-consciously “critical, controversial journal” was given saliency and intellectual coherence through being linked to some overarching frames. These frames operated loosely, and did not resolve the tensions and conflicts between readers, but are helpful as heuristic devices that make sense of the *Freewoman’s* intellectual milieu. The value of sexual experimentation was loosely linked to an overarching frame stressing *individuality* as a key ethic of modernity, and a goal of the feminist movement. The *Freewoman* published and discussed Nietzsche, Max Stirner, Weininger – all elitist thinkers, who stressed self-reliance and personal greatness, in contrast to the collectivist and egalitarian ethic more usually associated with the women’s movement. As Marsden saw it: “The objective of the Woman Movement being the development of the individual Ego... it appeals to the spirit of woman... it seeks to make them strong in spirit, to rise up and seize the means to their own development” (29 Aug 1912: 285). This was not an isolated concern of Marsden’s, but resonated with the stress on women’s independence and self-reliance within the women’s movement of the 1890s and 1900s (Brandon 1990; Caine 1997). The ‘new woman’ debates of that period can be seen as an attempt to describe what women’s development as individuals, rather than wives and daughters, would look like. The intense debates around women’s parasitism within the wider women’s movement were echoed in the idealized descriptions of ‘the freewoman’ as financially and emotionally independent, and linked feminism to Romantic individualist values of self-development and uniqueness, in contrast to the liberal individualist values of privacy and *laissez faire*.¹⁴² Romantic individualism helped motivate a broader Edwardian fascination with the development of genius. As a *New Age* contributor put it in characteristic overblown prose, feminism was about finding “the truly superordinary creator who gilds and ennobles the slavish herd by reflection of the sunshine radiating from its own superabundant humanity” (8 May 1913: 46).

Mobilizing readers around sexual affairs also meshed well with a second contemporary intellectual concern or ‘frame’ – the fascination with *introspection* – in Marsden’s words, the need for women “to throw off external authority and follow the voice within,” which could endow

sexual experimentation with inner meaning (29 Aug 1912: 285). This interest was prompted by the high profile of psychological theories in this period, also explored in literary terms in the 'new woman' fiction, and in spiritualism (Dixon 2001; Heilmann 2000). It was no accident that the *New Freewoman* came to be published out of the London offices of the British Theosophist movement. For *Freewoman* readers, the inner world which seemed to hold the key to understanding creativity, and political change.¹⁴³

Mary Gawthorpe had expressed her hope in 1913 that Marsden would write a critical response to the "Weininger-Nietzsche-Freud excesses."¹⁴⁴ These were the figures that set the intellectual framework for the *Freewoman's* feminism. Individualism and introspection can be understood as master frames, representing much larger discursive structures that characterize the intangible 'turn of mind,' temperament or 'cultural temper' of an age (Hynes 1968; Rose 1986). What is important here is to note the discrepancy between these master frames and those that characterized the suffrage movement – frames, for example, of equality and democracy. Both shared a belief in the centrality of gender as a means of framing and understanding the world. Yet by 1913, the emphasis on feminism and gender in the *Freewoman* had become obscured. At the launch of the *New Freewoman*, the publisher, Arthur Fifield, described the paper's goals: "The object of the paper, I understand, is to criticise all conventionalities, sham obstructions and dishonesties in the affairs of life, and to endeavour to lay the foundations of a simple straightforward emancipated society."¹⁴⁵ But even this program became too concrete for Dora Marsden, who proclaimed her indifference to "suffragists, feminists, 'proletarians,' freedom-worshippers, rebels, embargoists, or seekers-after-right of any kind." Instead, she claimed to be gleefully, if laboriously, "contributing to our own amusement by attempting to plot out a geography of the human mind" (*Egoist*, 1 Feb 1915: 19–20). Teresa Billington Greig's vision of "a free feminist platform ... in every town and city in the country" had been narrowed to a self-absorbed and introspective intellectualism.

The frame discrepancy between suffragism and the *Freewoman's* feminism became more marked as individualism came increasingly to be formulated by Dora Marsden as an extreme form of egoism. Marsden became unwilling for any kind of movement ethic or political agency to be associated with the *New Freewoman*:

We know we do empower ourselves, our contributors, and those who find pleasure in reading us: three admirable achievements of which the most admirable is the first. But ourselves apart we do not 'stand

for' the empowering of any... We prefer to say we 'stand' for nothing since the 'selves,' to whose power and satisfaction this effort administers, are too changeful for anything which 'stands' to keep up with.

(15 Dec 1913: 244–45)

Faced with such radical anti-essentialism in the *New Freewoman* and its successor from 1914, the *Egoist*, readers openly expressed their disappointment. The American Frances Björkman wrote to Marsden:

Apparently my simple Middle Western intelligence is inadequate to grasp the import of a paper so post-everything as *The New Freewoman*. I have a dizzy sense of being at sea in a high gale with nothing but a cockle-shell between me and the briny deep. In reading it, I am oppressed with a truly awful conviction of crudity and ignorance.¹⁴⁶

But Björkman's sense of ignorance did not lead to a disabling sense of voicelessness. She elaborated on what she found troubling about the shift from *Freewoman* to *Egoist*:

I wish there were more women contributors, and I could do with considerably less of 'the white bodies of women.' One is so everlastingly pursued by said white bodies through literature, and I did hope that *The Freewoman* would furnish us with a refuge where we could rest secure from them. I am very much interested in seeing the erotic [*sic*] life of women set forth truly and candidly by women themselves, but I feel as if I'd had enough of the erotic [*sic*] life of men as set forth by themselves, and also of what men think of the erotic life of women.¹⁴⁷

A British supporter, Bessie Hayes, also articulated her disappointment in 1913 to the new editor, Harriet Shaw Weaver:

I must confess that to change the paper's name to 'The Egoist' seems to me foolish. Such a name would convey nothing to the ordinary practical person. No doubt you will say *The Freewoman* is not meant for the ordinary practical person. But then what is the good of a 'gospel' (which Miss Marsden spoke of) if it is only for 20 or 50 people.... Don't you yourself think that the paper is not accomplishing what we intended it to? Some of the articles begin about nothing, twist and turn through a maze of words, and when I come

to the end, I wonder for what purpose it was written. Then the poetry, pages upon pages of it; I said I wasn't grumbling but I'm afraid I am. I had such hopes of *The Freewoman* and it seems utterly changed.¹⁴⁸

Clearly, Hayes had had hopes of a feminist periodical that could sustain a mass readership and an activist commitment, and along with other readers, she experienced deep disillusionment with the incomprehensibility of what they had hoped might be the intellectual basis for a new movement. The *Freewoman* had steadily lost its intellectual and practical link to the wider women's movement. Marsden herself argued that feminism was simply intended "to tighten the strings of the controversy" rather than set up a new movement or identity. But her readers persistently identified themselves as or aspired to be 'freewomen' and 'feminists' and ignored, or selectively misread those aspects of the journal with which they could not agree.¹⁴⁹

What was the long-term influence of the master frames of individuality and introspection on the cycles of activism and protest within the women's movement? 'Freewoman' had an ephemeral impact, its appeal apparently evaporating during the more collectivist ethos of World War I. The collective identity inspired by 'feminist' became a much more widely applied and bland term, losing its connotations of avant-garde iconoclasm. Intended as a pointed critique of suffragism, it became synonymous with both suffragism and 'the women's movement.' Individualist concerns had resonated strongly with Edwardian intellectual culture, and elements of the women's movement. The radical publisher Victor Gollancz, attempting to delineate 'modern feminism' in a 1917 collection titled *The Making of Women* had argued that "The greatness of a society increases in proportion to the number of individuals who are perfectly developed" (Rathbone et al. 1917). But the overall tone of the collection was a stress on collective feminine identities such as motherhood, and themes of genius, introspection, and individuality became much less resonant during World War I and the interwar decades. Those with more radical ideas preferred to call themselves 'post-feminist,' as a group of New York radicals declared in *Judy* in 1919 (undated, c. 1919: 20–21).

Interest in individualism and introspection re-emerged during the renewal of feminism in the 1970s, though in a transformed intellectual context. Introspection and the commitment to self-understanding and self-development had been central to the countercultural movements of the 1960s. The new attention paid to psychotherapies and other forms of introspective analysis strongly influenced the feminist activists

of the 1970s. Individualism was also stressed, not only amongst feminists, but in a broad range of later twentieth-century social movements. Arthur Marwick identified the catchphrase “doing your own thing” as a key concept of the 1960s (Marwick 2006). It emerged as an ambivalent commitment of the 1970s feminist movement which seemed to place collective solutions and identities as paramount, yet which also acted as a vehicle for individuals such as Germaine Greer, who brought an Australian libertarian tradition to her 1970 text *The Female Eunuch*.¹⁵⁰ ‘The personal is political’ seemed to stress the collective significance of individual experiences – but could also be interpreted as licensing thoroughly *individual* acts of rebellion. This interpretation has been one of the (diverse) trends characterizing the so-called ‘third wave’ feminisms that have emerged in the 1990s. ‘The personal is political’ has been reworked into a new form; the Canadian libertarian feminist Wendy McElroy comments, “The new slogan of feminism should be ‘the personal is personal’ ...let individuals choose” (McElroy 1996: 117). ‘New feminists’ such as Camille Paglia, Naomi Wolf, Wendy McElroy, or in Britain, Natasha Walter have rejected more collectivist versions of feminism as promoting a victim-centred political vision, which is irrelevant to women’s needs in the 1990s. Natasha Walter states that “[women] should always be seen as individuals, not representatives of their sex” (Walter 1998: 78). Naomi Wolf asks each woman to “claim her individual voice rather than merging her voice in a collective identity, for only strong individuals can create a just community” (Wolf 1994: 149). One is ‘held back’ through collective attributes such as gender, and must overcome this through a recognition of one’s individual qualities. For Wolf in the mid-1990s, “the statement ‘I am a feminist’ meant only I am a sentient, strong individual who objects to being held back – or having other women held back – on the basis of gender” (1994: 151).

There are some obvious links between this libertarian feminism and the individualism of the *Freewoman*. Very different intellectual and political traditions fed into each phase, and with the exception of ‘zine cultures,’ the thriving periodical culture had faded by the late twentieth century, making ‘new feminism’ much less interactive and collectively developed. Nonetheless, both versions of feminism rejected the view of women as victims. For Dora Marsden, women were not enslaved by men, but by their own failure to stand up to men and overcome their subordination. Feminism did not address itself to the ‘weak and crushed down,’ but to the vanguard of the strong, named by Marsden as ‘the freewomen’ or ‘superwomen.’ This is akin to the celebration of women’s power in the new feminism. Natasha Walter’s 1990s icons are

Margaret Thatcher, and the 'girl power' of the Spice Girls. Thatcher is characterized as "the great unsung heroine of British feminism... She normalized female success, without seeking special favours or privileges as a woman" (Walter 1998: 175). This polemical, provocative rhetoric clearly resonates with Edwardian evocations of 'freewomen,' despite the powerful divergences over sexual politics and morality. Both strands of individualist feminism also reject the state as an instrument for collective action, and prefer the leadership of committed individuals in their chosen spheres of excellence. The rejection of 'anything which destroys the complete selfhood of the individual' by the 'new feminists' closely resembles the egoism of Dora Marsden. The rejection of rights as a sign of weakness by *Freewoman* contributors resembles the rejection of affirmative action by some in the late twentieth century.¹⁵¹ The women's movement has always held together in tension a number of incompatible master frames, which recur through cycles of protest, and though the intellectual concerns of the *Freewoman* lacked resonance after the outbreak of World War I, these are perennial concerns, which re-emerge as influential within late twentieth-century feminism.

Conclusion

This case study has drawn extensively on the rich archival sources and personal correspondences associated with the *Freewoman* in charting its self-positioning within the media and social movement landscape. In the absence of such sources, historical understanding of the development and publicity strategies of the journal would have been significantly reduced, and the historical narrative would certainly fail to capture the ongoing commitment of its contributors and editors to engagement with a range of social movements, including women's suffrage. Polemical denunciations of the suffrage movement within the journal can usefully be contrasted to the ongoing interactions between critics such as Dora Marsden and committed suffragists amongst her readership revealed in their private papers and letters. Marsden's embrace of egoism suggests a rejectionist attitude toward activism and institutional affiliation of any kind, but the archival evidence suggests an ongoing engagement with movement politics. The archives also give rich insights into the iterative, interactive exchanges that lay behind the more forceful and polarized views that emerged within the published journal. Other feminist periodicals discussed within this study lack this kind of archival depth, and this can partly explain their neglect. Nonetheless, care must be taken not to allow archival richness to seduce

historians into paying undue attention to the subset of periodicals which offer these kinds of insights – as Peter Mandler reminds us, we must continue to ask questions about ‘throw’ and representativeness (2004). The long running, widely read and respected *Englishwoman*, for example, lacks the archival richness of the *Freewoman*, yet may have had as much if not more influence than the ephemeral *Freewoman* with its tiny print run, which has received so much historical attention.

The *Freewoman* subverts our ideas of the boundaries of feminism in the Edwardian period. A historically sensitive reading of this journal requires an abandonment of preconceptions about the content of feminism, and a willingness to see the political argument of the journal as fluid, polemical, and contestable. It was also actively shaped by its location in a context of periodical publishing. The *Freewoman* offers an illustration of an important though neglected phenomenon of social movements – the emotional and intellectual process of disaffiliation amongst individual activists – illustrated both in the founding of the journal and in its gradual shift away from the women’s movement. Yet this process was not a failure; rather it was a highly creative, if emotionally taxing, means of reframing the wider women’s movement. The disputes and internal conflicts over the meanings of ‘feminist’ and ‘freewoman’ within the journal should not be seen as a sign of failure or quarrelsomeness, but as a key part of the process of coining and popularizing new forms of collective identity (‘freewoman’ and ‘feminist’), that has, in the case of ‘feminist,’ proved to have enduring saliency and mobilizing power across the twentieth century.

The *Freewoman’s* feminism cannot only be understood as a derivative movement from suffrage; it was in dialogue with suffrage, and some suffrage tactics and grievances diffused into its formation of ‘feminism.’ But it also drew on the mobilizing power and ideas of other movements and collective action frames. The editors consciously drew on other publishing practices and intellectual traditions, and linked suffragist readers to other reading communities. The willingness of the editors to engage in a sustained manner with other journals and the commentary that went both ways between the *Freewoman* and the daily papers such as the *Times* and the *Morning Post* suggest an orientation toward wider publics. The *Freewoman* represents a creative reworking of an existing social movement field through an extension and amplification of the conceptual frames, explored here in relation to individualism and introspection. This tentative knitting together of influences to create a new social movement field forms a part of the protest cycle of the wider

women's movement. It generated conflict and ambivalence; the historical sources reveal both ambitions to form an activist movement, and a considerable, openly expressed reluctance to move beyond the level of intellectual speculation. This ambivalence was borne of the lack of consensus around the identity frames on offer. Nonetheless, an analysis that focuses on the intellectual level of master frames suggests that the key ideas influencing the *Freewoman*, of individual self-realization and introspection, exist in constitutive tension with ideas of collective action and an orientation toward external campaigns; the feminist movement of the later twentieth century suggests that this tension has persisted, and feminism seems likely to continue to encompass both frames.

Conclusion

We shall read one day, perhaps at no very distant date... of how the crowning victory of the Parliamentary Suffrage was won for women; we shall then be able... to trace the whole history of the long struggle, through the faithful pages, reporting active campaigns, scornful debates, repeated disappointments, and renewed efforts. Possibly all these in turn will be forgotten... by a younger generation, who will never know but that women always voted on the same terms as men. Well, be it so; oblivion is in itself a sign of progress.

(M. A. Biggs, *Englishwoman's Review*, 15 Oct 1908: 221)

Modern young women know amazingly little of what life was like before the war, and show a strong hostility to the word 'feminism,' and all which they imagine it to connote. They are, nevertheless, themselves the products of the women's movement and the difficult and confusing conditions in which they live are partly due to the fact that it is in their generation that the change-over from the old to the new conception of the place of women in society is taking place.

(Ray Strachey 1936: 10)

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw significant change in the 'public conversation' about women's rights and freedoms. The tendency to measure progress and changes in public opinion through the daily press and through the pages of their own periodicals stems back to the impact Bessie Rayner Parkes attributed to the *English Woman's Journal* in 1864. M. A. Biggs continued in that tradition when she celebrated 50 years of the *Englishwoman's Review* in 1908, noting the

“immense difference between now and then and the progress achieved in all branches of women’s activities” (15 Oct 1908: 217). She highlighted the journal’s role as a record of events: “Any chronicle of the history of the REVIEW would be equivalent to writing that of the whole woman’s movement, of which it is itself the principal general register” (217). Years later, the *Woman’s Leader* remarked, “If we look back at the progress since *The Englishwoman* was founded, and if we read over the arguments that had to be used in the early numbers of the magazine, we can measure the magnitude of the change . . . those old articles have an almost antediluvian ring, and would make fascinating, and possibly salutary, reading for the girls just leaving school” (7 Jan 1921: 1037). These journals played an important role in the very progress they chronicled.

The interwar period provided many opportunities for reflection on the developments in the preceding decades and there is a significant body of retrospective writing by feminists in these years, both polemical and personal. Assessments of women’s enfranchisement were invariably mixed. As Eleanor Rathbone observes, “Speaking generally, the results exceed expectations, but in some spheres of effort there has been disappointment . . . progress has been rapid when it depended on political action and slow when it depended on changes in heart and habits” (1936: 16). Pat Thane cautions that “There is a danger of measuring the impact of the vote by impossible standards; of expecting change to be unrealistically rapid; and of underestimating, by applying the values of later generations, shifts which were more significant in the context of the 1920s and 1930s than they appear with hindsight” (2001: 254). While it may be possible to track changes in legislation or the participation of women as voters and parliamentarians, it is much more difficult to measure the impact on what Rathbone refers to as ‘heart and habits.’ Periodicals provide some of the best evidence we have of the cultural impact of the campaign for enfranchisement and how it served as a foundation to build on.

After all, retrospective analysis did not imply the end of the suffrage campaign or the ‘Women’s Movement’ – the more frequently used term. The 1920s were a time not only for looking back, but also for looking forward. The partial franchise victory (equal franchise was not granted until 1928) shifted the stakes for women’s reform groups, at the same time that the devastating effects of the war created new and different issues, including the immediate economic implications of demobilization. The stock-taking in these years suggests a strong sense that the work and gains to date were only the beginning; the ‘future of the

women's movement' was a constant refrain. Rather than an attenuation of collective action or lack of support for feminist causes, the interwar years witnessed changes and diversification in feminist activism. These activities continued to permeate all levels of public life: social, economic, and political reforms; the growth of internationalism and peace activism among former suffrage supporters; and feminist developments in intellectual and cultural spheres. These disparate spheres of activity may have lacked the obvious focus, magnitude, and visibility of the suffrage campaign in the years before the war, which explains why it gained so much attention then and now. Nevertheless, many of the prominent feminists active in the interwar period were those who, as suffragists, had been committed to a wider range of reforms beyond the immediate goal of political enfranchisement. What is crucial is that the activities persisted and expanded; they did not disappear.

Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor argue that the women's movement in the United States has a continuous history from the mid-nineteenth century to the present and they use John Lofland's idea of mobilization as "a continuum from 'warm' to 'white hot'" to account for variations in the activities or growth of social movements (1991: 71). The same is true of Britain; the interwar period, for instance, was not a period of feminist retreat as is often assumed, nor was the attention to women as wives and mothers a return to the domestic sphere. Like so-called 'new social movements' later, interwar feminist activism concerned itself with the politicization of everyday life and identity politics – debating everything from the endowment of motherhood to 'new' and 'old' feminist identities. It also continued to pursue both reactive and proactive strategies, demonstrating the need to achieve political as well as cultural normative change.¹⁵² Periodicals facilitated these strategies by exploring and articulating new possibilities for women – intellectually, practically, artistically.

The feminist press of the interwar period confirms how existing and newly constituted organizations mobilized around many of the same issues and grievances. Some official organs chose to stop publishing, some broadened their mandates or evolved into new titles, and some periodicals were forced by financial circumstances to discontinue their work. But some persisted and new papers were founded, demonstrating an ongoing commitment and need for general feminist journals and official organs. The *Vote* offered engaging coverage of developments in national and international contexts until 1933. The *Common Cause* continued to publish after the war and advertised itself as "the paper for feminists, reformers, social workers, trades, speakers, and all women

citizens" and "equality" was its watchword. The paper became the official organ of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC) in March 1919 and then became the *Woman's Leader* in 1920. The new journal claimed it had a "special service" as a "meeting ground" for the numerous and "sub-divided" groups in the struggle for equality and in reminding them of the "unity of their cause" (6 Feb 1920: 7).

Journals like the *Woman's Leader* and *Time and Tide* arrived and persisted in spite of financial odds because feminists had little faith in the ability of the wider press to address their needs and continued to find ways both to share their ideas with one another and to communicate them more widely:

We lacked a Press then [when the *Englishwoman* was founded in 1909] for the political aspirations and the serious interests of women, and we lack that Press to-day. In spite of all the parade that the commercial Press makes of its women's pages and its women's supplements, the real substance of what we need is still deplorably absent. They give us fashions in abundance and superabundance, they record society doings which are of little or no interest, they repeat recipes until we are surfeited, they dish up sentiment and wash together time after time, and fancy that by so doing they produce the mental food that women need. . . . But they fail to convince us all the same, that such monotonous and substanceless rubbish is what the female public really *wants*.

(*Woman's Leader*, 7 Jan 1921: 1037)

These general feminist journals were instrumental in taking up the task of providing new arenas to debate ideas, monitor developments, and communicate with wider readerships. They contributed to what Rupp and Taylor refer to as the "production and maintenance of meaning within groups" in periods of "abeyance" in women's movements (1991). Even though they claimed to be serving a 'female public' they were no less open to male contributors or to addressing and engaging the general public than earlier papers were.¹⁵³

This study has used a range of conceptual frameworks – drawn from current debates about the public sphere, social movements, and media history – to elucidate the contributions of the feminist press in the context of early women's movements. The aim has been to demonstrate how and why these media reveal the complex and often conflicting terms in which individuals and organizations engaged with one another, but also – and significantly – with the general public. It is, after all, the

goal of social movements to bring issues and grievances to be heard, recognized, and addressed in the public sphere. The case studies offer a response to the tendency to homogenize 'women's periodicals' and the failure to acknowledge the scope of an overtly feminist press in these decades. The selection has been designed to reveal the diversity of genres, voices, and wide-ranging content while, at the same time, foregrounding some of the methodological challenges of doing this kind of work. We will briefly consider some of the conclusions to be drawn from these analyses.

By distinguishing between official organs and feminist reviews we highlight the different discursive strategies operating at the same time. While they shared a number of features and interests, these periodicals differed in terms of what they covered and how. In his examination of genre in Victorian periodicals, James Mussell suggests that the specific departments and their arrangement in a given publication offered "certain generic patterns that would have allowed readers to know what to expect" and that these "determined the way the world was represented to readers" (99). It is interesting to consider the implications of these generic patterns in the context of Carolyn Miller's theories about the relationship between genre and culture, particularly how genre facilitates participation in a community and can constitute a form of social action (1984, 1994). Language itself is central to the functions of genre. Janice Schroeder argues, in relation to the tone of nineteenth-century feminist periodicals, that the language used was "its own argument . . . its own enactment of critical claims" (245). These insights force us to think about the ways in which movement media deliberately styled themselves to reflect or even promote different organizational or group cultures – how they positioned themselves and constructed their readerships. We have described publications like *Votes for Women*, the *Common Cause*, the *Englishwoman*, and the *Freewoman* variously as evangelical, sober, decorous, and iconoclastic. Some were definitely willing to say 'feminist' more loudly than others, and to mean different things by it. They used visual styles, tonal registers, and marketing/pricing practices that linked them to some existing publications and distinguished them from others.

But self-definitions change. Movement media contributed to the formation and proliferation of politicized collective identities which emerged and changed over time and in reaction to other developments. The journals we have examined reveal the heterogeneity of collective identities generated by a single campaign: militants, suffragettes, constitutionalists, radical suffragists, democratic suffragists, anti-suffragists,

catholic suffragists, Irish suffragists, pacifists, labor women, freewomen, freelance feminists, social feminists, and new feminists. These labels not only complicate issues of social class, but also more basically they complicate how we identify and categorize supporters and opponents of the cause. For all that we may try to pin down the specific policies, editorial voices, addressees, and audiences of individual titles, they continually evade or surprise us; this is true of most of the periodicals we have examined.¹⁵⁴ Aled Jones reminds us that “editorial political identity was complicated by the multiplicity of discourses embodied in the text of the newspaper” (141). These reading challenges are exacerbated further by strategies of inclusiveness or the difficulty of gauging irony in polemical material, as the case of the famous spinster article in the *Freewoman* illustrates.

All of these factors underscore the need to read contextually. These periodicals were part of a referential discourse and it takes considerable effort to reconstruct the contexts, in whatever limited ways that is even possible. We have tried to indicate the dialogue that took place between different publications and sectors of the press, by using a few examples of how they might be read against one another. By selecting different events or topics for each of the case studies – elections, the war, sexuality – we have tried to illustrate that they are relevant to a wide range of historical fields and how they might be integrated into those fields. The forms of evidence we have been able to rely on necessarily limit these analytical processes. The *Englishwoman* has received more recovery work than is evident in the other case studies, because of the dearth of basic information about this journal in the existing scholarship. The case studies on the official organs and the *Freewoman* rely more on biography or sources such as letters, memoirs, and archival records. Perhaps the sharpest contrast between working from the ‘inside’ as opposed to the ‘outside’ can be seen in the cases of the *Freewoman* and the *Englishwoman*. There is a great deal we have not been able to do; the case studies raise many questions about contributors, features, content, editorial practices, and readerships. They offer, at best, a snapshot of particular historical moments or topics in order to reveal the interactions and layers of meaning that are normally glossed over in more general accounts.

The feminists who produced these periodicals did not regard them as ephemeral. In her tribute to the *Englishwoman’s Review*, M. A. Biggs recommended that “younger workers of our generation may find it useful and instructive to turn over some of these pages, to be reminded, or even ... to learn, by what determined efforts, or by what difficult steps,

most of the privileges they enjoy were gained" (15 Oct 1908: 221). As a chronicle of the movement, Biggs implied that the journal was also part of the legacy of the movement for future generations. Many periodicals were regarded and preserved by participants in the movement, less for their educational value, and more as memorabilia. The suffrage organs were available in bound copies, sold as souvenirs, and offered as prizes in selling competitions. These periodicals assumed a significance far beyond their practical functions. What we have tried to demonstrate is that they are of value and continue to yield important insights for us now – we too may find it useful and instructive to turn over some of these pages.

In her study of suffrage leadership and social movements, Louise Ryan notes the difficulties of studying movements in the past because "images of activists and leaders have become mediated through layers of representations" and "It is all too easy for movements to become reified, their internal dynamics and collective identity processes no longer visible to the modern researcher" (2001: 211). The observation may be applied more broadly to other aspects of the movement, notably to movement media and the ways in which they help us understand how issues, figures, and events were being mediated at the time, in creative and innovative ways. Part of our aim in this study has been to entice new readers for these journals as well as to encourage more seasoned readers of early periodicals to consider methodological questions and explore different models for doing media history. We have attempted to make a case for the publicist orientation of the early feminist press and for the need to understand these publications in relational terms, in other words, as embedded in a dynamic and widespread movement and part of a complex web of media and interests in the period. Importantly, we have quoted extensively from the letterpress of these papers to offer a flavor of the texts of these periodicals. But we have only skimmed the surface and pointed, in Jessie Boucherett's words, to "the work we have to do."

Notes

Introduction: The Challenges and Contributions of Feminist Media History

1. We use 'feminist' deliberately here to distinguish between the wide range of commercial periodicals targeting women readers and the more overtly progressive publications identifying themselves as committed to the emancipation of women. Beetham and Boardman describe Victorian feminist journals as those attempting "to provide a critique of contemporary culture and women's place within it" (61) and make a useful distinction between "campaign journals" (devoted to particular issues or causes) and "general feminist journals" (61). The case studies will examine both types.
2. Examples of discussions of the emergence of these other fields include Ashplant and Smyth on cultural history, Finkelstein and McCleery on book history, and Latham and Scholes on periodical studies.
3. See also Martin Conboy (2002) regarding arguments for an historical approach to the popular press, as well as Chris Atton (2002) and Hamilton and Atton (2001) on alternative media and the need to link recent forms to a longer history.
4. The examples are too numerous to list, but the studies range from the work of Helen Rogers and Kathryn Gleadle on the early to mid-nineteenth century, Barbara Onslow's examination of women in journalism from the mid- to late nineteenth century, to Adrian Bingham's study of gender in the popular press in interwar Britain.
5. For a discussion of the relationship between suffrage and national and imperial politics, see Fletcher et al. 2000; Burton 1994, and for a discussion of the American context, see Sneider 2008.

Part I Publics, Social Movements, and Media History

6. Nancy Fraser warns against the "less precise" use of the term by contemporary feminists because such usage tends to conflate areas of analysis that should be treated separately (1992: 110).
7. The studies emerging after the influential Calhoun collection, *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (1992), are too numerous to list here, the directions noted above can be seen in work such as: Asen and Brouwer 2001; Butsch 2007; Clark 2000; Crack 2008; Crossley and Roberts 2004; Edwards 2007, 2008.
8. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge's notion of the proletarian counter public realm or proletarian public sphere, in response to Habermas's bourgeois public sphere, was one of the first influential reformulations, followed by otherwise defined entities such as feminist counterpublics and alternative

- public spheres (see discussions of Fraser 1992; Felski 1989; Downing 1988 below). A more popularized usage in the context of queer and cultural studies can be found in Michael Warner's contributions (2002).
9. Habermas has acknowledged, even if he does not satisfactorily resolve, these critiques by feminist critics. See Habermas 1996a, b.
 10. The specific reference here is to Amelia Lewis's address to her readers in the (10 Feb 1872) issue of *Woman*, but it serves as an example of the tendency in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to see the proliferation and diversification of the press as implicated in segmenting the public – literally creating new groupings. See also Scott-James 1913.
 11. Craig Calhoun uses this phrase to capture the nature and scope of concerns raised by new social movements (1995: 186).
 12. See Brian Harrison's "Emmeline's niche" in *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 Nov 2000: 27 and June Purvis's "Frailty doesn't feature in war" in *The Times Higher*, 2 March 2001: 31. Harrison praises the book and Pugh's qualities, one of which is "the historian's fair-minded determination to see things as contemporaries saw them, without hindsight, wishful thinking, or preaching" whereas Purvis criticizes the book as part of a genre of suffrage histories written by "a small number of male historians who have written within a similar masculinist framework that seeks to belittle the suffragettes of the Women's Social and Political Union."
 13. There are collections devoted precisely to 'building bridges' between paradigms such as Meyer et al. 2002.
 14. See Poletta (2008) for a discussion of the challenges on the part of American sociologists to new social movement theorists and the overall impact of cultural approaches. Also, Calhoun 1995 for an analysis of why the 'new' was not so new.
 15. These include a wide range of journal articles, book chapters, and edited collections, some of which are noted in relation to cultural perspectives and women's movements below.
 16. For examples, see Hewitt and McCammon 2004; King et al. 2005; McCammon 2003; McCammon and Campbell 2002; McCammon et al. 2001; Rosenthal et al. 1997.
 17. Ferree and Mueller make an interesting distinction between women's movements and feminism, using 'women's movements' to denote "mobilizations based on appeals to women as a *constituency* and thus as an organizational strategy" as opposed to 'feminism' which they define as "the goal of challenging and changing women's subordination to men" (2007: 577).
 18. It may seem contradictory initially to consider anti-suffragists (espousing the preservation of traditional roles for women) as a counterpublic, but only if we ignore why reactionary groups in general (and in any historical period) feel threatened enough to mobilize on their own behalf in reaction to the wider public. Such mobilization occurs when they perceive progressive tendencies are gaining ground and becoming more widely accepted. The role of anti-suffragists, hailed at the time as a 'counter-movement,' will be examined in the case study on official organs (Chapter 1). These observations are relevant to right-wing extremist groups today for which the label would also pertain. See Meyer and Staggenborg (1996).

19. Examples of these tendencies include Sandra Stanley Holton's work on radical elements in the nineteenth-century suffrage movement, as well as studies of transatlantic and international women's networks.
20. Comparative perspectives on women's movements in these years reveal the extent to which the scope and success of their activities depended on the larger contexts of social and political activism in different countries (Fell and Sharp 2007).
21. Benford and Snow clarify that the concept of the frame in the specific context of social movements derives from the work of Irving Goffman and they note the use of the term in fields ranging from cognitive psychology to political science (2000). See Oliver and Johnston (2005) for a discussion of the problems with the uncritical use of the term 'framing' and the frequent conflation with the 'ideology.'
22. The term 'birth control' was coined in 1914 as part of Margaret Sanger's contraception campaign in the United States. It was a deliberate attempt to replace terms such as 'family limitation' and 'voluntary motherhood' current at the time (Chesler 97). Sanger founded her controversial monthly paper, *Woman Rebel*, in the same year.
23. Lisa M. Gring-Pemble examines, in the context of the American woman's rights movement, the function of letter writing in the consciousness-raising process of social movements (1998). While we do not focus on letters as a genre, it is worth foregrounding their role in the formation of networks.
24. Indirectly, Rosenberg's analysis points up the value of sources such as letters and diaries, as well as the restrictions on what could or could not be said, even in political reviews.
25. An example of the analysis of a specific topic is Katherine Kelly's analysis of suffrage spectacle and London daily newspapers (2004).
26. We refer back to Nancy Fraser's use of the term 'publicist orientation' earlier, in relation to her point about how counterpublics militate against separatism by directing themselves toward "wider publics" (Fraser 124).
27. See DiCenzo 2004 and Barbara Green 2009 for overviews of studies of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century feminist periodical press.
28. Bibliographic studies of British and American women's political periodicals have been important sources for identifying publications, including Doughan and Sanchez (1987) and Endres and Lueck (1996). Key microfilm sources for the publications themselves include Harvester's *The Social and Political Status of Women: Radical and Reforming Periodicals*, The Gerritsen Collection, and selections in recent projects such as NCSE (Nineteenth-Century Serials Edition). Print reproductions (often in facsimile) of individual journals or thematic collections include: *The Englishwoman's Review of Social and Industrial Questions* introduced by Janet Horowitz Murray and Myra Stark (Garland Publishing, Inc, 1980); *The Revolution in Words: Righting Women 1868–1871* edited by Lana F. Rakow and Cheri Kramarae (Routledge, 1990); *Irish Feminism and the Vote: An Anthology of the Irish Citizen Newspaper, 1912–1920* edited by Louise Ryan (Folens, 1996); *The Very Salt of Life: Welsh Women's Political Writings from Chartism to Suffrage* edited by Jane Aaron and Ursula Masson (Honno Classics, 2007); *Eve's Century: A Sourcebook of Writings on Women and Journalism 1895–1918* edited by Anne

- Varty (Routledge, 2000); and many of the titles in the Routledge History of Feminism series include selections from the periodical literature.
29. See Laurel Brake 2000–01 and Sally Mitchell 2009 for detailed accounts of these developments and the ongoing contributions to the field. Also, the *Victorian Periodicals Review* includes a history of its work in the field in its fortieth anniversary issue 41.1 (Spring 2008).
 30. We will draw on some of these sources in the case studies, but a sample of the types of analyses directly relevant to the issues and periodicals in our study include: Bohata 2002; Bostick 1980; Clay 2006; Delap 2000, 2005, 2007; DiCenzo 2000, 2003; DiCenzo and Ryan 2007; Franklin 2002; Green 1997; Hartman 2003; Joannou 2002; Kelly 2004; Levine 1990; Mercer 2004, Louise Ryan 1996; Oldfield 2003; Schuch 2001; Smith 2003. There is also a cluster of work around the *English Woman's Journal*, its successors, and the Langham Place group in the nineteenth century (Dredge 2005; Frawley 1998; Herstein 1985; Lacey 1986; Murray and Stark 1980; Rendall 1987; Robinson 1996; Schroeder 2002). These lists are not exhaustive. They do not include brief discussions of feminist or suffrage periodicals offered in histories of the British movement. There is a growing body of work on the American woman suffrage movement building on studies such as Solomon (1991). See Chapman and Mills, and Chapman and Lamont (both forthcoming 2011).
 31. We refer back to the discussion of Joan Scott's use of Derrida's concept of the 'supplement' in our introductory chapter.
 32. It is important to note that this situation could be seen as changing after the turn of the century with the proliferation of suffrage organs and feminist reviews. Onslow claims that "In retrospect the 'special periodical' can be seen to have influenced the political climate" and acknowledges that special periodicals "were to be exceptionally vigorous as the suffrage campaign continued into the following century" (2001: 181).
 33. Included here are classic studies such as Stanley Harrison's *Poor Men's Guardians* (1974), Stephen Koss's *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, Vols I and II (1981, 1984), and Alan Lee's *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855–1914* (1976), in addition to later, revisionist studies such as James Curran's and Jean Seaton's *Power Without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain* (1991).
 34. It is worth highlighting the fact that terminology is not always clear or consistent, both at the time or in the scholarship. So terms as various as newspapers, papers, journals, and periodicals were or are conflated or used inclusively to refer to dailies, weeklies, monthlies, and so on.
 35. For instance the closest we get to 'feminist' voices in the *Victorian Print Media* reader are Charlotte O'Connor Eccles' account of being a woman journalist in a man's world and Evelyn March-Phillipps' better-known piece on women's newspapers from the *Fortnightly Review*. But even the extract from March-Phillipps is edited in such a way that it eliminates what one might argue are the most interesting sections – namely her criticism of the treatment of the views and interests of women in existing sectors of the press and her concluding call for a paper of substance. The effect of the editorial choices is to reinforce the familiar patronizing dismissal of women's publications as superficial and inane.

36. For a more detailed discussion of these issues in the context of nineteenth-century periodicals, see DiCenzo 2010.
37. Hampton's argument about the decline of the educational ideal has been challenged in other contexts (Ardis 2008; Collier 2006, 2008).
38. Helena Swanwick, Evelyn Sharp, and Rebecca West are obvious examples. Swanwick, a feminist journalist, worked as a reporter for the *Manchester Guardian*, and became the editor of the *Common Cause*, the official organ of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. She became involved in a number of democratic and peace-related causes, contributed to a wide range of journals, and wrote a series of books on the women's movement, the socialist state, and the peace movement. Sharp, a member of the WSPU and regular contributor to *Votes for Women*, also wrote for a variety of mainstream daily newspapers and periodicals (Angela John 2003). West's prolific output traversed journalistic and literary circles, including feminist and socialist periodicals, daily newspapers, avant garde little magazines, middle-brow and mass market publications in Britain and the United States (Patrick Collier 2006; Lyn Pykett 2000).

Part II The Case Studies

39. We learned this lesson through the process of compiling our collection, *Feminism and the Periodical Press, 1900–1918* (Routledge, 2006). Three volumes (totaling roughly 1200 pages) originally seemed adequate for offering primary source material from a range of periodicals. In the end, it represents some snapshots of what we identified as key themes in the feminist press in those years.

1 Unity and Dissent: Official Organs of the Suffrage Campaign

40. I have used the *Englishwoman's Journal* in the specific instances where the title appears as such, rather than as the *English Woman's Journal*.
41. See John Mercer 2004 for a detailed discussion of *Votes for Women*, its news strategy, and relationship to the mainstream press.
42. I draw the term 'political literacy' here from rhetoric historian Wendy B. Sharer whose study examines the literate practices of American women's political organizations.
43. These journals have received growing attention in the field of Victorian periodical studies. In addition to the sources outlined for the *English Woman's Journal* and the *Englishwoman's Review* in Part I, see the following for discussions of other progressive journals of the period: Beetham 1996; Beetham and Boardman 2001; Fraser et al. 2003; Levine 1990; Onslow 2000; Phegley 2004; Schuch 2001; Tusan 2004; Van Arsdel 1978.
44. See Doughan 1987 for an overview of commercial, organizational, and feminist periodicals of the period.
45. The reference here is to the entry in the *Suffrage Annual Who's Who*, edited by A. J. R. in 1913. It is listed in the bibliography as R., A. J.

46. For example, the NUWSS passed a resolution in 1909 requiring a pledge from members to work only by constitutional means (Van Wingerden 101). In her memoir, Millicent Fawcett recounts that they had no choice but to exclude "Militant Suffragists" from membership in the NUWSS societies after the introduction of violent tactics such as stone-throwing and window-breaking (1925: 192).
47. For accounts of divisions in the nineteenth century, see Sandra Stanley Holton 1994, 1998. Harold Smith (1998) highlights disputes in the movement from 1871 to 1915.
48. For detailed treatment of the Woman's Press, see Simone Murray 2000, and Stanley with Morley 1988.
49. The NUWSS had made some minor attempts such as the short-lived *Women's Suffrage* (June 1907) issued from the London office. This looked more like a compilation of statements and pamphlet literature than a newspaper.
50. I am grateful to Julia Bush for drawing attention to this article in the *Times* (12 June 1908) in her book. The *Times* article praises this development and suggests the promises of support for this anti-suffrage initiative would be strong. Interestingly, it also reveals the respect even the anti-suffrage press had for Fawcett, stating: "The association will represent those who believe that, though Mrs. Fawcett is personally well fitted to have a vote, or many votes, that is a poor reason for admitting to the franchise two or three millions of women who know nothing whatever of politics, or parties, or the nation, or the Empire" (12 June 1908: 12).
51. I include here a range of promotional activities ranging from the disruption of political meetings to street selling, suffrage shops, public speaking and a large-scale events. See DiCenzo 2000, 2003 and John Mercer 2004, 2005, 2009. For a detailed analysis of the disruption of political meetings, and the strategy of targeting events in order to maximize national press coverage, see Jon Lawrence 2001.
52. "A 'Suffragette' Revolt" in the *Anti-Suffrage Review* (Feb 1911: 29). The article quotes long passages from Billington-Greig's article in the *New Age* and claims that her "bitter, contemptuous, and stinging denunciation of militant suffragists... cannot fail to have its effect, and we daresay it will end some delusions." It is clear that Billington-Greig's status as a "pioneer" of militant suffragism is of particular value to reinforcing what the antis had been trying to argue.
53. Swanwick's memoir offers a rare, critical assessment of the constraints imposed on "the editor of a paper run by a Society" (1935: 226).
54. The formation of this new society was also noted in the *Times* on 18 Jan 1910, 4.
55. Important work has been done on the role women played in political parties in Britain at this time, such as Hirshfield 1990 and essays in Boussahba-Bravard 2007. For the relationship between the Women's Liberal Federation and the NUWSS, see Vellacott 1993 and Holton 1986.
56. There is not sufficient space to offer a detailed analysis of correspondence sections of these papers, but fuller study is warranted. As we will see below, Swanwick adopted an open policy to the publication of letters in the *Common Cause*. Also interesting is the fact that the *Anti-Suffrage Review*

- published letters by suffragists expressing criticism of its views. I have no concrete evidence of a policy of censorship for *Votes for Women*, but it is clear they were not interested in critics. An article by D. Triformis in the *New Age* (17 Mar 1910: 462) suggests others had their suspicions about what did and did not get published in *Votes for Women*.
57. Hilary Frances deals briefly with features and allied interest groups found in the *Vote* as part of her discussion of the Women's Freedom League (2000).
 58. The emotional dimensions of social movements have received growing attention in recent years, but a detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this study. For a recent overview, see Goodwin et al. 2007. The quotation is from the *New Age* (17 Mar 1910: 462).
 59. These details are found in the NUWSS Papers, "The Coming Citizen" Paper 2/NWS/A/9/1 (Box FL301), Women's Library, London. It is also worth noting that as late as January 1909, *Women's Franchise* indicated that the NUWSS had requested they take over this paper as their own official organ (7 Jan 1909: 329).
 60. The commitment to peaceful and democratic methods of protest took on an even greater significance in the war years when the more radical wing of the NUWSS argued their case as pacifists. Some of these issues are discussed in the following case study (Chapter 2).
 61. The term 'sober' has attached itself to accounts of the paper. It first appears in Doughan and Sanchez to describe the paper's appearance (28).
 62. Holton comments specifically on the running of suffrage candidates as having been a "disaster" because they did not in the end poll a significant number of votes. She also cites criticism of the election policy expressed later in 1910 (1986: 50–1).
 63. For a detailed discussion of this organization, see Krista Cowman, "'A party between revolution and peaceful persuasion': a fresh look at the United Suffragists" in Joannou and Purvis (1998): 77–88.

2 *The Englishwoman: "Twelve Years of Brilliant Life"*

64. This review from the *Manchester Guardian* appears on the back cover of the first issue of the *Englishwoman* (Feb 1909) and is not otherwise dated.
65. The entry for the London Society for Women's Suffrage in the *Suffrage Annual and Women's Who's Who* situates the organization as part of the "modern Women's Movement," dating back to 1855 and draws an overt connection between itself and the "ladies" who "founded the *Englishwoman's Journal*" and the "Society for Promoting the Employment of Women" (R., A. J. 1913: 49).
66. The Richards divorced in 1914 (*Times* 24 Apr 1914: 3). Reference to this notice is made in an online biography of Filson Young which suggests that Grant Richards planned the *Englishwoman* with Elisina. She left him for Royall Tyler (one of the art reviewers for the journal) and the publication of the journal was taken over by Sidgwick and Jackson in 1910.
67. There was a succession of publishers who were male and the printer for the full run was Strangeways and Sons. By 1916 The Englishwoman Ltd. was the publisher and remained so until the last issue.

68. The section on conferring political rights outlines three separate suffrage bills (those by Stanger, Dilke, and Hedge).
69. She offers a strong statement in support of equal suffrage in "Bow and Spear" (Oct 1909: 286–90).
70. The review in the *Westminster Gazette* of the first issue of the *Englishwoman* is quoted on the back cover, along with the one from the *Manchester Guardian*.
71. For a more detailed discussion of how the feminist press mediated culture in the period, see DiCenzo 2008 and Delap et al. 2006.
72. A few catalogs and documents related to the annual exhibition can be found in the NUWSS papers at the Women's Library, London, in Englishwoman Exhibition Box FL369.
73. For example, "Problems of the Day" was moved forward and, in September 1914, "Echoes" became "Echoes of War," but reverted to its original title in January 1915.
74. See also Jo Vellacott (2007) and Marc Calvini-Lefebvre (2008) for detailed analyses of feminism in the war years.
75. Some of the key full-length studies include: Brown 2003; Calvini-Lefebvre 2008; Fell and Sharp 2007; Grayzel 2002; Oldfield 1989; Smith 2005; Vellacott 1987; 2007; Wiltsher 1985.
76. These were by no means the only internal conflicts to trouble the organization. The support of the Labour Party through the Election Fighting Fund was another major source of division. See also Holton (1986).
77. We are grateful to Jo Vellacott whose work has been so valuable in understanding the internal dynamics of the NU in relation to the war, and for her informal suggestion in a conversation that the journal may have been part of the LSWS's response to efforts to displace its prominence in the NU.
78. For further examples, see correspondence in the *Common Cause* 25 Sept 1914: 448–49, 2 Oct 1914: 460–61, and 9 Oct 1914: 473. Vellacott recounts Catherine Marshall's response to Oliver Strachey's attempt to "set up and knock down a straw target" (2007: 71).
79. A direct statement eventually appears in the "Echoes" section for June 1915 in response to the claims put forward by internationalists and pacifists that "their view is that held by English Suffragists." It states clearly: "The Editorial Committee of *The Englishwoman* feel that they cannot allow this assertion to pass without protest. They believe that the overwhelming majority of Englishwomen, whether Suffragists or non-Suffragists, prefer the maintenance of the pledged word of the nation" (269).
80. See for example "Women's Suffrage in War-Time" (July 1915: 1) in which Lowndes is openly critical of "male officialdom," uses the circumstances of the war to strengthen the case for women's suffrage, and then celebrates Denmark's recent decision to enfranchise women.
81. In the first year of the *Englishwoman* Haslam contributed a series over several months called "Women and the Nation" dealing with work, children, health/disease, and social justice issues. They were described by other papers as 'startling' and 'extraordinary.'
82. Three such articles include "Equal Pay for Equal Work" (Oct 1918: 1–5) and the paired "Equal Pay for Equal Value" and "Equal Pay for Equal Work" (Mar 1919: 97–103).

83. Rathbone was herself a contributor to the journal (see "The Industrial Outlook for Women After the War" Apr 1917: 1–10). But her ideas and writings were also taken up by other contributors (see "The Family Wage" in "Problems of the Day" for Dec 1917: 179).
84. I draw the term here from a report entitled "The 'Auxiliary Sex'" (19 Feb 1915: 718) about a letter by Swanwick to the *Manchester Guardian* in which she claims it would be completely unjust to turn women out of these jobs after the war and argues that the whole economic position of women must be reconsidered. See also "'Woman's Opportunity?'" (12 Mar 1915: 758).
85. See also Millicent Fawcett's "Lift Up Your Hearts" (Jan 1916: 5–15) and Betty Balfour's "Franchise For Service" (Nov 1916: 97–102).
86. See Rathbone "The Old and the New Feminism" in *Woman's Leader* (13 Mar 1925: 51) and the debate in the correspondence section of *Time and Tide* in March 1926.

3 Individualism and Introspection: The Framing of Feminism in the *Freewoman*

87. For further biographical details, see Garner 1990; Clarke 1996; Holton 1996 and Delap 2007.
88. Teresa Billington-Greig was a former activist of the WSPU and the WFL, but as Chapter X of her book describes, she had withdrawn from each of these in protest at their lack of internal democracy, and published a book-length critique of the suffrage movement (Billington-Greig 1911b).
89. Unless otherwise indicated, references are to the *Freewoman*.
90. Gawthorpe to Marsden, 8 June 1911. Dora Marsden Collection, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. Henceforth cited as DMC with box (Roman numeral) and folder numbers appended where relevant.
91. Gawthorpe to Björkman, 27 Mar 1912. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University. Mary Ware Dennett Papers 001940518. Henceforth cited as MWDP.
92. Marsden to Charlotte Wilson, undated 1911. DMC I: 29.
93. Gawthorpe to Marsden, 18 June 1911. DMC II: 1.
94. Gawthorpe to Marsden, 18 June 1911. DMC II: 1.
95. L. Eckenstein to Marsden, 24 Nov 1911. DMC II: 29.
96. Orage copied to Marsden by Gawthorpe, 8 Sept 1911. DMC II: 1.
97. Anon, "Women's Suffrage – a new policy," DMC II: 23.
98. Rebecca West remembered the suffrage movement in 1905 as composed of "teachers, mill-girls, shop-assistants and workers of all descriptions." In her article "Feminism" for the *Daily Herald*, she considered that the best feminist rebellion would be to foment a strike of teachers (5 Sept 1912). Reprinted in Marcus 1982.
99. M. P. Willcocks to Marsden, 1 June 1912; Lilian McCrie to Marsden, 5 Nov 1912. DMC III: 5.
100. Björkman to the editors of the *Freewoman*, 24 Feb 1912. MWDP.
101. Margaret McClure to Marsden, 24 Mar 1912. DMC III: 5.

102. H. G. Wells to Marsden, undated. DMC I: 25.
103. *Common Cause*, 23 Nov 1911: 577; Gawthorpe to Marsden, 9 Oct 1911. DMC II: 1.
104. Amy Haughton to Dora Marsden, undated. DMC III: 1.
105. Godfrey Harvey to Gawthorpe, 24 Nov 1911. DMC III: 1.
106. Henry Bryan Binns, 30 July 1912. DMC II: 26.
107. Unidentified, 24 Sept 1912. DMC III: 11.
108. Hindshaw to Rona Robinson, undated DMC III: 2.
109. Martin Freeman to Marsden, 4 Nov 1912. DMC II: 31.
110. Florence Graham to Marsden, 28 May 1912. DMC III: 4.
111. Billington-Greig to Marsden, 14 Oct 1911. DMC II: 31.
112. WH to Marsden, 26 Dec 1911. DMC III: 2.
113. On free speech campaigns, see Stansell 2000. *Freewoman* reader Mary Ware Dennett deployed the anarchist-associated identity 'freeman' in a letter asserting that suffrage has become a free speech cause. Dennett to Lucy Burns, 17 Nov 1917. MWDP.
114. Margery Curry Dell, quoted in Björkman to Marsden, undated. MWDP.
115. One contributor wrote to the editorial assistant, Grace Jardine, with honesty about the manipulation of the letter's page: "Of course, I am anxious to be attacked in order to try to convince the other people they are wrong. . . . Can you get, *or manufacture in your office*, letters asking what I mean by it – they need not repeat my arguments, only ask me to explain. . . ." Arthur Lewis to Jardine, 14 Jan 1912. DMC III: 3 (emphasis in the original).
116. West to Marsden, June 1913. DMC I: 26.
117. Mrs Eleanor Jacobs to Marsden, 4 Jan 1912. DMC III: 3.
118. Frances Björkman to Dora Marsden, 20 May 1912. MWDP. On the emotions within social movement theory, see Goodwin et al. 2001.
119. Hindshaw to Marsden, 15 July 1911. 10 June 1912. DMC III: 2.
120. Ayrton to Gawthorpe, 19 Nov 1911. DMC II: 25.
121. West to Marsden, undated: DMC I: 26; Rachel Graham, undated letter to the editors. DMC II: 7.
122. B. W. Starling to Marsden, 23 Feb 1912. DMC III: 8. See also Flint (1993: 238–39).
123. M. Bridges Adams to Marsden, 25 Aug 1912. DMC II: 25.
124. Aldred to Marsden, 9 Feb 1912. DMC II: 25.
125. Marsden to Björkman, 11 Jan 1913. MWDP.
126. Carter undated, DMC II: 28; Bunting, 12 May 1912. DMC II: 27.
127. L Boddingle, 26 Feb 1912. DMC II: 27.
128. Haynes to Marsden, 29 Mar 1912. DMC III: 1.
129. Willing & Co. to Winterton, 16 Feb 1912; Foster to Marsden, 10 June 1912. DMC III: 10.
130. Anon, 'Women's Suffrage – A New Policy.' DMC II: 23.
131. Marsden to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 30 July 1914. Harriet Shaw Weaver Papers, British Library, London. Vol. 57352.
132. J. M. Kennedy, 'Three Classes of Women' (*New Age*, 8 May 1913: 8). Rebecca West memorably described Kennedy in a review of his 'English Literature 1880–1905' as "a bishop manqué. He writes in the solemn yet hiccupy style peculiar to bishops, with a 'however' or 'indeed' or 'of course' interrupting

- every sentence Perhaps Mr Kennedy is a bishop in some secret Church of the Nietzscheans" (DMC II: 15).
133. West in *Time and Tide* (16 July 1926). Her recollections were also published in the American journal *Equal Rights*. On the involvement of Stella Browne with the *Freewoman*, see Lesley A. Hall 2001.
 134. Ansell to Marsden, 14 July 1912. DMC II: 25.
 135. Fletcher to Marsden, undated [1912]. DMC II: 30.
 136. Charles Drysdale to Rona Robinson, 11 June 1912. DMC II: 29.
 137. West to Marsden, undated. DMC I: 26.
 138. Marsden to Granville, 29 Apr 1912. DMC III: 5.
 139. Margaret McClure to Marsden, 24 Mar 1912. DMC III: 5.
 140. Unidentified, 24 Sept 1912. DMC III: 11.
 141. Gawthorpe to Marsden, 18 Mar 1912. DMC II: 1. Gawthorpe is citing an anonymous reader's communication to her.
 142. For a discussion of parasitism, see Schreiner 1911. On varieties of individualism, see Lukes 1973.
 143. Delap 2007 offers an extended discussion of the intellectual traditions that underpinned Edwardian concerns with individualism and introspection.
 144. Gawthorpe to Marsden, 21 Aug 1913. DMC II: 1.
 145. Fifield to Herrin, 9 May 1913. DMC II: 30.
 146. Björkman to Marsden, 16 Oct 1913. MWDP.
 147. Björkman to Marsden, 16 Oct 1913. MWDP.
 148. Hayes to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 28 Nov 1913. DMC IV: 1a.
 149. Following Ardis, I have suggested elsewhere that *Freewoman* readers can usefully be seen as 'skipping readers' (1999: 198). See also Delap 2000.
 150. I am grateful to the work of Natalie Thomlinson for elucidating this connection for me.
 151. The individualist feminism of the late twentieth century seems a narrowly libertarian and voluntaristic feminism, reduced to seeking enhanced opportunities and liberties for women within such the existing capitalist liberal system. The *Freewoman* suggests a feminism that is far more utopian and revolutionary, and gives a richer, more honest, account of how an individualist feminism might conceptualize issues such as (inter)dependency and autonomy.

Conclusion

152. The reference here is to Cohen's and Arato's attention to dualistic strategies discussed in Part I. Interestingly, the *Woman's Leader* identified "two main streams" in the "Woman's Movement," claiming: "One is an effort to break down barriers, the other an effort to expand into fresh life. The struggle for the vote belongs to the first: so does the struggle for equal opportunities in the professions and in industry. The development of women's education, of women's citizenship, and of women's work belongs to the second" (6 Feb 1920: 7).

153. The role of male contributors has been only implicit in the case studies, but it is an area that deserves further attention. Some of the periodicals foregrounded the practice more than others and some even had to defend themselves on this point.
154. Allison Cavanagh makes a useful distinction between the roles played by the proposed addressees and the actual audiences of print media (2007).

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Index

- Aaron, Jane, 203n28
abolition, 32, 45
Actresses' Franchise League, 127
Adburgham, Alison, 58
Aldington, Richard, 123
Aldred, Guy, 173–4, 185n124
Alexandra Magazine, 80
Allen, A.M., 110
alternative media, 5, 9, 54, 58, 60, 61,
66–8, 201n3
 see also movement media;
 suffrage/feminist press
Aminzade, Ronald R., 172
anarchism, 160, 168, 169, 173–4, 176
Anti-Corn Law League, 55
anti-feminism, 27, 53, 177–8, 179
anti-suffrage, 27, 92–4, 107, 111, 113,
115–16, 134, 135, 137, 159, 174,
177
 1889 appeal and, 91
 as countermovement, 41, 92n17
 see also Women's National
 Anti-Suffrage League (WNASL)
Anti-Suffrage Review, 17, 77, 83, 87, 92,
93, 94, 96, 98, 115–16, 118, 125,
128, 135, 137, 174n52, 206n56
anti-vivisection, 55
Arato, Andrew, 33, 38, 51, 62n152
Ardis, Ann, 58, 59, 177n37, 211n149
Aronson, Amy, 4
Artists' Suffrage League, 127
Asen, Robert, 31, 201n7
Ashplant, T.G., 201n2
Asquith, Herbert, 103, 109
Atton, Chris, 60, 66, 67n3
Ayrton, Hertha, 101, 173

Bagguley, Paul, 172
Bailey, Michael, 65
Balfour, Lady Frances, 117, 121, 126,
127n85

Ballaster, Ros, 58
Banaszak, Lee Ann, 39
Banks, Olive, 39, 92
Bartley, Paula, 90
Baty, Thomas, 183
Bax, Belfort, 177
Becker, Lydia, 85
Beetham, Margaret, 12, 58, 59, 61,
69n1, 205n43
Benford, Robert, D., 42, 45–6, 48, 88,
180n21
Bermondsey by-election, 100, 103,
107
Biggs, M.A., 194, 199–200
Billington-Greig, Teresa, 33–4, 61, 71,
91, 96, 97, 105, 107, 108, 160,
163, 168, 187n52, 209n88
Bingham, Adrian, 50, 59, 65, 69n4
Birnstingl, Harry, 182, 183
birth control, 46, 54, 182, 184n22
Björkman, Frances Maule, 171, 174,
188
Black, Clementina, 122, 130
Black, Naomi, 144
Bland, Lucy, 180
Boardman, Kay, 59, 201n1, 205n43
Bohata, Kirsti, 204n30
Bolt, Christine, 79
Bostick, Theodora, 83, 204n30
Boucherett, Jessie, 81, 200
Boussahba-Bravard, Myriam, 206n55
Bradshaw, Ethel, 173
Braithwaite, Brian, 58
Brake, Laurel, 62, 70, 128n29
Brandon, Ruth, 186
Briggs, Asa, 3
Bristow, Gemma, 123
Britannia, 87
British Journal of Nursing, 129
Brouwer, Daniel, 31, 201n7
Browne, Stella, 181, 211n133

- Brown, Heloise, 208n75
 Brügger, Niels, 5, 6
 Buechler, Steven, 39
 Burke, Peter, 3, 10
 Burton, Antoinette, 35, 201n5
 Bush, Julia, 91, 92, 93n50
Business Girl, 85
 Butler, Josephine, 62, 63, 186
 Butsch, Richard, 201n7
- Caine, Barbara, 62
 Caird, Mona, 53, 101
 Calhoun, Craig, 32, 159n7, 202n11, 202n14
 Calvini-Lefebvre, Marc, 123, 208n74, 208n75
 Camauër, Leonor, 68
 Campbell, Karen, E., 202n16
 Caniglia, Beth Schaefer, 42
 Carmin, JoAnn, 42
 Carpenter, Edward, 181, 182, 183
 Carroll, William, K., 38
 Carter, Cynthia, 11
 Castle, Ralph Tudor, 132, 139
Catholic Citizen, 119
Catholic Suffragist, 87, 88, 119
 Cavanagh, Allison, 212n154
 Cecil, Lord Robert, 146–7
 Chambers, Linda, 59, 68
 Chapin, Alice, 100, 107
 Chapman, John, 54
 Chapman, Mary, 204n30
 Chartism, 55
 Chartist press, 79, 119
 Chesler, Ellen, 203n22
 Chew, Ada Nield, 164, 174
 Churchill, Winston, 103, 105
Church League for Women's Suffrage, 45, 87, 88
Church Militant, 45, 119
 civil society, 33, 52
 collective action and, 51, 57
 political society and, 33, 54, 62
Clarion, 110
 Clarke, Bruce, 209n87
 Clark, Wayne, 201n7
 class, 25, 27, 32, 61, 63–4, 101, 112, 118, 119, 121, 123, 152, 164, 169, 199
- Clay, Catherine, 59, 204n30
 Clemens, Elizabeth, 42, 43
 Cohen, Jean, 33, 38, 51, 62n152
 Collier, Patrick, 205n37, 205n38
 Collini, Stefan, 179
Coming Citizen, 109, 207n59
Common Cause, 17, 21, 47, 75, 77, 82, 84, 86, 87, 92, 94, 95, 96, 98, 109–14, 117, 118, 122, 124, 129, 144–50, 154, 166, 172–3, 174, 176, 183, 196, 198n38, 206n56, 208n78
 Conboy, Martin, 64, 74n3
 Conciliation Bill, 82, 116
Conservative & Unionist Women's Franchise Review, 87–8
 Conservative Party, 108, 116
 constitutionalism/ constitutionalists, 43, 45, 86, 87, 88, 91–8, 104–5, 109–10, 112, 113, 118, 120, 122, 123, 125, 127, 128, 134, 142, 144, 198
 see also National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS)
Contemporary Review, 57, 62, 122, 124, 176
 Corbett, Mary Jean, 35
Cornhill, 128
 correspondence pages, *see* suffrage/feminist press
 Cowman, Krista, 102, 207n63
 Cox, Harold, 132, 136–7
 Crack, Angela, 28–9, 201n7
 Crawford, Elizabeth, 128, 144
 Cromer, Lord, 117
 Crossley, Nick, 201n7
 Curran, James, 5, 6, 8, 12, 25, 59, 63–4, 65n33
- Dahl, Hans Frederik, 6
Daily Chronicle, 156
Daily Herald, 173, 209n98
Daily Telegraph, 53
 Dancyger, Irene, 58
 Davison, Emily, 102
 Delap, Lucy, 17, 75, 122, 172, 178n30, 208n71, 209n87, 211n143, 211n149
 della Porta, Donatella, 172

- Dell, Floyd, 169, 174, 186
 Demoor, Marysa, 59
 Derrida, Jacques, 10, 204n31
 Despard, Charlotte, 95, 105
 DiCenzo, Maria, 47, 61, 101n27,
 204n30, 205n36, 206n51,
 208n71
 Dixon, Joy, 187
 domestic magazines, 59, 70
 Doughan, David, 67, 122n28, 205n44
 Downing, John, 5, 54, 67, 68, 83n8
 Dredge, Sarah, 69, 204n30
 Drysdale, Charles, 163, 169n136
- Earl, Jennifer, 51
 East London Federation of
 Suffragettes, 87
 Eccles, Charlotte O'Connor, 204n35
Echo, 56
 Eder, David, 169
Edinburgh Magazine, 57
 Edwards, Gemma, 32, 201n7
 egoism, 169, 187–8, 190–1
Egoist, 160, 169, 170, 187, 188
 elections, *see* suffrage
 Eley, Geoff, 29
 Eliasoph, Nina, 52, 53
 Ellis, Havelock, 166, 181, 182, 183
 Elmy, Elizabeth Wolstenholme, 101,
 112
 Endres, Kathleen L., 203n28
English Review, 124
Englishwoman, 1, 2, 17, 34, 74, 75, 86,
 98, 120–58, 162, 163, 164, 192,
 195, 197, 198, 199
see also London Society for Women's
 Suffrage (LSWS); National
 Union of Women's Suffrage
 Societies (NUWSS);
 suffrage/feminist press; World
 War One
Englishwoman Exhibition of Art and
 Handicrafts, 141
English Woman's Journal, 69, 81,
 194n30, 205n40, 207n65
Englishwoman's Review, 81, 85, 129,
 130, 131 (Fig3), 151, 152, 194,
 199n28, 205n43
 eugenics, 184
Eugenics Review, 129
Evening Standard, 164
Evening Standard and St James' Gazette,
 162
- Fabianism, 161, 165, 169, 173, 174,
 177
 Fawcett, Millicent Garrett, 63, 91, 93,
 94, 95, 96, 98, 99, 115, 117, 122,
 123, 125, 130, 132, 134, 137, 145,
 146, 148, 149, 157n50, 206n46,
 209n85
 Fell, Alison S., 148–9, 203n20,
 208n75
 Felski, Rita, 28, 202n8
 feminism(s), 1, 3, 7, 15, 17, 38, 61,
 160–2, 165, 174, 177, 179, 182,
 185–6, 189–90, 192, 194, 196,
 198n1
 collective identities and, 43, 121,
 159–60, 165–6, 167–70, 172,
 189, 190, 192, 198–9, 200
 denominational, 88
 endowment of motherhood and,
 153, 184, 196
 freewomen and, 121, 168, 169, 189,
 190, 191
 gendered analysis and, 60, 61
 humanism and, 160, 166–7, 177
 individualism, 169, 186–8, 190
 interwar period, 50, 195, 196
 introspection and, 186, 187,
 189–90
 liberal, 121, 151, 152
 libertarian, 168, 190n151
 motherhood, 13, 181–2
 new social movements and, 31, 32,
 33–4, 48
 'new' vs 'old' feminism', 157, 190,
 196n86
 post-feminism, 189
 postwar and contemporary women's
 movements, 28, 33, 51, 119,
 190–1, 193n151
 public debate and, 34, 50–1, 57, 62,
 63, 65
 reactive vs proactive, 33–4, 61–2,
 100
 superwomen and, 190

- feminism(s) – *continued*
 women's movements and, 40–1, 45, 49, 121n17
see also anti-feminism; class; suffrage; suffrage/feminist press; women's work; World War One
- feminist media history, 4, 7–13, 58, 59–60, 61, 63–6, 69–70
see also media history; suffrage/feminist press
- Feminist Media Studies*, 8, 11
- feminist public sphere, 16, 26, 28, 60
- Ferguson, Marjorie, 58
- Fernihough, Anne, 179
- Ferree, Myra Marx, 45, 202n17
- Fine, Gary Alan, 47
- Finkelstein, David, 11, 201n2
- Fletcher, Ian Christopher, 65, 69n5
- Flint, Kate, 56, 59
- Flynn, Elizabeth Gurley, 169
- Forbes, Barbara, 128
- Fortnightly Review*, 57, 62, 85, 124, 127n35
- frames and framing, 17, 37, 42–3, 45–7, 48, 54, 69, 78, 79, 87–8, 90, 98, 103, 109, 118, 134, 147, 159, 180, 186, 187, 192, 193, 203
 countermovements and, 46, 90
 frame disputes, 46, 88, 118
 master frames, 44, 46, 187, 189, 191, 193
 narratives, 47
 resonance of, 46–8, 88, 90, 189
- Frances, Hilary, 207n57
- Franchise Bills (1918, 1928), 45, 119, 155
- Francis, John, E., 86
- Franklin, Cary, 204n30
- Fraser, Hilary, 59, 61n8, 205n43
- Fraser, Nancy, 25–6, 28, 36n6, 203n26
- Fraser's Magazine*, 57
- Frawley, Maria, 204n30
- Freewoman*, 123, 128, 137, 159–65, 172–80, 191–3
Freewoman Discussion Circle, 184–5
- Galsworthy, John, 101, 122, 130, 132, 139
- Gamson, William, A., 54, 87
- Garner, Les, 111, 179n87
- Gawthorpe, Mary, 160–1, 163, 164, 166, 168, 173, 187
- gender, *see* feminism; media history
- Gentlewoman*, 129
- George, Lloyd, 155
- Gleadle, Kathryn, 59, 201n4
- Goffman, Irving, 203n21
- Gollancz, Victor, 188
- Goodwin, Jeff, 207n58
- Gore-Booth, Eva, 130
- Grain Growers' Guide*, 9
- Granville, Charles, 160, 184
- Grayzel, Susan R., 208n75
- Green, Barbara, 59, 203n27, 204n30
- Greer, Germaine, 190
- Gring-Pemble, Lisa M., 203n23
- Habermas, Jurgen, 16, 22–4, 25–6, 28, 30, 31, 32, 35, 52n7, 202n9
- Hackney, Fiona, 69
- Hale, Beatrice Forbes-Robinson, 17
- Hall, Lesley A., 179, 211n133
- Hamilton, Cicely, 13, 105, 107, 110, 126, 127, 132, 139–40
- Hamilton, James, 60, 61, 67n3
- Hamilton, Susan, 53, 56–7, 62
- Hampton, Mark, 66
- Haralovich, Mary Beth, 7
- Hardcastle, Frances, 98
- Harraden, Beatrice, 101
- Harris, Michael, 80
- Harrison, Brian, 55–6, 64, 79, 83n12
- Harrison, Stanley, 204n33
- Hartman, Kabi, 204n30
- Haslam, Beryl, 110
- Haslam, James, 153, 208n80
- Hayes, Bessie, 188–9
- Haynes, E.S.P., 163, 167, 176
- Heilmann, Ann, 187
- Herald of Revolt*, 173
- Herstein, Sheila R., 204n30
- Hewitt, Lyndi, 90, 202n16
- Hills, John W., 155
- Hindshaw, Winifred, 163, 169, 171
- Hirschfeld, Magnus, 182
- Holton, Sandra Stanley, 13, 74, 90, 92, 93, 123, 167n19, 206n47, 206n55, 207n62, 208n76, 209n87

- homosexuality, 162, 182–3
 Hopkin, Deian, 56, 79–80, 110
 Housman, Laurence, 101, 107, 130
 Hultin, Dr. Tekla, 136
Humanity, 85
 Hume, Leslie Parker, 123
 Hunt, Scott, A., 42, 48
 Hynes, Samuel L., 187
- International Woman Suffrage
 Alliance, 87, 112, 145
Irish Citizen, 87
 Irish nationalism, 45, 69, 109
 Irish suffrage press, 39
- Jackson, Kate, 179
 Jackson, Margaret, 178
 Jacobs, Eleanor, 170–1
 Jasper, James, M., 49
 Jeffreys, Sheila, 178, 179
 Jenson, Jane, 47
 Jewish League for Women's
 Suffrage, 88
 Joannou, Maroula, 204n30
 John, Angela, 204n38
 Johnston, Hank, 61, 69n21
 Jones, Aled, 66, 199
 journalism, *see* suffrage/feminist press;
 scholarship and approaches to
Judy, 188
 Juhasz, Alexandra, 8, 9
Jus Suffragii, 87
- Kamester, Margaret, 142
 Kelly, Audrey, 85
 Kelly, Katherine E., 203n25, 204n30
 Kenton, Edna, 174
 King, Andrew, 65
 King, Brayden G., 202n16
 Klandermans, Bert, 40, 41, 69, 90
 Kluge, Alexander, 27, 201n8
 Koivisto, Juha, 25, 31
 Kolstrup, Søren, 5, 6
 Koss, Stephen, 204n33
 Kramarae, Cheris, 203n28
- labor movement, 32, 33, 43, 45, 50,
 55, 56, 80, 89, 173, 174
 labor/socialist press, 65, 69, 79–80
- Labour Leader*, 110
 Labour Party, 109, 208n76
Labour Record and Review, 56
 Lacey, Candida Ann, 204n30
Ladies' Court Book, 129
 Lahusen, Christian, 38
 Lamont, Victoria, 204n30
 Langham Place Group, 81, 83, 84,
 121, 151n30
 Latham, Sean, 59
 Law, Cheryl, 157
 Lawrence, Jon, 206n51
 Lee, Alan, 80, 204n33
 Leigh, Mary, 102
 letters as historical evidence, 49, 53,
 89, 96, 183–4, 191, 199n23,
 203n24
 Levine, Philippa, 204n30, 205n43
 Lewis, Amelia, 52, 67, 85n10
 Lewis, Leslie, W., 59
 Liberal Party, 93, 99, 100, 102, 103,
 104, 108, 117
 Lofland, John, 196
 London Society for Women's Suffrage
 (LSWS), 117, 122–3, 124, 127,
 144–5, 147, 151n65
 Low, Barbara, 185
 Lowndes, Mary, 122, 123, 126, 127,
 128, 141n80
 Lowy, Albert, 183
 Ludovici, Antoni, 177
 Lukes, Stephen, 211n142
 Lytton, Constance, 104
- Malone, Carolyn, 152
Manchester Guardian, 83, 97, 120, 124,
 136, 139, 156n38, 207n64,
 208n70, 209n84
 Mandler, Peter, 192
 March-Phillipps, Evelyn, 204n35
 Marcus, Jane, 209n98
 marriage question, 53–4
 Marsden, Dora, 50, 101, 128, 160–91
 Marshall, Catherine, 208n78
 Martineau, Harriet, 57, 63
 Martyn, Edith How, 95, 107
 Marwick, Arthur, 190
 Masefield, John, 130, 132, 139
 Mason, Bertha, 98

- Masses*, 176
 Masson, Ursula, 203n28
 Mayhall, Laura, 35, 98
 Maynard, Mary, 100
 McAdam, Doug, 38, 40, 44, 47, 49, 161
 McCammon, Holly J., 90, 202n16
 McCleery, Alistair, 11, 201n2
 McElroy, Wendy, 190
 McLaughlin, Lisa, 11, 34–5
 media history, 4–13, 14, 16, 21, 57–70, 178, 200
 gender and, 7, 8–9, 10, 16, 50, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64–5
 history and historiography and, 7, 25
 Media History and, 4, 11
 terminology, 55, 64, 70, 78n34
 see also alternative media;
 suffrage/feminist press
 Melucci, Alberto, 49, 159
 Men's League for Opposing Women's Suffrage, 117
 Men's League for Women's Suffrage, 86, 95, 121, 122, 133
Men's League for Women's Suffrage, 87
 Mercer, John, 204n30, 205n41, 206n51
 Meredith, Maud, 135
 Meyer, David S., 202n13, 202n18
 militancy/militants, 35, 43, 44, 45, 53, 86, 89, 91–3, 94–8, 99, 101, 102, 104, 105, 107–8, 109, 111, 112, 113, 115–16, 144
 see also Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU); Women's Freedom League (WFL)
 Miller, Carolyn, 198
 Mill, John Stuart, 151
 Mills, Angela, 204n30
 Minkoff, Debra, 42, 43
 Mitchell, Sally, 204n29
 modernism, 179
 Morley, Ann, 59, 74, 101n48
Morning Post, 162
 movement media, 16, 34, 46, 54–7, 65, 67, 77, 78–9, 83, 89, 99, 124, 138, 144, 159, 198, 200
 see also specific titles, alternative media; media history; social movement theory;
 suffrage/feminist press
 Mueller, Carol McClurg, 45, 48, 159, 166n17
 Murray, Janet Horowitz, 203n28, 204n30
 Murray, Simone, 59, 206n48
 Mussell, James, 198
 National American Women's Suffrage Association (NAWSA), 165, 171, 174
 National Federation of Women Workers, 145
National Review, 62, 124, 135
 National Society for Women's Suffrage, 85
 National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), 157, 197
 National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), 86, 87, 91, 92, 93, 94, 97, 100, 104, 108, 109–15, 117, 122–3, 124, 127, 142, 144–5, 146, 147, 148, 149, 152, 157, 158, 179, 183
 Negt, Oskar, 27, 201n8
 Neilans, Alice, 100, 107
 Nelson, Carolyn Christensen, 91
 Nerone, John, 4
 Nessheim, Ragnhild, 57, 75
 Nevinson, Henry, 101
 Nevinson, Margaret, 101, 107
New Age, 56, 83, 96, 120, 124, 125, 160, 162, 163, 164, 167, 169, 176, 177–8, 180, 186n52, 207n56, 207n58, 210n132
 New Constitutional Society for Women's Suffrage, 97–8, 104
 New Journalism, 53, 110
 'new woman', 3, 186, 187
 Nietzsche, Friedrich, 186, 187
Nineteenth Century, 53, 57, 62, 85, 91, 122, 124, 127, 163
 Nineteenth-Century Serials Edition (NCSE), 203n28

- Oldfield, Sybil, 204n30, 208n75
 Oliver, Pamela E., 203n21
 O'Malley, Tom, 5–6
 Onslow, Barbara, 29, 59, 62, 68, 80n4, 204n32
 Orage, Alfred, 163, 177
 O'Shea, N., 147
- pacifism, *see* World War One
 Paglia, Camile, 190
 Pankhurst, Christabel, 78, 81, 97, 99, 101, 103, 128, 144, 165, 169
 Pankhurst, Emmeline, 97, 101, 102, 103, 104, 128, 144, 165
 Pankhurst, Sylvia, 87, 144
 Parkes, Bessie Rayner, 80, 194
 Pearson, Karl, 54
 Pelletier, Madeleine, 174
 People's Suffrage Society, 116
 periodical communities, 172, 174
 Pethick-Lawrence, Emmeline, 56, 103, 104, 107, 118
 Pethick-Lawrence, Frederick, 56, 118
 Phegley, Jennifer, 59, 205n43
 Plunkett, John, 65
 Polletta, Francesca, 36–7, 47, 49
 Powell, David, 99
 Powell, John, 132
 press history, *see* media history
 pressure-group periodicals, 55–6, 59, 78, 80, 83
 see also specific titles; alternative media; suffrage/feminist press
 publicist orientation, *see* suffrage/feminist press
 publics and counterpublics, 16, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27–31, 41, 49
 see also feminist public sphere; social movements
 public sphere, 2, 16–17, 21–34, 39, 52–3, 57
 private vs. public interests, 22, 23, 24, 31–5, 51
 public discussion/debate and, 16, 22, 27, 32, 52–3, 57, 62, 63, 65, 70, 73, 194
 see also civil society
 Pugh, Martin, 35–6, 123n12
- Punch*, 91
 Purvis, June, 202n12
 Pykett, Lyn, 205n38
- Rabinovitz, Lauren, 7
 Rakow, Lana, 8, 203n28
 Rathbone, Eleanor, 152, 153, 157–8, 189, 195n83, 209n86
 Rendall, Jane, 79, 204n30
Review of Reviews, 129
 Richards, Grant, 127, 129
 Richards, Mrs. (Elisina) Grant, 120, 126, 127, 132, 137, 140
 Riley, Denise, 8
 R., A.J., 88, 123n45
 Roberts, John Michael, 201n7
 Robins, Elizabeth, 101
 Robinson, Solveig C., 204n30
 Rogers, Helen, 59, 201n4
 Rose, Jonathan, 187
 Rosenberg, Sheila, 53, 62n24
 Rosenthal, Naomi, 202n16
 Royden, Maude, 112
 Rubinstein, David, 123
 Rucht, Dieter, 30, 40, 84, 89–90
 Rupp, Leila, J., 48, 196, 197
 Ryan, Leila, 204n30
 Ryan, Louise, 39, 200n28, 204n30
 Ryan, Mary, 26, 28, 35
- Sanchez, Denise, 67, 122n28, 207n61
 Sanger, Margaret, 203n22
 Scholes, Robert, 59
 Schreiner, Olive, 101, 166, 167, 182
 Schroeder, Janice, 198, 204n30
 Schuch, Elke, 204n30, 205n43
 Scott, C.P., 111
 Scott-James, R.A., 70, 76n10
 Scott, Joan, 8, 10, 60n31
 Seaton, Jean, 63–4, 204n33
 Sennett, Maud Arncliffe, 101
 sexual morality, 180–4
Shafts, 85
 Sharer, Wendy B., 205n42
 Sharp, Evelyn, 52, 76–7, 205n38
 Sharp, Ingrid, 148–9, 203n20, 208n75
 Shattock, Joanne, 56–7, 59
 Shaw, G.B., 101, 122, 130

- Shevelow, Kathryn, 59
 Sinclair, May, 101
 Sinclair, Upton, 163
 Smith, Angela K., 204n30, 208n75
 Smith, Harold, 92, 206n47
 Smyth, Gerry, 201n2
 Sneider, Allison L., 201n5
 Snow, David A., 45–6, 180n21
 Snowden, Philip, 130
 socialism, 32, 55, 79, 160, 171, 173, 177
 socialist press, *see labor/socialist press*
 social movements
 collective identity, 37, 42, 46, 47, 48–9, 54, 56, 88–9, *see also* feminism
 contentious collective action, 39–40, 42, 56
 continuity, 43–4, 45, 196–7
 countermovements, 27, 41, 46, 52, 90, *see also* anti-suffrage
 cultural dimensions and impact, 36–7, 46, 47–52, 61, 69
 cycles of protest, 42, 43–4, 45, 56, 172, 189, 191
 initiator and spin off movements, 44, 46
 internal/external relations, 30, 40, 89–90
 multi-organizational field, 16, 40–1, 42, 46, 90, 158
 new social movements, 3, 31–3, 34, 37–8, 48, 51, 52, 54, 196
 organizations and cultures of, 39, 42–3, 47, 48, 49–50, 198
 participation in, 36, 41, 43, 44, 45, 89, 150
 politicization of everyday life, 32, 33, 196
 repertoires of collective action, 43, 45, 54, 92
 see also feminism; framing; movement media; social movement theory; suffrage
 social movement theory, 16, 21, 29, 30, 37, 38–9, 41, 51
 cultural perspectives, 16, 48, 51
 early women's movements and, 33, 39, 44, 48
 framing perspective, 37, 46; *see* framing
 media and, 16, 22, 29, 39, 54–5
 paradigm shifts, 37–8, 51
 political opportunity perspectives, 37, 48
 process, emphasis on, 16, 30, 37, 49, 52, 54
 resource mobilization theory, 37, 38, 42, 48, 51
 Solomon, Martha M., 204n30
 spinsterhood, 178–9
 Staggenborg, Suzanne, 202n18
 Stanger, Mr, 139
 Stanley, Liz, 59, 74, 101n48
 Stansell, Christine, 210n113
 Stark, Myra, 203n28, 204n30
 Steiner, Linda, 68
 Stirner, Max, 164, 186
 Stocker, Helene, 174
 Stopes, Charlotte Carmichael, 168
 Strachey, Lady, 121, 126, 127
 Strachey, Marjorie, 140
 Strachey, Oliver, 147–8, 156, 157n78
 Strachey, Ray, 194
 suffrage, 2, 13–14, 17–18, 160–1
 adult suffrage, 45, 115, 116, 137
 conflict and, 38, 41, 43, 56, 77, 79, 88, 89–99, 117–19, 149–50
 dissidents, 56, 79, 96, 118, 150
 diversity and, 27–8, 40–1, 76–7, 87–8, 89, 118–19, 196, 198–9
 elections and, 77–8, 97, 99–117, 155, 199
 feminism and, 3, 13, 75, 105, 142, 148, 154, 166–7, 170–2, 174, 177, 187, 192
 historiography and, 14, 35–6, 37, 43–4, 90–1, 142, 144n12
 networks and, 14, 43, 45, 55, 56, 74, 88, 89, 159, 183
 Scottish suffragists, 87
 social movement theory and, 38–9, 45, 55
 social and political reforms and, 14, 41, 47, 58, 102, 105, 110, 111–12, 126, 196
 unity and co-operation, 77, 86, 87, 94, 96, 112, 117–18, 157, 197

- Welsh suffragists, 87
 women's history and, 13, 36, 37, 41, 43–4, 74, 142
see also anti-suffrage;
 constitutionalism/
 constitutionalists; feminism(s);
 framing; militancy/militants;
 social movements;
 suffrage/feminist press; World
 War One
- Suffrage Annual Who's Who*, 97,
 123n45, 207n65
- suffrage/feminist press, 2, 13–15, 17,
 35–6, 42, 43, 56n1
 archival evidence and, 9, 159,
 190–1, 199
 correspondence, 50, 56, 75, 79, 98,
 102, 111, 112–13, 147, 159,
 162, 164, 170, 185n56
 feminist journals and monthly
 reviews, 63, 74–5, 78, 83, 103,
 121, 122, 126, 127, 144, 158,
 196, 197n1
 financial survival and, 66–7, 80,
 105, 196
 functions and impact of, 13, 17, 22,
 38, 42, 49, 55, 63–4, 67–8, 78,
 81, 83, 97, 100, 150, 195, 196,
 197, 198
 letter press of, 15, 74, 75, 200
 literature and the arts in, 69, 75,
 121, 127, 139–41, 164
 mainstream press and, 56–7, 62, 63,
 66, 69, 80, 83, 84
 news coverage and, 17, 65–6, 67, 69,
 76, 82
 official organs, 44, 74, 78–119, 121,
 124, 135, 138, 196, 198, 199
 organizational cultures and, 50,
 87, 88
 periodical genres and, 17, 64, 74,
 78, 79, 121, 124, 127, 130, 144,
 162, 164, 176, 179, 198
 proliferation of, 44, 47, 77, 84–8, 87,
 89, 95
 publicist orientation, 16, 17, 56, 58,
 68, 73, 100, 200n26
 'Public Press' and, 26, 29, 55, 66, 69,
 76, 78, 80, 81
 readerships, 17, 22, 57, 58, 60, 73–4,
 78, 79, 83, 84, 88, 89, 98, 119,
 122, 158, 163–5, 169, 172–4,
 185, 189, 192, 197, 198, 199
 scholarship and approaches to, 9,
 14–16, 57, 58–66, 68, 74–5, 78,
 99, 119, 121, 123, 197–200
 separate or specialist press, 55, 56–7,
 58, 73, 80–1, 83
 significance of, 17–18, 26, 36, 57,
 66, 67, 68–70, 73, 75, 158, 196,
 197–200
see also specific titles; alternative
 media; framing; media history;
 social movements and media
- Suffragette*, 78, 87
Suffragette News Sheet, 87
 Swanwick, Helena, 34, 76, 84, 94,
 96–7, 109–10, 111, 144, 145, 148,
 150n38, 206n53, 209n84
see also Common Cause
- Swidler, Ann, 50
- Tarrow, Sidney, 39, 44, 45, 55, 172
 Taylor, Barbara, 180
 Taylor, Verta, 37, 48, 166, 172, 196,
 197
 temperance, 32, 55
 Terry, Ellen, 168
 Thane, Pat, 195
 Thatcher, Margaret, 191
 Theosophy, 187
 Thomlinson, Natalie, 211n150
 Thompson, Dorothy, 119
 Thompson, Tierl, 21, 89
 Tilly, Charles, 54
Times, 92, 98, 115, 116, 117, 124, 135,
 162, 192n50, 206n54, 207n66
Times Higher, 202n12
Times Literary Supplement, 202n12
Time and Tide, 130, 158, 184, 197n86,
 211n133
Titanic, 69
Tramp, 129
 Triiformis, D., 207n56
 Tuchman, Gaye, 76
 Tusan, Michelle, 59, 60, 66, 122n43
 Tyler, Royall, 132

- United States
 women's movements in, 26, 35, 39,
 173, 174, 196n30
 women's periodicals in, 58, 59, 165,
 169, 174, 185n28
- United Suffragists, 118
- Urania*, 183
- Uricchio, William, 12, 28
- Valiveronen, Esa, 25, 31
- Van Arsdel, Rosemary T., 205n43
- Van Dyke, Nella, 37
- Van Wingerden, 206n46
- Varty, Anne, 203n28
- Vellacott, Jo, 123, 142, 144, 146n55,
 208n74, 208n75, 208n77, 208n78
- Victoria Magazine*, 84
- Victorian Periodicals Review*,
 204n29
- Victorian studies, 58, 59
- Villis, Tom, 177
- The Vote*, 17, 77, 82, 95, 105–9, 118,
 119, 160, 166
- Votes for Women*, 1, 2, 17, 56, 57, 75,
 77, 82, 86, 87, 91, 98, 100–5, 106
 (Fig.1), 107, 110, 111, 124, 166,
 173, 174
- Walter, Natasha, 190
- Ward, Mary (Mrs Humphrey), 93,
 162
- Waring, L.F., 153
- Warner, Michael, 202n8
- Weaver, Harriet Shaw, 188
- Webb, Beatrice, 130
- Webb, Sidney, 130
- Weininger, Otto, 164, 182, 183, 186,
 187
- Wells, H. G., 163, 165, 167
- Westminster Gazette*, 140
- Westminster Review*, 53, 57, 62
- West, Rebecca, 163, 170, 173, 181,
 184n38, 209n98, 210n132
- Whitby, Charles, 182
- White, Cynthia, 59
- Whitelaw, Lis, 127, 140
- Whittier, Nancy, 48, 51, 166
- Willcocks, M.P., 209n99
- Wilson, P.W., 149
- Wiltsher, Anne, 208n75
- Wolf, Naomi, 190
- Woman* (1872), 52, 67, 85n10
- Woman Clerk*, 85
- Woman Engineer*, 85
- woman question, 3, 54, 62–3, 70, 84,
 135
- Woman Rebel*, 203n22
- Woman's Century*, 9
- Woman's Dreadnought*, 45, 87, 118
- Woman's Herald*, 85
- Woman's Journal*, 174
- Woman's Leader*, 45, 120, 124, 130,
 141, 157, 158
- Woman's Opinion*, 85
- Woman's Signal*, 85
- Woman Teacher*, 85
- Women & Progress*, 82
- Women's Co-operative Guild, 145
- Women's Coronation Procession,
 76–7
- Women's Franchise*, 85–7, 94–5, 105,
 109, 121, 122, 129, 133, 138,
 140
- Women's Freedom League (WFL), 79,
 83, 86, 87, 94, 95, 96, 100, 103,
 105–9, 112, 115, 160, 171
- Women's Gazette & Weekly
 News*, 85
- Women's Industrial News*, 85
- Women's Labour League, 145
- Women's National Anti-Suffrage
 League (WNASL), 92, 93, 94, 112
- Women's Penny Paper*, 84–5
- Women's Social and Political Union
 (WSPU), 35, 50, 56, 79, 83, 86, 87,
 90, 91, 92, 93, 94–5, 96, 99,
 100–5, 107, 108, 109, 112, 115,
 117, 119, 128, 160, 161, 163, 165,
 166, 170, 173, 180, 184
see also militancy/militants
- Women's Suffrage Journal*, 85, 91
- Women's Suffrage Record*, 127
- Women's Trade Union League, 152
- Women's Tribune*, 81
- women's work, 135, 150–5
 endowment of motherhood, 153,
 196
 equal pay for equal work, 137, 153

- Restoration of Prewar Practices Act
 - 1919 and, 152
- Society for the Promotion of the Employment of Women, 151
- trade unions, 150, 153
- war and, 151–4, 155
- Women Writers' Suffrage League, 127
- Workers' Dreadnought*, 45
- World War One, 45, 50, 121, 127,
 - 141–50, 189, 191
 - anti-war, 146
 - pacifism and, 142, 144, 145, 147, 148, 149, 150, 196
 - patriotism, 142, 144, 147, 153
 - war effort, *see also* women's work
- Yates, L. Keyser, 154
- Young, Filson, 207n66
- Zangwill, Edith, 101
- Zangwill, Israel, 101
- zines, 190